



The Ethiopian Herald

AGI CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE AFRICA
Abyssinia Group of Industries

Manufacturer of Rebars, Angles, Channels, Flat Bars & Round Bars. Introducing cut & bend service for rebars.

Contact & Address
Tel: +251 116 63 97 55/ 251 116 63 51 22/25
Mob.: +251 962 009 072/ +251 949 440 868
+251 911 45 9790
E-mail: sales@agiethiopia.com
4th Floor, Dabi Building, Bole road Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Vol. LXXX No 179 6 April 2024 - Megabit 28, 2016 **Saturday** Price Birr 10.00



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

Gov't takes decisive steps to expand startup apps

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA— Taking into consideration its vast human power and untapped resources, Ethiopia has taken various measures to effectively utilize startup apps aimed at overcoming multifaceted challenges, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

During a recently held forum, Premier Abiy said that the country has been focusing on the startup apps to well promote its economy.

He said: "There are a number of alternatives to expand the technology and taking the significance of all these alternatives into account, we have mainstreamed STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in all our universities, and such an audacious step can be taken as a promising move to well expand the technology thereby building digital economy. Hence startup creates jobs, and helps the nation effectively collect tax as there is a very severe problem

See Gov't takes decisive ... Page 3

Holiday Season: Ethiopia to attract second-generation in droves

• Launches 2nd round homecoming initiative

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - Coinciding with the upcoming major holidays and break time, Ethiopia is expected to enjoy numerous arrivals

of second generation homecoming initiative, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) said.

While commencing the second round homecoming program yesterday, Tourism Minister Ambassador Nasisie Chali said that in connection with Adwa victory commemoration

and other related side events, the Diaspora community has been actively taking part in a wide range of involvements thereby registering remarkable achievements.

See Holiday Season: Ethiopia ... Page 3



ENDC involves over 130, 000 citizens in preliminary activities

• Selects over 14, 000 representatives

Page 3

City embarks on Lake Hawassa preservation activities

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - Hawassa City Administration announced that activities are underway to protect Lake Hawassa from pollution.

City Culture and Tourism and Sport Department Head Mekdes Huriso told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that her bureau in collaboration with stakeholders is working to prevent wastes from entering Lake Hawassa by conducting a study.

Recalling that the city of Hawassa is named after the lake, Mekdes expressed that her bureau together with intended bodies would work on safeguarding the lake which is the natural treasure of the city and the nation.

Sofar, the city administration has been

See City embarks on Lake ... Page 3



News

Court underscores enhancing stakeholders' role to address justice loopholes

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADAMA – The Federal Supreme Court said the collaborative efforts of actors in the justice sector are the order of the day to ensure rule of law and protect the rights and benefits of citizens across the country.

The court organized the *National Legal Translations Forum* yesterday in Adama town that aims to ensure rule of law and justice through the consolidated efforts of relevant stakeholders.

In his opening remark, Federal Supreme Court President Tewdros Mihert said that the main purpose of the forum is identifying the root cause of problems related with rule of law and justice and mobilizing the public's participation to set relevant solutions.

As to him, structural adjustments would play a significant role in addressing the number of pressing challenges regarding injustice, illegal activities, and people's grievances and the likes. "Accordingly, all concerned bodies should work hand-in-hand by establishing strategic policies and giving legal translations for people's interest."

The president further highlighted that all courts are directed to utilize technologies that are developed by the Artificial Intelligence Institute, which translated voice to written format that is easing the process and help to give credible decisions and boost the public's trust. "The exploitation of the digital system has become the order of the day and all stakeholders discuss it."

For his part, Justice for All Prison Fellowship Ethiopia President Pastor Daniel Gerbereselasie noted that limitations to ensure the rule of

law and the justice system's incapability have caused sporadic conflicts and uncertainties. In this regard, conflicts in parts of the country have caused loss of lives and immense property damage while posing a serious threat to society's well-being.

Therefore, stakeholders' collaboration to make sure accountability is significantly helpful to address justice sector's hurdles and curtail unlawful practice across the country. "In this regard, we are ready to contribute our share to maintain the supremacy of the law and facilitate conditions because people always need justice."

Stakeholders drawn from various states including Oromia, Gambella and Sidama presented roadmap papers for initial discussion. On their presentation, they stressed the wide gap that has been existing in the justice system and officials'



Tewdros Mihert

slow response to the public grievance.

The stakeholders promised to exert more efforts and employ different mechanisms that would help to satisfy the public's demand for credible justice service.

AAU, Huawei ink partnership MoU

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- Addis Ababa University (AAU) and Chinese technology company Huawei signed yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would enable them to foster partnership in human resource development.

Speaking at the occasion, AAU Institute of Technology Executive Director Bikila Teklu (PhD) said that the partnership will help the university to grow its digital experience. "Addis Ababa University is the first autonomous public university in Ethiopia. In light of this; it has adopted a five-year strategic plan and fostering the partnerships with big corporates including Huawei Technologies is a key focus area of the plan."

According to Bikila (PhD), the partnership is crucial to creating industrial exposures and capacity building for AAU staff and students. "The Institute, in partnership with Huawei, has built a state-of-the-art academy whereby hundreds of experts have been trained and several telecom infrastructures have been deployed."

The AAU graduates are also said to have benefited from the career opportunities offered by Huawei.

Huawei Technologies Ethiopia CEO Liu Jifan on his part indicated that the agreement is an extension of the three-year-old cooperation with the AAU.

The Ethiopian government is already entering into the digitization process and Huawei technologies are immensely contributing. "The youth are the future creators of new technologies and Huawei, as a leading technology institution, is hiring youths. Our workforce in Ethiopia is also significantly growing."

Alongside the MoU, Huawei has launched job-fair opportunities for the AAU graduating students.



Photo: Gebabo Gebrie

President's advice to organizations: Vigilance in taking first step

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—President Sahlework Zewde stated that laying cornerstone and setting strategy doesn't mean reaching at a final stage and achievement; rather it is the first step to determine future success.

Conveying message in video speech during Mekdes Children's Horizon fundraising ceremony launching on Thursday, the president said that any designed strategy becomes reliable and sustains when it is effective, tangible and properly executed on the ground.

"Thus, we need to move in unison to grow better and healthful children to ensure our development in the near future. Our problem will be solved by collaboration and strong

effort like what artist Mekdes has been doing on children future fate," she said.

In her opening speech artist Mekdes Tsegaye said: "Now I have started my vision as I was thinking in my life of achieving a long dream and I have seized it today."

She organized fundraising program Thursday in the presence of government officials, business men and artists to build its first center and said it will start its work in Addis Ababa and then expand into other states. In the first round, it will accept 200 children from all over Ethiopia.

One billion Birr is needed to build the center that can accommodate 1,000 children when gets operational in full swing.

Women and Social Affairs Minister, Eregogie Tesfaye (PhD) said that children need protection, have right to grow, and mitigate social problems.

"We need to support, give love, and care to our children. We shall socialize children in good ethics to make them productive in later life. Caring and fulfilling their demand is not responsibility of government or one institution rather it requires the engagement of all actors," she said.

Mekdes Children's Horizon is local charity organization founded by artist Mekdes Tsegaye that has mainly worked to create safe and nurturing environment for the children who lost their families.

News

ENDC involves over 130, 000 citizens in preliminary activities

- Selects over 14,000 representatives

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA – So far, over 130, 000 citizens have been involved in agenda collection, participants' identification, and other preliminary activities, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said.

Briefing the media yesterday, ENDC Spokesperson Tibebe Tadesse stated that the commission has been undertaking various activities to identify dialogue participants and mapping about 1,300 districts across the country in a bid to make the process inclusive and participatory.

Tibebe also indicated participants' identification has been taking place in 940 districts across the country while the commission has finalized the two activities in 850 districts. Participants' identification would take place in the remaining districts in the coming weeks.

"Out of the 130, 000 citizens participated in the preliminary activities; more than 14,000 are selected to take part in the agenda collection for the final dialogue. The representatives are drawn from different states and segments of the society excluding Addis Ababa, federal institutions and Diaspora communities."

The spokesperson further highlighted that the commission has finalized the identification of representatives who will participate in the final dialogue in Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Sidama, South Western Ethiopia, South and Central Ethiopia states as well as in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city administrations.

Participants' identification is taking place in Somali and Oromia states and after completing such activities, the commission would attain 70-75% of the total representatives that are required for the final dialogue. The remaining 25 to 30% will be filled by participants' identification and agenda collection activities in Amhara and Tigray states and preparation is underway to this end.

Currently, the commission finalized the preparations to launch the agenda input collection from public forums. In this regard, the state-level agenda collection forum is expected to take an average of eight to 10 days and it also needs preparations on labor force, logistics, security and other areas, he remarked.

Nation expects above average rainfall in April, May

- Institute forewarns flood-prone communities

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian Metrology Institute has forecasted above the average rainfall in the rest of the spring season while urging flood vulnerable communities to take necessary precautions.

Briefing media outlets yesterday, Institute General Director, Fetene Teshome said that the spring season rain will fall more heavily in different parts of the country in the next two months of April and May.

Accordingly, heavy rains may affect social and economic activities in flood-prone areas, along rivers and in cities, he expressed while urging the society in such areas to take necessary precautionary measures to avert risks.

The southern and southeastern parts of the



Fetene Teshome

country, which are the main rain receiving places this season, will have above average rainfall, whereas the western half will have normal and above average rainfall, he mentioned.

The forecast indicated that the North-East, Central and Eastern areas of the country may receive normal and above-average rainfall, he

stated.

As to Fetene, the community should take into account the weather forecast for the rest of the spring months and make proper use of the above average rainfall distribution.

"It is necessary to carry out agricultural and other social and economic activities during this period consulting with experts."

In the last two months, the Institute reported warm tropical Pacific Ocean and normal northern Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures that have led to above-average rainfall in the south, southeast, and northeast regions of the country.

The Director General recalled that light and heavy rain has been observed in various areas of the country, and especially in forty (40) areas of the country, from 30-96 mm of rain has been recorded in 24 hours in the aforesaid period.

Gov't takes decisive...

in Ethiopia in due course of collecting tax."

As to him, the existing lower Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country would be enhanced making use startup apps as the technology has the potential to attract huge Forex.

It was learnt that the forum is also targeting at bolstering the technology and expanding it to various sectors attracting wealth.

Not only is the government expected to expand innovative ideas via raising awareness of the youth but also the private

sector is highly duty bound to expand the sector so. He said, "A number of entrepreneurs have been encouraged to expand the technology. Thus the private sector needs to actively participate in the sector."

City embarks on Lake...

conducting bids for planned activities to divert flood from entering the lake, she stated.

A recent study on the lake indicated that sedimentation, industrial chemicals, and fertilizers are washing into the lake due to the removal of old trees from the surroundings, she stated.

The city administration is planning to resolve the problem through carrying out

a study to bring a lasting solution, she expressed.

According to Mekdes, the administrations of Sidama and Oromia states must work hand in hand to save the lake which surfaced between the two.

She said that her department has planned to participate all actors including the surrounding communities, fishermen, boat builders and farmers regarding the

protection activities.

Mekdes noted that a significant development would be achieved if all stakeholders are committed to contribute to the conservation process considering the enduring advantages of the lake.

She also called on the Hawassa city residents to play due role in preventing wastes from polluting the lake.

Holiday Season : Ethiopia...

Aligning with the theme of the second round, "Connect to your historical roots," which will be held from the end of February 2024 to beginning of May 2024, she stated that chains of side events, panel discussions among many others are planned to be carried out with a view of reconnecting homecomers with their history to realize the nation's development.

"As March break and grand holidays such as Ramadan and Easter are approaching, the number of influxes is increasing. Also, the guests have attended the grand Iftar programs in various areas of the country," she underscored.

Accordingly, "this round would help Diasporas discover the history of their homeland and understand the roots of their ancestral patriotism and selfless scarification paid by our forefathers and foremothers to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their country throughout

various periods," she remarked.

During the first round, a large number of second generation Ethiopians have visited various parts of the country thereby experiencing the diverse cultures, traditions, customs and unique features of Ethiopian people, as to Amb. Nasisie.

In their stay, she said adding that the diaspora have also participated in various events and managed to spend a fruitful and enjoyable time.

It is to be recalled that the first round homecoming was held from the end of December 2023 to the beginning of February 2024 under the theme: "Connect to your multi-cultural roots."

Welcoming the arrivals, Ministry of Foreign Affairs State Minister, Ambassador Birtukan Ayano said that this phase is the unique one because it comes while commemorating the nation's successful transformation journey

and the 13 anniversary of Abbay dam, and, thus it would create the opportunity to grasp the continuity of the development of the sovereign nation.

Announcing the successful continuation of the initiative, the State Minister expressed her organization's readiness to strengthen the coordination activities along with partners and embassies.

Furthermore, among the national committees, Custom Commission has also pledged to provide any custom related full-fledged supportive 24/7 services accordingly.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has made a call to second generation Ethiopians residing outside of Ethiopia with the view of enabling them explore their roots, culture and history, explore new and existing destinations and make connections to contribute to the future of Ethiopia.

Opinion

Promoting cooperation, achieving greatness: The power of unity

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Unity among citizens is one of the most important pillars of bolstering peaceful coexistence and creating a stable nation forever. It has the greatest value in nation building. Such a very noble principle has resulted in multiple benefits for the country thereby recording success stories of unity and collaboration among the over 120 million population of Ethiopia, indeed!

Unity is by far the best for bringing inclusive local community solutions. New good practices are taking place in this nation every day. However, it should be at a cross-regional or intercontinental level that we should accelerate to enable spirit of cooperation to flourish. Most cross-national initiatives among citizens have been initiated by peace-loving compatriots, with as objective to maximize peaceful coexistence for unlimited segments of the society, the close to 1.4 billion African populations out of the universal populace.

Hence, unity or cooperation should take a courageous trust step and move out of everyone's comfort zone and citizens should seriously focus on their roots of better together instead of copying the competition drive of clan-oriented community. The optimized backbone of the cooperation among the citizens should result in a stronger position on total value sharing and would create a change driver towards the peace-oriented generation and absolutely stable nation.

It is absolutely better to bring the principle of collaboration again to the centre of what a citizen is. Tackling challenges better together as virtual neighbors in our emerging new world we live in can all the time be the best avenue to arrive at absolute peace though the degree varies. The potential of a new narrative for the development of harmonious way of living matter the most as it can prettily inspire renewed public attitude towards one another.

Peace first and socio-economic development cooperation is needed more than ever before for Ethiopians. The essence of unity, fraternity and cooperation is to support Ethiopia in its efforts to improve the lives of citizens leaving no one behind. The society has to receive the call for change of course through new words and action. It is this time indeed the entire vision of the nation would be made a success.

Citizens have thus to play to their strengths and ensure that socio-economic and even political collaboration continues to increase our chances of a better tomorrow for one and all.

Most definitely our goals are largely the same as articulated by the entire community in a series of groundbreaking

agreements over the past few years and, more generally, in the core mission of unity and togetherness. Here all citizenry have to be committed to empowering and giving voice to youth as agents of change.

No doubt, understanding that tackling the cardinal and systemic problems and the political, economic, social and environmental crises confronting the generation requires firm determination and heartiest cooperation. Yes, the lofty goals are proving hard to reach as progress is uneven and new challenges are constantly emerging that often overshadow the positive outcomes already achieved.

Firm cooperation and being change engines need a fresh narrative that explains to a wider public what it actually is, how it operates and why it is needed to counter a media-driven narrative that reinforces public perceptions of its shortcomings. Principally, the potential of a new narrative aiming at inspiring renewed public spirit for making a prosperous nation, Great Ethiopia, has to be well intensified.

What needs to be well underscored along this line is, as in a world where divisiveness and discord seem to dominate the headlines; the concept of unity has never been more important and priceless. Hence, such an appalling approach has to be well abated and reined somewhere. Yes, unity refers to the state of being united or joined together working collectively towards a common goal, sure. It goes beyond mere cooperation, as it emphasizes the strength and power that can be harnessed when individuals come together as a unit. That is why it is recurrently heralded that the significance of unity in various aspects of life and the way how it can lead to unparalleled success should come first if the generation would love to make real difference in all aspect.

Unity plays a pivotal role in building a harmonious society. When people unite, regardless of their differences, they can achieve incredible feats. Unity fosters understanding, empathy, and acceptance, eradicating prejudices and biases. It enables communities to address social issues collectively, striving towards a more equitable and inclusive society.

In the realm of communal life, business, or any collaborative endeavor, unity is the key to success. A team that operates in unison, with a shared vision and clear communication, can accomplish extraordinary things. Unity in teamwork cultivates trust, enhances productivity, and maximizes efficiency. When individuals with diverse skills and perspectives come together, their collective efforts create synergistic outcomes that exceed what any individual could achieve alone.

Political unity is crucial for the stability and progress of a nation. It involves setting aside personal interests and

working towards the greater good of the country. Unity in politics facilitates bipartisan cooperation, leading to effective governance and the ability to address pressing national issues. It ensures that decisions and policies are made in the best interest of the entire populace, fostering social cohesion and economic development.

In an interconnected world, unity is essential for tackling global challenges. Unity is an indispensable force that has the potential to transform societies, teams, and even nations. It ignites the spark of collective action, enabling individuals to transcend their limitations and achieve greatness. By embracing unity, we can foster cooperation, empathy, and understanding, paving the way for a more harmonious and prosperous world.

Many are highly in a state of anxiety as they have understood unity as being one and the same. However, unity doesn't hold the sense of uniformity instead being togetherness to make capacity and power to win. Cooperation, working together, collaboration and merging all forms of assets to attain a shared goal, are born to unity.

True, collaboration as unity understands that while we need alignment around a vision and consensus around values, and collaboration as unity embraces difference where it is needed and allows for individual differences in culture, norms, and practices to be sustained.

Unequivocally, taking the time to establish foundations for unity and firm collaboration that can comfortably hold difference is critical to supporting joined-up ways of working that engage with complexity and are, therefore, far more likely to succeed, but are easy to make practical via developing humility, love of peace and integrity.

People are not supposed to end where they began as situations change following the gear of respective epoch. Unity is thus powerful precisely because it brings together different voices and perspectives. Meaningful unity rests not in homogenizing and eliminating differences, but in finding higher order commonalities, and working with those. Besides, change and a call for unity should come with cleansed hear and horizon of thinking.

As developing the spirit of unity comprises an increasingly diverse array of societal cohesion, governmental bodies, multilateral and non-state actors working in different ways, government-to-public, people-to-people, peer-to-peer and public-to-private ties, it has to be a usual lyric to be repeatedly recited by all citizens.

Besides, unity champions the implementation of a range of lucrative principles amongst diverse nations and nationalities including the

government, civil society, private sector, parliamentarians and many others. Ethiopians are largely responsible for the growth and progress of their own country. Undeniably, unity helps people work together to achieve common goals. It resolves conflicts and differences as well as creates an environment of harmony and creates an environment of perspectives from a healed space. It is what we need to survive, what we need to solve problems, it is what we need to be content!

Unity, being together, is the key to build a good and strong society and relationships. It is also important at every step in our life. People, who learn the importance of staying united, our life will be happy in every step. Those people who do not understand its importance will face difficulties at different stages in life. People who stay united together are never left alone in any trouble that is why it is said unity is important because nature wants us to unite.

We then feel positive phenomena fill our lives: happiness, confidence, peace and harmony. Moreover, it is important that our unity is above all divisions, and not merely the unity of one group against another. The latter is simply a group-inflated ego that serves to increase division and hatred in society, and which also leads to no ultimately positive outcome. Therefore, the importance of unity is the importance of people's very survival, and whether they live lives harmoniously or painfully.

In sum, establishing the importance of unity in society requires regular education, and examples of unity above division. The process of prioritizing unity in society has yet to start. The key to the transformation from division to unity has to be made a viable start and unwavering step to change.

People or citizens of a given nation have to simply organize their socio-cultural influences to bring the need for unity to the center of public discourse, and they will then think about it more and more, and start wanting it to happen forever. Eventually, unity above division would become as common as different segments of living strata.

Unity is of utmost importance for society as well as the whole country as strength is always with it. Hence, it is the concept of standing together for every thick and thin matter. There are many stories as well as real-life incidences have proved that unity always leads a harmonious and fulfilling life for all.

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

Editorial

Dialogue: The magic bullet

In contemporary Ethiopia, there are deep divisions and differences of opinion among political elites, opinion leaders, and some segments of society along the lines of major national issues. In view of this, the Ethiopian parliament has green lighted an institution that is tasked with creating an enabling ground for the various parties to come to consensus on vital issues that decide the future of the country.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (NDC) is established as an independent organ envisaged leveling the path for the opinion leaders and people selected to represent the various ideas and communities to hold dialogue on selected fundamental national issues.

Despite a long history of co-existence among the diverse people of Ethiopia, differences in opinion regarding culture, history, languages, beliefs, and political outlooks, among others, have started to deepen over the recent years. Armed insurgencies have added fuel to the fire and have led to the loss of lives and property.

Worse still, Ethiopia's historic foes have been exploiting the difference in opinion to sow the seeds of discord. Their ill intention is to keep Ethiopia weak and fragile. Ethiopia's enemies leave no stone unturned to divert the attention of Ethiopians from development activities to internal conflicts.

If it goes unabated, the country will inevitably come to dismemberment. No doubt, the ramifications of such a daunting result could cross the national borders. To say the least, such a despicable scenario—God forbid—this is a complete recipe for the entire East Africa to get destabilized. The already-troubled region will be a launching pad of terrorism. Therefore, the peace and development of a country, as big as Ethiopia, cannot be overlooked.

Viable way for Ethiopians, as we have learnt from our historical track records such as the victory of Adwa and recent encouraging accomplishments of the Abbay Dam construction, is standing in unity. The only way ahead is narrowing the differences and augmenting unity. In doing so, they can achieve success not only in defending their country from foreign enemies but also bringing economic development.

The Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (NDC) has been established to fulfill the mission of bringing lasting peace in Ethiopia through facilitating dialogue.

All including those engaged in the armed struggle should focus their attention on ways and means of making the national dialogue a success story. The guns must be silenced.

Putting trust on the NDC is essential as it has been carrying out various activities that pave the way to the all inclusive national dialogue. Since its establishment, it has gone long distance in creating awareness on the objectives of the commission, in selecting participants and collecting initial agenda from different stakeholders in various parts of the country including, but not limited to Harari, Sidama, Southwest Ethiopia, Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz and City Administrations among others.

At this juncture, the commission is facing the ongoing violent conflicts in large parts of the country, which are stumbling blocks and hurdles to its activities. All stakeholders must encourage peace in these regions. Ethiopia becomes safe havens for its people only when peace reigns. All sides must not seek solution through the use of force. Dialogue, however, is the magic bullet.

Stakeholders, both domestic and foreign ones, should stand by the side of the commission, and encourage it by throwing the necessary support behind its activities. Among the supports is needs is to let it do things independently. All sides that should support the entity must demarcate their lines clearly not to interfere in its affairs directly and indirectly.

Opinion

Exploiting Abbay Dam tourism potential

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Like many other countries in the world, Ethiopia has to effectively utilize its own rivers for different developmental activities and tourism undertakings. As it is well recognized that rivers constitute major tourism resources via providing countries with spectacular settings, recreational and transport facilities, a series of heritage and adventure, as well as linking environmental and ecological scenes, Ethiopia is well capitalizing on its water resources such as what it is doing on the Abbay River.

Yes, tourism and river are intricately linked in terms of source of attraction and unique experience. Rivers are found to be major tourism resource offering fabulous settings, recreational opportunities, and waterfront landscapes. Cognizant of the fact that various activities like river cruises, water sports like sailing and rafting and the riverbank landscape contribute to the immense potential of river tourism and its role in the development of places along its banks, this east African nation has relentlessly worked on water resources. Besides, the local culture and heritage generally being connected with the Abbay river makes various places along the river, destination of cultural tourism, too.

In Ethiopia, which is the land of many rivers, river tourism holds much potential as a form of sustainable tourism. The places get identified by the river flowing by it, the beautiful natural setting and the various river-based activities attracting tourists, thus branding those places as river tourism destinations would be an incomparable means to help the nation solicit great benefit out of the sector. The seventy recreational centers established around then grand Dam are the living testimony for this fact.

Promotion of river tourism can help in preservation of natural environment and cultural heritage of the nation as well as add to the employment opportunities of the local population.

True, the development of river tourism in Ethiopia and its various contributions in terms of conservation of the Abbay river and its surrounding environment as well as creating opportunities for sustainable livelihood of the river-based community is greatly useful. The relationship between river and tourism is really of paramount importance in boosting economic growth thereby seeing poverty and backwardness off for good from the soil.

Based on this popular river tourism destination in Ethiopia, the Abbay Dam, the symbiotic relation between river and tourism by exploring the nature of tourism related activities has centered on the river and the riverfront has now

been well capitalized on, and the activity is planned to be expanded to other areas.

The construction of the grand Dam on the Abbay River would thus be instrumental in bolstering economic growth and tourism growth across the nation. This is a significant power source for the Ethiopian economy, indeed! It is in fact expected to bring employment and business opportunities, as well as putting the world's gawk on Ethiopia. Upon completion, the outcomes of this Dam are expected to improve Ethiopians' living standards and initiate and maintain their sustainable development.

The Ethiopian government has highlighted the tourism potential of the Dam, particularly the islands created in the area, stressing that the project will unlock the country's development opportunities. Such a bold move has to be well expanded into other rivers and Ethiopia has to have a number of dams using its rivers.

Since the dam is now about to be completed, all citizens have to cooperate well for its effective and successful accomplishment. Yes, the Dam is now home to many islands which have immense tourism destination development potential. There are many possibilities for Ethiopians on the horizon if they are committed enough to work in unison to unlock the country's national budding.

Rural areas and in particular mountain territories have been experiencing an increasing appreciation of natural and heritage resources and their use for recreational and leisure activities, boosting tourism development and generating renewed functions with economic and social impact.

Dam recreational centers have been becoming increasingly important for leisure and tourism, with many activities associated and many users seeking for them. Since there is a growing demand for these recreational centers, the country has to allow investors, be they are local or international, to work more on the places so as to help the nation hop steps forward.

There is a strong perception of Dam's importance in attracting tourists, in improving the quality of life of the local population and in the opportunity to expand trade and service activities. Furthermore, in the image of the community, the importance of river beaches like what is observed in and around the Abbay Dam has provided citizens with mesmerizing feeling and mental health apart from helping them have ample job opportunities.

In sum, as the Abbay Dam has immense tourism significance apart from lighting Ethiopia and the Horn, every riparian country in particular and nations of the continent in general have to do their level best for its effective accomplishing.

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



The Ethiopian Herald

Established in 1943

Published daily except Mondays
By The Ethiopian Press Agency

Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press

Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew

email- workubelachew@press.et

Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city

Woreda - 05, House No----

Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama

Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et

email: ethiopianherald@press.et

Fb//Ethiopian Press Agency/

The Ethiopian Herald

Art & Culture

Patriot's life, a learning tool for bigger national dreams

BY NAOL GIRMA

Patriotism and people's view about it may differ from generation to generation but its existence could be the cornerstone of every culture around the world. Traditionally, the essence of patriotism in Ethiopia has been related to a warrior's mentality. The legacy of freedom and not being colonized is given to the ancestors who marched from all corners of the Country all the way to the north, to have fought a one day battle and shape the future of a victorious country. That was during the battle of Adwa, where the multi-ethnic Ethiopian patriotism was born and grown up through generations as a culture. However, some argue that the patriotic history and legacy has been given to certain leaders of specific ethnic groups from the north and the narrative has always been the same. There are also people or scholars who argue that through time the traditional narrative of patriotic history has magnified the deeds of some ethnic groups and covered others while the history was known to be done with harmony.

Ethiopia could be an ancient Country with ancient historical and cultural heritages but the traditions of recording written history at some point or level seem to be biased and abandoned by the people in charge of documenting it. This must have resulted in the dominance of a history that develops the upper contribution narrative of history for some ethnic group. Recording history in a country where prolonged wars of warlords and regimes being biased may not be surprising.

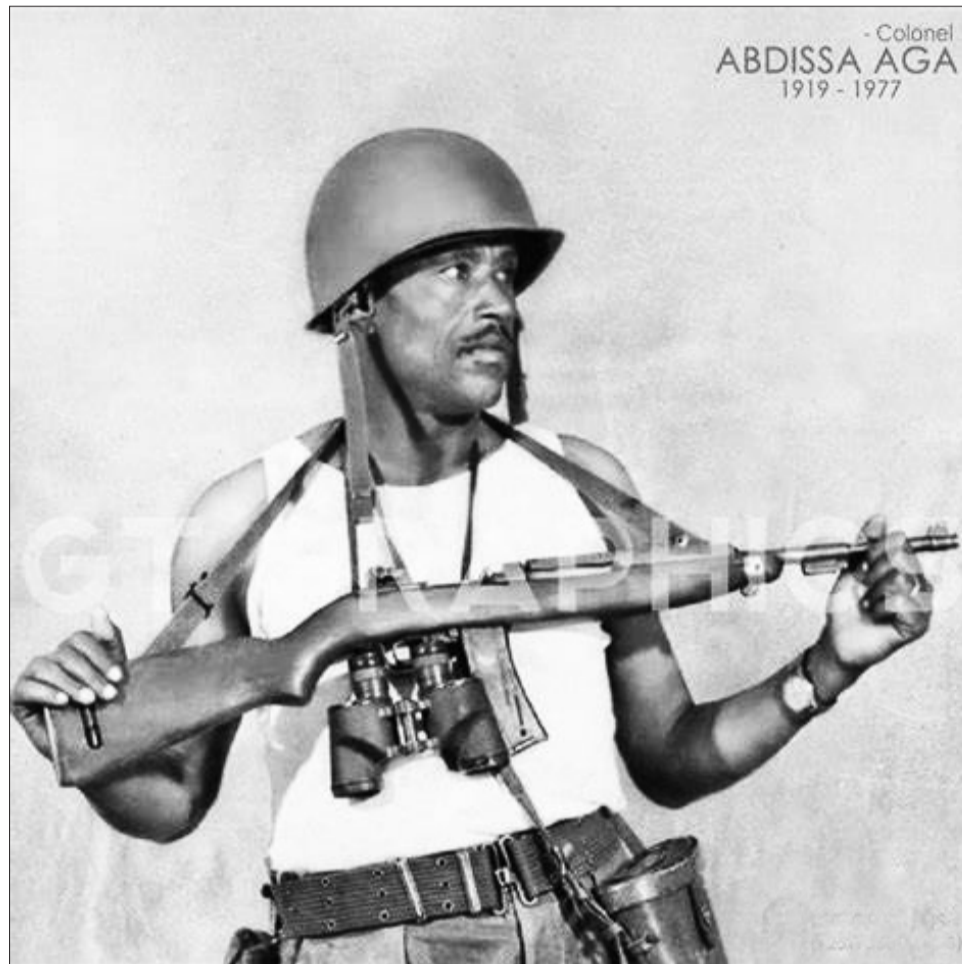
But Countries like Ethiopia, should have known better in terms of keeping its own long lived history of patriotism for some group of the new generation believe the distinction of the documentation of history has caused a lot of misery in the Country. For instance The Ethiopian Herald would like to highlight the story of a great patriot from the Oromo ethnic group but had been only a history, which should have been on a movie, as some Ethiopians said so.

Some two years ago Minas Halefom was on his way from Piasa to Addisu Gebeya while he heard this amazing story of an Ethiopian patriot Abdisa Aga on a radio in a cab. According to him, he had learned the history of Abdisa Aga in his elementary school classes. But what he had heard on the radio was more detailed and elaborated. He said to the BBC that the Amharic version of his text book has thought him nothing more than a story that Abdisa Aga escaped the prison in Italy through a window.

"The story I have heard on the Radio depicted that Abdisa was taken to Italy as a war prisoner, escaped from the prison in a way that sounds like the movie "prison break" a movie, which the new generation holds so dearly!"

Abdisaga was one of the Ethiopian patriotic symbols whose history sounds like a myth for an external world but a reality in a country that once he had been kept a war prisoner.

Countless Ethiopian mothers and fathers had sacrificed their lives and passed to generations a delicate and strong identity



of a patriotic culture. Heroes have had risen and cemented their legacy on a flourishing historical pages, even though the narratives are still controversial.

In 1828 the Italian colonial force tried to subjugate Ethiopia as its part of colony and faced a sever defeat at the battle of Adwa. The war only lasted for a day and the colonial force was defeated. Even the young students in Rome went out on the streets uttering "Viva Menilik" on their own defeat. After years of preparation a Fascist Italian force wanted revenge and came back to Ethiopia with all its full force of land and air fighters carrying bad poisonous gas.

Abdisa Aga was a patriot in a foreign land. His life would have been a movie! He was born in the current Oromia region of Wollega zone in 1911 ETC. when he was twelve his father got arrested in a case of crime he wasn't involved. Abdisa tried to bring justice for his father but didn't succeed. The young boy who, had left his sixth grade school looking for justice, lost his father in the process and joined the military force following an arrangement from his uncle who was close to the majesty.

He joined the Ethiopian military force at the age fourteen and efficiently completed the training from the Holeta Academy being a cadet! After two years of his graduation, the Italian fascist force invaded Ethiopia, in order to avenge the defeat of Adwa. Abdisa Aga was said to be sixteen when he started fighting against the Italian troops. In the battle that took place in Wolega of Oromia region, Abdisa Aga had simultaneously took down three Italian war planes with his machine gun. That was when the fascist force tried unsuccessful operation to hunt Abdisa Aga. Abdisa Aga escaped with sixty soldiers who graduated from the Holeta academy. The soldiers joined Ras Emru's force and fuelled the struggle against

fascism.

Meanwhile, Abdisaga was wounded in a battle and captured by enemy forces. He was brought to Addis Ababa and imprisoned. Few days later he would snatch a machine gun from prison guards and escaped. During that period of time, the Italian chief in Addis Ababa Rodolfo Graziani got wounded from a bomb attack by Ethiopian patriots Abrham Deboch and Moges Asgedom. In a revenge the Italian forces led a campaign of massacre which claimed the lives of over 35,000 thousand Ethiopian civilians in one day.

But Abdisa's patriotic deeds didn't stop by escaping from prison. Taking cover at Qaliti river bridge, he had ambushed Italian forces who were traveling from Debrezeyit(Bishoftu) to Addis Ababa Lancha for the massacre campaign. This was very disgraceful news for the official in Rome. According to sources the fascist leader in Rome had ordered Ethiopian patriots with glorious deeds to be captured alive and taken to Rome. Abdisa Aga was on the list. After a long tempting search by the Italian forces, Abdisa Aga was found and captured. Then, he was taken to Italy and imprisoned in a prison built on the island of Sicily.

During his time in prison, the patriot didn't face difficulty in creating good relationships with the prisoners of different nationalities. The prison guards didn't like his sociability! Even though thoseday in the prison were so tough, Abdisa Aga started plotting an escape plan with his Yugoslavian cellmate. When the ripe time presented himself, he shredded his blanket and made a robe out of it. He got out of the window and climbed down the prison building. Everything was quite that late night when Abdisa Aga crept towards the three guards sleeping, under the main gate, with their rifles in their hands.

Killing all three of the prison guards near the main gate he and his Yugoslavian friend escaped the prison. Later they executed a prison break operation and freed all the prisoners of the island. Abdisaga's plan wasn't only freeing the prisoners but also building his own army and fighting against the Fascist Italian forces on their own land. As he continued fighting, World War II broke and the allied force gave material support for his army and he proved stronger and fearsome. When the fascist force was defeated and Rome fell in the hands of the allied force, Abdisa Aga would order his multinational soldiers tie a bandage of the green, yellow, red paint (Ethiopian) bearing flag on their hands and he himself marched to the City waving high the flag. Abdisa Aga's army received a warm welcome by the allied forces, narrates Minas Halefom on his book with the title 'Aga'.

Such a glorious life of the patriot hasn't been well recognized by generations, for the repeatedly changing regimes in Ethiopia bring systems that only glorify their ideologies and history. This could be one tradition Ethiopia has to change, putting in mind that patriots like Abdisa Aga fought for their country and not for their ethnicity.

Abdisaga was one of the Ethiopian patriotic symbols whose history sounds like a myth for an external world but a reality in a country that once he had been kept a war prisoner.

Law & Politics

Addis on the way to renovation

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

Anyone who comes to Addis today could be completely taken aback by the magnitude of redevelopment of the city that is going on in various quarters especially around the central areas. Looking at how much demolition of streets, houses, businesses and pavements and how many trees have been uprooted, one would just be amazed and even bewildered where it begins and where it might end. In the past, we have seen certain quarters being partially demolished, some roads enlarged or expanded, drainage passages newly built or extended, fences built along certain streets and large green areas developed with large pavements ideal for walking with seats fixed on the sidewalks. But we have never seen an entire neighborhood completely demolished and all the residents redeployed to other localities, so many roadside houses demolished.

To cite just one instance, the old and congested neighborhood around Piassa, commonly known as 'Doro Manekia', has been completely demolished to leave way for a new face. It was so densely populated with houses constructed one next to the other, with very narrow streets inside and hardly any sanitation facilities, few will miss it. Given its vicinity to one of the most central and convenient trading areas of the city, people of low-income circles used to go out of that neighborhood and easily engage in informal trading which is of course one of the typical characteristics of the Addis Ababa, a city that is reputed of being 'the shelter of so many low-income people', even in the midst of so much abundance and wealth.

Addis is reputed of accommodating every sector of society because somehow people manage to earn their daily bread by peddling something on the streets and put some food on the table for their children.

Many people had thought that the redevelopment activity would be limited to the environs of the newly inaugurated Adwa Victory Memorial. Already there were rumors that the entire area around the memorial would be redeveloped to match the beauty and importance of the center of the city where it was first founded. However, soon the redevelopment scheme was seen extending in all directions from the city center and the houses and shops that were built very near to the sidewalks of the city streets were marked to be removed.

According to the Addis Ababa City council, all the old and out of plan houses, all illegal constructions are to be contained in the redevelopment scheme because they are not worthy of existence in a city such as Addis. The council has repeatedly asserted that it would compensate all those who are legitimate owners of the houses and hand them a new life in front of them. Plots of land

and flats in condominiums are availed according to the city council.

Among the demolished houses are notably those in the famous quarter of jewelry around the old Piassa not deemed to be up to the new plan and face of the city. The city council believes that the shops are not up to the newly upgraded standard of the neighborhood of Piassa which needs to be redeveloped and reshaped.

The city authorities have also said that the city's redevelopment was already declared officially five years ago and looking at it as a surprise now is erroneous and misleading. They said there have been countless meetings with the inhabitants of the areas that were to be affected and extended discussions were undertaken. There were no surprises. The city council says the residents affected all knew well in advance and the plan began to be executed according to the priorities of the project.

Hence, the complaints heard here and there on the part of certain inhabitants are, according to the city council, unacceptable and impractical. The council will go ahead with the project and as it has done with other projects, it will complete it within the time span that is fixed. Any inconvenience to the traffic congestion and the movements in the city should hence be understood and patiently tolerated until the city continues to change its face, becoming a modern city well suited to conduct a healthy life.

In the meantime, residents are heard wondering and anxious which other neighborhoods will now be the next under this vast redevelopment. It is known that Addis has so many neighborhoods full of congested houses and scarce inner roads. Many of them accommodate many residents who rely on their small businesses with small shops, cafes and kiosks. The idea of moving away from those quarters is for them a challenge because they are not obliged to begin from scratch in their activities.

The city council has given several explanations on how things have been planned and that the residents that would be relocated to other areas. It as well has made it clear that the people will receive substitute and adequate houses and places where they can conduct their businesses. The intention is to make Addis commensurate to its name and fame and not leave it with so many illegal and informal settlements and businesses with little hope of expansion. The challenge for many inhabitants is however how to embark on a new life in a new neighborhood. They say they leave behind all their social bonds and they feel a bit uprooted.

They argue that being distant from their usual clients, and bringing new customers would be a challenge. All their social life and habits will be gone. In the new quarter, they would have to reinvent a new life and new social interactions. However, we remember when Sheraton

Addis was built, a whole neighborhood had to be demolished and those who used to live there were relocated in a new neighborhood around what is called CMC St Michael and Kotebe areas where they were given new houses. Eventually they were satisfied with the new arrangement because now they got enough space to live in rather than the congested neighborhoods where they used to have.

The majority of the houses in the neighborhoods which have been demolished especially around Piassa do not have any sanitary services nor sewerage for the waste. Residents lived in poor conditions. In fact, many say these demolitions are long overdue because it is impossible to live under similar conditions right in the center of the 'capital of Africa'.

While renovating the city may be well taken by the majority of the residents of Addis who see a new future for their city, the key issue however is raised by those directly affected in terms of relocation and the potential loss of their daily earnings for their livelihood. This is particularly true for those who are not formally employed and scrap a living from informal trade. Among the relocated are families with children who by leaving their old neighborhoods have to go far away. The municipality has reiterated that it has made things clear with a series of discussions held with these families indicating them of how to go about to face their new life. The city authority has said that all these renovation schemes and the so-called Corridor Development would be over in about six months and the major activities would be over in a couple of months. Most of the spaces liberated would be used to enlarge the roads, plant flowers, grass and trees and make the city deserve the name it has: Addis Ababa or new flower.

The city authorities insist that the plan was meticulously prepared and designed and it was not a sudden decision as many may think. They say they have taken time to do it and all roads that have been affected are to be replaced by alternative roads. But, with the increasing number of the population and above all vehicles, traffic is very much congested and movement in the city is bound to be affected. People are forced to spend a lot of time on the streets trapped in the traffic until the project is completed.

In the meantime, certain utilities such as electricity, water and telecom services may be affected and the council has said that it is doing all it can to limit the inconveniences. However, as Addis tries to join the family of well developed and managed cities, these redevelopment schemes become mandatory. The old houses that have been built across the years without any proper planning and any permits must be rid of and replaced. Certain roads and byroads need to be upgraded and risks for clients reduced. It should hence be appreciated that change was inevitable to readjust the city to the new tangible reality of modern life.

The intention is to make Addis commensurate to its name and fame and not leave it with so many illegal and informal settlements and businesses with little hope of expansion



“I’ll fight till I see *Amharic* AU’s working languages”

- Rahmatou Keïta

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Today’s guest is a Nigerien journalist, writer, and film director, Rahmatou Keïta. Born in Niger, she began film career in 1990.

After studying philosophy and linguistics in Paris, Keïta started her career in France. Before becoming a movie director, she made a name for herself as a journalist for European TV channels. She appeared on the cultural program *L’assiette anglaise* on France 2.

She directs short films and created the TV series *Femmes d’Afrique* (Women from Africa) (26 x 26-minute episodes, 1993–1997), which screened on national channels in Africa. With friends, Keïta started *Sonrhay Empire* productions to produce films “off the beaten track.” In 2005, her first feature film, *Al’èssi...*, about pioneers of African cinema such as Zalika Souley was selected at the Cannes Film Festival and won the Sojourner Truth Award. *Al’lèssi...* received several awards, including the Best Documentary Award in Montreal and at the FIFAI.

A committed activist for African causes, Keïta is a founding member of the Panafrikan Association for Culture (ASPAC) and takes an active part in the dialogue of cultures and civilizations. In 2016, her film *Zin’naariya!* (The Wedding Ring) was released.

For years, Keïta has been struggling to make Amharic the official language of the African Union. While she was in Addis, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a short stay with Keïta to know the effort she made so far to realize her dream and the feeling she has about Ethiopia in general.

What inspired you to stand by the side of Ethiopia’s Amharic language and strive to make it an official language of the AU?

For the first time, I came here to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to participate in the African Union summit, which was held between 2008 and 2009. When I first visited the AU, I observed the establishment document of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was signed by our four fathers. Surprisingly, I don’t see any documents written in Amharic and Gees languages. That was the thing that surprised me.

As a linguist, I understood that Gees is one of the most ancient alphabets in the world, and Amharic is one of the nine official languages in Ethiopia. I started to research why Amharic, the language widely spoken throughout the country, is not used as an official language of the AU. Ethiopians are always used to speaking their own native languages instead of using others. We have to talk to or communicate with Amharic.

In 1963, the founding fathers of the OAU decided to use languages that were spoken on the entire African continent as the official language of the organization. At that time, Arabic was one of the most widely used languages, apart from other colonial languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English. However, the treaty of the African Union is written in Amharic and Gees. I thought Emperor Haile Selassie I, who was also one of the founding fathers of the OAU, refrained from raising the idea of making Amharic the official language of the AU when the agreement was signed in Ethiopia. He just did not want to push them for that. Nevertheless, Swahili was selected as one of the official languages of the OAU.

Later on, I discovered that *Alpha* Oumar Konaré, the former president of Mali and the African Union Commission, put Swahili as one of the official languages of the AU. Later, when I became familiar with that, I tried to talk to the president to understand who could do it. However, I could not do that as he was ill. Other officials who were working with him told me that he would call when he was good. He later died.

The second important point is that even if we have some alphabets and languages in Africa, some of them have disappeared due to invaders’ distractive roles. As language is a human treasure, we have to protect our alphabet for future use. When I kicked off the struggle, the population of Ethiopia was 80 to 100 million, and now the number has grown to 120 million.

The world population is now greater than eight billion. I stand up for making Amharic one of the official languages of the African Union, having a vision of protecting the language from being vanished. Even if it is the language of 120 million people, it could disappear if we do not give it serious attention and protect it.

Now, English has become the world’s medium of communication and serves as a tool for the exchange of goods and services. It has been used as an economic language around the world, which greatly contributes to its prosperity. Africans with deep pockets send their kids to foreign countries to have better education abroad, especially in the US, and the poor Africans dream of being rich in western schools. On the other hand, the language of these rich people is less and less used for thought.



One of the arguments raised here is to protect our treasures. A people can exist if they have their own language and culture. If our language appears and the culture disappears, we don’t exist anymore. We have to protect all the languages that exist in Africa. Amharic, which has its own ancient alphabet, is one of the languages. Researchers find Gees in the hieroglyphs. This indicates that it is more ancient than we think. A hieroglyph has now disappeared. So let us work together for the survival of Gees and Amharic by making them the AU’s official languages. That is how I started my campaign. Everywhere I go, I talk to people in and out of Africa. As a film director, I have been promoting my campaign while I attend various

international film conferences. Some of my friends understand that it is a wonderful idea and appreciate my campaign.

Amharic has now become a language spoken in a range of countries, including Sudan, Egypt, Djibouti, Eritrea, and the USA. When I go to Los Angeles, for instance, there is a town called “Little Ethiopia.” If you don’t know Amharic, you have faced challenges in performing any activity. Students are taught the Amharic language in schools and universities. Some people who reside in Germany, England, and Israel used to speak Amharic. Our sisters and brothers, who go back to their

continued to page 9

continued from page 8

“I’ll fight till I see *Amharic*...

roots, are also taught the Amharic language in Israel. No one could say that it was just in Ethiopia. We have to have a lot of arguments that we need to convince.

When I started the campaign in 2009, I talked to Meles Zenawi, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia. He appreciated the idea, but it is not regulation. He gave me hope to meet and talk about the matter and to discover ways of realizing it. He then became ill and died. However, he was highly interested in the matter. Now it is not my interest alone; it is the curiosity of all Africans.

Is there any progress that you can mention here as a success?

In Africa, we have a lot of people who speak their own languages. The effort to make Amharic the official language is a process that takes some time. So, it is not considered a simple task. In my country, Niger, Hausa was the most widely spoken local language in Nigeria, as it was used by more than 48 million people. Following this were Yoruba, Nigerian Pidgin, Igbo, and Fulfulde, which registered approximately 39.5 million, 30 million, 27 million, and 22 million speakers, respectively.

We are still speaking our languages, even if we are facing various challenges, including the brainwashing education of colonization culture. We still exist. The second thing is, we cannot present the entire quest you have at a time. My struggle is to make Amharic one of the official languages of the African Union. Because I am not from Ethiopia, people interview me curiously or write papers on the matter.

When I started the campaign, people were laughing at me. It may succeed or not. However, if you want to fight to gain something, you have to start on your own, and that is the reason I decided to have an Amharic title (generic) for my film, *The Wedding Ring*, even though the task is very expensive. *The Wedding Ring* was my last film in the Oscar computation for best foreign language, and the generic subtitle of the film was in Amharic. When you came to the Oscar theater, we all, the stars of Hollywood, kept silent when Amharic subtitles came, and after the screen all came to us, they asked me; “What is this? I replied that it was Amharic. “Are you from Ethiopia?”, They asked me, “Are you from Ethiopia?”, I responded that I am from Niger. All film makers are writing subtitles for their films in their countries languages.

What is your message for those who want to join your campaign?

Anyone can come and join my campaign. Of course, there are some who conducted research and thought about the Amharic language. So, if they are convinced of what I am doing, they have to join me and make the campaign stronger. As far as I know, it is a national issue, and your Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tayeaske Selasse, proposed



Amharic as the new official language of the AU while making a speech at the 37th ministerial summit.

My campaign is considered a pan-African movement, while the minister is national. So, the campaign will be stronger, and for that, we need some time. I, for instance, met Foreign Minister Taye at the African summit, and we deliberated on the matter. They have the power, but we only have the commitment to do that. When I started the campaign, I did not know anybody. And I am convinced culturally and psychologically to do the task. As we are in a cultural war, Africans are convinced I should do that.

People don’t think about their culture as they are tightening up in their daily routine tasks. You have to be strong in defending those who act against cultural invaders. There are a lot of places in Africa where war is still a challenge for our culture. When you are in a war situation, there are a lot of things you do not know or think about. If we knew each other better, things would not be beyond our capacity. If we are all humans,

humanity comes from Ethiopia. People of Africa, people of the first humanity, should have a chance to show peace, love, and the significance of culture to the world. Now, we are really cautious about culture. However, our children are reliant on the internet instead of writing books.

Is there any organization that assists you in realizing your reverie?

So far, no one has assisted me. Undeniably, some people are giving moral support. As you all know, every campaign has its own cost and it also takes time for your own work. Sometimes, the campaign requires traveling to a certain places and you have to cover expenses related to transportation, accommodation, and so on. The African Union summit is a place where heads of state assemble to pass decisions on various issues. After I arrived here, I talked to a lot of high-level officials, including the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Musafaki Mahamat.

I sent a letter to President *Paul Kagame*,

President Felix Tshisekedi, and President Azali Assoumani, the ones who became the present AU president. I have also written a letter and informed them well about the campaign. As your minister asked, we have to go fast to make Amharic an official language of the AU this year. The AU chairperson, Musafaki, will be replaced by a newly elected commissioner of AU. If we are not successful this year, we are forced to start the agenda from scratch with the newly elected commissioner.

I gave a letter personally to the existing AU commissioner and talked about the issue, as it is one of the steps to follow for the success of the campaign. As I told you earlier, I promote the Amharic language wherever I go so as to achieve my vision. In order to succeed in this noble cause, we need the intervention of prominent people such as Athlete Haile Gebre Selase and Mo Ibrahim to be with us in resolving some financial bottlenecks.

As a linguist, you know that every language has its own philosophy, and what is new you came across in Amharic?

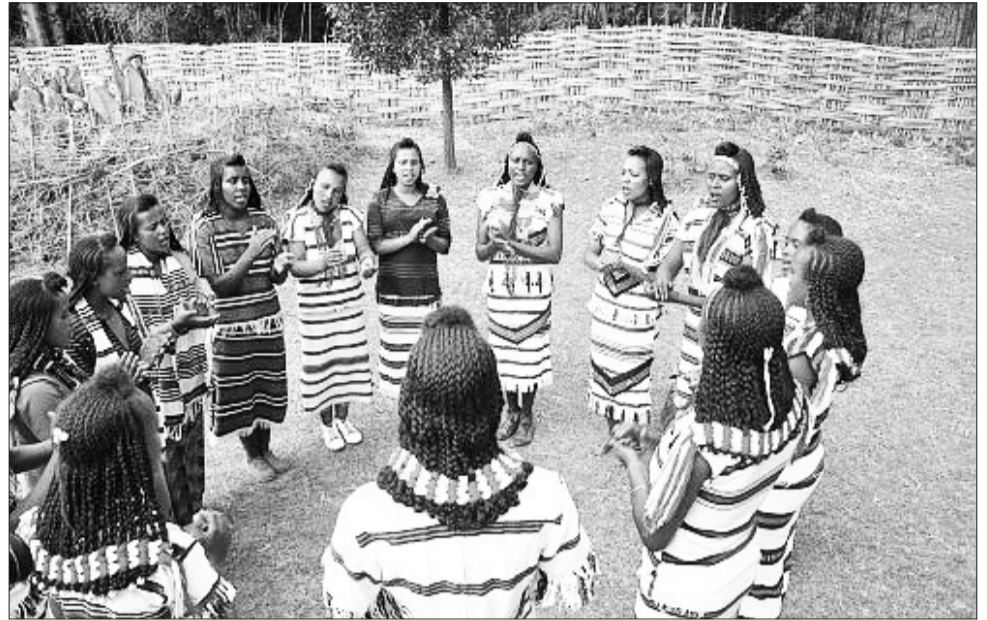
I think each language is special. Each language has its own way to see the world, its own way to think, and its own philosophy. This should be protected. The special thing that I see in the Amharic and Geez languages is, they have 94 percent of all African tones. You cannot write them in Latin or Asian languages. It has its own unique alphabets, called “Fidel” or “ha, hu,” and number systems. Its consonants and vowel sounds are merged into distinct orthographic characters, i.e., one character is a complete phoneme or sound system.

So, Amharic has the base of all African sounds. It is strange because no one of these languages has all these tones. When I say 94 percent, if you take one of the South African languages—Xhosa—Amharic does not have all the tones of Xhosa. I know they have their own way to write it too. A language found in Africa that has all the African language tones is Amharic. For me, it is evidence. If the office of the AU were in another country, I would not look for it. I just came here to Ethiopia; I know this alphabet and language.

Thank you very much.

It is my pleasure.

Society



Experience the vibrant New Year festival of Sidama: *Fiche-Chambalala*

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Among the various festivals Ethiopia celebrates with passion, New Year festivals have a special place among the majority. Depending on the culture or the identity of that particular society, New Year will be celebrated warmly and colorfully. *Fiche-Chambalala*, which is a unique New Year festival that is celebrated among the people of Sidama, is the one in this regard.

According to the information obtained from the Sidama State Culture, Tourism and Sport Bureau, Sidama's New Year Festival is one of the intangible cultural events that have been passed down from generation to generation. The festival takes place in the 12th month of Sidama constellation and calendar; and the exact day of both the termination of the old year and the beginning of the New Year is set by traditional astrologers known as *Ayanto* among Sidamas.

About a month before the festival, *Ayanto* hold a meeting to elect prayer leaders for the coming year. These chosen elders, isolating themselves from the community, fast and purify themselves so that they can know what the next year will bring to the people. It is believed that these elders are gifted with unique talent and wisdom to understand whether the New Year will bring good days and peace.

Ayanto look to the sky (the stars) and below the earth (the goat's caecum -the part that is the beginning of the large intestine) - seeking the wisdom that nature offers. They predict what will happen in Sidama in the coming New Year by slaughtering a small goat and reading the caecum applying the wisdom they have inherited from ancestors. It is believed that a closer look inside the caecum of goats reveals the future to the elders.

The festival starts with family and neighborhood gatherings and then expands to the process of celebrating together massively at the traditional square.

The *Fiche-Chambalala* New Year celebration is a time for the Sidama people get together, extend gratitude for the blessings of the past year, and look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

The *Fiche-Chambalala* New Year celebration is a time for the Sidama people get together, extend gratitude for the blessings of the past year, and look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Fiche festival is also a time when tribal leaders and senior elders teach and give directions to the community in order to promote peace, respect, tolerance, reconciliation, accelerate development and respect human rights.

What is more, the day has also a special place among the people of Sidama for it is a time they will forget their past grudge and embrace forgiveness.

As it was indicated by Sidama State President, Desta Ledamo, *Fiche-Chambalala* festival is not only a transition to another year, but also it is a time where past grudges and bitterness are removed and forgiveness will be practiced.

In his congratulatory message to the people of Sidama in relation to the festival, Desta said that the festival is a visible indication

of the level of knowledge and wisdom of forefathers. It is also a pride to Ethiopia and an intangible cultural heritage that has universal value and importance.

Fiche-Chambalala has cultural and social benefits beyond its significance as a beginning of a new year. It is a heritage that reflects the core cultural aspects of the Sidama people.

Fiche-Chambalala is a New Year festival that has been passed down from generation to generation and continues to be cherished and celebrated by the generations to come, the President remarked.

Since *Fiche Chambalala* is one of the most valued holidays among the people of Sidama, several cultural practices are performed and everyone eagerly awaits the day. On this special day, children are free from performing any house chores. Thus, they get together to sing "*Aide Chambalala*", which means "we have come back". In response to this song, mothers would reply "*ille, ille*", which means good to see you today" and they will provide them with various traditional dishes.

On the actual day, it is not only children who enjoy the day. Men and women, young and old will also celebrate it warmly and joyfully. What is more, cattle that had been busy for most of the months will get relief on this special occasion.

On this special occasion, it is common to see friendly competition among young men and women. This friendly competition is believed to bring unity and togetherness among the community while providing entertainment for all ages. It is also common to see families and neighbors gathering and spending the day by eating and drinking. They later go out to the public square to sing and dance.

One of the key elements of *Fiche-Chambalala* celebration is the preparation of "*Bursame*", a traditional and much-loved dish that is commonly enjoyed during the *Fiche-Chambalala* celebration. This flavor and delicious dish holds cultural significance and is an essential part of the festive feast.

This dish showcases the rich agricultural heritage of the Sidama people, as it features a variety of locally grown ingredients that are readily available during the harvest season. The main ingredients typically

include barley flour, sorghum, maize and beans, which are mixed together to create nutritious and delicious porridge.

The preparation of *Bursame* involves careful cooking and stirring to achieve the desired texture and flavor. The mixture is slowly simmered over a fire, allowing the ingredients to blend together and develop a rich and savory taste. The meal is also shared among family members and neighbors as a symbol of unity and abundance during the festival. As sources indicated, "*Bursame*" is often accompanied by traditional Sidama songs and dances, with participants dressed in colorful attire and adorned with handmade bead jewelry.

During the *Fiche-Chambalala* festival, families also gather to pay homage to their ancestors and seek blessings for the upcoming year. Offerings are made to the spirits of the land and prayers are recited for a bountiful harvest and prosperity. During *Chambalala* traditional elders play a significant role in guiding the community through several rituals and ensuring that all the customs and traditions are upheld.

The ritual of decorating the streets and households with flowers and other decorations is another aspect of *Fiche-Chambalala*. As some sources indicated, the decorations symbolize the beauty and abundance of nature, as well as the renewal of life and growth that comes with the changing seasons.

While the Sidama people are preparing to celebrate *Fiche-Chambalala*, State Police Commission has announced that it is undertaking arrangements to celebrate the day peacefully.

Sidama State Police Commission Commissioner Shemels Thomas told ENA that the *Fichee Chambalala* festival will be marked on Friday and Saturday. In this regard, all the necessary preparations are made to celebrate the festival peacefully.

Shemels also said that since *Fichee Chambalala* is one of the intangible cultural heritages registered by UNESCO as heritage of humanity, several tourists will attain the program. In this regard, he urged the residents of the city to show all the necessary cooperation so that local and international tourists can have a wonderful time.

Verbatim and Caption

The reform promotes youth-led startup businesses- PM Abiy

Ethiopia to repatriate 70,000 Ethiopians from Saudi Arabia: MoFA



“
Ethiopia is cultivating an environment conducive to youth entrepreneurship, fostering innovative problem-solving businesses. Recognizing the youth as the nation’s engines, brimming with innovative ideas, and according policy support for the ecosystem are vital to translate ideas into reality. Ethiopia gives due focus to achieve these goals.
Despite current challenges, numerous initiatives over the past five years now have been actively addressing these hurdles, paving the way for abundant opportunities.”
Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) addressing “Startup Ethiopia” discussion forum

“
Ethiopia is finalizing preparations to begin repatriating 70,000 Ethiopian migrants from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ethiopian government is committed to assist Ethiopians who are in difficult situations abroad. Following a discussion between the government of the two countries, some 70, 000 Ethiopians who are in difficult situation in Saudi Arabia would be repatriated. A national committee, comprised of 16 institutions, is undertaking preparation for the successful repatriation of citizens. The repatriation will start soon.”

”
Nebiyu Tedla, Spokesperson,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
Ethiopia



GERD proves Ethiopians resilience amid challenges: DPM



“
The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is a living testament to what Ethiopians will accomplish if they are united. The national flagship project has currently reached 95.8 percent. The GERD is a testament to what Ethiopians will accomplish in unison by overcoming any challenges facing them. To show Ethiopians resilience, this years’ commemoration theme is “Together we can”.”

”
Temesgen Tiruneh, Deputy Prime Minister during the 13th anniversary for the commencement of the construction of GERD