



The Ethiopian Herald

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Patriarch wishes peace, every good to Ethiopia

• Tourists laud Ketera's mesmerism

BY BETELHEM BEDLU & MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Abune Mathias I has wished for a profound peace and unity for the faithful and the people at large.

The Patriarch made the above remark in connection with this year's Ketera celebration yesterday at Janmeda.

Abune Mathias further called on followers to pray for Ethiopia's everlasting peace and unity.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald* at the occasion, foreign nationals who came from different corners of the world expressed amusement in the celebration calling the event as "captivating" and "overwhelming."

"I came here with my husband 25 years ago and celebrated *Timiket* (Ethiopian Epiphany) in Lalibela. The experience was fantastic and wonderful in Ethiopia. I love the culture and the people are very friendly. I would invite everybody around the world to come here," said Sam Bloom, from Sydney, Australia.

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Photo: Samuel Tesfaye



Sam Bloom



Professor Michael Rogers



Suana Esludero

Premier underscores perpetuating Epiphany essence for common good

• Wishes all faithful happy Epiphany

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA—The celebration of Epiphany does have a multitude of touristic values apart from showcasing religious and cultural essence, so stated Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

Wishing all the Ethiopian Orthodox Faithful a happy Epiphany, the premier stated that not only is Epiphany a manifestation of religious and cultural avenues to shape human character and nurture humility but it also provides people to get all the good grow as apostles did during baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Jesus had two crucial missions for being

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Landlocked nations face challenges in meeting people's needs: Premier

• Ethiopia welcomes decision of AfDB

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Landlocked nations face insurmountable challenges impeding their capacity to meet the needs of their populace for sufficient and enduring livelihoods, as

See Landlocked nations ... Page 3

Ethiopia pushing towards multipolar world via BRICS plus

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia is working toward the realization of a multipolar world order having capitalized on the potential it has secured in joining the BRICS plus bloc, the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen made the above remark during a panel discussion organized by the World Economic Forum's Center for Regions, Trade, and Geopolitics in Davos, Switzerland yesterday.

The deputy premier stressed in his remark that international order needs to be fair and reasonable since a unipolar or a narrow global landscape that involves only two or more rivals doesn't solve existing or emerging problems.



As to him, the world requires the presence of multiple actors who are able to observe and address the structural problems of the globe especially in the underdeveloped

countries.

To this end, the involvement of multiple

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A bloc already on own mess can't patronize others

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Ethiopia is a champion of multilateral diplomacy

Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD)

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Timket: Cultivating forefathers' preaching

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News



Green Legacy enables Ethiopia expand coffee cultivation: Authority

• Nation plants about 1.4 bln coffee trees each year

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – The Green Legacy Initiative has enabled Ethiopia expand coffee cultivation planting about 1.4 billion saplings each year, Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority announced.

Authority's Coffee, Tea and Spices Development Chief Executive Officer, Fekadu Deferes told The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the Green Legacy Initiative has capacitated the country to expand coffee cultivation as about 1.4 billion coffee seedlings have been planted each year since the launching of the program.

This year, the Authority has prepared more than 1.7 billion coffee trees and over 117,000 hectares of land to grow more plants and increase coffee product and productivity, he expressed.

Besides, Fekadu said, the Authority is working with partners to plant many coffee seedlings in the areas that have not been cultivated so far, thereby the preparation of the holes has been began.

Moreover, pruning and replacing old coffee trees with saplings has been done to increase productivity, he noted.

He disclosed that stated that the Authority planned to replace 117,460 hectares old coffee trees with new ones this fiscal year alone.

Fekadu recalled that 582,448 hectares of land has been pruned and replaced by the new seedlings during the past five years.

Ethiopia, Somaliland accord major diplomatic achievement: President

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia's sea-access deal with Somaliland is a major achievement in recent diplomatic history, so said the President of the Southern Ethiopia state.

Southern Ethiopia State President Tilahun Kebede told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the agreement would ensure mutual benefit and bolsters the friendship between the two peoples.

Ethiopia needs seaport to be economically and politically competitive and to maintain its sovereignty, the President said adding that the port is very important to meet the needs of the huge population.

He stated that apart from the economic importance of facilitating free transportation of import and export products, the port agreement with Somaliland has a great security benefits for Ethiopia.

As to the President, the agreement made with Somaliland to lease the port will not affect any country it rather helps East African nations to have a strong economic and social ties.

The agreement shows the bold stance and strong commitment of country's leadership as the issue has never been a national agenda in the past 30 years, Tilahun noted.

The agreement reached through a successful approach to achieve political, social and economic benefits, he stated.



Tilahun Kebede

He appreciated Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and his administration to make the port agreement a success for the country and the people that have been without a port for

years.

He also called on all Ethiopians to support this idea and stand by the government side to make the agreement successful.

Ethiopia's new diplomatic height great milestone in nation's history

ADDIS ABABA/ENA/ - The new Ethiopian diplomatic height, which has passed through all the ups and downs, is a great milestone in the nation's history, Institute of Foreign Affairs Asian and Pacific Director-General and Senior Researcher Anteneh Getachew said.

According to him, Ethiopia's membership on January 1, 2024 and signing of the historic Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU on same day demonstrate the diplomatic height the country has reached.

In an exclusive interview with ENA, the director-general added that all actors, including the Diaspora, people and leadership as well as the diplomats at the front line have played their roles in bringing Ethiopia to this historic stage.

Ethiopia has an established history as founding member of multilateral organizations like the League of Nations, the UN as well as the OAU.

Now, Ethiopia has joined the BRICS because of its national interest, Anteneh said, adding that this is not a matter of abandoning one bloc and joining the other.

Ethiopia's foreign policy is non-alignment and the country works with BRICS and with the western countries, the director-general noted.

Ethiopia remains committed and ready to play a constructive role in promoting peace and prosperity as a new member of



Anteneh Getachew

the BRICS family in collaboration with all its members.

In the post-reform era, that is after the coming of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to power, the foreign policy has given priority to neighboring countries; and that has been recently manifested.

The director-general stressed that PM Abiy has been very much committed to peaceful diplomacy.

Highlighting also one of the pillars of Ethiopia's foreign policy that focuses on regional integration, he said infrastructure is the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about regional integration.

As a result, building infrastructure, energy diplomacy, green legacy

diplomacy and all these have been experienced in Ethiopia. This shows that Ethiopia is really committed to realizing regional integration.

"If integrated, you have common fate, a shared interest, common purpose. So, we want to have the shared prosperity we aspire for this region," the director-general underlined.

But at the same time, Ethiopia has raised a genuine and justifiable question of the need for access to the sea and building a naval force.

According to Anteneh, the neighboring countries should listen and understand the country's genuine concern, which is a matter of presenting our justifiable reason why we need access to the sea.

The recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Partnership and Cooperation signed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Muse Bihi Abdi includes wide scopes of cooperation in social, economic, political and military fields.

For the director-general, the current geo-political dynamics in the region, Ethiopia's diplomatic stature, its history and population size, among others, show that Ethiopia deserves access to the sea, which is a genuine question.

A justifiable question about access to the sea is now raised and we want a win-win solution, he stressed.

News

Photo: Berihu Tadele



TECNO Mobile unveils flagship models to Ethiopian market

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA- TECNO Mobile, a Chinese consumer electronics manufacturer, unveiled its flagship SPARK 20 Pro+ cellphone model to the Ethiopian market at a high-profile event at the Friendship Park yesterday.

As the official mobile phone sponsor of the African Cup of Nations 2024, TECNO also revealed the Spark 20 Series smartphones in the program that was attended by senior representatives of the Ethiopian football community, and key stakeholders.

The new Spark Series, which is currently priced at 23,000 Birr, has the G99 Ultra Boost Processor, 256 GB ROM and 16 GB RAM, 5000 mAh capacity, and is said to have the

latest technology.

It was stated at the product launching event that the SPARK 20 Pro + meets the high expectations and varied needs of young Ethiopian customers and the device is available in four colors, namely Moolint Black, Frosty Ivory, Sunset Blush and Magic Skin Green.

The event marks a significant milestone for the company, as it brings its innovative new products to one of Africa's fastest-growing economies with a population of over 115 million people and home to a rapidly-growing consumer base.

In addition to showcasing cutting-edge technology to young Ethiopian customers, the event also celebrated the iconic continental football competition as well as honored some

of the most respectful Ethiopian football personalities who made history with their role in the nation's participation in past AFCON tournaments.

TECNO is a technology brand with operations in over 70 countries and regions across five continents. Since its launch, the company has been revolutionizing the digital experience in emerging global markets including Ethiopia.

In line with its commitment to making mobile technology accessible to all, the company has also been actively involved in community development initiatives, including the provision of digital training programs and the donation of mobile devices to youth development centers across Ethiopia, it was learned.

Premier underscores...

baptized: to be a model for others and lift Adam from ruined.

He further said that today is marking epiphany and thousands of millions of congregations have come out to over 20,000 places across the nation. Before 2,000 years when Jesus Christ was baptized, there were only finger counted persons, but these days it has been well recognized across the globe.

In a similar vein, Ethiopia's ongoing change journey which has been trekking is

tantamount to such evolution, and it will be clear for all when it gets fruition.

"Everyone is expected to think of all things that have been benefiting people while we are celebrating the Epiphany apart from well recognizing the spiritual and cultural values of celebrating Epiphany. As to him, the government has now been doing two decisive actions: rescuing the nation and showing others the right direction," the Premier opined.



Patriarch wishes peace...

Professor Michael Roger, a tourist from the U.S. who mentioned his repeated participation in Timket stated that the vent is wonderful and colorful.

Roger further highlighted that he partook in the ceremony in Lalibela, Amhara State last year where he found the culture, dance, chants to be awe-inspiring and unique.

Sharing the above idea, Francisco Trejo, from Spain on his part said "I participated in this *Ketera* for the first time but three times engaged for other religious festivities

in Ethiopia."

The tourist also mentioned his fascination with the celebrations and took so many pictures to show it to his friends and family when he returns to his country and promised to invite them to attend the festival next year. "People are laughing and chanting in this colorful ceremony and the atmosphere is very impressive. In Particular, Ethiopians are very kind and hospitable."

Suana Esludero, another tourist from Spain, noted that it is her second visit to Ethiopia but

this is her first experience in Ketera festivity, the eve of Timket. She said the experience is really exciting and quite impressive. The people and celebration are also beautiful. "The religious chant is interesting and the experience is amazing as a foreign citizen. I am very much eager to witness Epiphany."

Esludero also highlighted that the celebrations, the colorful traditional costumes and the chanting are really unique from the other celebrations she has ever attended.

Ethiopia pushing...

actors and the creation of fair and reasonable global order is indispensable, Demeke underlined.

Ethiopia is the founding member of the UN and AU and it has now become a member of the BRICS plus bloc which is an emerging but crucial platform as the global setup has not been responsive to the underdeveloped and developing countries, he stated.

"In this regard, I think the establishment of BRICS is a good opportunity to strengthen multilateralism, and again, to have more opportunities for partnership on economic development and related areas."

Ethiopia, as a country that manages an emerging economy with huge demand, has got an important opportunity to get more partners for joining the bloc that has more access for economic cooperation and the likes, he indicated.

He underlined that Ethiopia demands more effective and strong multilateral partnership in which BRICS would create a good opportunity to strengthen that cooperation with developed nations and the developing ones through bilateral relations among members of the bloc and via South-South cooperation.

He mentioned that joining BRICS plus bloc was a timely and a good opportunity for Ethiopia as it has been craving for reliable partnership and economic engagement.

Ethiopia would move forward on the vision and the roadmap of the bloc and play its due role as a good member while exploiting the potentials the coalition endows, he noted.

Moreover BRICS is a crucial platform to reverberate African voices to the world as the continent desires to play a role in the international arena like promoting multilateralism on trade, investment and other economic activities, he added.

The engagement of the world's middle powers is becoming a reality as changes in security, economy, and digital capabilities create a multipolar international order in place of the unipolar world, as to Demeke.

According to him, Africa is rising and will be able to play an important role in the world as multilateral players and middle powers replace the unipolar world order.

Landlocked nations...

well as to guarantee their overall development, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said.

The Prime Minister's remark came yesterday while addressing the 19th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kampala, Uganda.

"In my remarks today during the 19th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I reiterated that landlocked countries face insurmountable

challenges hindering their ability to fulfill the demands of their people for adequate and sustained livelihoods and to ensure their development," the Premier's social media post read.

He also stressed that Ethiopia continues to seek a peaceful and mutually beneficial and negotiated solution to such a challenge.

Meanwhile, the premier held a discussion with the President of Kenya, William Ruto, on the

sidelines of the Summit.

During the course of the meeting, both leaders deliberated on regional and bilateral issues, PM Abiy confirmed in a message posted on his social media page.

Moreover, the premier through a post published on X (formerly Twitter) noted reiterated the commitment of his government to deepening relations with AfDB. "We remain committed to strengthening our relations through the

support of my brother President of the Bank, Akinwumi A. Adesina."

Ethiopia's partnership with the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) is essential to its food sovereignty endeavors, he asserted.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and his delegation traveled to Kampala, Uganda to participate in the 19th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement on Thursday night.

Opinion

Timket: Ethiopia's intangible world heritage inscribed at UNESCO

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Timket, meaning baptism is a religious festival celebrated with much with captivating religious paraphernalia in Ethiopia. The festival is a major outdoor celebration colorfully marked in major cities of the country including Addis Ababa, Gondar, and Lalibela and also in rural areas of Ethiopia. The festival is particularly celebrated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian believers to venerate Christ's baptism in the River Jordan.

Although the festival is observed by Orthodox Christians all over the world, in Ethiopia it takes on a special significance as it is the most colorful event of the year in the country celebrated at the end of harvest season. The most relevant symbol of the festival is colorful embroidered umbrellas that protect the sacred Tabot and the priests carrying the Tabot.

This year and as usual, the youth all over the country are expected to actively participate in the deliberations of *Timket* festival. They keep law and order in cooperation with the organizers and the security forces. The cooperation among the youth in the city to help organize the festival indicates a cross cultural exchange of experience and unity to ensure the unity and peace for this country.

In Addis Ababa, all the *Tabots* will be carried and escorted to Jan Meda and the faithful spend the night at this place in an earnest mood of prayer and benediction.

With exception to the Tabot of Saint Michael which will stay one more day at Jan Meda, all the *Tabots* will be escorted back to their churches with chants, songs and prayers by Sunday School children and the entire group of the faithful.

Traditionally *Timket* is celebrated on the 19th January every year with an exception in the leap year when it is celebrated on 20th January. The celebration corresponds to the 10th day of Tirr according to the Ethiopian calendar. The festival is famous for its re-enactment of baptism ritual of Christ at the River Jordan. The traditional ceremony of the festival includes respectfully carrying the Tabot – a model of the Ark of the Covenant wrapped in rich silk cloth by the priest on his head to the nearby water body locally known as *Timkete-Bahir*.

Timket is celebrated in a restive season in which farmers enjoy their harvest. January is also a month in which traditional and modern marriage ceremonies are conducted. *Timket* sets a special occasion in which the youth are engaged in traditional dating in which young boys throw lemon to the girl they prefer or indicate their choice by throwing lemon to the girl of their interest indicating their desire for courtship and ultimate marriage proposal. It is an occasion of courtship and love among Ethiopian youth.

Although *Timket* is a religious holiday, it is also celebrated as a festive cultural occasion on which everyone celebrating the occasion is attired with new dresses and outfits. An Amharic anecdote goes “*Le Timket Yalehone*

Libse Yibetates” meaning let the dress that is not for *Timket* end into shreds. The cultural dresses worn on the occasion by the faithful vividly depict a mosaic of dresses worn by men and women of different nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. Cultural dresses made of cotton fabrics add more vigor and beauty to the festival.

Timket is marked by a variety of cultural dances from nations, nationalities and peoples in a single place. During the Imperial Regime, such cultural shows end up in skirmishes and fights between members of different nations and nationalities. However, over the last 25 years, the cultural shows that were staged on *Timket* were as peaceful as ever. A spirit of respect, coexistence and understanding has prevailed as the peoples of this country have come to realize the importance of unity in diversity.

Over the last couple of years, hijacking occasions of religious festivals for a political leitmotif to fan out religious fanaticism has been observed. Such activities are totally inconsistent with the religious desired of the faithful and for all those who wish to enjoy peaceful *Timket*. It is incumbent upon the public to effectively safeguard their constitutional rights to free and peaceful worship devoid of any political agenda. Over the past several years, various political groups and religious zealots have tried to use the occasion to create chaos in various parts of the country and all the necessary care needs to be employed to avoid politicizing on religious festivities.

Timket will be celebrated on the occasion when relative peace and normal life has been restored in various parts of the country including Oromia and Amhara States and some areas of south Ethiopia. The effective implementation of the state of emergency in Amhara region has been instrumental to restore tourists' desire to come and visit the country. In this respect the nation is expecting to host thousands of tourists who would like to enjoy the festivities of *Timket* and the warm weather in Ethiopia.

The colorful celebration of *Timket* is just at the corner and the faithful are getting ready to celebrate the occasion with full hope and optimism for the peaceful development of their country.

Timket is one of the most important religious intangible world heritage already inscribed at UNESCO and is one of the major tourism resource for Ethiopia. Thousands of tourists converge both on Addis Ababa and Lalibela to mark the day attired with traditional Ethiopian costumes of their choice.

The author of this article would like to stress on the need to make all preparations to utilize the *Timket* season not only for tourism purposes but also for building and restoring the image of the country being tarnished by activities of extremist forces disrupting the normal development pace of the country and the reform programs underway in Ethiopia.

The month in which *Timket* is celebrated is also a period of preparation for farmers in the belt producing areas of the country. Farmers purchase various agricultural

The colorful celebration of *Timket* is just at the corner and the faithful are getting ready to celebrate the occasion with full hope and optimism for the peaceful development of their country

implements and inputs that they could use in their farms.

It must be noted that *Timket* is celebrated among all Orthodox Church believers that belong to all ethnic groups in the country and is therefore not restricted to a single ethnic group. Moreover, *Timket* amplifies the age old unity, religious coexistence and mutual respect among the people of Ethiopia.

This year, *Timket* is celebrated on the occasion in which the nation is getting ready to conduct a National Dialogue to resolve all the socio-economic and political setbacks and challenges the country has been facing. It is expected to be a national forum in which people of all walks of life and ethnic groups will spell out the solutions to the problems that the country has been facing.

On the other hand, the holiday is marked on the occasion in which millions of Ethiopians displaced from their domiciles due to the war in the northern part of the country are waiting for more food and medical support from the people of Ethiopia here and overseas as well as the international community. It is important to scale up not only the relief support but also the rehabilitation of infrastructures that were destroyed during the tragic wars and conflicts conducted in the northern part of the country and elsewhere in Ethiopia.

This year, *Timket* will be celebrated in a contrast of environmental rehabilitation and ecotourism development brought by the National Green Legacy Initiative and recurrent drought situation in the country. However, Ethiopian landscape is becoming ever greener and beautiful as the ecotourism projects at Gorgora, Wochi, Hillala Kela, Chebera Chirchura and Koyisha. These projects have already become a source for income generation for unemployed youth.

At this point in time, the occasion in which *Timket* is celebrated it needs to be used by the religious leaders to declare the importance of peace for exercising religious freedom in the country and for promoting peaceful coexistence among various religions and for promoting common narratives for enhanced development of the country in the context of the ongoing national reform program.

On the other hand, political parties in the country need to provide meaningful and effective support for the upcoming National Dialogue Program so that all issues and challenges must be pelted out to effect sustainable peace and development in Ethiopia.

The celebration of *Timket*, as mentioned above should be as one source for quality tourist development in this country. It must also be linked to generating the necessary income from visits and excursions to the major ecotourism sites recently developed.

The author recommends that deeper studies should be conducted on the intangible world heritages found in Ethiopia. The cultural dimensions of *Timket* could be one of them. The sociological basis of the celebration of this religious festival need to be studied not only for the sake of research but also to transfer the cultural values of the festival to the next generation of Ethiopians. Of particular importance is the study which could be made in the context of celebrating *Timket* in a variety of cultural settings in Ethiopia.

For instance, the type of religious and cultural outfits have their own meanings that need to be studied.

Moreover, *Timket* could be used as a cross cultural exchange item between the youth in African and many other youth groups from the overseas. This is instrumental to foster friendly relations between the youth in Africa and the rest of the world.

On the other when it comes to documenting the entire process of documentation of the festival in different cultural context, there is a big gap in this respect. Special videos and promotional colored cards depicting *Timket* can be prepared for incoming tourists who are interested.

HAPPY *TIMKET* CELEBRATIONS FOR THE FAITHFUL OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODX CHURCH !

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's Epiphany: Ritual beyond religious essence

It can be confidently uttered that Epiphany is a unique holiday that lends wings to the soul as many believe that the sins they have been committing yearlong is cleansed and rubbed out for good. That is why the sprinkling of the blessed water on the congregations is also carried out.

Apart from consolidating the culture, traditions and values of society, the Ethiopian Epiphany has since long back been a clear manifestation of coexistence, unity and humility among citizens, not limited to the faithful indeed. And it is a colorful festival celebrated all over the country to commemorate the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, starting on the eve of the main festival, called Kettera.

Ethiopians are today celebrating this festival colorfully and hundreds of thousands of the faithful participate in the actual festival. The Epiphany celebration has often long been the choice of many tourists at home and coming from abroad to celebrate this annual festival.

Yes, celebrants attend night-long prayers and hymn services, before attending the actual festival the following day, and it is a religious and cultural festival whose viability is ensured through its continuous practice and the fundamental contribution of Orthodox clergy.

On the first day of the celebration, the Arks of the Covenant replicas of each church are carried out in procession to a public space such as Jan Meda, for instance. A special tent is set up at the public space where each replica of the Ark of the Covenant rests as members of the church choirs chant hymns all night long and are accompanied by priests with their prayer.

To the surprise of everyone, all roads leading to the center, where Arcs of the Covenant perch, are flooded with worshippers decorating themselves with attention-grabbing and embroidered traditional clothes. Here, tourists too adore themselves with traditional Ethiopian clothes. This is really a clear manifestation of Epiphany's multifaceted values apart from religious ceremony. Not only is Epiphany a source of pride, cultural reflection, emblem of unity and coexistence but it has also been a scheme to generate income for the nation as hotels, lodges and restaurants get ready to accommodate guests of all sorts.

Such a mesmerizing scenario has a great potential to attract tourists or visitors, be they are local or international ones and especially the latter have annually forwarded testimony that the Ethiopian Epiphany is the best tourism magnet apart from well reflecting Ethiopians' humility, hospitality and people of love and fraternity.

Interestingly, visitors from around the world annually visit this festival and get fascinated by the unique features of the Ethiopian Epiphany as it is one of the most sacred and holiest holidays in Ethiopian Orthodox church outdoor celebrations, rich in many Christian backgrounds that date back centuries.

There are myriads of things to see during the festival since it is one of the greatest scenarios for which Ethiopia is known to the world. From such a lucrative annual festival or manifestation of coexistence and unity, other parts of the world have to recognize that Ethiopia is a land of peace and catchy scenes. Most definitely, Ethiopian Epiphany is a superb celebration and it is the place that creates a good opportunity for all tourists to come and visit Ethiopia. Hence, the country and its people have to reinvigorate the cultural reflections like this via working together, ensuring peace of the land thereby pushing the nation steps forward. Since the Epiphany celebration is, of course, one of the emblematic religious and cultural festivals unique to this country, Ethiopians have to nurture such a cultural reflection well.

In sum, the celebration attracts visitors intrigued to learn about the annual religious ceremony and the country needs to work on revamping the battered industry, the smokeless one via further bolstering cultural and religious ceremonies like Epiphany.

Opinion

Ethiopia's commitment to finding common ground in GERD project

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

Despite the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) being a national and sovereign project funded and constructed solely by Ethiopians, Ethiopia has made significant efforts to engage downstream countries and foster a spirit of cooperation. Besides, the country has been eager not only to involve the downstream nations but also to find common ground that allows all the three countries to reap the benefits of this transformative dam.

As a sovereign nation, Ethiopia holds the authority to harness its hydropower potential for the purpose of economic growth and poverty alleviation. Through trilateral talks, the country is actively engaging with downstream countries to find practical solutions that strike a balance between its development aspirations and the concerns of its neighbors.

The trilateral negotiations provide an invaluable opportunity for all countries involved to express their perspectives, voice their concerns, and engage in meaningful discussions to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

Understanding the importance of regional cooperation, Ethiopia has initiated trilateral talks involving Sudan and Egypt, providing a platform for constructive dialogue and collaboration. Through such engagements, the nations aim to address concerns, navigate challenges, and establish frameworks that guarantee sustainable utilization of the Nile River's resources. This cooperative approach not only safeguards the interests of all participating countries but also promotes long-term regional stability and economic prosperity through the exploitation of renewable energy resources.

By acknowledging the changing dynamics of the Nile basin region and recognizing Ethiopia's legitimate rights to its own resources, a path can be paved toward a comprehensive agreement that benefits all nations involved. Through genuine dialogue, trust-building efforts, and a commitment to finding common ground, the trilateral negotiations have the potential to foster lasting regional cooperation and ensure the sustainable development of the Nile River's resources.

While Egypt's stance has been heavily influenced by historical agreements, these negotiations provide an opportunity to transcend such narratives and seek practical forward-looking solutions. By engaging in a collaborative and inclusive process, all parties involved can work towards a comprehensive agreement that ensures Ethiopia's development goals are met while respecting the rights and interests of downstream nations.

A cooperative approach can pave the way for long-term regional stability and sustainable development marking a significant step in the quest for equitable and mutually beneficial management of the Nile River's resources.

Egypt, guided by its colonial influences, has unjustly monopolized the benefits of

the shared resources for centuries without facing any opposition or critical examination. This unjust practice has marginalized and sidelined other members of the Nile Basin, particularly Ethiopia, which is the source of the river. Ethiopia has long been kept in the dark, with Egypt reserving exclusive rights to the Nile and leaving other countries as mere bystanders with no say in its management or benefits.

The most recent round of trilateral negotiations took place in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. It proved to be an eagerly anticipated event, as delegates from Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt gathered to engage in productive and constructive discussions.

The purpose of this round of negotiations was to further explore and evaluate potential solutions, seeking common ground and finding ways to address any outstanding concerns or disagreements. However, Egypt's approach in these negotiations has been overshadowed by a tendency to cling to outdated perspectives rooted in the colonial era Nile agreement framework.

Egyptian officials persistently assert that their claims are based on historical rights, employing manipulative tactics that perpetuate an unfair and antiquated system. Cairo appears to be steadfast in its efforts to protect and perpetuate the colonial agreements, investing significant resources and making considerable sacrifices to maintain the status quo. Despite Egypt's narrative, it is crucial to recognize that the trilateral talks are intended to foster a collaborative environment and encourage all parties to take part in a constructive dialogue.

While Egypt's reluctance to move away from the colonial-era agreements presents challenges, it is essential to approach the negotiations with an open mind seeking compromise and considering the unique context and needs of all nations. In the spirit of cooperative engagement, it is essential for all parties to transcend historical grievances and embrace a forward-looking approach.

However, despite these encouraging developments, Egypt has persistently acted as a roadblock hindering any attempts at achieving mutual understanding and resolution of GERD-related issues. Egypt's continuous obstructionist approach undermines the progress and potential for cooperation in the region. By maintaining a rigid and uncompromising stance, Egypt hampers the possibility of reaching mutually beneficial agreements and obstructs the path to resolving unresolved issues relating to the GERD project.

Despite having the sovereign right to develop its resources, Ethiopia has consistently shown goodwill and dedication in ensuring the concerns of downstream nations, like Egypt, are adequately addressed. By proactively engaging in negotiations and working tirelessly to find common ground, Ethiopia has exhibited its willingness to overcome challenges and foster a spirit of cooperation. However, Egypt's entrenched adherence to historical rights and its refusal to acknowledge the changing dynamics of the Nile Basin perpetuate a deadlock in the negotiations.

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The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture

Ethiopian Catholic Church's celebration of *Timket*

BY NAOL GIRMA

The Ethiopian Catholic Church is a vibrant and ancient Christian community with a rich cultural heritage. One of the most significant and widely celebrated events within the Ethiopian Catholic Church is *Timket*. *Timket*, also known as the Feast of Epiphany, holds great importance for Ethiopian Catholics as it commemorates the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River. In this article, we will explore the significance of *Timket* and how it is celebrated within the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church traces its roots back to the early days of Christianity and has a unique blend of Jewish, African, and Christian traditions. Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia in the 4th century, making it one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. The Ethiopian Catholic Church emerged following the union with the Roman Catholic Church in the 19th century. Today, it is an integral part of the religious and cultural fabric of Ethiopia.

Religious father Daniel Haso (PhD) was born in the Western Arsi near Shashamane town. Currently he is the Head of the Education Department of the Ethiopian Catholic Church. In an interview with him, EPA discussed a lot of issues regarding the celebration of Ethiopian *Timket* festivities Experts.

Could you brief us about your education and work?

Father Daniel: After studying philosophy and theology in the country, I was ordained a priest in 2005. I worked as a Catholic priest in charge in Ambo, Jimma, Kafa and Naqamt. Later I was sent to the United States, Chicago for my studies and did my master's and 'PhD' in educational leadership and management. I finished my studies and came back and worked in various places. Currently, I am the Head of the Education Department of the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

How long have you served in the Catholic Church?

Father Daniel: I served in the church for about 30 years. While in Chicago I also ministered to Catholic Ethiopians. I also consecrated and various services in Dallas, Texas, Minesota, Atlanta, Georgia, Washington, DC, Maryland, and New York.

Can you explain the significance of *Timket*, the Ethiopian celebration of epiphany, in the Catholic faith?

Father Daniel: Certainly! *Timket*, the Ethiopian celebration of Epiphany, holds great significance in the Catholic faith in Ethiopia. First we are Commemorating the Baptism of Jesus. *Timket* primarily commemorates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the

***T*imket festivities provide an opportunity for the Ethiopian Catholic Church to emphasize and highlight the shared values of peace, love, and compassion that are central to their faith**

River Jordan. It is seen as a pivotal event in the life of Jesus and signifies the beginning of his public ministry. The Ethiopian Catholic Church considers this event as a manifestation of Jesus' divinity to the world.

Timket is an occasion for Ethiopian Catholics to renew their baptismal vows and reaffirm their commitment to their Christian faith. It serves as a time of personal reflection, repentance, and spiritual renewal. The faithful are encouraged to seek forgiveness, reconcile with others, and deepen their relationship with God.

Timket is also associated with the celebration of the Holy Trinity in the Ethiopian Catholic Church. It is believed that during Jesus' baptism, all three persons of the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—were present and revealed themselves. This aspect of the celebration highlights the foundational belief in the Triune nature of God.

It also shows the Symbolism of Water, Water holds significant symbolism during *Timket*. It represents purification, cleansing, and the washing away of sins. Ethiopian Catholics participate in a re-enactment of the baptismal ritual by immersing themselves in water or sprinkling it on themselves, reminiscent of Jesus' baptism. This act symbolizes their desire for spiritual purification and the washing away of sins.

How does the Ethiopian Catholic Church celebrate Baptism today, and have we been told about the mystery of Baptism?

Father Daniel: First of all, we need to look at the meaning of Baptism. In our church, Baptism is a great mystery. The mystery is related to salvation. After God created human beings (Adam and Eve placed them in paradise) they committed crimes and were expelled from paradise.

After their expulsion, their sin or spread

reached all mankind. Sin is cancelled only through the mystery of Baptism. Our Lord Jesus Christ also went down to the Jordan River to be baptized. This does not mean that the Lord Jesus is a sinner for Christians. When we look at the mystery of Baptism, water itself cleanses the inside of the impurities. We clean our bodies with it and wash our clothes with it. It also means that it cleanses us from the spirit that is defiled by sin. So according to our belief, man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he is baptized.

What is the main message of Baptism and how is it explained?

Father Daniel: Basically, when we talk about baptism, it is spiritually the way we are cleansed from the stain of sin. For example, we like it when we wash our bodies. We feel special. And the spiritual mystery of Baptism is true that just as our souls are washed away, our inner identity is cleansed of our sins through the mystery of baptism. There is no sin that escapes this baptism. It means that any sin is forgiven. That is why our souls become like new-born babies.

How does the Catholic Church recognize the languages, traditions and cultures of nations? For example, in terms of making the community worship in its own language

Father Daniel: The Catholic Church has a word called 'enculturation' enculturation means that when the church enters any culture, it looks at the culture. We also work on everything from language to how the congregation gets involved. Priests and bishops who go there learn the language of the people first. They learn and preach and sanctify by it. Translation work is also conducted. Mass, hymns and teachings are conducted in the languages of each of the nation's nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. Even for Ambassadors of various countries and international communities we provide services in various languages.

How does the Ethiopian Catholic Church promote peace and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups during *Timket* festivities?



Father Daniel: The Ethiopian Catholic Church plays a significant role in promoting peace and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups during the *Timket* and contributes to fostering harmony. The *Timket* celebrations are open to people from diverse backgrounds, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliations. All individuals, regardless of their faith, are welcome to observe and participate in the festivities. This inclusive approach helps to bridge divisions and promote unity among different groups.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church actively engages in interfaith dialogue and collaboration with other religious communities during the *Timket* celebrations. This dialogue serves as a platform for individuals from different faith traditions to come together, share their beliefs, and cultivate mutual understanding and respect.

The *Timket* festivities provide an opportunity for the Ethiopian Catholic Church to emphasize and highlight the shared values of peace, love, and compassion that are central to their faith. By focusing on these common principles, the Church encourages individuals from diverse backgrounds to recognize their shared humanity and work towards peaceful coexistence.

During *Timket*, the Ethiopian Catholic Church often organizes community outreach programs that aim to address social issues, alleviate poverty, and provide assistance to those in need. These initiatives are often carried out in collaboration with other faith-based organizations and community groups, fostering cooperation and understanding among different religious and ethnic communities.

No evil should be done in a place of worship. Harsh words should never be heard. According to the Catholic system, no priest or pope mentions or says anything about another religion. The gospel says nothing else. There are followers of different religions in our school. We don't ask for religion. We only welcome Ethiopian children. It is never permissible to display hateful signs in preaching or in schools. Currently, we are exposed to various problems as a country and ethical education should be given properly. Parents should also monitor and raise their children properly.

Law & Politics

A bloc already on own mess can't patronize others

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

In what could amount to disregard and contempt for Africa, some countries and blocs have been in many ways trying to maintain an interventionist approach in dealing with the continent's sovereign matters. The old-fashioned imperialist thinking and patronizing behavior are still pervasive as old and emerging powers try to impose their colonial-era-like policies.

As if Africa is not capable of resolving its unresolved matters, in many instances some blocs that disastrously failed to resolve the grave crisis engulfing their blocs are presenting themselves as the right prescription for Africa's problem.

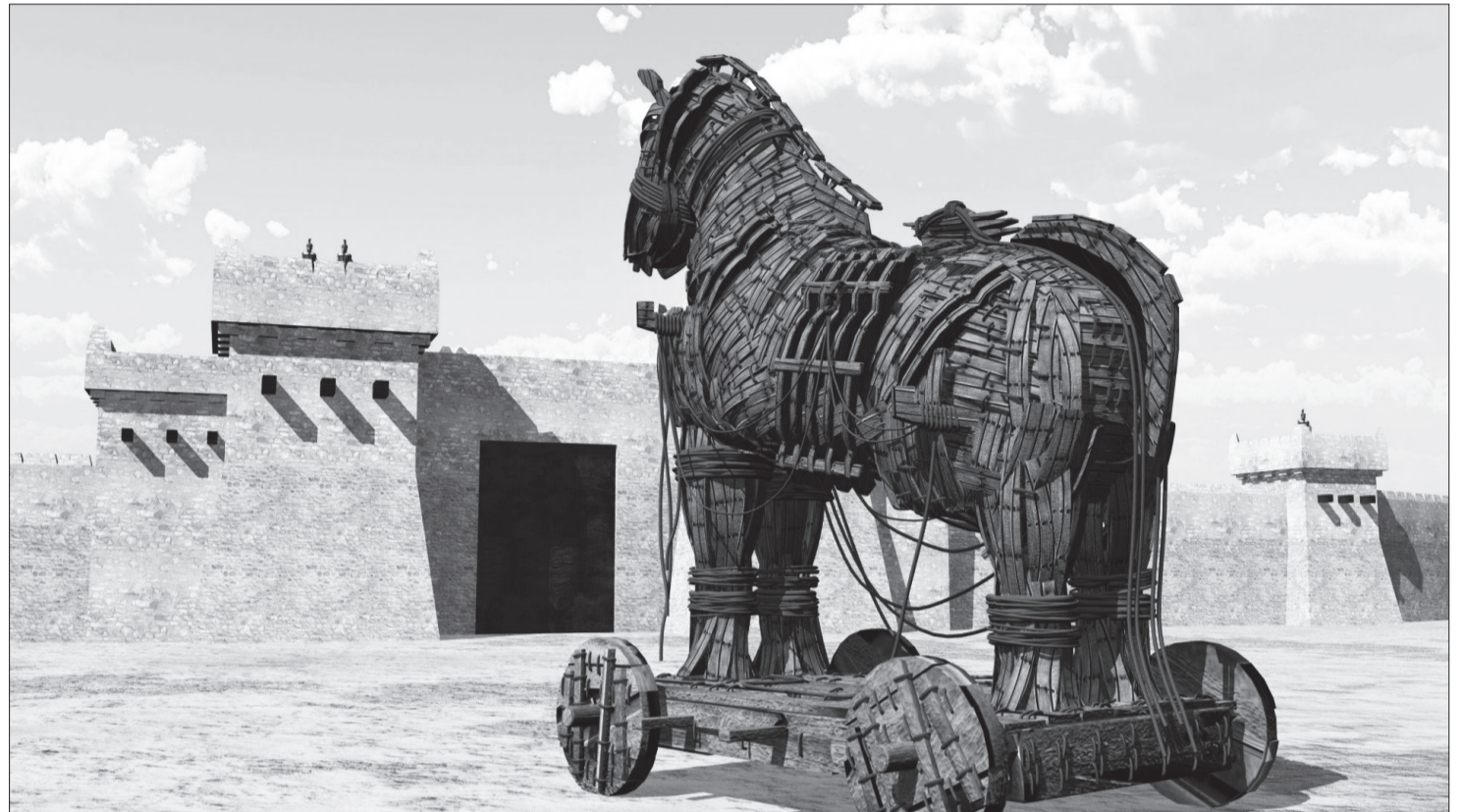
Ironically, a bloc like the Arab League that has been walling under the quagmire of inter-state crisis and conflicts has been trying to infringe on the internal affairs of Africa at a time when the latter has already shown its efficiency to redress its internal woes or agreements. Already beset by its mess, the bloc's acts are tantamount to disrespecting Africa's wisdom and skill to address its problems.

Having no legal and moral grounds, the Arab bloc has been serving as the Trojan horse of Ethiopia's historic foes albeit to no avail. The bloc whose members still enjoy strong bilateral and multilateral relations with Ethiopia has been becoming a stooge for some countries and a go-between for other nations. It is a fact that Ethiopia has some historic enemies from both near and far trying to wrongfully internationalize their matter with Ethiopia. These national enemies have left no stone unturned to stop the country from its path to development and exert unnecessary pressures to make its road bumpy.

Some entities have tried to take the issue to the Arab League sheltering under their power in the bloc. Deliberately neglecting the power and responsibilities of the African Union and other continental blocs, the bloc and some other entities have been presenting themselves as caretaker of African issues. Again ironically, the League once complained of external meddling in Sudan by other countries. In a sharp contradiction, the bloc has been issuing strings of statements and declarations regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Some countries that have been the cradle of African civilization have toiled to use the bloc to their own advantage and green lighting a willful external intervention.

Although appearing upsetting, Ethiopia, as the founding member of the African Union (AU) and other international organizations like the United Nations (UN), is trying to see the matter cool-headedly and solve any problems using the African approach.

The Pretoria peace is a solid testimony in this regard. In an effort to integrate the region where the country is situated too,



Having no legal and moral grounds, the Arab bloc has been serving as the Trojan horse of Ethiopia's historic foes albeit to no avail.

Ethiopia has also given priority to cementing partnerships and entering deals with neighboring nations. Suffice it to mention the recent Ethio-Somaliland agreement to access the sea.

The two parties have tried to apply a win-win approach with a give-and-take mode to let the former access to the sea and in return give some share from the Ethiopian flagship company, Ethiopian Airlines to the latter.

Speaking of the agreement, Ethiopia has been playing a key role in any matters in the horn. The nation has done tangible jobs to ensure the peace and security of the region. Not only that, the nation has deployed its troops in many regional disputes to bring peace. The activities in Somalia and Sudan can be a textbook example of its contributions.

Albeit, ignoring what was done to them, some nations created a partnership with Ethiopia's key enemies and asked those entities to interfere in the sovereign matters of the country. Asking blocs like the Arab League to put their hands on the issue and defame Ethiopia is unacceptable as the bloc has no moral and legal ground to get such power to interfere in sovereign matters.

Discussing the issue under the umbrella of the AU or any regional and continental blocs, like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is what Ethiopia wants to resolve any problems. Otherwise, the country has no intention to accept any decisions or defamation from any blocs.

Ethiopia, in its long history, always finds a way to peace and togetherness with its neighboring states. The nation has also had a great bond with the Arab World. Nonetheless, there are some enemies of Ethiopia that still want to use the bloc and its name for their own hidden agenda. Using

The two parties have tried to apply a win-win approach with a give-and-take mode to let the former access to the sea and in return give some share from the Ethiopian flagship company, Ethiopian Airlines to the latter

the bloc's platform to entertain the interest of some is what Ethiopia strongly opposed to. Ashamedly, the bloc has repeated the mistake it has done in connection with the Ethio-Somaliland deal.

In response to the defamatory statement of the League, Ethiopia has issued statement lambasting the ill-fated acts of the bloc. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced that the Arab League's statement against the Ethio-Somaliland Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) held nothing useful but contempt for African solutions to African problems.

Briefing journalists, MoFA Spokesperson Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD) said that the press statement by the Arab League undermines not only Ethiopia's role in the region but also the old-aged Ethio-Arab diplomatic relationship.

"The Arab League statement is unacceptable. It is actually known which country is pressuring the organization. I was attending the webinar session [of the meeting]. The

statement released following the session contempt Africans clearly. Africans have the full potential to resolve their own problems. So, the statement by League undermines the notion of "African solutions to African Problems", the ambassador said.

Ethiopia and the Arab world have long long-standing diplomatic relationships which stood the test of time in the face of various regime changes. Contrary to this, the Arab League has released a statement that ignores the Ethio-Arab diplomacy, Ambassador Meles noted.

"Egypt and the Arab League are the two sides of a coin. It needs to be told honestly. The statement by the Foreign Minister of Egypt is not useful either. It does not match the relationship of the two countries. Ethiopians and Egyptians are the peoples of the Abbay River. Accordingly, Ethiopia has a firm stance not to aggravate issues," he stated.

He also said that such destructive statements, especially by the Egyptian side, are not new. "They were disseminating the same contents over the Abbay dam in the past years. Ethiopia has no plan to negotiate issues using media reports."

According to Ambassador Meles, countries that are very distant from the region, including Egypt, have military bases. Ethiopia, having no port and access to sea is being pressured and they answer no to the reason, according to the Spokesperson.

To him, the fortune of this generation is dependent on access to sea which can be justified as a matter of equity and justice. Speaking about the current diplomatic situation between Ethiopia and Somalia, Ambassador Meles said that his country opts for a peaceful diplomatic approach as the only available solution.

Ethiopia is a champion of multilateral diplomacy

Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD)

BY DANIEL ALEMAYEHU

Our today's guest is Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD). He is serving as the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The career diplomat has a twenty-year service in the Ministry on various capacities. His last appointment was as Ethiopian Ambassador to Kenya, Malawi, Comoros and Seychelles. The Ethiopian Herald sat for a brief interview with him on matters in connection to the recently launched Ethiopian Diplomatic Week and Exhibition. Enjoy reading.



What is your view of the ongoing Diplomatic Week and Exhibition?

The event is simply super. It's all about promoting Ethiopia's diplomatic history. It is about showing the contemporary diplomacy and its achievements. It is about portraying the impact of the advent of science and technology on diplomatic undertakings and our effort to rise to the challenge.

What would the Ministry achieve as a result of the diplomatic week?

What we want to achieve, at the end is, it is to bring the public and the ministry closer. The Ministry remains to be closed for quite some time. It had become a profession of a selected few. Today, the intentions of the Ministry are to make diplomacy and foreign policy interactions a daily chorus of the ordinary citizen as well. At the exhibition, citizens would further understand Ethiopia's history of diplomacy, and the achievement and challenges of the past and present. It also paves the way for visitors to see what is in store for the endeavors ahead.



Diplomacy cannot be carried out only by career diplomats like me. Every individual and every institution have the responsibility of promoting the national interest of Ethiopia. There are very simple examples, the Ethiopian airlines, the flying ambassador, has been playing a very important role in showing the other face of Ethiopia. Also, the Ethiopian shipping lines is Ethiopian flag carrier, and promotes the national interest one way or on another. Ethiopian athletes also paint a favorable image of the country on major

global competitions and when they set a new world record. So every individual has the responsibility of playing his/her part in promoting the national interest of Ethiopia. So, we want to open up the ministry to the general public, and also help the public play its unrivaled role in achieving and promoting the national interest.

Can we talk about the major triumphs of the Ministry over the last 116 years?

Quite many! In fact, the modern history of Ethiopia's foreign relations begins with the establishment of the Ministry. In fact, it first came to shape as the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Policy during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. We're grateful for the leader; he brought a modern way of managing foreign policy to the scene.

But it doesn't mean that our foreign diplomacy is only 116 years old. No! The genesis of foreign policy and diplomacy

of Ethiopia dates back to thousands of years of history. In fact, it is as old as Ethiopia.

It begins with the time of Queen Sheba. You have King Ezana and King Kaleb during the Aksumite era, who left us their indelible legacy of diplomacy.

In the modern time, Ethiopia participated and of course put its mark

Continued to Page 9

Herald Guest



Ethiopia is a champion...

Continued from Page 8

in the establishment several multilateral organizations. It fulfills its international commitment in this regard as well. The Ministry played due role in all the endeavors. Ethiopia's contribution as member and founder of several multilateral and regional organizations such as the League of Nations and the UN, the UNECA and OAU (present day AU) are but to mention a few. Ethiopia has been playing a seamless role in maintaining the peace and security of the world by deploying thousands of peacekeepers.

In fact, we are one of the major peacekeeping contributing countries coupled with our contributions of women peacekeepers; we've been instrumental in fulfilling our international commitment in this regard.

Imagine when many African countries were languishing in the yoke of colonialism, Ethiopia involved as a founding member of many international organizations like the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunications Union, and many, many more. Ethiopia had, therefore, served as a voice of Africa and backed the effort of decolonizing the continent.

In our recent history, the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was a key player in the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU), not to mention his contribution in supporting and chairing the New Partnership for African's Development (NEPAD). And the current leader, our



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) also used his diplomatic prowess to make Ethiopia a member of the BRICS bloc.

How is the Ministry prepared to future endeavors?

Look, with the advent of science and technology, diplomacy has been evolving like any other profession. Internet technology has changed the way we live for the better, and given the new challenges as a result of it as well. The

social media have given the opportunity for leaders to interact with the public at large.

So, the promotion of national interest is not only carried out through accredited diplomats, but every leader and citizen also participates in one way or another. So, in a very changing and evolving global context, the modus operandi of diplomacy cannot go with the same old fashion. So the Ministry has introduced

the digital department. We have made adequate preparation in all respects to furnish the ground for future activities. So, the future is so bright, we don't forget that we have 120 million people out of which the youth makes what 65 million. The youths would be part and parcel of the diplomatic endeavors.

Thanks for your time Amb. Meles.

My pleasure.

Society

Timket: Cultivating forefathers' preaching

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Timket also known as Ethiopian Epiphany, is a vibrant and spirited street festival celebrated annually in Ethiopia. This religious and cultural extravaganza holds immense significance in the Ethiopian *Orthodox Tewahido* Church and the Ethiopian Catholic Church and is considered as one of the most important events in the country. With its roots tracing back to biblical times, *Timket* is a time of great rejoicing, renewal, and commemoration. Ethiopia's historical connections to Christianity have shaped the festival into what it is today. With a blend of religious customs and age-old traditions, *Timket* has become the most cherished intangible asset in the country.

According to preaching from the EOTC, one of the essential rituals of *Timket* involves the blessing and consecration of water. Water is believed to be sanctified through prayers, symbolizing the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Congregations collect this holy water to take home, symbolizing spiritual purification.

The commemoration of *Timket* starts on the eve of the main festival. The eve is known as *Timket*, which means blocking the flow of water for the blessing of the celebrants. On the eve of Keteria, people escort their parish church Tabot (replicas of the Ark of the Covenant) to *Timkete-Bahir* (a pool, river or artificial reservoir), transported by a priest of the parish and accompanied by a great ceremony.

The people spend the night attending night-long prayers and hymn services. Hundreds of thousands participate in the actual festival on the following day – 19/20 January. The celebration starts early in the morning with pre-sunrise rituals. These are followed by the sprinkling of the blessed water on the congregation, as well as other ceremonies. At around 10:00 a.m., each Tabot begins its procession back to its respective church, involving an even more colorful ceremony with various traditional and religious songs. The viability of the element is ensured through its continued practice, with Orthodox clergies playing a pivotal role: they sing the praises dedicated to the rituals and hymns, carry the Ark, and preach relevant texts.

During *Timket* all people regardless of age, gender ethnicity or any other background flow out of their house to accompany and escort the arks (*Tabots*) to the sacred places arranged to them to spend the night. On the Ethiopian *Timket* festival, there are two major ceremonial occasions that take place at a time starting from the eve up to the end. One is the spiritual ceremonial process that takes place by religious leaders, priests, Sunday schools students, harpist, and ecclesiastics, among others.

As usual, this year's *Timket* festival will be celebrated colorfully in all parts of the country. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) Holy Synod Member urged the faithful to promote peace, love and unity while celebrating Ethiopian Epiphany (*Timket*).

EOTC Holy Synod Member and Bishop of Central Gondar Zone, Abune Yohannes said that *Timket* holiday commemorates the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River and the Harrowing of Hell.



Abune Yohannes noted that celebrants should be cautious and appear in a soothing and tranquil manner while observing this year's *Timket* in Gondar, Amhara State.

This year's Epiphany celebration has manifold advantages in promoting the positive image of Gondar in particular and Ethiopia in general. Therefore, efforts are underway to celebrate this outdoor festivity peacefully in harmony, he expressed.

Moreover, the *Timket* festival has become a must-see ritual festival in Ethiopia. The day amuses participants. The ceremonial occasion is undertaken with appealing Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) Sunday school students songs, priests sanctify, various religious preaching, different cultural songs, cultural dancing, among others.

The day gives an opportunity for local participants and tourists to discover most of the cultural dressings found in Ethiopia. Not only this, one will be satisfied while observing the colorful dressing of the peoples that is added with smiley faces without ages limitations.

Timket requires meticulous planning and

active participation from local communities. Weeks before the festival, neighborhoods organize cleaning campaigns to spruce up their churches, streets, and gathering areas. They also engage in fundraising activities to ensure the success of the celebrations.

It is common to see the youth engaged in cleaning the streets of Addis Ababa before and on *Ketera* to give more color to the festival. They decorate the streets of the city with the tri-colors-green, yellow, and red. And most of the time they work voluntarily through organizing themselves based on their vicinity. To this end, the *Timket* celebration voluntarism activities grow to more efforts to help others.

Following this, youths cultivate the best experiences from their peers and keep the forefathers'/foremothers' best preaching, culture, learn about the culture and tradition of other ethnic group which helps them to accept, appreciate and respect differences among others.

Behind the scenes, dedicated committees oversee the logistics of *Timket* celebration. They coordinate security measures, crowd control, transportation, and the allocation of

resources. These preparations contribute to the smooth operation of the festival, ensuring that everyone can partake in the festivities and experience the joy of *Timket*.

More importantly, *Timket* festival usually ends peacefully and colorfully. And it is possible through the active participation of every stakeholder.

In sum, Ethiopia is a land rich in folklore and storytelling traditions, and *Timket* provides a platform for these stories to be shared and celebrated. Folklore performances, storytelling sessions, and traditional music and dance performances take place throughout the festival, captivating audiences with tales of heroes, myths, and legends. *Timket* has a significant impact on local communities, both economically and socially.

In addition, the festival creates opportunities for local artisans, food vendors, and small businesses to showcase and sell their products. It also brings people from different communities together, fostering social cohesion and promoting cultural exchange.

Happy Ethiopian Timket celebration!

International

Kenya: Tanzania, Kenya Resolve Air Travel Restrictions Dispute

DAR ES SALAAM/NAIROBI: Tanzania and Kenya have reached an agreement that the recently imposed restrictions on air travel should not stand.

According to Tanzania's Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, January Makamba's post on X (formerly Twitter), the two East African economic powerhouses have resolved the matter using the relevant authorities.

"I spoke to my Kenyan colleague @Musalia Mudavadi. We agree that restrictions on air travel between our countries and from either of our countries to a third country shouldn't stand. With the relevant authorities, we've resolved to settle this issue, per existing agreements, within 3 days," Mr. Makamba posted.

On his part, his Kenyan counterpart noted that Tanzania and Kenya have agreed that their respective Civil Aviation Authorities will work together to have the matter resolved amicably within the next three days.

"I have this evening spoken to H.E. @JMakamba (MP), Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, regarding the decision of the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority to rescind the approvals for @Kenya Airways to operate passenger flights between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, effective from January 22nd, 2024.



"We have jointly agreed that our respective Civil Aviation Authorities will work together to have the matter resolved amicably within the next three days. There should, therefore, be no cause for alarm," Mudavadi posted on X platform.

On Monday, the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) announced a decision to revoke the approvals for Kenya Airways (KQ) to conduct passenger flights between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

According to a statement released and signed by the TCAA Director-General, Mr. Hamza Johari, the approvals are under the third and fourth Freedom Traffic Rights with effect from January 22nd of

this year.

"TCAA, on behalf of the aeronautical authority of the United Republic of Tanzania, has decided to rescind the approvals for Kenya Airways (KQ) to operate passenger flights between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam under the third and fourth Freedom Traffic Rights with effect from January 22, 2024," reads part of the statement.

The third and fourth freedoms are traffic rights that allow international services between two countries.

The third freedom gives an airline the right to fly (passengers and/or cargo) from one's own country to another country.

The fourth freedom gives an airline the right to fly from another country to the home country for the purpose of commercial services.

The statement further said that the move was meant to reciprocate the decision by the aeronautical authorities of the Republic of Kenya to refuse Tanzania's request for all cargo flight operations by Air Tanzania Company Limited under Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights between Nairobi and third countries.

The TCAA cited the Kenyan authorities' refusal as a breach of section 4 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Air Services between the two nations signed on November 24th, 2016, in Nairobi, Kenya.

This section stipulates reciprocal treatment for airlines of both countries.

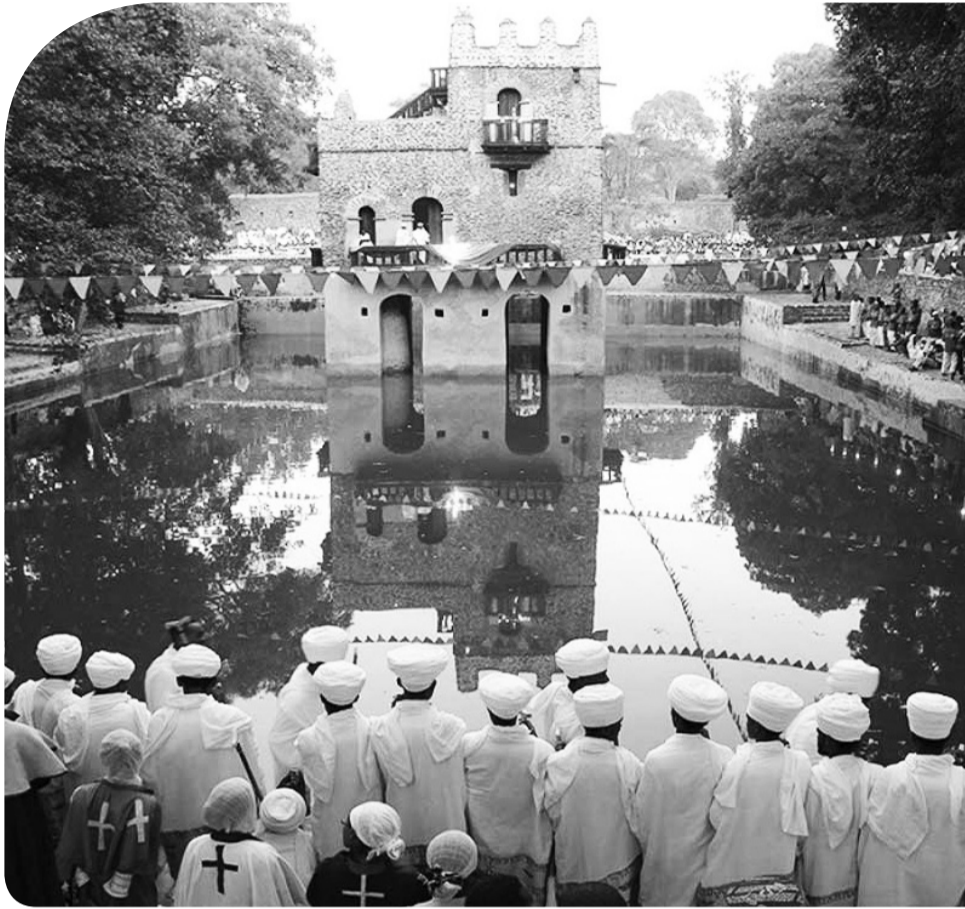
"This decision is based on the principle of reciprocity, following the refusal by the Kenyan authorities to grant approval for ATCL'S cargo flights despite the clear provisions of the MoU," the statement said.

Following the decision, the statement noted, there shall be no passenger flights by KQ between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam from January 22nd of this year. It further read that Tanzania shall always strive to adhere to the principles of the Chicago Convention 1994 and Bilateral Air Services Agreement between States.

Source: Daily News.

Verbatim and Caption

Timket: The joyous...



The Blessing of the Water:

Upon reaching the water, a solemn ceremony takes place. Prayers are offered, and the water is blessed by the priests. Pilgrims eagerly wait to immerse themselves in the blessed waters, seeking spiritual cleansing and renewal. It is believed that the holy water retains its sacred properties throughout the year and can be taken home by the faithful for personal use.

Community Celebration:

Timket is not only a religious observance but also a time for families and friends to come together and celebrate. Traditional Ethiopian dishes are prepared, and people engage in feasting, singing, and dancing. The celebration fosters a sense of unity, as people from different communities and backgrounds join in the festivities, reinforcing the bonds of faith and culture.



Verbatim and Caption

Timket: The joyous celebration of Epiphany in Ethiopia

BY NAOL GIRMA

Timket, the Ethiopian celebration of Epiphany, is a vivacious and deeply meaningful event that holds paramount importance in the nation's cultural and religious fabric. Lasting for three days, *Timket* is a jubilant event that brings together Ethiopian Orthodox Christians to commemorate the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan.

The Preparations:

Days before Timket, communities meticulously prepare for the celebration. Churches are adorned with colourful decorations, and participants don traditional white clothing. The Tabot, a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, is carefully wrapped and placed on a beautifully adorned carrier in preparation for the procession.



The Procession:

On the eve of Timket, the Tabot is carried in a grand procession from the church to a nearby body of water, typically a river or a pool. The procession is accompanied by joyful singing, traditional music, and dancing. The atmosphere is filled with a sense of reverence, excitement, and unity as thousands of believers join the procession, holding lit candles and chanting hymns.

See Timket: The joyous... Page 19