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Fostering social cohesion builds community with shared vision

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - Fostering tolerance and social cohesion has an immense contribution to cement the aspiration of unity in diversity and builds a community with shared vision, the Culture and Sport Minister said.

The Ministry held yesterday's Coexistence Week conclusion symposium, which was marked by various events with different stakeholders over the last five days. Speaking at the occasion, Culture

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Experts slam wrong portrayal of Ethio-Somaliland deal

BY DESTA GEBREHIWOT

ADDIS ABABA-Ethiopia's accord with Somaliland is a continuation of its amicable foreign policy and not a farfetched move to

breach others' sovereignty, social science experts said, stressing the need to secure a seaport in a and fiercely-contested region.

The experts also slammed doubts and supersized as valid and reciprocal actions which would interpretations of the Memorandum of

See Experts slam ... page 3



MoFA to exhibit historic journey of Ethiopian diplomacy

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced that the first national diplomatic history exhibition will be displayed from January 11 to February 02, 2024.

See MoFA to ... page 3

Ethiopia unveils holiday packages for second-generation Diasporas

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia has unveiled a package service to second-generation Diasporas in particular and foreign and local visitors in general for the upcoming Christmas and Epiphany holidays, announced Ethiopian Tour Operators Association.

Head of Member Affairs with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, Beza Tilahun told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that a package of services has been prepared for second-generation Diasporas, foreign and domestic visitors to get all services in one stop while celebrating and visiting this year's Christmas (*Genna*) and Epiphany (*Timket*) festivities.

"Car service, hotel, food and tour and related services are being provided to the visitors who come via a center led system



and follow their own route in a coordinated manner with the concerned entities. The Association is also providing training for tour guiding and operating bodies to provide better service to visitors," she said.

Beza noted that her association is working on standards to ensure the quality of the services what they

See Ethiopia ... page 3

Coffee Tourism: A catalyst for foreign currency earnings

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Let us translate the message into action

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Dream chaser off beaten path emerging successful despite constraints

"I specialize in designing, producing digital electronics devices, solar oven innovator," - Kaledawit Esmelealem

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News

Premier's call to second-generation Diaspora avails opportunities: *Amb. Dina*

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - The call made by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) to the second-generation of Ethiopian Diaspora for homecoming provides benefits for the Diaspora and the country as well, Ambassador Dina Mufti remarked.

The premier invited the second-generation Ethiopian diaspora to visit their country of origin in three rounds from 30th December 2023 to the end of September 2024.

The second-generation of Ethiopian Diaspora, who are born and live outside of their origin of country, are believed to be a large number.

The objective of the invitation is to reconnect this part of the Diaspora with their ancestral root, help them acquaint with the unique culture, values and history as well as the ongoing overall transformation efforts in Ethiopia.

In an exclusive interview with ENA Foreign Affairs Standing Committee Member of the House of People's Representatives Ambassador Dina said the prime minister made the call considering the fact that Ethiopia has huge second generation Diaspora in various parts of the world and the homecoming enables them to connect with their kinships, culture, and hospitality in their country of origin.

The Diaspora will also be able to see physically the internationally acclaimed historical, religious and cultural heritages of Ethiopia that they may only know from afar, he added.

"They are not aware of the current actual situation of their country of origin. The visit will help them to see what Ethiopia looks



like now ranging from geographic location to the other dynamic aspects of the country including population, culture, history and hospitality among other things. They will also be able to witness physically how Ethiopia's historical heritages and other tourist sites are marvelous."

Ambassador Dina added the invitation is also crucial to familiarize the second generation diaspora about the ongoing socioeconomic transformation of their country of origin.

Relentless efforts are being carried out in Ethiopia to transform the nation in various sectors including tourism.

The second generation of the Diaspora will also be able to explore business and

investment opportunities in Ethiopia as most of them are believed to have acquired a great deal of knowledge, skill, wealth and experiences in ranges of fields and they could contribute to the continuation of national building efforts, he said.

"There are two sides of benefits about this visit. One is to familiarize themselves with their country of origin. They will see and witness it physically. The second one is they may consider about doing business in Ethiopia. They may come with their knowledge, wealth, and experiences and will be able to share that as well. They will be able to contribute to the continuation of the socioeconomic development of the country," Ambassador Dina said.

Authority backs Air Force to defend Ethiopia's airspace

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA-The Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority (ECAA) is joining hands with the Ethiopian Air Force (ETAF) to detect any potential threats directed against the airspace of the country.

In an effort to safeguard air sovereignty, the ECAA collaborates with the ETAF and the Information Network Security Administration (INSA), said Yohannes Abera, the Director of Air Traffic Management at the ECAA.

He told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the ECAA utilizes various technologies, including Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B) and multilateration observational machines, to identify flying objects within Ethiopian airspace.

Whenever unauthorized or threatening manned or unmanned aircraft enter the country's airspace, the ECAA promptly contacts the ETAF by pressing a designated key, initiating immediate collaboration between the two entities.

Yohannes further explained that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has designated an air boundary, requiring any flying object to obtain permission before crossing it.

So, flight details, including altitude and flight path, must be specified when seeking permission from the civil aviation authority or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

If the ECAA, ETAF, or other relevant parties fail to acknowledge a detected flying object, the ECAA initiates voice communication with the aircraft, instructing it to avoid Ethiopian airspace.

Also, ECAA maintains contact with ETAF with one press key, informing them of the flying object's speed and direction within the country's airspace. Yohannes noted that ETAF possesses more advanced technology than the ECAA and can provide additional assistance if notified.

Regarding the country's aerial safety, Yohannes emphasized that the ICAO conducts safety audits, and Ethiopia has achieved an impressive audit result of 89.8, indicating a high level of safety comparable to the global average of 60.

The country boasts the highest safety rating in Africa, sharing this distinction with Ghana. He underscored that the country's safety audit rating of 89.8 reflects its commitment to maintaining superior safety standards. Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest airline, holds a certified safety level on the continent.

As the navigation service provider, the ECAA manages over 600 flights daily and possesses the necessary capacity to accommodate them. ECAA also has a countrywide communication system that operates on VHF, offering FM-quality coverage, he added.

Service urges foreigners to rectify improper documents

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA - Foreign nationals who are residing in Ethiopia without legal permit are strongly urged to acquire legal document within one month, according to the Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS).

The announcement came yesterday while briefing journalists on the existence of significance number of foreign individuals residing in Ethiopia without legal documentation

At the event, ICS Director General Selamawit Dawit indicated that over 18,000 foreign nationals are living in Ethiopia with fake documents.

In addition, there are a large number of foreign nationals residing in the country without fulfilling the immigration rules and regulations of the country, she added.



Selamawit Dawit

According to ICS Director General, migrants are living in Ethiopia using fake ID, residence visa, and company names.

She added that the Immigration and Citizenship Service (ICS) is working in collaboration with federal police to bring these foreigners to the legal system.

Therefore, she strongly urged foreign nationals who are living in the country without legal permit to bring their document to the immigration and citizenship service from first week of January 2024.

Accordingly, legal measures will be taken against those who fail to register within the dates of this announcement.

It was learnt that the Service is working in close collaboration with the Federal police to curb the illegal activities through joint effort. Similarly, the Service has been working with various stakeholders such as NGOs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ethiopian Investment Commission, and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in a bid to conduct documentation rectification.

Ministry pleads media to enhance public's awareness of cervical cancer

- *To promote cancer early diagnosis*

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA-The Ministry of Health (MoH) said media practitioners need to advance their role in enhancing the public's awareness about cervical cancer and promote cancer early diagnosis.

In a press briefing she gave recently, MoH Chief Executive Officer of Disease Prevention and Control Center Hiwot Solomon (MD) stated that January is being marked as cervical cancer awareness month globally. Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer in Ethiopia next to breast cancer.

Dr. Hiwot further noted that the Ministry is utilizing different modes including mobile phone and television broadcasts



Hiwot Solomon (MD)

to enhance the public's awareness about the disease. Also, commendable jobs

have been made in expanding pre-admission and early cancer treatment services in health centers and hospitals. However, the public's lack of awareness about cervical cancer leads to patients to come to hospitals when the cancer reaches an advanced level and resulting in low survival rate. Hence, the media and communication sector need to play their due role in building informed society about cervical cancer, she added. Dr. Hiwot also said that in Ethiopia, more than 1,300 health facilities provide treatment for cervical cancer, and more than 529, 000 women receive pre-diagnosis treatment in these facilities in this fiscal year. "However, the community's cancer testing habit is very

low compared to what is needed."

To address accessibility related challenges, the Ministry is doing extensive work to make the pre-admission and early cancer treatment available in health centers in addition to hospitals in every regional state, the CEO remarked.

The WHO report revealed that cervical cancer is a type of cancer that kills women at a high rate and has a particularly high impact on sub-Saharan countries. According to the World Cancer Registry in 2020, 604,127 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, which is the leading cause of death among women.

MoFA to exhibit...

In Press briefing held yesterday, MoFA Spokesperson Amb. Meles Alem (PhD) said that Ethiopia's long diplomatic history will be exhibited and tabled for discussion next week. According to him, about six researches, conducted by international relation experts, political scientists and historians regarding the past, the existing and future diplomacy of the country will be presented and discussed during the three week-long event.

The modern history of MoFA dates back to 116 years, thus, the exhibition is not just an event to display some materials, it rather is a demonstration of invaluable historical evidences that could help scholars, diplomats, and researchers, he said.

The memories to be exhibited will inspire

those who are interested in discovering Ethiopia's diplomatic history, according to the Spokesperson.

Electronic and hardcopies of journals and evidences showcasing Ethiopia's diplomacy in global, continental and regional level have been prepared, Meles mentioned, adding that Ethiopians and the Diplomatic community are invited to visit the exhibition.

He also said that a diplomatic journal which reads the diplomatic history of Ethiopia will be inaugurated in the event.

The first national diplomatic history exhibition will be launched on January 11 at Science Museum under a theme: "From the Capital of Africa to the World Stage".

Experts slam wrong...

serve the entire region.

Accordingly, Dilla University History and International Affairs analyst Abdu Mohamed (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the country has not reinvented something new and its agreement with Somaliland is part and parcel of its three decades of foreign policy towards Hargeisa,

Ethiopia and Somaliland have been forging commercial and other diplomatic relations devoid of external reactions and standpoint. "And, Ethiopia needs to view the ongoing reactions carefully from diplomacy and peace perspectives," the analyst recommended.

Sharing the above rationale, Hawassa University Law Instructor Fekadu Deriba, stated that as the Ethiopian Airlines have been flying to Hargeisa and the country has a share in the Berbera Port, the recent MoU is not a new phenomenon. "It is normal for two parties to seal a mutual agreement so long as it does not affect others."

"Ethiopia needs to study the reactions following the signing of the MoU carefully and craft appropriate response mechanisms

and continue to create clarity."

No external entity should dictate Ethiopia as to when and with whom it should enter into agreements. It is up to Ethiopia to decide on its foreign policy, Fekadu said, adding: "the country's quest for access to the sea is historical, legal and geopolitical. Its interest can be achieved through various means. A mutual agreement is one path."

For Hawassa University Political Science and Philosophy Instructor Awel Ali, Ethiopia's quest is purely economic and reciprocal and its agreement with Somaliland is neither invasion nor violation of sovereignty.

Expressing the rationale to Ethiopia's aspiration to sovereign access to the sea, the expert said, "most of the time threats or attacks are coming from the sea and having direct port access will enable the country to freely import the armament that needs to protect its security."

Awel recommended that the agreement should be followed by concrete actions by all involved parties. "Both parties need to work more on the details and translate the accord into action."

Fostering social cohesion...

and Sport Minister Kejela Merdassa stated that creating strong bond in the community would contribute more to building relationships and responsibility. "This strong bond is also crucial to Ethiopia's state building process."

According to Kejela, the people to people ties in Ethiopia are unique when it is compared with others and the society has a long-cherished culture of tolerance and social cohesion that all contribute to keeping unity in diversity.

The symposium is aimed to discuss ways to overcome challenges of tolerance and togetherness, he added.

For her part, Culture and Sport State Minister Workinesh Biru said that Coexistence Week is organized with the aim of avoiding intolerance and maintaining fraternity within the community.

Over the last five days, over 30 million people took part in sport and other events to build tolerance and narrow the gap among communities. "Our forefathers and foremothers laid a foundation for us to follow and strengthen togetherness and peaceful coexistence."

The state minister further noted that the week-long event is also campaigning for the importance of maintaining tolerance and



Photo: Dagne Abera

togetherness as well as promoting unity in diversity as well as building mutual trust.

An expert in the issue, Tekalign Ayalew (PhD) noted that the relationship and responsibility within a community builds a community with the same vision. "It is a sense of belonging, vertical and horizontal relations among members of the society and the state characterized by mutual trust."

The expert also pointed out that building a community with the same vision requires the norm of forgiveness, hailing to the injured and ensuring inner peace.

Ethiopia unveils holiday packages...

provided to visitors, and members who don't meet criteria will be removed from membership.

The association is working to increase tourist flow, build positive image of Ethiopia through promoting tourist destination by involving in international events and using various media outlets including social media, she added.

Efforts are being made to surge the number

of members as well as visitors by working on various exhibitions and festivals, the Head mentioned.

The Association is also working to increase foreign exchange earnings by extending the duration of visitors so that tourists that would come for religious and cultural values of Ethiopia will be encouraged to visit the natural heritages too, she said.

Opinion

The relation that's governed by inclusive diplomacy, mutual benefit

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

Since the imperial era for the last 70 years, Ethiopia has been established good diplomatic relation both with the west and the eastern countries. Through utilizing its diplomatic corridors, it could obtain financial, technical and consultancy supports. With the supports obtained, it could establish educational institutions from the elementary level up to the higher education and produced well trained human resources used as inputs in various economic sectors. In his formative years, the emperor laid foundation which geared the nation towards economic growth with the support of mostly from the western countries.

In 1950s, with the support of the US based Oklahoma University, Ethiopia could establish the Haromaya Agricultural College. The College played pivotal role in supplying educated youth trained in Agriculture to the market and support the nation strived in improving the way of farming and providing extension services to farmers. Similarly, Ambo and Jima agricultural colleges were established with the financial support of the west and Scandinavian countries and played vital role in supplying trained man power to the market.

In 1960s, the Bahir Dar polytechnic college was established by the technical and financial support of the then Soviet Union and the institute contributed to the nation's economic growth by supplying technicians to the manufacturing sector. The Addis Ababa University, when it was established by the support of the western countries, even its curriculum was adopted from the western universities by disregarding the local socio economic and historical aspects and to date, it produced well educated graduates both from social and natural science fields.

It also could mobilize financial resource from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and from the western countries through bilateral relations and more or less the system witnessed economic growth.

During the Derg era, Ethiopia totally abandoned its relation with the west due to ideological difference and established strong diplomatic bond with the socialist countries. It obtained more military support from these countries than the economic one. The drying up of financial and economic support from the west and the political instability dragged the nation to go back and economic progress was registered negatively.

In 1991, when the defunct EPRDF regime assumed power, it reinvigorated Ethiopia's relation with the west and

established good relation based on mutual benefit. Looking the political development in Ethiopia optimistically they supported the government by providing billions of Dollars in the form of loan and grant and the regime could stimulate the economy and could register substantial economic growth.

Ethiopia's economy during the EPRDF regime has achieved a growth rate averaging 9.9% a year from 2007 to 2018. The regime had also established strong economic bond with China and obtained support particularly in constructing infrastructure such as roads, the Addis Ababa light rail way, the newly constructed electric powered Ethio- Djibouti rail way, hydropower dams, wind farms and industry parks. The booming of the construction sector also can be mentioned in this regard. The flourishing of foreign investment was also substantially increased.

After the assuming of the current government led by Abiy Ahmed (PhD) Ethiopia's relation with the west and China also continued steadily well and the financial and economic support particularly from the west based on the multilateral and bilateral relations continued until the outbreak of the war in the northern part of Ethiopia in 20 21.

According to the World Bank, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria with about 123 million people and one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, with an estimated 6.4% growth in the year 2021/22. However, it also remains one of the poorest, with a per capita gross national income of \$1,020. Ethiopia aspires to reach lower-middle-income status by 2025.

The consistently high economic growth over the last decade resulted in positive trends in poverty reduction in both urban and rural areas. The share of the population living below the national poverty line decreased from 30% in 2011 to 24% in 2016 and human development indicators improved as well. However, gains are modest when compared to other countries that saw fast growth, and inequality has increased in recent years. Furthermore, conflicts in various parts of Ethiopia risk undermining the economic and social development progress the country has achieved.

Ethiopia's strong growth rate built on a longer-term record of growth over the past 15 years where the country's economy grew at an average of nearly 9% per annum, one of the highest rates in the world. Among other factors, growth was led by capital accumulation, in particular through public infrastructure investments. Ethiopia's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed down from the

year 2019/20 to 2021/22 due to multiple shocks including COVID-19, with growth in industry and services easing to single digits. However, agriculture, where over 70% of the population is employed, was not significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its contribution to growth slightly improved compared to previous years.

In addition, because of the outbreak of war in the northern part of the country, the west particularly the US accused Ethiopia as violation of human rights, war crime, sexual harassment and abduction and consequently imposed economic sanctions.

It suspended financial aid and the provision of loan. International financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International monetary Fund also held their financial support and the provision of loan. The US government also suspended Ethiopia from AGOA program which allowed Ethiopian textile products to get market in the US market free of tariff. Nevertheless, after the Pretoria Agreement reached between the federal government of Ethiopia and the TPLF officials in 2022, both parties reached to cease fire and halted the war and later the west lifted most of the economic sanctions against Ethiopia. Currently, Ethiopia enjoys good relations both with the western and eastern countries.

The Joining of Ethiopia to BRICS recently brought better opportunity to the country to attain economic progress through obtaining access to loan from the member countries, to tap their market, attract foreign investment, takes opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer.

As it is understood as compared to the BRICS member countries, Ethiopia's economy is small but the country is located in the strategically important region of the Horn of Africa which is flanked by the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Red Sea is the water root where 40% of the world petroleum oil is transported to Europe via Suez Canal. This again enhanced the strategic importance of the nation in the horn of Africa. Attracted by the strategic value of the place, western countries such as USA, France, China, Turkey and Russia established their military base in Djibouti, Somalia Mogadishu and Port Sudan. Hence, Ethiopia must exploit its strategic significance through strengthening its multilateral relations.

The government has launched a 10-Year Development Plan, based on its 2019 Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda, which runs from 2020/21 to 2029/30. The plan aims to sustain the high growth achieved under the Growth and Transformation Plans of the previous

decade while facilitating the shift towards a more private-sector-driven economy. It also aims to foster efficiency and introduce competition in key growth-enabling sectors such as energy, logistics, and telecom, improve the business climate, and address macroeconomic imbalances.

Ethiopia seeks to chart a development path that is sustainable and inclusive in order to accelerate poverty reduction and boost shared prosperity. Significant progress in job creation, as well as improved governance, will be needed to ensure that growth is equitable across societies of the country. Achieving these objectives will require addressing key challenges among others, macro-economic imbalance that constrained private sector development, structural transformation, and generation of jobs and reducing conflicts that have brought a substantial impact on lives, livelihoods and infrastructure.

The cessation of hostilities in the Northern part of the country in November 2022 is an important step in this direction. Like the rest of the world, Ethiopia has been experiencing the unprecedented social and economic impact of the pandemic. While exports and foreign direct investment rebounded in 2020/21 and jobs have been recovering, some lasting scars are likely to remain. Urban employment levels have not recovered fully, some households and firms continue to report income losses, and poverty is estimated to have increased.

Food insecurity, due to adverse weather events continued to affect economic growth, locust invasion, conflict, and global conditions leading to high inflation of food prices. Frequent severe weather events alongside long-term impacts of climate change undermine agriculture and pastoral livelihoods as well as food security. The 2022 drought is the worst in forty years, severely affecting millions in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Overall, more than 20 million persons have been exposed to severe food insecurity in 2023.

The country's growing workforce (with roughly two million persons reaching working age per year) puts pressure on the absorption capacity of the labor market, which necessitates improving current jobs, while creating sufficient new jobs. In addition, exploring and exploiting of natural resources through utilizing foreign and local investment is vital. Side by side with these, boosting export should be strengthened so that the nation can create wealth which could be used for poverty reduction.

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

Editorial

Ethiopia's MoU with Somaliland genuine, reciprocal!

There have been swift reactions from different parties since the inking of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Addis Ababa and Hargeisa. The landmark agreement with mutual dividends for many would be a great deal of breakthrough for the Horn region that has been wallowing in the quagmire of interstate conflict and other menaces.

Already beset by natural and manmade predicaments, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Partnership and Cooperation would allow Ethiopia to develop a port and station a naval force in the Red Sea while serving as an opportunity for Somaliland to have a share in the former's public enterprise. The intentions of both parties to the agreement are clear and genuine, that is collective growth.

Unlike some erroneous reactions from some entities, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Partnership and Cooperation that Ethiopia and Somaliland signed would be a rallying factor and exemplary move to foster unity in the fragmented region.

The accord also signals that a new dawn is in the making in the volatile region. And, it is the continuation of Ethiopia's unwavering resolve to cultivate strong comradeship and amicable relation with neighboring countries. Ethiopia has previously entered agreements with neighboring nations to undertake joint infrastructural development. The MoU with Somaliland, and is no different.

For the agreement is based on mutual benefits, legal and peaceful principles, it would not impact any parties or violate any laws. In its statement this midweek, Government Communication Services claimed that no one would be harmed by the MoU. This Memorandum of Understanding neither a breach of trust nor a violation of the law.

The deal with Somaliland is an indication of the government's conviction that peaceful tactics, the reciprocity principle, and cooperation with neighbors will help Ethiopia achieve its goals. "This opportunity is open to all," the statement of GSC indicated

The accord with Somaliland demonstrates the government's conviction that Ethiopia can achieve its goals using peaceful means, collaboration with its neighbors, and the reciprocity principle. The deal with Somaliland is an indication of the government's conviction that peaceful tactics, the reciprocity principle, and cooperation with neighbors will help Ethiopia achieve its goals.

To create clarity among the international community and to foil the smear campaigns by some archenemies of the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has briefed Addis based diplomats on the MoU. In his briefing, the National Security Advisor of the Prime Minister, Ambassador Redwan Hussein stated that the MoU will allow Ethiopia to diversify its options regarding access to the sea and ports. Furthermore, Ethiopia will have an important role peace and security of the region in tandem with ensuring its survival. The MoU is not only about access to the sea or port but it also includes the vast areas of cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, technology, agriculture, and tourism.

Over the years, Ethiopia has been following the principle of neutrality in the internal affairs of other countries. It has rather been a proponent of internal solutions for internal problems. It also set an example with its Pretoria peace. The MoU the country penned with Somaliland do not breach the sovereignty of other parties, no does it affect other nations. The intentions are clear and genuine. It is an agreement which other nations of the region should follow a suit. And, Ethiopia is ready to enter similar agreement with other nations of the region as well.

Opinion

A glimmer of hope to greening a desert again! Research shows the Sahara Desert used to be a green savannah

Algeria's Tassili N'Ajjer plateau is Africa's largest national park. Among its vast sandstone formations is perhaps the world's largest art museum. Over 15,000 etchings and paintings are exhibited there, some as much as 11,000 years old according to scientific dating techniques, representing a unique ethnological and climatological record of the region.

Curiously, however, these images do not depict the arid, barren landscape that is present in the Tassili N'Ajjer today. Instead, they portray a vibrant savannah inhabited by elephants, giraffes, rhinos and hippos. This rock art is an important record of the past environmental conditions that prevailed in the Sahara, the world's largest hot desert.

These images depict a period approximately 6,000-11,000 years ago called the Green Sahara or North African Humid Period. There is widespread climatological evidence that during this period the Sahara supported wooded savannah ecosystems and numerous rivers and lakes in what are now Libya, Niger, Chad and Mali.

This greening of the Sahara didn't happen once. Using marine and lake sediments, scientists have identified over 230 of these greenings occurring about every 21,000 years over the past eight million years. These greening events provided vegetated corridors which influenced species' distribution and evolution, including the out-of-Africa migrations of ancient humans.

These dramatic greenings would have required a large-scale reorganisation of the atmospheric system to bring rains to this hyper arid region. But most climate models haven't been able to simulate how dramatic these events were.

As a team of climate modellers and anthropologists, we have overcome this obstacle. We developed a climate model that more accurately simulates atmospheric circulation over the Sahara and the impacts of vegetation on rainfall.

We identified why north Africa greened approximately every 21,000 years over the past eight million years. It was caused by changes in the Earth's orbital precession - the slight wobbling of the planet while rotating. This moves the Northern Hemisphere closer to the sun during the summer months.

This caused warmer summers in the Northern Hemisphere, and warmer air is able to hold more moisture. This intensified the strength of the West African Monsoon system and shifted the African rainbelt northwards. This increased Saharan rainfall, resulting in the spread of savannah and wooded grassland across the desert from the tropics to the Mediterranean, providing a vast habitat for plants and animals.

Our results demonstrate the sensitivity of the Sahara Desert to changes in past climate. They explain how this sensitivity affects rainfall across north Africa. This is important for understanding the implications of present-day climate change (driven by human activities). Warmer temperatures in the future may also enhance monsoon strength, with both local and global impacts.

Earth's changing orbit

The fact that the wetter periods in north Africa

have recurred every 21,000 years or so is a big clue about what causes them: variations in Earth's orbit. Due to gravitational influences from the moon and other planets in our solar system, the orbit of the Earth around the sun is not constant. It has cyclic variations on multi-thousand year timescales. These orbital cycles are termed Milankovitch cycles; they influence the amount of energy the Earth receives from the sun.

On 100,000-year cycles, the shape of Earth's orbit (or eccentricity) shifts between circular and oval, and on 41,000 year cycles the tilt of Earth's axis varies (termed obliquity). Eccentricity and obliquity cycles are responsible for driving the ice ages of the past 2.4 million years.

The third Milankovitch cycle is precession. This concerns Earth's wobble on its axis, which varies on a 21,000 year timescale. The similarity between the precession cycle and the timing of the humid periods indicates that precession is their dominant driver. Precession influences seasonal contrasts, increasing them in one hemisphere and reducing them in another. During warmer Northern Hemisphere summers, a consequent increase in north African summer rainfall would have initiated a humid phase, resulting in the spread of vegetation across the region.

Eccentricity and the ice sheets

In our study we also identified that the humid periods did not occur during the ice ages, when large glacial ice sheets covered much of the polar regions. This is because these vast ice sheets cooled the atmosphere. The cooling countered the influence of precession and suppressed the expansion of the African monsoon system.

The ice ages are driven by the eccentricity cycle, which determines how circular Earth's orbit is around the sun. So our findings show that eccentricity indirectly influences the magnitude of the humid periods via its influence on the ice sheets. This highlights, for the first time, a major connection between these distant high latitude and tropical regions.

The Sahara acts as a gate. It controls the dispersal of species between north and sub-Saharan Africa, and in and out of the continent. The gate was open when the Sahara was green and closed when deserts prevailed. Our results reveal the sensitivity of this gate to Earth's orbit around the sun. They also show that high latitude ice sheets may have restricted the dispersal of species during the glacial periods of the last 800,000 years.

Our ability to model the African humid periods helps us understand the alternation of humid and arid phases. This had major consequences for the dispersal and evolution of species, including humans, within and out of Africa. Furthermore, it provides a tool for understanding future greening in response to climate change and its environmental impact.

Refined models may, in the future, be able to identify how climate warming will influence rainfall and vegetation in the Sahara region, and the wider implications for society.

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Business & Economy

Coffee Tourism: A catalyst for foreign currency earnings

BY LAKACHEW ATINAFU

Coffee tourism has gained significant popularity in recent years due to the increasing global interest in specialty coffee, sustainability, and experiential travel. Travelers are now seeking immersive experiences in the world of coffee production, which has led to the emergence of coffee tourism as a vibrant niche within the broader tourism industry, documents indicate.

Coffee enthusiasts, cultural explorers, and adventurers are drawn to coffee-producing regions, where they can engage in activities such as coffee farm tours, hands-on participation in coffee harvesting and processing, coffee tasting sessions, and learning about the intricacies of making coffee. These experiences allow travelers to delve deep into the rich cultural heritage and picturesque landscapes associated with coffee production.

Beyond its cultural and educational value, coffee tourism has become a significant contributor to foreign currency earnings in countries with thriving coffee industries. International travelers who engage in coffee-related activities contribute to the local economy by spending money on accommodations, local transportation, meals, souvenirs, and various other experiences. As a result, the tourism sector becomes a valuable source of foreign exchange earnings, diversifying revenue streams for coffee-producing regions. This diversification reduces their dependency on volatile coffee commodity prices, providing alternative income sources that are less susceptible to market fluctuations.

According to documents, Coffee tourism also stimulates job creation within local communities, offering employment opportunities in the hospitality industry, transportation services, guiding roles, and other related sectors. This economic growth contributes to poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and an overall improvement in living standards in coffee-producing regions.

Furthermore, emphasizing high-quality coffee production and sustainable practices enhances the overall coffee tourism experience. Certifications such as Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, or organic certifications can attract conscious travelers who value ethical and sustainable practices, according to the international coffee alliance department.

In the case of Ethiopia, promoting its organic coffee and boosting exports can be achieved through various strategies. Obtaining internationally recognized certifications such as Organic, Fair Trade, and Rainforest Alliance for Ethiopian organic coffee ensures consumers of its organic production methods, sustainability, and fair trade practices. Developing a strong marketing and branding strategy specifically for Ethiopian organic coffee, highlighting its unique characteristics, flavors, and cultural heritage, is crucial. Participating in international coffee trade shows and exhibitions provides valuable networking opportunities and positions Ethiopia as a leading producer of high-quality organic coffee.

Supporting and strengthening farmer cooperatives involved in organic coffee production, providing training, technical assistance, and resources, ensures fair prices for farmers and promotes



Coffee' is Ethiopia's Gift to the World – photo google

sustainable agriculture practices. Investing in infrastructure development to improve the coffee value chain, including processing facilities, transportation networks, and storage facilities, helps maintain the quality and freshness of organic coffee beans.

Expanding export markets for Ethiopian organic coffee to emerging destinations with a growing demand for organic products, such as Europe, North America, and Asia, requires strategic partnerships with importers and distributors in target markets.

The Ethiopian government can provide support programs and incentives for organic coffee production, including financial assistance, tax breaks, and research and development initiatives focused on improving organic farming techniques. Advocating for policies that promote sustainable agriculture and organic certification processes further supports the growth of the organic coffee sector. Emphasizing Ethiopia's commitment to environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation strengthens the appeal of Ethiopian organic coffee to environmentally conscious consumers.

By implementing these strategies, Ethiopia can effectively promote its organic coffee, increase export volumes, and establish itself as a leading producer of premium organic coffee in the global market, it is underscored.

Coffee tourism presents an opportunity for coffee-producing countries to earn foreign currency. With international travelers' spending money on accommodations, local transportation, meals, souvenirs, and coffee-related activities, the tourism sector becomes a valuable source of foreign exchange earnings.

Coffee tourism diversifies revenue streams for coffee-producing regions, reducing their dependence on volatile coffee commodity prices. By capitalizing on the growing demand for coffee tourism experiences, these regions can create alternative income sources that are less susceptible to market fluctuations.

Coffee tourism stimulates job creation in local communities, offering employment opportunities in hospitality, transportation, guiding services, and other related sectors. This economic growth contributes to poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and the overall improvement of

living standards in coffee-producing regions.

Investing in infrastructure such as roads, airports, accommodations, and visitor centers in coffee-producing regions enhances accessibility and attractiveness for tourists. Efficient transportation networks and quality accommodations are crucial for attracting and retaining visitors.

Collaboration between the coffee industry, tour operators, local communities, and government bodies is essential. By working together, stakeholders can develop well-curated coffee tourism experiences, ensuring authenticity, sustainability, and a positive impact on local communities.

Effective marketing campaigns, both domestically and internationally, can raise awareness about coffee tourism destinations. Collaborative efforts between tourism boards, coffee associations, and travel agencies can leverage digital platforms, social media, and targeted advertising to reach potential coffee-loving travelers.

Emphasizing high-quality coffee production and sustainable practices enhances the overall coffee tourism experience. Certifications such as Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, or organic certifications can help attract conscious travelers who value ethical and sustainable practices.

In order to promote its organic coffee and boost exports, Ethiopia should emphasize obtaining internationally recognized certifications such as Organic, Fair Trade, and Rainforest Alliance for its organic coffee. These certifications assure consumers of the coffee's organic production methods, sustainability, and fair trade practices. Adhering to stringent quality standards will enhance the reputation and marketability of Ethiopian organic coffee.

It has to develop a strong marketing and branding strategy specifically for Ethiopian organic coffee; highlight the unique characteristics, flavors, and cultural heritage associated with Ethiopian coffee; leverage digital marketing platforms and social media to reach a broader audience of coffee enthusiasts and eco-conscious consumers who value organic production. Participate in international coffee trade shows and exhibitions to showcase Ethiopian organic coffee to potential buyers, roasters, and distributors. These events provide valuable networking opportunities and allow Ethiopia to position itself as a leading

producer of high-quality organic coffee.

Supporting and strengthening farmers' cooperatives involved in organic coffee production via providing training, technical assistance, and resource to help farmers adopt organic farming practices effectively are essential. Strengthening cooperatives ensures fair prices for farmers, encourages collective marketing efforts, and promotes sustainable agriculture practices.

Invest in infrastructure development helps improve the coffee value chain. This includes upgrading processing facilities, transportation networks, and storage facilities to maintain the quality and freshness of organic coffee beans. Efficient infrastructure will help streamline the export process and ensure that the coffee reaches international markets in optimal condition.

Expanding the export markets for Ethiopian organic coffee beyond traditional destinations enables multiply foreign currency earnings. This includes actively exploring emerging markets with a growing demand for organic products, such as Europe, North America, and Asia. Besides, developing strategic partnerships with importers and distributors in target markets paves way to facilitate market access and distribution.

Highlighting Ethiopia's commitment to environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation, it needs to emphasize the efforts taken to preserve natural habitats, protect indigenous coffee varieties, and promote agro forestry practices. Embracing sustainable practices resonates with environmentally conscious consumers and strengthens the appeal of Ethiopian organic coffee.

Coffee tourism offers an exciting avenue for earning foreign currency within the coffee industry. By capitalizing on the rise of specialty coffee and experiential travel, coffee-producing countries can showcase their unique coffee heritage, diversify revenue sources, stimulate economic growth, and create sustainable livelihoods for local communities. With strategic investments, collaborative partnerships, and effective marketing, coffee tourism has the potential to drive foreign currency earnings and cement the position of coffee-producing regions as sought-after destinations for coffee enthusiasts worldwide.

Art & Culture

Let us translate the message into action

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

I) Love
 God's miraculous work
 Designed Almighty-man
 Love loud to talk
 Resides in
 The Incarnated Word's
 Sky- to-earth
 Coming down
 And His birth
 In Bethlehem town
 To lead life
 Putting on
 A human flesh
 And gown.
 II) Truce
 What is more?
 God wanted to restore
 With man amity
 As per His
 Forgiving identity.
 III) Humbleness
 Christ was
 Born in a barn
 "Avoid egotism!"
 Us to warn.
 IV) Peace
 Than yourself love
 Your neighbor better,
 Because this way

The world for inhabiting
 Would be comfier.
 Envoy
 If the Aforementioned virtues
 We're supposed
 To emulate
 How failed we
 For one another
 To strike out from
 Our hearts hate?
 How failed we
 To stop worldwide
 The flowing of
 The innocents' blood
 Like flood?
 How failed we
 To display modesty
 True to Christ's
 Defining identity?
 If peace
 Is the oxygen
 We breathe,
 How failed we on
 Nonviolent coexistence
 To cut our teeth?
 How failed we,
 With accountability,
 Going half way
 "Let us bury
 The hatchet!"
 To our labelled foe say?



I'd tell you in my sleep

BY NAOMI ALEM

When I'm drunk and words don't
 make sense
 That's when I will tell you the truth
 I don't know why I feel incomplete all the time
 Your love brings me joy but I don't understand
 you
 Or maybe I just don't understand myself
 I don't know where to go from here
 Will you promise me forever
 I might wake you up from your sleep
 And I might rob you from your sleep
 But I will forever dream about you in my



This too, civility

BY WORKU BELACHEW

Know on what to be op-
 posed to,
 And on what, not to.
 As one is entitled to their opinion,
 As is civility to respect other's
 dominion,
 But, there appears a ground to
 stand together,
 Regardless of leveling from who-
 soever,
 This too decorates civility,
 Isn't it a building block of moral-



Science & Technology

Dream chaser off beaten path emerging successful despite constraints

“I specialize in designing, producing digital electronics devices, solar oven innovator,” - Kaledawit Esmelealem

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Kaledawit Esmelealem is an innovator and founder of Kale Electronics Company. He is electronics devices design engineer at Kale Electronics and an instructor at Bahir Dar University. He received his first and second degree from Bahir Dar University in Computer Science. He ranked third at the National Aviation Innovation Competition organized during the first National Aviation Expo-2023 here in Addis Ababa.

Kaledawit was born and raised in Bahir Dar city, the capital of Amhara Regional State. He attended both primary and secondary educations in Bahir Dar. Since his childhood, especially after he started formal education, science and technology ignited Kaledawit's passion. He was focusing on experiments and struggling to change the theoretical ideas he imbibed in class into practical ones. After he joined high school, his love to science courses put down roots in his heart. He loved physics, chemistry and mathematics courses and he joined his school's Science and Technology Club.

Even before school, he tried his hands on maintaining and making things. While in high school, he tried to translate the theoretical ideas he accumulated in school into practice both at school in the science and technology club and at his home. At that time, he produced simple electronic gadgets by his own efforts. Later, to further develop his skill and knowledge and to realize his hobby of becoming a professional innovator, completing the preparatory education; interested in electronics devices, he joined university determined to pursue computer Science.

This way he has managed to develop programing and designing knowledge in electronics devices. Currently, Kaledawit is an instructor of Computer Science at Bahir Dar University and he has established his own small electronics devices designing and producing company to realize his innovational ideas.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Kaledawit noted that invention and innovation were his childhood dreams, which he actualized uploading knowledge in the field. He was struggling in creating something new, maintaining and fixing simple electronic devices during his childhood. Making and fixing electronic gadgets offered him inexplicable gratitude in his childhood. This hobby sprouted into a profession after he joined college especially following his high school education.

That way, he honed skills in the electronics devices programing and production. Then, combining his experience from his childhood and the education he received from his formal education, he continued struggling to change his concepts and ideas in to products. And now, Kaledawit is striving to produce his already prototype products into commercialized products for market consumption.

Now, Kaledawit has a lot of innovational ideas and prototype products waiting to be produced for commercial purposes. Solar traffic light system, solar oven and solar products for light purpose are among his innovational ideas



Solar product assembled by Kale Electronics company

waiting for mass production. Assembled and programed locally, his solar products are on the market though with limited number due to financial constraints, while the solar oven, a product to change the traditional way of making injera into modern way using solar energy is on the table.

“Since my childhood, combining both theoretical knowledge and try-and-error efforts, I have specialized in electronics devices technology,” Kaledawit said. As he was interested in electronics design using software and computer-aided design, he has continued to manufacture electronics products at home by establishing Kale Electronics. He continued struggling changing concepts into products.

As to him, seven years ago, he produced a traffic light that functions using solar energy, though due to lack of finance he failed to duplicate it for commercial purpose. The product was a digital traffic light that fully operates using solar energy. “I designed, assembled and programed the digital solar traffic device locally,” Kaledawit said adding that to commercialize the product, financial constraint tied me down.

“As it was difficult and challenging to commercialize the solar traffic light device, I dropped producing it and turned my face to other products,” he reiterated. As he proved his mettle to produce standard electronics boards, different project owners are asking him to design and produce electronics devices. Thus he has turned his face to designing and producing electronics boards.

“After I dropped the idea of producing solar traffic devices, directly, I zeroed in on tapping solar system” Kaledawit stated. He is currently working on designing, assembling and programing solar energy products. Kaledawit stated that his innovations in the solar energy area secured him a lot of awards and recognitions. Incentivized, he is engaged in the solar energy business currently. Solar products assembled and designed by him are found in the market, still with rarity, as he is struggling with financial shortages.

Kaledawit stated that his biggest achievement for which he has secured a patent right and is still struggling to commercialize is a solar oven. The solar oven is a product to bake the Ethiopian flat bread injera, which is a staple food, through modern and easy ways, as to him. As it is capital intensive, he is looking forward to support or partnership to commercialize his innovation.



Kaledawit Esmelealem in his workshop

According to him, his product is power saver and easy to use, that aims to totally transform the traditional and cumbersome Injera making process.

“My goal is realizing and commercializing my solar oven product so as to modernize and transform Injera making process in Ethiopia.” The solar oven product is totally unique and new invention that can really modernize and ease the injera making system especially for the rural residents. For the time being, he is assembling and selling solar products assembled and programmed by his company's workshop.

During the recent national innovation aviation expo, he had staged his radar invention. He ranked third from the competitors gathered from across the nation. Kaledawit has specialized in designing digital electronics boards and for that purpose, he has developed a radio signal receiver systems. As to him, the device systems detect a radio frequency at the space, understand it and computerize it to use it for intended purpose.

“The device is my own invention from the concept to the design level. I developed an antenna and installed a radar technique. Using radio frequency, the radar identifies the distance and type of an object in the space and land,” Kaledawit stated. The radar technology has the ability to know the distance and type of airplane flying. He said that the radar technology produced at home has a lot of benefits though his

product is in the pipeline.

Next Plan

The next plan of Kaledawit is to open a factory to realize and commercialize his innovational products, though the innovation ecosystem for startup businesses remains challenging. “My plan is to produce standardized products and to establish an industry to produce my innovational products,” Keledawit said optimistically. Quality and quantity are atop his mind. “Currently, I am struggling to realize my ambition.” His dream is to own a big electronics factory and is working day and night to realize it. Still, the innovation ecosystem is challenging for him as he experienced serious challenges over the past ten years.

Challenges for startup innovators

As to Kaledawit, changing an idea or concept in to product taxes passing through tiresome steps. There is a need to pass five to seven steps and passing the steps by itself is challenging. What makes it more difficult is the lack of suitable ecosystem for beginners. At least, there must be favorable infrastructure for investment.

Lack of adequate and sustainable finance, lack of suitable ecosystem, inadequate support and limited institutions to verify prototype products are among the critical challenges facing the electronics devices sector. Hence, he calls both private and governmental institutions to give due attention to the sector and support inventors and innovation.

Society

Plan your trip; connect to your progenitors' culture, history

BY STAFF REPORTER

Gena (The Birth of Jesus Christ) and *Timket*, (The Baptism of Jesus Christ at Jordan River by John the Baptist) are among the religious feasts celebrated warmly and colorfully among adherents of Christianity.

These two annual festivals, (*Gena* and *Timket*) unlike other countries, fall in the month of January- on 7th January and 19th respectively, (Tahsas 29 and Tir 11 in the Ethiopian calendar) respectively. The festivals are celebrated a few days after followers of the Gregorian calendar welcomed their New Year.

And this year's *Gena* and *Timket* festivals are just left with a few days to be marked with breathtaking and captivating events throughout the country; especially at Lalibela and Gondar.

Following the festivals, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed extended his invitation to the second-generation foreigners of Ethiopian origin around the world to come back to their roots, reconnect with their ancestral roots, experience and enjoy the unique social, cultural and religious values and practices of their affinities, to spend some quality time at their homeland and have memories that will last a lifetime and also contribute to the nation's growth and development.

The Premier made the call a week ago at the time he inaugurated the Chebera Churchura Elephant Paw Lodge, located in the Dawro Zone, South West Ethiopia.

According to the Premier, the program will be carried out in three-rounds, from 30th December 2023 to the end of September 2024. The first-round homecoming program is arranged under the motto "Connect to Your Culture" begins from 30 December 2023 to 29 January 2024.

In this respect, the first round of the homecoming program is scheduled from 30 December to 29 January 2023 under the theme "Connect to Your Culture". Thus, second generation foreigners of Ethiopian origin invited to come home and attend the stunning, unforgettable events of the *Gena* and *Timket* festivals in Ethiopia.

Likewise, the second round program will be carried out under the theme "Connect to Your History" at the time when the African Union Summit will take place in Addis Ababa.

And the third round will take place from the time the Ethiopian rainy season begins to 30 September 2024, and the second generation diaspora who come to the homeland during this schedule will participate in the national annual tree planting session, according to the Prime Minister.

"What I want to make a call is about the second generation of Ethiopians who were born abroad. The second-generation Ethiopians



This initiative marks a pivotal step in bridging the generational gap and fostering a collective spirit of growth in keeping with the country's unwavering commitment to welcoming its global diaspora

are invited to come to their country in three rounds, from the end of December 2023 to beginning of September 2024 starting from this week. The first round will be held under the theme "Connect to Your Culture" They are invited to celebrate Christmas, Epiphany and victory days' including the Victory of Adwa celebrated sometime in the future with us. Thus, they will be familiar with their culture and promote it to others. The second round, which will be held starting from the AU Summit until the end of the rainy season is dubbed as "Connect to Your History". This will enable them to know their history, language, faith and culture," the Premier elaborated.

The 3rd round, as to him, will be held from the end of June to the beginning of September 2024 under the motto: "Leave Your Legacy."

According to Abiy, if the young Ethiopian Diasporas come home, know their culture and history and they are re-connected, they will teach children, plant seedlings, participate in rainy season activities. And the invitation is to leave their legacy in the land of their progenitors through taking part in various activities.

Stating that the invitation is not just an empty invitation, the Prime Minister pronounced the arrangements of special discounts by various service rendering organizations including the Ethiopian Airlines, the hotels and other similar institutions in all parts of the country.

"The reason for the invitation is not gaining money; but to let them know and understand their culture, history and love their country. It is also to encourage them to return, serve and develop their country once our path to prosperity starts to fruition. Ethiopia is ours and at the same time, theirs."

Subsequent to Premier's invitation, various activities are undertaken to welcome the second generation Ethiopians in the Diaspora.

The Ministry of Tourism has recently announced the establishment of a main

committee tasked to facilitate homecoming of the second-generation Ethiopian diaspora.

In a press briefing, the Tourism Minister, Ambassador Nasise Chali, stated that the homecoming program is aimed at connecting generations at home and abroad and familiarizing the second generation diaspora with their country of root.

Once they come home receiving the invitation extended by the Prime Minister, the second generation Diaspora will get connected to their history and culture and contribute their part to the ongoing development activities in the country, she said.

Not only that the homecoming program, aside from mending the gap between generations of Ethiopians, will also enable the second generation diaspora to promote the tourism potentials of Ethiopia to the rest of the world and become ambassadors of their nation at the global sphere.

The Minister further said "generations may come and go, but our beloved Ethiopia remains an everlasting beacon. So it is our duty to pass the baton, not just to those within the borders, but also to our kin scattered across the globe," ENA reported.

To realize Premier's call, make the guests' stay more enjoyable and memorable, the Ministry has set up a grand committee and divided the Second Generation Ethiopians Homecoming into three phases with a series of different events scheduled to be overseen by sub-committees.

The main committee is led by the Ministry of Tourism, she pointed out, adding that different institutions from federal, regional, and city administrations are part of the main committee.

Each phase promises a unique of events designed to foster meaningful connections and celebrate shared heritage.

"This initiative marks a pivotal step in bridging the generational gap and fostering a collective spirit of growth in keeping with the country's unwavering commitment to welcoming its global diaspora," Nasise reiterated.

International

Japan quake: Rescuers rush to reach survivors

At least 30 people were killed after a powerful earthquake hit Japan on New Year's Day, with rescue teams on Tuesday struggling to reach isolated areas where buildings had been toppled, roads wrecked and power cut to tens of thousands of homes.

The quake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 struck on Monday afternoon, prompting residents in some coastal areas to flee to higher ground as tsunami waves hit Japan's west coast, sweeping some cars and houses into the sea.

Thousands of army personnel, firefighters and police officers from across the country have been dispatched to the worst-hit area in the Noto peninsula in Ishikawa prefecture.

"The search and rescue of those impacted by the quake is a battle against time," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said during an emergency disaster meeting on Tuesday.

Kishida said rescuers were finding it very difficult to reach the northern tip of the Noto peninsula due to wrecked roads, and that helicopter surveys had discovered many fires and widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Many rail services and flights into the area have been suspended. Noto's airport closed due to damage to its runway, terminal and access roads, with 500 people stranded inside vehicles in its parking lot, public broadcaster NHK reported.

In Suzu, a coastal town of just over 5,000 households near the quake's epicentre, there may have been up to 1,000 houses destroyed,

according to its mayor Masuhiro Izumiya.

"The situation is catastrophic," he said.

Across Ishikawa prefecture, authorities have confirmed 30 deaths so far, with half of those in Wajima, another hard-hit city in the remote northern tip of the peninsula.

Firefighters have been battling blazes in several cities and trying to free more people trapped in collapsed buildings, Japan's fire and disaster management agency said.

More than 140 tremors have been detected since the quake first hit on Monday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency, which warned more strong shocks could hit in the coming days.

Nobuko Sugimori, a 74-year-old resident of Nanao city in Ishikawa, told Reuters she had never experienced such a quake before.

"I tried to hold the TV set to keep it from toppling over, but I could not even keep myself from swaying violently from side to side," Sugimori said from her home which had a large crack down its front wall and furniture scattered around the inside.

Across the street, a car was crushed under a collapsed building where residents had another close call.

Fujiko Ueno, 73, said nearly 20 people were in her house for a New Year celebration when the quake struck but miraculously all emerged uninjured.

"It all happened in the blink of an eye" she said, standing in the street among debris from the wreckage and mud that oozed out of the road's cracked surface.

Several world leaders sent condolence messages with President Joe Biden saying in a statement the United States was ready to provide any necessary help to Japan.

The Japanese government ordered around 100,000 people to evacuate their homes on Monday night, sending them to sports halls and school gymnasiums, commonly used as evacuation centres in emergencies.

Many returned to their homes on Tuesday as authorities lifted tsunami warnings.

But around 33,000 households remained without power in Ishikawa prefecture on Tuesday after a night where temperatures dropped below freezing, according to Hokuriku Electric Power's (9505.T) website. Most areas in the northern Noto peninsula also have no water supply, NHK reported.

The Imperial Household Agency said it would cancel Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako's slated New Year appearance on Tuesday following the disaster. Kishida postponed his New Year visit to Ise Shrine scheduled for Thursday.

Japan's defence minister told reporters on Tuesday that 1,000 army personnel are currently involved in rescue efforts and that 10,000 could eventually be deployed.

The quake also comes at a sensitive time for Japan's nuclear industry, which has faced fierce opposition from some locals since the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that triggered nuclear meltdowns in Fukushima. Whole towns were devastated in that disaster and nearly 20,000 people perished.

Japan last week lifted an operational ban imposed on the world's biggest nuclear plant, Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, which has been offline since the 2011 tsunami.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said no irregularities were found at nuclear plants along the Sea of Japan, including five active reactors at Kansai Electric Power's (9503.T) Ohi and Takahama plants in Fukui Prefecture.

Hokuriku Electric's Shika plant, the closest to the epicentre, has also been idled since 2011. The company said there had been some power outages and oil leaks following Monday's jolt but no radiation leakage.

The company had previously said it hoped to restart the reactor in 2026.

Chip equipment maker Kokusai Electric (6525.T) said it is investigating further after finding some damage at its factory in Toyama ahead of the planned resumption of operations on Thursday.

Companies including Sharp (6753.T), Komatsu (6301.T) and Toshiba have been checking whether their factories in the area have been damaged.

Source: Times of Earth

What's not to understand about climate change?

In Uganda and other places, people need to know how climate change actions will benefit their lives now. We have to change how we talk about the environment.

In July, global temperatures reached record highs, marking a climatic milestone likely unmatched in at least 120,000 years. Otim William Gerison, a Ugandan data analyst, experienced the searing heat firsthand.

"I thought it wasn't going to rain this year, only for October to abnormally get wet," Gerison said.

Coincidentally, as the 28th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP28) approaches its close, a report by the World Resources Institute paints a disheartening picture of the current state of climate action: Out of 42 indicators assessed, a staggering 41 are not on track to achieve their 2030 targets.

Shifting focus, Jefferson Nzundi Bwambale, a climate enthusiast and partnerships specialist with the United Nations Development Programme Uganda, expressed concern about a LinkedIn post he encountered: "The Arctic is warming almost 3 times faster than the rest of the planet. A warmer Arctic accelerates global heating, rise in sea levels, loss of ecosystems and more. We must act now. Time is running out."

While the post may resonate deeply within

the renewable energy and climate change communities, Bwambale suggests that for the broader audience, the message might be too abstract, hindering widespread attention.

Bwambale's concerns are clear.

The Arctic, with its remote and unfamiliar nature, may not appear as an immediate threat to many. Terms like "global heating" could be deemed too complex for a broader audience.

The post lacks concrete examples, leaving readers with a lingering "so what?" Finally, urgency is mentioned without explaining why time is running out or suggesting specific actions.

Bwambale sees a broader challenge: Discussions on climate change often elude comprehension. "How can we expect them to readily grasp these abstract environmental concepts?" Bwambale said.

Bwambale estimates that less than 1% of the global population truly grasps the implications of climate change. "Even worse are Ugandans," he said.

Gerison pointed out that much of the population of Uganda is young. "With 80% below the age of 25, many haven't witnessed the full extent of climate changes," he said.

Janet Ndagire, Bwambale's colleague, said it is difficult for Ugandan natives to connect with climate campaigns. They often perceive them as obstacles to survival rather than crucial

interventions.

"Imagine telling someone who relies on charcoal burning for survival that cutting down a tree could be hazardous!" Ndagire said. "It doesn't make sense to them, especially when the tree is on their plot of land."

Reflecting on personal experiences, Ndagire recalled childhood days of going to sleep fully covered. Nowadays it is too hot to do that, he said.

Ssiragaba Edison Tubonyintwari, a seasoned bus driver originally from western Uganda but currently driving with the United Nations, recounts the challenges of driving between 5 and 9 AM in the Albertine rift eco-region especially around the Ecuya forest reserve.

"It would be covered in mist," said Tubonyintwari. "We'd ask two people to stand in front, one on either side of the bus, signalling for you to drive forward, or else, you couldn't see two metres away. Currently, people drive all day and night!"

What happened? Tubonyintwari pointed to unauthorised tree cutting in the reserve, residential constructions and the cultivation of tea alongside Irish potatoes in the wetlands. The result was rising temperatures.

His account supplements a Global Forest Watch report which puts commodity-driven deforestation above urbanisation.

It's notable that Tubonyintwari didn't

explicitly use the term "climate change," yet the sexagenarian can effectively explain the underlying concept through his detailed description of altered environmental conditions.

Global Forest Watch reports alarming deforestation trends, with 5.8 million hectares lost globally in 2022. In Uganda, more than 6,000 deforestation alerts were recorded between 22 and 29 November this year.

The consequences of such environmental degradation are dire. Ndagire emphasised that those who once wielded axes and chainsaws for firewood are now the very individuals facing reduced crop yields due to extreme weather conditions.

Even as Uganda grapples with the aftermath of a sudden surge in heavy rains from last October, Bwambale questions the country's meteorological department, highlighting the failure to provide precise explanations and climate-aware preparations.

These interconnected narratives emphasise the need for accessible climate campaigns and community-driven solutions. As COP28 gathers elites, the call for a simplified narrative gains prominence, mirroring successful communication models seen during the Covid-19 pandemic; else it's the same old throwing of good money after bad.

Source: news-decoder.com



This is Ethiopia

Ye Gena Chewata- Traditional Ethiopians' Christmas game

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ye Gena Chewata is the oldest traditional game practiced in Ethiopia for centuries. This traditional game though has deep roots and holds significant historical and cultural values, the exact origin of the game and its exact beginning date is not recorded.

Some believe that the game originated during ancient times when Ethiopians sought entertainment during the holiday season. It has been passed down through generations, with each era adding its own unique twist and flavor to the gameplay.

Ye Gena Chewata, also known as the Ethiopian Christmas game, holds a significant place in the cultural fabric of Ethiopia. This traditional game, played during the Christmas season, is not only a source of joy and entertainment but also encompasses deep-rooted historical and symbolic meanings. This game brings communities together, creating bonds and fostering social connections. The game is one of the most cherished traditional games played in Ethiopia. It is also a game that brings people together, whether they are young or old, family or friends, to have a good time and indulge in some friendly competition.

Addis Ababa City Administration Culture and Tourism Bureau Intangible Heritages Senior Expert Memhir Mekibib Gebremariam told *The Ethiopian Herald* that that Christmas tree, Christmas father and Christmas gift are not familiar during the Ethiopian *Genna*.

On the other hand, Ethiopian Christmas is marked with various traditional games and celebrations among the youths, women and children. The game is played widely during Ethiopian Christmas celebration countrywide. Various cultural cloths like; Jano, Bernos, among others are also a special adornment while celebrating Ethiopian Christmas. In addition, different cultural songs and dancing are played with youths in different cultural backgrounds throughout the country.

This game has gained immense popularity in Ethiopia over the years. It is not just a game; it is a cultural phenomenon that reflects the spirit and camaraderie of the Ethiopian people. From bustling cities to rural villages, you can find *Ye Gena Chewata* being played with enthusiasm and passion. It is a game that transcends age, gender, and social status, uniting people under the shared joy of friendly competition.



Children playing *Ye Gena Chewata*

Accordingly, in the rural areas, a popular game is conducted between two youth teams. The game is named after the festival and is called "*Ye gena Chewata*". *Gena* festivities begin early in the day, as early as 6:00 am when people gather in churches for mass. For the clergy, it has begun much earlier, 43 days before, with the fasting period leading up to *Gena*. This pensive fasting period is required of the clergy and is known as the fast of the prophets. The fast of Advent is carried out to cleanse the body and soul in preparation for the day of the Birth of Christ.

According to the Ethiopian Cultural Sport Federation, in the past *Ye Gena Chewata* was primarily seen as a leisure activity and a way to pass the time. However, in recent years, it has gained recognition as a cultural heritage that should be preserved and celebrated. Organizations and individuals are now working towards raising awareness and promoting the significance of *Ye Gena Chewata* in Ethiopian society.

Beyond its entertainment value, *Ye Gena Chewata* has implications for social dynamics and cultural identity. It provides a platform for the preservation of traditional customs, language, and values. It also serves as a reminder of Ethiopia's rich history and the importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer. *Ye Gena Chewata* embodies the spirit of Ethiopian culture and continues to be a source of pride for its people.

Different sources indicate that *Gena* is a traditional sporting game created and played in the highlands of Ethiopia; the game bears many similarities with modern

day field hockey.

In addition, *Ye Gena Chewata* serves as a fun and engaging activity that adds an extra layer of excitement to the holiday season, creating lasting memories for all involved. This game is usually played in a wide open area located between two towns, yet the game area has no official boundaries. The two opposing teams try to throw a ball made of wood in the air and attempt to hit it with their sticks, all done to prevent the other team from bringing the wooden ball to their town.

Accordingly, the game received its name from Ethiopia's Christmas celebrations called *Gena*, proving their association. *Gena* is believed to be good for the body, mind and spirit, as it initiates healthy competition between towns, neighbors, and family members. It facilitates a strong feeling of bonding and friendship, not only on a local level but also in a national way.

Different culture and heritages experts also recommend that in a rapidly changing world, the traditional games of the past can sometimes struggle to find their place. The rise of digital entertainment, urbanization, and shifting cultural preferences pose potential threats to the practice of *Ye Gena Chewata*. It is crucial to address these challenges and ensure that the game does not lose its cultural significance.

Fortunately, there are ongoing efforts to preserve and promote *Gena Chewata*. Community organizations, cultural institutions, and passionate individuals are actively organizing events, workshops, and exhibitions to showcase the game's

importance. By educating younger generations about its cultural significance and encouraging their active participation, *Ye Gena Chewata* can be safeguarded for the future. Together, it is possible keep the spirit of *Ye Gena Chewata* alive and thriving in Ethiopian society.

Ethiopian *Ye Gena Chewata* stands as a cherished tradition that encapsulates the essence of community, history, and cultural identity. As this game continues to be passed down through generations, it remains a symbol of unity and celebration.

While facing the challenges of modern times, the preservation of the game is vital, ensuring its endurance and the continued enjoyment of this special Ethiopian game.

In sum, *Ye Gena Chewata* is not just a game but a reflection of Ethiopian culture and tradition. It is often played during the Ethiopian Christmas season, known as *Gena*, which is a significant holiday for Christians in the country. The game serves as a way to celebrate and mark this special time of the year, bringing people together to enjoy each other's company and engage in friendly competition. Within families and friend groups, *Ye Gena Chewata* can deepen relationships and create lasting memories. The playful banter, friendly competition, and shared laughter during the game create a positive and joyous atmosphere. It is a chance to let loose, forget about daily worries, and simply enjoy the company of loved ones. Whether you win or lose, the connections formed through *Ye Gena Chewata* are the real victory.