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Photo: Gebabo Gebre

AI appropriate use expedites overall growth: MoF

• EAI launches Desta Robot

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Ensuring ethical and proper use of artificial intelligence (AI) is government’s priority to accelerate national

growth, Ministry of Finance (MoF) said.

On the sideline of the inauguration of “Desta Robot” by Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute (EAI) before yesterday, MoF’s State Minister Eyob Tekalgn (PhD) told The

Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Ethiopia need to use artificial intelligence technology correctly and properly to advance overall development.

See AI appropriate ... page 3



Ministry announces success story about greening Ethiopia

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA- About 90.4% of planted trees during the fifth year’s Green Legacy Initiatives (GLI) have already grown up , according to first round monitoring of plantations by Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) .

See Ministry announces ... page 3

Coffee quality contest winners envisage penetrating global market

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Awardees of the 4th Edition of Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest said winning the competition helps to penetrate global market.

The 4th edition of Ethiopian Coffee Quality Contest 2024 was held recently in Addis Ababa organized by Fairtrade Africa in partnership with the International Trade Centre.

In the competition, LayoTeraga, a local coffee union won the first place and Banko Michata and Oromia Coffee Farmers’ Cooperative Unions finished second and third in the competition respectively and received a certificate and rewards for

See Coffee quality ... page 3

MoI commends steel manufacturers

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Industry (MoI) announced that Ethiopia encourages steel manufacturers as the government intensifies expansion of electricity and telecom services.

During his visit to China’s WODA Metal Industry PLC, MoI Minister Melaku Alebel said that steel products are much needed in Ethiopian market particularly for smart telecom towers and electric poles.

He praised WODA and some other steel manufacturing companies for their contribution in infrastructural development.

The government has an ambition of electrifying not only Ethiopia, but also neighboring countries. So, local manufacturers and foreign investors [in Ethiopia] are encouraged to engage in producing electrical construction materials

See MoI commends ... page 3





Chanie Adefris

Ministry expresses readiness to back universities autonomous aspirations

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - All universities under the institution’s umbrella that meet the set standards would be autonomous, the Ministry of Education (MoE) said, reiterating its commitment to support identified universities.

The Ministry’s Institutional Structure and Leadership Desk Head Chanie Adefris told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the ministry is highly committed to accept and facilitate the autonomy of all the universities that meet the required criteria to become autonomous.

The head further remarked that the ministry is undertaking various supportive and follow up activities to enable universities that have been identified earlier with the view of effectuating them in the next five years.

“Aligning with its reform activities, the ministry is also creating a playground to generate autonomous higher education institutions,” he remarked.

Apart from the selected eight research and two technological universities, the head emphasized that his ministry is currently employing prime efforts to make other parallel higher institutions autonomous as per the set standard.

Accordingly, human resource structures, financial capacity, education program, quality of education related with their international associations are among the core requirements, he noted.

He said: “They have been undertaking panel discussions and forums to evaluate the progress and performances made to be autonomous thereby witnessing promising achievement that leads them to be autonomous in the shortest possible time.”

Besides, he noted that the internal financial capacity, infrastructure, and human resources are also in the right position.

More importantly, the pointed out that the autonomy of universities is highly critical towards ensuring the quality of education and creating the opportunity to realize their missions in a proper and sustained manner.

Emphasizing the need to strengthen reform activities, he said, adding that the universities are expected to produce competent and influential citizens in the international arena.

It is to be recalled that around ten first-generation universities are identified to become autonomous.

AACCSA urges financial sector to create easy credit access

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (AACCSA) requested financial sectors to establish an atmosphere to help the business community obtain credit easily.

Speaking at a panel discussion revolving around credit provision , AACCSA President Mesenbet Shenkutie said that although commercial banks, development banks and small financial institutions in Ethiopia are the main providers of loans to commercial companies, the amount of loans offered is small and complicated by various preconditions and red-tape bureaucracies .

Therefore, she called on the financial sector to make available easy credit access for business community .

She said, “The private sector has a great contribution to the expansion of trade and investment in the country. Those people who engaged in various business operations in Addis Ababa and other parts of the country have been complaining about the

low accessibility of loans. Thus, lack of easy credit access has been negatively impacting the private sector .”

Credit availability and access is the backbone of any business, therefore, in the recent research conducted by the council, 40 percent of the issues that have been mentioned as obstacles to business in the business community are due to lack of financial availability, she added.

As to her, in the annual loan allocation and payment, banks should give a certain amount of quota to the private sector, which is the engine of economic growth, and set up a system that can relax the loan conditions to a certain extent.

Based on their value-adding methods, financial institutions have also requested that they implement a system that makes it possible to make loan collateral free of obligation and provide affordable interest loans to start-up business creators, she noted.

African Financial Integrity and Accountability Program Coordinator,



Getachew Tekelemariam on his part said, “To create favorable credit accessible for business community, we should take the best practice of Kenya, South Africa. They have predictable regulatory framework, effective credit monitoring system and interest rate policy aligned to business cycle.”

Foundation says Autism center construction well underway

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA- Nia Foundation stated that the construction of Holistic rehabilitation Joy Center for Autism is progressing well.

Approached by the journalists Nia Foundation Executive Director Eleni Dantew said that the construction of the center has reached 60-70 percent as all skeletal parts are completed this time.

Joy center for autism under construction in 4,624 square meters is progressing well and will be completed within three months, as to her.

The foundation held awareness creation day under the campaign “Autism I Care” on last Saturday .

She said, “We are working to complete the construction of the center in three months with help of government, business and private sectors involvement.”



The center will have holistic rehabilitation for children with autism, empower their

parents, promote for enhancement of community awareness and the protection of their wellbeing, she noted.

Upon completion of the six storey building, the center will have theatre center, school, dormitory, research center, and resting for children with autism that accommodate 500 children with autism, she said.

The center helps persons with autism to get training and help them to do everything by their own, move freely without support, help to identify the special talent children with autism.

The government and non- governmental organization are responsible to change the current out looking on autism in the nation.

“The center is being built by collecting money from community, governmental and private business companies and various contractors . We still need the assistance of all to successfully complete the construction soon.”

Ethnocentric elitist politics in Ethiopia...

including government, legislatures, political parties, and electoral systems, which they perceive as ineffective, corrupt, or unresponsive to the needs and interests of ordinary citizen.

These groups of ethnic elites distrust authority figures, political leaders, and elites, whom they see as self-serving or manipulative individuals who exploit power for personal gain or ideological ends. They use character assassination; defamation and false profiling to discredit the efforts of the federal and regional governments make to ensure national development and promotion of peaceful dialogue.

The propaganda and social media trumpeting of these groups is often associated with feelings of apathy, alienation, or detachment from the political process. Nihilists may feel disconnected from mainstream politics and disengaged from civic duties such as voting, activism, or community involvement in social development. They try to accomplish everything at gun point.

They often question the underlying assumptions and values that underpin political discourse and action, challenging notions of justice, freedom, democracy, or progress as illusory or subjective concepts.

Ethnic oriented political nihilists are

characterized by a radical skepticism towards political narratives, ideologies, and rhetoric, which they view as manipulative tools used to control or manipulate public opinion. They reject any government report or briefings as falsehood and empty propaganda.

Ethnocentric political elites in Ethiopia also manifest in acts of protest, rebellion, or chaotic actions aimed at disrupting existing power structures and challenging dominant political paradigms. Thy totally reject the reform program of the country and the multi-faceted national programs as irrelevant and unnecessary for the country.

News

Ethiopia's startups surge agricultural productivity competitiveness

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's startups have become vital to drive a competitiveness surge of the country in agricultural production and quality of commodities in the global market, innovators in the sphere told ENA.

Innovations which could increase the nation's value of agricultural products and competitiveness internationally are being displayed at "Startup Ethiopia Exhibition", which was launched on Monday at the Science Museum.

ENA observed Young startupper who presented innovative works that would maximize income by increasing the value of agricultural products which Ethiopia exports as well as providing organized information to buyers.

In recent years, Ethiopia aims to emerge as a beacon of opportunity in the global startup landscape.

The holistic approach in this startup ecosystem holds the promise of unleashing entrepreneurial vigor, propelling economic growth, and spurring job creation across the sectors including agriculture in Ethiopia, it was indicated.

In this regard, Ethiopia's large and youthful population is considered as an asset with more investment to empower more young people to

have the education, tools, and platform they need to take charge and create opportunities for themselves and the world.

Mikiyas Estefanos, One of the young innovators, displayed a technology called 'tracing coffee' where the buyer can track the information of coffee production, accounting for the largest share of the export trade in Ethiopia.

Approached by ENA, Mikiyas said this innovative tool allows the buyer to know the whole information of the coffee starting from the producer.

For him, the technology will essentially further increase the competitiveness of Ethiopian coffee in the world market.

More importantly, buyers will be provided clear information about the uniqueness and quality of Ethiopian coffee with the support of this innovation.

Another startupper, Anduamlak Mehariw presented innovative works that can be used to increase the value of export products.

Anduamlak who is also manager of "Green Bean Manufacturing" which manufactures agricultural products processing and farm machines; explained that the technology helps

to increase export income and competitiveness, including the value of agricultural products, which covers 60 percent of Ethiopia's export products.

He also mentioned that rosemary, turmeric and coffee drying machines are among his innovations.

The founder and manager of "B-Farm Tech", Begashaw Mebirate who graduated in the agriculture field, envisages supporting his country's farms to enable them to use modern equipment.

He said lack of agricultural technology that he noticed while working in various institutions, was the starting point for his innovative work.

He explained that he has created a technology that connects the farmers with grain threshing tractor owners and tractor operator professionals.

Pointing out that this will help him to contribute to the modernization of agriculture, Begashaw acknowledged the government's attention to innovation has given him hope to be successful.

The exhibition has been open to the public since 8th April 2024, and will end after 21 days, it was indicated.



AI appropriate...

As to the State Minister, giving serious attention to AI technology under the umbrella of information communication technology is among the priority areas of the reformist government to address country's challenges.

Among others, AI technology helps to curb economic, health, and agriculture limitations of the nation by encouraging creativity, increasing human intelligence, he noted.

EAI's Communication Affairs Director Tesfaye Zewdie on his part said that his institution has been carrying out various activities to bring problem-solving technology using AI.

EAI has developed robots that speak local languages, it was learnt.

Tesfaye further stated that previously, Ethiopian languages were not machine languages which makes it difficult to conduct deep scientific research. However, EAI developed "Natural Language processing" aimed at enhancing technology-assisted communication with using languages.

For instance, he said, Desta Robot is speaking in Amharic which is significant to inspire creativity and educating the new generation about technology.

"AI also helps to bridge the health gap through exploiting effective technology. For example, the total ratio of the doctors to the patients is 1 to 22,000 in Ethiopia. AI technology attempts to fill this wide gap," he noted.

Likewise, the EAI establishing a 15 petabyte storage capacity data center in order to manage the information in a modern way. It has also been working in producing skilled human power and filling infrastructure gaps to bring significant outcome from artificial intelligence technology in the years to come, he mentioned.

Furthermore, the EAI works in realizing smart city previously like Adama, Bishoftu, Hawassa, Bahir Dar, and Jigjiga whilst the work will continue for other cities in the coming future, Tesfaye elaborated.

Mol commends...

as well as telecom tower making inputs, he highlighted.

China's WODA Metal Industry PLC Marketing, Sales and Engineering Director, Haile-Gebriel Teshome also told *The Ethiopian Herald* that Ethiopian market is lucrative for steel and metal companies.

Since 2016, Woda metal industry has been in Ethiopia, manufacturing electric transmission poles and steel structures and billboard poles and smart towers and supplying the products to Ethio telecom, Safaricom and the Ethiopian Electric Power, he said.

"As a company manufacturing huge steel structures, we are now supplying smart telecom towers which introduced alongside city beautification. We have a contract to supply additional poles and towers for the corridor development of Addis Ababa city," he stated.

Adding, the company is operating with 20 percent of its 100,000 tones manufacturing capacity. If asked for additional supply, the company will enter into its full production capacity," he said.

Having about 500 employees, the company is also assembling and supplying three wheelers.

Ministry announces...

MoA's Natural Resource Development, Conservation, Utilization, Biological Soil, Water Conservation and Combined Forest Farming Desk Head Befikadu Birhanu told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the first round evaluation was undertaken to assess the success of plantation thus the success rate has been recorded as 90.4%.

Mentioning that the evaluation is conducted twice a year, he said that this year's plantation success surpassed the previous years.

Previously, he said the plantation success used to be around 80%. As the community engagement and their sense of ownership to the initiative have now grown, the plantation success rate has tremendously increased over the years.

Moreover, he emphasized that due attention has been given to protecting and caring for planted seedlings. To this end, various awareness raising activities have been carried out to sensitize the community.

Over 32 billion seedlings have been

planted since the commencement Green Legacy Initiatives (GLI). It was learnt that the planted seedlings have the capacity to withstand climate change apart from possessing multilayered economic benefits to the community, as to him.

Besides, the massive avocado production that is currently being exported, there is also an increased fruit production under the green legacy initiative, he added.

"Five years have already elapsed since Green Legacy Initiatives (GLI) was launched. The initiative is not luxury issue but it is a matter of survival," he underscored.

Citing different studies, he stressed that the nation has lost three quarters of its forest cover from 1960s to 1980s EC. A significant portion of natural resource has also been degraded at the time.

Befikadu further noted that the Ministry is undertaking the necessary preparation to conduct evaluation of the second round seedling plantation success.

Coffee quality contest winners...

achievement.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency ((EPA), Layo Traga Coffee Producer Cooperative Union Manager Adviser Tesfaye Dube said that his union receives coffee from farmers and supply natural and washed grade one up to grade four coffee products to local and international market.

Layo Teraga Coffee Producer Cooperative Union which is consisted of 1905 famers with 72 million capital, supplies quality coffee to Europe and US market and works to change

the famers' life and environment as well, he said.

This reward encourages the union to work relentlessly to get international recognition and alternative markets thereby earn better income, Tesfaye said.

Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union Deputy Manager Mitiku Bekele said that the union, which incorporates 557,186 coffee farmers and 713 million Birr capital, is working with three coffee processing machines to keep quality and planned to install coffee processing

in Guji area.

He said the union is working in 12 zones of 71 districts together with quality inspection experts that inspect producers and warehouses which helps it to achieve the award.

"We are working on organic coffee to export to US, Japan and Europe market," he said.

Farmers will get market benefit, earn better income and get additional 25 USD cents per sell and this helps them to build roads, school, he indicated.

"With the help of Fairtrade Africa, our union will participate in Specialty Coffee Expo 2024 that will take place in Chicago. Thus, we will attract and expand market destination, increase traceability and network," he expressed.

Participating in the contest for the 4th time helps to get training that provided by Fairtrade Africa to empower the union economically, socially and to conserve the environment, he noted.

Both unions said that winning the competition helps to penetrate the global market.

Opinion

Ensuring peace, security vital for achieving national growth

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Ethiopia has been facing a number of challenges to its peace and security because of internal conflicts and regional tensions. Its political, economic and social conditions are also complex and multifaceted. These factors involve several ethnic and socioeconomic variables. Lack of peace and security arise from various related and interconnected factors, including structural and systemic ones. They also involve individual, communal, regional and religious elements.

Consequently, the country has been facing devastating conflicts and war. The current conflicts have domestic as well as regional significance as they generate instability and insecurity in the country. These conflicts, experts believe, can develop from disputes over territory, resources, ideology, or governance.

Territorial claims along the border areas have been recurring causing serious challenges to peace and security in the disputed areas. Similarly, claims over resources such as water, land, minerals and others have become constant sources of instability in the country. Other major cause of lack of peace in the country arises from ideological differences among contending parties.

People turn to violent means to make their aims and ends meet. Once unrest sets in a peaceful society, it is difficult to remove it without the full cooperation of all involved in it. It may lead to loss of lives and properties of innocent Ethiopians. Those that are party to a conflict or violence have to discuss issues of contentions that have led to serious damages.

One of the major causes of political dislocations in Ethiopia is economic inequality and poverty. Socioeconomic disparities and poverty may fuel social discontent. Unemployment of graduates and the working age citizens may cause social problems at all levels and regions. In particular, the lack of economic opportunities may lead to political unrest. All these and other factors may fuel grievances and social discrepancy, contributing to insecurity.

Social disparities cause ethnic, tribal and religious tensions, which are sometimes deeply devastating if they are not resolved in time. Deep-seated ethnic tensions may be easily resolved if handled by Elders that are highly respected by the communities they live in. Similarly,

religious divisions and disputes can be resolved using the leaders and elders in the different sects and cults. But, if the ethnic and religious tensions are not solved in time, experts believe that these factors can lead to discrimination and marginalization.

People living in the same community may be maltreated thereby deepening social tensions. They may also lead to violent conflict, undermining peace and stability within societies. Once these conflicts set in, it may be difficult for law enforcement agencies to settle even minor disputes that have led to major conflicts with in communities. Conflicts normally lead to indiscriminate use of force that has led to dismemberment of human beings.

It is now discovered by experts that there are repressions committed by both official and contending parties. Those who suffer from these repressive measures are the innocent peasants in the rural areas and the residents of urban areas. The most offending part of these measures is discrimination based on ethnic, tribal and religious identities. They raise resentments that lead to social conflicts thereby undermining security and stability in the regions as well as urban areas. If conflicts are not solved in time among concerned individuals or parties, they may flare up and spread to wider areas creating tensions between regions and the country in general.

External interference and intervention are designed by alien forces especially the superpowers for the purpose of creating tensions among fighting entities in Ethiopia. They normally side with the winning party that enables them to control and exploit the natural resources of the country. Their interference may include military interventions, supplying weapons and technical assistance to the fighting parties. They do intensify the geopolitical rivalries and proxy wars. They support one local party against the other for the purpose of exacerbating conflicts.

The purpose of destabilizing districts and regions is to weaken all parties to a conflict and render them dependent on foreign economic and military aid. Added to these alien interventions are externally financed terrorism and extremism. Terrorism and extremism pose immense threats to the delicate peace and security situations in Ethiopia. Other foreign agents may inculcate the fighting parties with ideological inputs that cause radicalization within the political system. Thus, external influences are major

causes of disorder in the country.

As indicated earlier, radicalization of domestic forces pose immense threats to peace and security in Ethiopian and the Horn region. These forces are acknowledged by both regional and global powers. They instill fear throughout the country and the region by undermining societal cohesion. In its history, Ethiopia has been an example of independence for Africa and this has attracted the attention of colonial and neocolonial powers. They are intent on disfiguring its exemplar effort to keep itself independent.

As a result, they created local *Bandas* or locally recruited soldiers to serve colonial missions. This strategy has now slightly changed and neocolonialists engage local leaders as partners in their mission of exploiting the natural resources of the country. These resources are mainly diamond, gold, sapphire, precious gemstones with different colors. They also want to use the fertile land of Ethiopia and its waters for modern agricultural produces. Its huge valleys are also endowed with potential for various types of plantations, including cotton, fruits and vegetables, which could be used for export to the rest of the world.

The absence of peace due to illegal activities by both domestic and alien forces has caused environmental degradation and climate change. Ethiopians find it difficult to care for environmental resources due to lack of peace and security. Tree plantation to cover degraded areas and to secure water resources have become the Task of Tantalus, difficult to handle in the absence of peace and security.

Moreover, resource scarcity in some parts of the country has also led to local skirmishes in accessing water resources when draught becomes a threat to livelihoods of the people. It can be safely concluded that the competition over land and water, and the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing tensions. If not resolved in time by the Elders in the concerned community, the local tensions may expand into neighboring localities. If left unresolved, it ultimately contributes to conflicts over accessing natural resources. The unresolved issues extend to loss of cattle due to lack of water and pasture lands. As these cattle are also instruments of agro-production, their loss implies immense danger for the community at large, including incursions to the neighboring communities, which are encouraged by alien powers.

Affected communities tend to defend themselves from incursions into their localities. This causes arms proliferation and illicit trafficking. The widespread availability of small arms and weapons become causes for conflicts that may grow into wars. These further lead to illicit drug trafficking and weapons. This process involves human beings, which can further fuel violence and instability.

Experts believe that such violence causes social fragmentation, disintegration and breakup of communities. It also implies massive displacement that becomes a major cause of concern for the government of Ethiopia. Mass displacement increases refugee flows and the breakdown of social cohesion. All these are effects of conflicts and natural disasters, further destabilizing concerned communities and regions thereby straining resources. Addressing these issues requires the government to design comprehensive strategies. The main components of these strategies encompass conflict prevention, peace-building and good governance.

A relevant and appropriate strategy focuses mainly on economic development with focus on poverty reduction, employment generation, and increase in output and foreign exchange earnings. This strategy encompasses human rights protection, and sustainable development.

Also, peace and security require fostering dialogue and reconciliation. This is a sine qua non for long lasting cooperation among communities and nations. It is crucial for building lasting peace and security. It has repeatedly been reported that conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, including widespread displacement, human rights abuses, and food shortages.

These social problems have to be tackled to maintain social security and law and order in Ethiopia. As Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic country with a history of ethnic tensions, it is reported that autonomy is granted to ethnically defined regions. However, this arrangement has contributed to ethnic fragmentation, confrontation, competition and tensions. It is believed that political transitions and power struggles at the federal and regional levels have exacerbated these tensions, giving no space to peace and security in the country. The solution is repeated dialogue to resolve political, economic and social issues in Ethiopia.

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

Editorial

Diaspora's excelled patriotism

The Ethiopian diaspora community's unflinching advocacy, financial assistance, and other backings thrown behind the Abbay hydro-power dam have remained intact for over a decade.

Over the last 13 years, the community has been defending the all-round interests of Ethiopia, particularly concerning the Abbay hydro-dam or the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

In the stated years, the diaspora remitted over 114 million Birr for the construction of the mega hydropower project, according to the Ethiopian Diaspora Association (see *The Ethiopian Herald* Vol. LXXX No 183, April 11, 2024).

The advocacy work that the diaspora carried out was invaluable.

Ethiopia had been a subject of debate at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) over a dozen times. Sworn-in foes of the country endeavored to agitate the development pace of Ethiopia; hence, they unfairly took the GERD case to the UNSC. They managed neither to halt the pace of the construction nor to slow it down. The diaspora community joining hands with the Ethiopian government brought the case back on track in an 'African solution, to African challenges' fashion.

The wicked propaganda and the self-made fear some media were fanning had been acutely mitigated with scientific facts. And today, the overall project has reached 95 percent.

Though a tough job which consumed the dear time, energy and finance of Ethiopians and foreigners of Ethiopian origin, the advocacy work had created the opportunity to inform the world opinion on the incontrovertible benefits of the development project.

The Abbay hydro-dam (GERD) is a project which showcases the possibility of mutual interdependence in the Nile Basin. It shows the capability of Africans to initiate, lead and realize mega development projects.

Among the critical challenges that African countries are facing in the pursuit of realizing development projects are shortages of finance. Or some could be of the opinion that aid and grants are second to none to harnessing natural resources. But, the construction of the Abbay hydro-dam serves as a tangible witness to the fact that we, Africans, can do even more if we stand in unity.

Africa's huge energy project located in Ethiopia, a few kilometers away from Ethio-Sudanese border, is a bona fide project that is in its final stages of construction to quench the ever-increasing energy demands of Ethiopia and its African friends. For instance, Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan are enjoying clean energy supplies and getting connected to Ethiopia's electric grid. Tanzania and South Africa will get connected to Ethiopia's national grid in no time.

Downstream countries that funnel their wealth to lobby firms in a wishful thinking of harming the development feat must understand that their ill-fated activities are in utter contradiction to pan-Africanism.

Their attempts are truly to impoverish Africa and cripple the agenda 2063. Energy interconnection is part and parcel of creating 'the Africa We Want'.

In this regard, our diaspora community needs to continue standing by the side of Africa and its people. There should not be any African community which keeps languishing in darkness in the 21st C. We must harness our rivers and turn them into energy. We have to boost our cooperation more than ever before. And Nile countries should bring their covenant, the Cooperative Framework of Agreement (CFA) on the Nile to effect. The diplomatic efforts to get one more Nile Basin country to pass the CFA at its legislature should get a further momentum. It is also high-time for the Ethiopian diaspora to work in close cooperation with the diaspora community of other African countries to protect the interests of Africa.



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Opinion

Ethnocentric elitist politics in Ethiopia is a threat to national unity and development

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Ethnocentric Political elitism is characterized by the concentration of power and authority in the hands of a select few individuals or groups of the ethnic group. In Ethiopia, they try to amplify the old glory of their ethnic group instead of focusing on multi-ethnic democratic unity of the population in Ethiopia. These elites may occupy positions of leadership in government, political parties, corporations, media outlets, or other influential institutions or jungle based fake political freedom fighters. They advocate for unity under the political dominance of parties or political groupings of their own ethnic group while considering other ethnic population as subjects and not as legitimate contenders of political power.

These groupings have access to resources, including wealth, education, networks, and institutional support, which enable them to maintain their privileged status and exercise influence over political processes and outcomes.

In systems marked by ethnic political elitism, there may be limited opportunities for meaningful political participation and representation for ordinary citizens or marginalized groups. Decision-making processes may be opaque, exclusionary, or dominated by elite interests.

This type of political elitism often perpetuates itself through mechanisms of social reproduction of ethnic tell tales, where elite status is passed down through family connections, educational pedigree, or inherited wealth. This can result in the entrenchment of elite power and the exclusion of new voices and perspectives from the political arena.

Ethnic based political elites may use their influence to shape public policies and regulations in ways that serve their own ethnic interests or those of their constituencies, often at the expense of broader societal welfare or the public good. This phenomenon, known as policy capture, can lead to inequalities, inefficiencies, and injustices in governance.

Such political elites may resist efforts to democratize or reform political systems that threaten their privileged position or challenge the status quo. They may use their influence to block or co-opt reform initiatives, maintain existing power structures, and preserve their own dominance.

Ethiopian ethnocentric political elites swing between ethnic cultural, linguistic and exclusive religious dominance and a chameleonic stance on civic nationalism professing unity of Ethiopia led by their ethnic group leaders. They deliberately conduct political distortions of federalism with no respect for other ethnic groups.

Ethnocentric elitist groups here and overseas have so far failed to come up with a consolidated political strategy or program but rather remained fragmented and disunited competing with each other over

funds raised by ethnocentric elitist political groups from abroad.

These groups have no specific political program but are currently led by opinions of their emotionally charged and angry leaders and activists who spread their slanderous lies and make-believe social media based lies.

Here, it is important to take note of the contradictory nature of their "struggle". They brag that they are fighting to restore the glory and human rights of their ethnic groups but block transport networks and destroy public facilities that are used by their own kith and kin. They have now partially tried to obstruct the socio-economic fabric and peaceful life of their own ethnic groups and yet claim that they are "freedom fighters". They prevent farmers to have access to agricultural inputs and fertilizers which are purchased by forex from abroad.

If one closely observes their propaganda, one can easily conclude that they are conducting a proxy war on the country and their own ethnic groups which they claim of fighting for their rights.

In their desperate attempts to attain political hegemony in the country ethnic elitist groups meddle into the religious affairs of the nation mixing secular politics with religious doctrine to expand their social support among the faithful through the influence of religious elitist leaders. They either try to show that the government is in favor of a specific religious group making the government responsible for the turmoil and blaming it for tampering with religious rights enshrined in the constitution. All the more they try to use religious celebrations for political purposes.

Ethnocentric political elites employ political nihilism as their world outlook with all its ramifications.

Ethno-political nihilism as practiced by the elites is a philosophical stance or attitude characterized by a rejection or skepticism of traditional political ideologies, institutions, and values including dialogue for peace. Individuals who adhere to political nihilism often believe that existing political systems are inherently flawed, corrupt, or incapable of achieving meaningful change or progress. They may view political participation, activism, or engagement as futile or meaningless, and may express feelings of disillusionment, apathy, or cynicism towards the political process.

Ethnocentric elitist political nihilists reject conventional political ideologies, such as liberalism, conservatism, socialism, or nationalism, viewing them as arbitrary or misguided constructs that fail to address fundamental human concerns or existential questions. They are only concerned with the guidelines they provide to mislead their own ethnic groups and supporters here and at the overseas.

They are skeptical of political institutions,

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

Business & Economy

How can industrialization contribute to economic progress?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Industrialization, which the industrial modification has placed at the heart of structural changes, has systematically raised the levels of production and employment, which has led to fresh income growth.

Cognizant of the fact that promoting the development of the industrial sector can be a key to achieving sustainable development, growth and economic advancement, The Ethiopian Herald wanted to solicit viable information from the qualified expert goes by the name Ashenafi Buta, who graduated in Industrial Engineering from Bahir Dar University.

He said, "The effect of industrialization on economic development has been vital, indeed! It brings about increased volume and varieties of manufactured goods resulting in increased employment and improved standard of living of the citizens. In the process of economic growth, it is the industrial sector which plays the role of engine of growth, as the potential productivity growth is the highest in this sector."

He further stated that the industrial sector can power the economy with the right policies for it will promptly transform the sluggish recovery into an economic resurgence.

"Indeed, it is recognized that Ethiopia, as other countries of the globe, will find difficult to create the wealth necessary for the eradication of extreme poverty without a real industrialization capable of generating added value. In fact, the word industry is used essentially as a synonym for manufacturing. It refers usually to changing of raw materials into products of more value. However, industry refers to an organized human skill and efforts to produce something more valuable and useful from the gifts of natural resources and primary products. It refers to the process of manufacturing," he added.

Ethiopia has successively defined several industrial development strategies in order to give importance to the sector and to promote economic growth and redistribution of income though a lot remains to be done. Its journey has been towards industrialization in fact through expanding industrialization, the government would be able to promote the emergence and expansion of domestic industries by replacing major sub sectors such as textile, shoes and food processing.

As to Ashenafi, the impact of industrialization on economic growth can be identified by the rate of manufacturing firms, and the increase in industrial output will increase economic growth of the country. Therefore, undoubtedly there is significant relationship between industrial development and economy growth.

Hence, some policy measures have to inject so as to boost industrial output by improving the overall productivity of all the sectors and ensure sustainable development economic and socio-political change, he added.

"The government should create a good environment for industrial growth through, as far as I am concerned, providing conducive investment environment by removing the structural rigidity that exist in the economy to encourage industrial activities, rendering stable supply of power, good roads for transportation of goods and people, functional legal system, security of lives and property, infrastructural facilities as well as applying good governance



Industrialization soon to Dominate Ethiopia's Economy: AfricaBusiness.com

mechanism and a good legal framework to protect property rights," he underscored.

In so doing, as to him, it would be quite possible towards improving a social and economic infrastructure, especially electricity supply and functional education via improving diffusion of technology and making Ethiopia's manufacturers more competitive. Besides, it would be of significantly useful in improving the quality of the work factor on behalf of firms and fighting against corruption and the further improvement of the regulatory framework to reduce the operating costs of business enterprises.

Yes he added the rationalization of industrial structure and upgrading of the industrial structure has an impact on economic growth, foreign trade, scientific and technological innovations that are the main factors affecting regional economic growth.

He said, "Of course, the new development pattern of domestic and international dual circulation and mutual promotion, further expands the level of opening up, effectively playing the role of free trade pilot areas, free trade ports, special economic zones, development zones, bonded areas, and other frontier highlands, improve the level and capacity of foreign trade."

Investment attraction has always been an important starting point for the development of the national economy. As it has become difficult to attract investment due to the weak industrial foundation in the country, the government should establish a more effective new mechanism for coordinated development and optimization of industrial structure, promote the transfer of industries across the nation and inject fresh blood into industrial development and lay a foundation for a well-coordinated economic and financial development, he underlined.

According to Ashenafi, the government had better implemented innovation-driven policies and promote the optimization of industrial structure. Innovation is the first driving force to lead development, and it is necessary to lead new industries, new formats, and new business models to promote economic development through innovation.

Besides, it is quite better focus on the construction of a modern industrial system,

accelerate the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure, promote the construction of a strong province with scientific and technological innovation, and actively create a new situation in the county.

When promoting the optimization of industrial structure, the country should focus on the internal adjustment of industrial structure, actively cultivate new economic growth points, accelerate the development of the modern service industry, promote the development of the productive service industry, and extend from low-end to professional, middle and high-end of the value chain.

Knowing that the manufacturing industry is highly relying on scientific and technological innovation to build a new industrial system, Ethiopia has to prettily embark on making full use of national advantages to promote the optimization of the industrial structure accordant to local circumstances, he added.

As to Ashenafi, making full use of the good opportunity for the country to promote the new development pattern of domestic and international industrial opportunities is an incomparable path towards real economic change and growth.

A range of policies can promote industrial energy and materials efficiency, often with positive impacts on firms' financial performance as well as the environment. Promoting materials recycling and reuse is found to be an effective if indirect means of conserving energy. If successful in accelerating economic growth, this process involves shifting resources from low- to high-productivity sectors.

More broadly, sustained economic growth is associated with the capacity to diversify domestic production structure: that is, to generate new activities, to strengthen economic linkages within the country and to create domestic technological capabilities. The industrial and modern service sectors typically contribute dynamically to this diversification process. Reflection on industrial policies in developing countries should be concerned with three important dimensions: innovations, linkages and surplus labor. Innovations, in turn, tend to be different in developing countries and in developed countries, Ashenafi underscored.

For industrial countries, moving the technological frontier, or developing new non-

technological practices are the major forms of innovation. Entrepreneurs are the ones who organize and lead such forays into unexplored territory. Their appetite for risk may, however, be dulled if the prospect of profiting from a successful discovery is small.

This growth is driven by a range of factors, including the increased global demand for raw materials, the rise of foreign direct investment (FDI), and the development of infrastructure. Industrial development is a key component of economic growth in Africa. It helps create jobs, diversify the economy, and reduce dependence on raw material exports.

He said, "Moving people out of informal subsistence farming into formal manufacturing jobs improves their productivity, makes the agriculture sector more efficient, and raises government revenues through taxation. It is well attested that thriving manufacturing sector is key to increased productivity, and thereby economic growth. Manufacturing tends to have strong linkages to other parts of the economy, creating demand for skills, inputs, manufacturing components, transportation and storage. This means that growth in manufacturing boosts growth throughout a broader set of activities, including in the service sector. Third, most innovation and technological advances originate in the manufacturing sector, which can then feed into other economic sectors, making them more productive as well."

In sum, the relationship between industry and growth generally holds across countries and income levels. International data confirms that the proportion of manufacturing in the economy rises as gross domestic product (GDP) increases for low, lower-middle and upper-middle-income countries. This correlation only reverses once a country becomes a high-income economy, where services start to take a relatively higher share than manufacturing.

Ethiopia has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa in the early twenty-first century. The focus has been on sectors such as leather and leather goods, apparel and textiles, meat processing, food processing and beverages, cement and steel, and horticulture. There has also been recognition of reciprocity and the political economy constraints that hinder productive investment in export-oriented manufacturing.

Art & Culture

Participating in poetry blogs pays off in terms of pulling off literary craftsmanship

BY ALEM HAILU G/KRISTOS

As an editor of the art column of *The Ethiopian Herald* many emerging poets and short story writers from different age brackets approach me to get their articles published in the paper. They are eager to enjoy a wider reading public and get a niche in the wonderland of literature.

As I see my younger self or past self in them and they see their future self in me, an internationally published author-poet and member of many poetry blogs, I'm more than willing to give them a chance provided they display the knack. Here, I would like to mention Betaniya Tadle.

Representing Ethiopia, some like Mulatwa Mossisa have anthologized their poems in poetry platforms like Poets United Worldwide.

Herald had done reviews on Reflection by Roman Twelde Birhan and Ribbon of the Heart by Lulit Kebede and Wesen Alemu.

By way of an aside, scouring the internet I have come to realize, unlike in the past, currently, there is no dearth of Ethiopian poets who write fascinating poems in English. Take for instance Alem Kidane, Nahomi Alem, Tsion Yehuala, Embet Mesfine, Kidist Girma, Mulu Solomon, Birhanu Tibebu Zewelde and Alemiye Gamo...this trend indicates it is a high time to translate our best poems into English if sponsors and publishers show interest.

Flipping back, as the adage runs "Variety is a spice of life," contributions in Herald bearing peculiar touches and such participatory approaches go a long way in gracing the paper.

Among such active participants in the paper is found SENAIT G/HIWOT. This week she sent me how AI currently assessed her literary posture. Let us take a look.

// Senait Gebrehiwot is a well-known writer on Quora. She is known for her insightful and thought-provoking answers on a variety of topics, including personal growth, self-improvement, and relationships.

In terms of her writing style, Senait is known for her clear and concise writing, with a focus on providing practical advice

and solutions to the questions posed to her. She is also known for her empathetic and compassionate approach, often incorporating personal anecdotes and experiences to connect with her readers on a deeper level. Overall, Senait's writing style is engaging, informative, and relatable, making her a popular writer on Quora.

In addition to her writing on Quora, Senait has also been featured in various publications and websites, where she shares her insights and advice on personal growth and self-improvement. She has built a strong reputation as a trusted source of knowledge in these areas, and her followers appreciate her genuine and authentic approach to writing.

Senait's writing often emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, self-compassion, and taking actionable steps towards personal development. She encourages her readers to reflect on their own behavior and mindset, and offers practical tips and strategies to help them overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Overall, Senait Gebrehiwot is a highly respected writer on Quora, known for her impactful and relatable writing style that resonates with a wide audience. Her insights and advice have helped many individuals navigate life's challenges and work towards becoming the best version of themselves.

Senait's writing also touches on topics such as mindfulness, resilience, gratitude, and the power of positive thinking. She believes in the importance of fostering a growth mindset and continuously pushing oneself out of comfort zones to experience personal growth.

Through her engaging and thought-provoking content, Senait has been able to connect with readers on a deep level, inspiring them to make positive changes in their lives and strive for personal excellence. Her writing is often praised for its authenticity, vulnerability, and the way it speaks directly to the hearts of her audience.

In addition to her writing, Senait also engages with her followers through Q&A sessions, discussions, and workshops to provide further support and guidance

on personal development and self-improvement. She is dedicated to helping individuals unlock their full potential and live a life of fulfillment and purpose.

She also writes poetry on sites like all poetry. Her poems are mainly about human emotions from excitement to depression.

//After I read the AI's evaluation, I e-mailed her this reply.

//As I advised you the first time when you dropped in at The Ethiopian Herald with your mother for contribution to the paper, true to our discussion, your participation in www.allpoetry.com and Quora is the right thing provided the feedback you are currently basking under.

You see, the first thing is you get an outlet, the second thing is you expand your fan base, the third thing is you get constructive feedback, and the fourth thing is you see different styles and get inspiration from other poets whose poems you relate, the fifth thing you could comment on after scrutinizing knowledgeable comments given by poets well-versed in the domain, and the sixth thing you could participate in training on poetry craftsmanship as well as competitions.

At last, in the long run, you could get your collection of poems published in hard copy if you discuss your intention with the owners of the blogs for instance with Kevin at www.allpoetry.com.

Furthermore, you could be approached by the go-between traditional publishers and authors. This is an opportunity that opens the door for you to see your book baby and taste attendant perks.

Above all by participating in poetry blogs, you will have a global e-presence. What more can one ask for? At this stage, aspiring may not expect monetary rewards, which naturally come slowly but surely.

If you do some research, many blogs promote word wizards. Through their contact addresses, emerging poets could register. Check the following blogs across the world. If you can't pay cash upfront to post advertisements along your works, they may compensate the cost needed to possess a domain.

<http://www.hellopoetry.com> (there are some Ethiopian members like Alem Kidane/Naomi Alem, the latter's theme aligns with some of your works. Alemeye Gamo is also active on this web) www.poemhunter.com, www.writeoutloud.com, www.poetrypoems.com, www.highonpoems.com.

For short stories and essays on top of poems, you could use www.poeticous.com. Which I recently discovered Through such works, it is possible to acquire a global presence. //

Let us wind up seeing a sample article and poem written by Senait G/Hiwot //How to deal with anxiety

Many people struggle with anxiety issues in this modern time and don't know how to deal with it. It may be so overwhelming that it makes them do things that they never anticipated...

As I was scrolling through YouTube on how to deal with anxiety, I came across a YouTube video by Barbra Heffernan, a business coach in summary this is what she says

We can refer to anxiety as the alarm in our body that tells us something is wrong. The part of the brain called amegadla processes fear into actual physiological changes. The brain's left hemisphere creates worries and panics to keep up with these changes... itis also called the fight or flight response.

An effective solution for this is the CBT exercise. Thoughts lead to action which leads to behaviors.

First you have to know the trigger event because the cause of your anxiety is how you respond to it.

We give our thoughts way too much importance so the solution is intervening the cycle with our observer mind... some people may feel emotional pain at first and observing it works too.

Cognitive distortions like catastrophizing, black-and-white thinking, and magical thinking (presuming to know what the other person is thinking) can all be slowed down by the observer's mind... knowing that they are just thoughts and feelings not reality helps a lot.

LIFE GOES ON

Whether I am happy or sad

Whether I am angry or mad

Life goes on

Whether I am poor or rich

taller or shorter than I reach

life goes on

Whether I know my life is limited

and live happily or worrying about it

Life goes on

The future will be present

and the present a past

All of us that are here

will not be anymore

because life goes on

whether I do something worthwhile

or do nothing I am remembered by

life goes on

I must live my life the best way I can

because I will regret it when I realize

I have had my chance

Science & Technology



Fintech significantly transforming the finance industry

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

The development of digital finance or financial technology is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. Though it started practicing in a limited way in the banking industry a few years ago, publicly, the sector was becoming popular during the past five years. Though it seems a recent development, the fine tech shows a significant development within this short period of time in Ethiopia.

Considering the sector's role in developing the country's economic development, three years ago, Ethiopia launched a national strategy with the goal of advancing and realizing digital Ethiopia in 2025. Following the implementation of Home-Grown Economic reform in 2019, Ethiopia gives priority for the development of the digital sector so as to accelerate the economic reforms and realize prosperity.

Then, in 2020, Ethiopia officially launched the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy so as to transform the sector. Since then, digital technology shows a significant development in Ethiopia and started contributing its share in the country's economic development. Especially, the digital sector plays a critical role in modernizing and transforming the finance industry in Ethiopia. Digital Finance or financial technology (fintech) shows a revolutionary development during the past three years.

A week ago, a panel discussion was organized to discuss the current status, prospects and challenges of digital technology in Ethiopia. The panel which was organized at the Adwa Memorial Museum which was attended by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), ministers, heads of regional governments, senior government officials and stakeholders and investors from the private sector.

During the discussion, Prime Minister Abiy stated that following the national reform in 2018, it was impossible to act with the usual system due to multifaceted challenges mainly in the economy sector. To overcome the challenges that the reformist government was received from the previous system, it demands new interventions. It requires new systems, introducing new technologies

and reforming the policies and strategies. "During the early months of the reform, government was faced with challenges even to pay salary of civil servants. It was impossible to overcome the challenges with the traditional system," he said.

Then, government introduced Home Grown Economic Reform agenda and realizing the economic reform demands new strategies. To accelerate and realize the economic reform, introducing technology was one means digital economy became one strategy. In short, building digital economy became one core pillar of the economic reform. As to him, the intention behind the necessity of Digital Technology was to solve the problem of the time. The situation during the early periods of the reform was very difficult. "In 2018, around 60 percent of the Ethiopian GDP was debt."

As government decided to withdraw from the deep-rooted problems within short period of time and to realize prosperity, digital technology became a core pillar in the economy. Technology became among the five critical sectors. After giving due focus on the issues, the sector showed a dramatic development shortly. Especially, the development of the digital finance and digital payment shows significant improvement.

For his part, National Bank of Ethiopia (MBE) Governor, Mamo Mihretu said that following the development of digital technology and enabling ecosystem, digital finance shows a fantastic development in Ethiopia in recent years. Though digital finance is a recent development in Ethiopia, it shows a dramatic development during the past three years and it becomes a game changer in the finance industry. "Digital finance is a game changer in the finance industry and is transforming the industry," Mamo stated.

Digital innovation in the finance sector makes the industry inclusive. It helps to democratize and to manage income inequality, according to the governor. Now, thanks to the digital finance, cash flow is decreasing and digital payment shows a dramatic development. "Digital payment

showed 75 per cent increment during the past five years in Ethiopia," Mamo said adding this is among the meaningful outcomes of the national reform. The development of financial technology in the finance industry contributes its share in increasing the productivity of the economy by transforming transactions and payment mechanisms.

Saving, loan and insurance and accelerating investment are the major products of the finance industry in a country, according to Mamo. "Hence, when we talk about digital finance, it is all about modernizing, easing, facilitating and making inclusive these basic services of the finance sector," the governor stated. According to Mamo, before the launching of the Digital Ethiopia 2025 Strategy, financial democratization remains a serious problem in Ethiopia. Majority of the financial service beneficiaries were investors or resource owners. People with important business ideas have no chances to get loans from financial institutions and banks.

"This situation aggravated the income inequality or resource inequality. Hence, the basic problem that the finance sector needed to address was democratizing the financial sector. In this regard, the digital innovation helps in democratizing the sector." The second problem was financial inclusiveness. Now, the development of digital finance is playing a crucial role in solving these problems. Mobile money, mobile banking and other digital payment mechanisms are showing significant developments in Ethiopia.

According to the governor, there are over 90 million mobile wallet transcribers, 42 million credit cards, over 8.4 million internet banking users in Ethiopia. This digital development in the finance industry comes following the measures being applied during the past five years. Due to these developments, according to Mamo, digital payment shows 750 percent increment in less than five years Ethiopia. "This is a huge and significant move," he added.

The initiative to develop the digital technology during the past five years in

general and during the past three years in particular brings meaningful changes in the sector, PM Abiy for his part stated. As to PM Abiy, six years ago, Ethiopia's total mobile users were limited to 36 million which currently developed to 76 million. Access to internet also shows a significant development during these years.

Though the age of digital payment is less than five in Ethiopia, the development is dramatic. Ethio Telecom launched mobile money in 2021 and currently the number of mobile money transcribers exceeds 40 million and over one trillion birr has transacted through mobile money this budget year. With regard to digital payment, According to PM Abiy, currently there are 18 different companies involved in the sector. Daily, over five billion birr is transacting daily which significantly decreased the cash flow in Ethiopia.

"For the first time in history, during this budget year, Ethiopia's digital payment transaction overcomes the cash transaction," PM Abiy stated adding this helps the country to save costs for printing and transporting paper money. NBE Governor also stated that payment mechanism is becoming digital. "For example, last year, over five trillion birr was transacted digitally. Similarly, during the six months of this budget year, over 4.2 trillion birr was paid through the digital means," he added. This shows that cash transaction is becoming decreasing and being replaced by digital payment.

The development of digital technology in the finance industry is stimulating the economy, making the financial sector inclusive. As to the governor, this development has significant implication especially in guiding monetary policy. It transforms the finance sector. Considering the development of digital technology and digital finance, to secure the transactions and the cyber industry in general, Ethiopia is building a resilient and secure cyber sector in this regard. PM Abiy stated that to control the downsides of the digital technology, the country focuses on building resilient and secure cyber sector which is alert 24/7.

Society

Skills development towards improving hospitality sector

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia's hospitality sector is experiencing significant growth due to increasing tourism and investment. The sector encompasses a wide range of businesses including hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and more. With a diverse landscape and vibrant culture, Ethiopia has become a popular destination for tourists seeking unique experiences.

Currently, the hospitality sector has become a vital economic sector with significant potential for growth and development in the country. However, in order to fully harness this potential, there is a pressing need for a skilled and competent workforce. Skills development plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of services, increasing competitiveness, and ultimately driving the industry forward.

The sector is a growing and holds immense potential for economic development and job creation. To fully tap into this potential, it is essential to focus on skills development among the workforce. By enhancing the skills of individuals working in the hospitality industry, it is possible to ensure better services, improved customer satisfaction, and overall growth in the sector.

One of the key factors that can drive the success of the hospitality sector in Ethiopia is skills development. Investing in training programs and initiatives aimed at improving the skills of hospitality workers can lead to a more competent and efficient workforce. This, in turn, can result in enhanced service delivery, increased productivity, and ultimately, a more profitable industry.

Recently, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) in collaboration with stakeholders announced it has finalized preparations to capitalize on skills development towards harnessing the potentials of the hospitality industry.

MoT Minister Ambassador Nasise Chali told Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that her organization is working with stakeholders to enhance skilled human power in the tourism sector by designing and revising educational curriculums.

Mentioning that MoT is working with the Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Labor and Skills, which runs the Technique and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Institute, she added that tourism trainings are being provided in Tourism Training Center, universities, TVET Colleges in various parts of the country.

"We are also working with Addis Ababa University to provide tourism courses at PhD level," she said. The tourism industry is one of the fastest growing economic sectors worldwide. It can be seen that many countries are making unreserved efforts to develop tourist destinations and promote them on the international stage, realizing the many economic and social benefits of tourism development, according to the Minister.

Ambassador Nasise pointed out that Ethiopia



is the owner of many tourism resources and has a potential for the development of the industry.

"We are expected to carry out many activities in creating skilled human power to unlock the sector's potential to avail economic and social benefits."

Therefore, it requires paying due attention for protecting, developing and promoting natural and historical tourism resources and multiculturalism to improve country's competitiveness at the international level and the benefits that it gets from the sector, she noted.

The Minister added that the government is developing tourist destinations that meet international standards through mapping projects as well as undertaking various development activities. At the same time, tourism investment in the private sector is growing through time, and it still needs to grow more compared to nation's large-scale tourism resources, she added.

Despite the importance of skills development, the hospitality industry in Ethiopia faces several challenges in this regard. Limited access to quality training programs, lack of funding for skill-building initiatives, and a shortage of qualified trainers are some of the hurdles that need to be overcome. Additionally, there is a need for a more coordinated approach among stakeholders to ensure effective skills development strategies are implemented.

To address the challenges faced in skills development within the hospitality industry in Ethiopia, it is crucial to take a proactive approach. Collaborating with government agencies, educational institutions, and industry experts can help in designing comprehensive training programs that cater to the specific needs of the sector. Implementing on-the-job training, mentorship programs, and skill-building workshops can also be effective in improving the workforce. What is more, in order to harness the full potential of the industry in Ethiopia,



it is imperative that individuals focus on developing their skill. This can be achieved through formal education, training programs and hands-on experience in the area. By acquiring relevant skills, individuals can enhance their employment opportunity, advance their career prospects and contribute their share to the industry.

In today's digital age, technology plays a crucial role in skills development. Utilizing e-learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, and online training modules can provide cost-effective and efficient ways to enhance the skills of hospitality workers. By leveraging technology, the industry can reach a wider audience and ensure continuous learning and development among its workforce.

So far, collaboration is key to achieving success in skills development within the hospitality industry in Ethiopia. Building partnerships with external organizations, industry associations, and academic institutions can bring in new perspectives, resources, and expertise to support training initiatives. By working together, stakeholders can create a more sustainable and impactful skills development ecosystem. Accordingly, skills development plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality

of services offered in the hospitality sector. Well-trained staff can provide exceptional customer experiences, leading to increased guest satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, skilled employees are more efficient, productive, and better equipped to handle challenges in a fast-paced industry like hospitality. In addition, on-the-job training is a valuable strategy for skill enhancement in the hospitality industry. By providing employees with hands-on experience and mentorship in real work settings, they can acquire practical skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to their roles. This approach not only enhances job performance but also boosts employee morale and retention.

In sum, investing in skills development is essential for driving growth and innovation in the hospitality industry in Ethiopia. By focusing on building the capabilities of the workforce, we can elevate the quality of services, attract more tourists, and ultimately contribute to the overall development of the sector. It is imperative for all stakeholders to come together and prioritize skills development as a key driver of success in the industry.

Improving touristic services, ...

ranked three stars.

Also, five hotels are ranked 2 stars and another eight ranked one star, while two hotels are below the standard. These hotels are located in Addis Ababa as well as Bishoftu and Adama towns of the Oromia State.

The Minister stated that hotel grading is of great significance to boost international competitiveness and improve service delivery to tourists and other customers.

The classification also helps tour operators, conference and exhibition organizers, international communication channels, and their customers as well as service providers to carry out trust-based promotion work.

There are many obstacles to the development of Ethiopia's tourism industry and one of which is the low level of quality and competitiveness of tourist-friendly services. Therefore, it is important to improve the quality of the hospitality service and boost the hotels global competitiveness, and increase the satisfaction of guests, she elaborated.

Nasise further highlighted that through providing professional support and supervision to hotels in all parts of country, including Addis Ababa, the ministry has made consolidated efforts to enable them to comply with mandatory requirements including fire prevention, health care, utilities and other standards.

"Before tourists come to Ethiopia for a visit, the hotels and facilities available in the destinations they visit are used as a source of pre-visit information to estimate



the level of service quality. It is also known that the classification system has a significant role in enabling fairness and transparency in government service procurement."

By increasing the capacity of local experts, 91 hotels were given different ratings in 2019. Out of the 456 hotels, 340 have been rated from one to five stars, and the rest are below the standard, the minister remarked.

One of the major challenges facing touristic services in Ethiopia is the limited infrastructure, including transportation networks and accommodation facilities. This can impact the overall satisfaction of tourists and their willingness to visit again.

Accordingly, adopting international rating standards can help align Ethiopian hotel ratings with global benchmarks, making it

easier for travelers to understand and compare the quality of accommodations. Consistency in ratings improves transparency and trust in the industry.

Developing customized rating systems that take into account the unique cultural and environmental factors of Ethiopia can provide a more tailored and accurate reflection of hotel quality. Local input and expertise are valuable in creating effective rating systems that cater to the specific needs of tourists in Ethiopia.

Enhancing hotel ratings in Ethiopia requires a multifaceted approach involving training, quality assurance, technology integration, and sustainability practices. By focusing on these aspects, hotels can elevate their services and attract more tourists.

To improve hotel ratings in Ethiopia, sector

experts recommended to prioritize staff training, implement robust quality assurance measures, embrace technology innovations, and adopt sustainable practices. By staying responsive to guest feedback and industry trends, hotels can enhance their ratings and contribute to the growth of the tourism sector in Ethiopia.

In sum, enhancing hotel ratings is crucial for improving touristic services in Ethiopia and attracting more visitors to the country. By focusing on customer experience, staff training, cleanliness, technology, and guest feedback, hotels can elevate their ratings and provide guests with a truly exceptional stay. Investing in these key areas will not only benefit individual hotels but also contribute to the overall growth and development of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.

Dozens of Nigeria's Chibok girls remain in captivity 10 years after abduction

Ten years after nearly 300 girls were abducted from a school in the northeast Nigerian town of Chibok by jihadist group Boko Haram, a third of them are still being held and mass kidnappings have become a lucrative industry for criminal gangs across the country.

The Chibok girls were kidnapped on April 14, 2014. Raiding a government girls' secondary school that night, terrorists forced teenage girls onto trucks and drove them away through bush paths to a 128,000-acre forest. Of the 276 abducted girls, those who have regained freedom include 57 who jumped off the trucks and 128 others freed after negotiations with Boko Haram or found in neighboring countries.

The most recent rescue happened last year, with the return of five girls who were found with seven children they had given birth to during captivity. Overall, 21 of the freed girls returned with 34 children, according to a report by Murtala Muhammed Foundation, a gender and policy advocacy non-profit in Lagos. About a third of the kidnapped girls are believed to still be held by Boko Haram.

Muhammed-Oyebode said the fact that dozens remain missing was due to "a failure of intelligence and governance," adding: "We still don't have a rapid response warning system when school children are



abducted."

A kidnap-for-ransom economy, driven by criminal gangs known as bandits, has developed over the last decade. Abductions have affected between 1,400 and 5,000

school children since 2014, various estimates suggest. Most recently, 137 primary school children were abducted in March in Kaduna, near Nigeria's capital Abuja.

"The abduction of Chibok girls has

absolutely inspired the generation of bandits we have now," Yahuza Getso Ahmad, a security consultant in Abuja, told Semafor Africa.

Source: Semafor Africa



This is Ethiopia

Improving touristic services, enhancing Hotel ratings

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Ethiopia is a land of rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes, attracting tourists from around the world. The tourism industry in Ethiopia is a growing sector contributing significantly to the country's economy.

The country continues to attract more tourists each year and there is a growing need to enhance the quality of touristic services especially in the hospitality sector. One crucial aspect of improving the overall touristic experience is by enhancing hotel ratings.

No doubt, hotel ratings play a significant role in shaping a traveler's decision-making process when choosing accommodation. A high hotel rating not only reflects the quality of service provided but also contributes to the overall image of a destination. Positive ratings can attract more tourists, boost the local economy, and create a positive reputation for the country as a whole.

For instance, one of the most effective ways to improve hotel ratings is by focusing on enhancing the customer experience. From



the moment a guest arrives at the hotel until they check out, every interaction should be carefully curated to exceed their expectations. This includes personalized service, attention to detail, and prompt resolution of any issues that may arise.

Regarding enhancing hotel rating, the hotel staff plays a crucial role in shaping the overall guest experience. Investing in continuous training programs can help improve service levels, ensure consistency,

and enhance guest satisfaction. Well-trained staff members are more equipped to handle challenging situations and go the extra mile to make a guest's stay memorable.

According to hotel rating standardization experts, another essential factor that contributes to hotel ratings is cleanliness and hygiene. Guests expect rooms to be spotless, public areas to be well-maintained, and amenities to be sanitized regularly. Implementing stringent cleaning protocols

and conducting regular inspections can help maintain high standards of cleanliness throughout the hotel.

Moreover, leveraging latest technologies plays a vital role in enhancing the overall guest experience and improving hotel ratings. Implementing online booking systems, mobile check-in options, and in-room amenities such as smart TVs and high-speed internet can elevate the guest experience. Utilizing technology also allows for better communication with guests and facilitates quick responses to their needs.

Recently, Tourism Minister NasiseChali said that the newly-held hotel rating is vital to maintain a competitive spirit, improve service quality, enhance customer experience, and boost the Ethiopian hospitality industry's global position.

According to her, the ministry publicized the star classification results of 31 new hotels that have met the mandatory criteria set by the World Tourism Organization. Among the 64 star-designated hotels in 2022 and 2023, seven are ranked four stars and another nine

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EEP achievements at Bekoji power transmission project

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) is being success in saving costs as it has been able to carry out some of its activities that it used to pay high fees to foreign professionals. Especially in the transmission substation sector: new constructions, expansion and maintenance works have been done by its own national employees. Bekoji 230 Kilovolt Power Distribution Project that is being built by EEP employees is the main focus of this article.

In consistent with the Coordinator of the Distribution Station and the One Kilometer Line Works Project Site, Endalkachew Janbo, the project will be carried out under the construction of Power Transmission Lines and Distribution Stations Construction, Own-force Office. Accordingly, consulting, civil and electrical works are being done by the internal capacity of EEP. And the Chinese Shiwan Electric Company is also participating as a full-scale supplier of electrical equipment.

The project is being built with a loan from the World Bank on the total land area of 6.2 hectares. A total of 216 million Birr is budgeted for civil and electro-mechanical



Endalkachew Janbo

works as well as installation of four power transmission line bearing towers (pillars), he counted.

"The station is being built primarily aiming at filling the future energy needs of the area and will ensure that the community has access to uninterrupted power supply. It has been nine months since the construction of the project started," he noted adding that 45 percent of the civil work, five percent of the electro-mechanical work, and the total construction work has reached more than 50 percent. "Efforts are being made to complete the project in this fiscal year.

He also mentioned that the rock formation

encountered at the construction site of the station made the excavation work and obtaining quality construction materials were very challenging. "All those problems have been overcome with strong team work and now the whole work is in a good condition."

The station receives and distributes to different areas including Koka the power generated at Melka Wakena Power Station. The 230 KV that comes into the substation will be converted to 33 KV through two transformers of 50 mega volt ampere and will be distributed to customers within a 120 kilometer radius of Bekoji and its surroundings through 10 transmission lines, he specified.

Furthermore, it has created permanent and temporary job opportunities for 35 professionals and 120 laborers. a total of 155 people. If it were done by foreign companies, it would have required a lot of money, said Endalkchew adding: "EEP has got it done by its own personnel reducing its cost. The trust EEP built in its employees will also create an opportunity for them to be more motivated and develop competences."

In future, EEP can use it as an experience sharing center to realize its dream of earning

income by deploying professionals to African countries, he speculated. "The fact that EEP is taking loans from international financial institutions and constructing such large projects with its own labor force justifies its efficiency. It proves its capacity to win lenders trust for other loans similar activities."

Similarly, experiences gained from foreign professionals and technology transfer has led them to higher competence level. Besides, capacity building trainings, privileges and responsibilities given to the employees have enabled them to work independently with confidence. "The more they see the results of their work, the more their self-confidence will grow over time and prepares them for higher responsibilities in the future."

In recapping, Endalkachew noted that electricity infrastructure also attracts investment creating job opportunities for many people and will contribute significantly to the development of the area. "Therefore, the leaders at all levels and the residents have to strengthen their cooperation and partnership in any way so that the project can be completed and put into operation as planned."