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Reform gov't brings

immense changes in Addis: Deputy Mayor

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA - The six-year-long national reform has brought about significant changes that have been greatly benefiting

Addis Ababa and its residents, the Deputy Mayor said.

Deputy Mayor Jantirar Abay made the above remark at the public rally that was held yesterday to cherish the achievements made

in the past six years with the guiding idea of "We will stand together for the prosperity of our country."

See Reform gov't ... page 4

Ethio-Engineering Group set to assemble electric vehicles

BY YESUF ENDRIS

BISHOFTU - Ethio-Engineering Group will shift to assemble electric vehicles and machines soon, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh said, expressing the government's relentless support.

Accompanied by Industry Minister Melaku Alebel, Transport and Logistics Minister Alemu Sime (PhD), and Ethio-Engineering Group CEO Suleiman Dedefo, the DPM paid a visit to the state-owned group's automotive facility in Bishoftu town yesterday.

During a visit, Temesgen expressed

See Ethio-Engineering ... page 4

ERCS, CBE jointly to construct building

• Working to excel humanitarian responses

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Red Cross Society approved the joint venture accord with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to a building project located in the heart of Addis Filwaha's district that lags for 28 years due to various reasons.

The ERCS held a General Assembly

See CRCS,CBE ... page 4

Fiche chamballala means to spread peace, unity across Ethiopia

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

HAWASA - As Fiche Chamballala is a feast of unity and reconciliation, it has the power to promote peace across the nation, Sidama State Chief Administrator said.

Fiche Chamballala is a celebration that marks transition to a Sidama's New Year. It is also one of the intangible heritages of the country registered by UNESCO in 2016 as a world heritage.

Sidama people hold New Year on a day declared by elders called *Ayantus* who

See Fiche chamballala ... page 4





Mamo Mihretu

Ethiopia's digital payment ensures equitable benefit sharing: NBE

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA – The national digital payment initiative leverages global insights on digitization to foster stronger, safer, and fairer communities, National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) said.

In an opinion piece published on Africa Business, NBE Governor Mamo Mihretu stated that the national digital payment initiative is part of a broader reform agenda aimed at promoting stronger, safer, and more equitable communities.

The next phase of the National Digital Payment Strategy is set to deepen digital financial services' reach into rural and underserved areas, he noted.

"We aim to do this by leveraging critical economic sectors such as agriculture and healthcare, broadening the spectrum of financial products available and bolstering data protection and cyber security measures to safeguard users," he stated.

He pointed out that the National Digital Payment Strategy exemplifies the power of innovation, collaboration, and perseverance in crafting an economic future that benefits all citizens.

As the government approaches the completion of the first foundational leg of Ethiopian journey, voyage can perhaps offer insights to nations across the continent aiming to transition towards a cash-lite and financially inclusive economy, he wrote.

Moreover, he stated, the upcoming annual payments conference in Addis Ababa in April will be a pivotal moment to chart the future course of Ethiopia's digital financial landscape, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to share insights, forge partnerships, and set actionable goals for continued progress.

Mamo added that the increase in digital transactions is positive, but more work has to be done to prioritize programs that help women and other disadvantaged populations become more financially and digitally included.

To continue fostering confidence in Ethiopia's contemporary financial system and laying the groundwork for a more open and inclusive financial environment, financial and payment service providers ought to incorporate gender considerations into the design of their products and services, the Governor noted.

Supreme Court modernizing justice institutions to redress complaints

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADAMA – The Federal Supreme Court said it is modernizing courts and justice institutions in order to resolve public grievances related to court proceedings.

Federal Supreme Court President, Tewodros Mihret told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the Court has been carrying out several activities to realize modern courts and justice institutions in the country in a view to address public grievances pertained to legal process.

Accordingly, he said, "smart code system was implemented and a wide area network and integrated court case management information system are being developed in cooperation with Information Network Security Administration to ensure modern institutions."

He believed that the new system would resolve public complains as it enables the nation to realize digital courts through avoiding the manual approach.

He stated that activities related to encouraging and formulating legal frameworks, enhancing capacity building, and improving procedures will be



Tewodros Mihret

done intensively to provide a credible, accountable, and responsible court and justice services across the country.

Sidama State Supreme Court President Demissie Dulecha on his part said that modernizing the court and justice system would have a multi-layered significance to work with the people and bring the expected result that the nation needed in that area.



Demissie Dulecha

"Courts and Justice Institutions should keep responsibility and play their part independently," he said, adding that the State's Supreme Court is modernizing its system though a lot remain to be done in such case.

Demissie further stated that the Sidama state is working a lot to achieve people's satisfaction through providing effective and proper courts and justice services by 2030.



Ministry underscores spurring startup technology

BY MENGESHA AMARE

ADDIS ABABA - The government has been doing all its best to promote the startup technology and other related aspects, so stated Melaku Alebel, Industry Minister.

As to him, the sector is a hub of innovative, creative and competent citizens who have come together, and the government has been encouraging and helping the forerunners of the sector thereby helping the country earn

its deserves out of the technology.

Kidus Feseha, who won the 2022 International Startup entrepreneurs award, on his part said that Start up Ethiopia is at its infant stage, but trekking on the right track to push the nation steps forward.

He said, "To persuade people about the great significance of the startup technology were difficult from the very beginning, but it starts bearing fruits. Even investors and other entrepreneurs have been contributing

a lot to the development of our Company."

According to Kidus, the policy proclamations that promote the sector are very important and plausible. "What matters is we all are expected to work hard and expand the sector. In the era or ever-changing technology and modernization, an organization or a company is not an office and a physical entity, but a human mind."

He further said that the startup technology needs to be well expanded and well nurtured.

Editorial

National Reform has continued bearing praiseworthy fruits

Recently, tens of thousands of residents of various cities in different regions including Addis Ababa have reaffirmed their support for the successful completion of the Abbay Dam. The 13th year laying of the foundation of the Dam is also to be commemorated under the theme: "Together We Made It Possible" while its construction stage has reached 95 percent. Besides this, the residents have appreciated the fruits of the reform over these six years and they reaffirmed to continue their commitment in supporting the relentless efforts of the government.

Indisputably, over the past six years, Ethiopia's reform efforts have produced commendable results that maximize the benefits of its citizens. Indeed, the reformist leadership of the nation charted a transformative journey, altering the nation's socio-political landscape in profound ways. These efforts have not only ignited hope but have also sparked critical dialogue on the country's trajectory. As the nation navigates this juncture, the results of its reform journey reflect both the promise of a brighter future and the enduring struggle to realize its full potential regardless of the persisting challenges.

More importantly, Ethiopia's reform agenda has left a permanent mark on the nation, heralding a period of profound transformation. This ambitious endeavor has seen the dismantling of longstanding political barriers and the fostering of a more inclusive and democratic beliefs. Interestingly, the resilience and determination of the Ethiopian people shine through, as they continue to strive for a brighter, more equitable future. As the nation charts its course forward, the results of these reforms serve as a testament to both the potential for renewal and the enduring struggle for meaningful change.

Furthermore, the reformist leadership has borne fruit across various spheres, marking significant strides towards a more inclusive and prosperous society. The leadership has initiated a series of political reforms aimed at democratizing the country's political landscape. This includes the release of political prisoners, the lifting of media restrictions, and the opening of political space for opposition parties.

Moreover, it has also pursued a proactive approach to regional diplomacy, fostering closer ties with neighboring countries and playing a constructive role in regional peace and stability initiatives. It has embarked on ambitious economic reforms, attracting foreign investment, and promoting private sector growth. Initiatives such as the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the implementation of pro-business policies have helped stimulate economic activity and create jobs. The nation has taken steps to address historical grievances and promote social reconciliation among its diverse ethnic groups. This includes efforts to promote interethnic dialogue, address grievances related to land rights and resource allocation, and foster a sense of national unity and cohesion. For instance, the government along with its people has initiated the forthcoming National Dialogue.

The other peculiar feature of the reform leadership is its unparalleled capacity in project execution. It has been accomplishing series of projects per their schedule. It has also demonstrated prudent and determined leadership in saving the Abbay Dam from its total failure. It's not an exaggeration to deduce that this Dam has been a significant endeavor for the reformist leadership, reflecting not only the country's commitment to economic development but also its determination to restore a mega project from its abortive state.

In sum, nation's reformist leadership over these six years has yielded tangible results in terms of widening political landscape, regional diplomacy and economic growth. It has also demonstrated a strong commitment in restoring the construction of the Abbay Dam. While there is still much work to be done, these reforms represent an important step forward in Ethiopia's journey towards a more democratic, prosperous, and inclusive future.

Opinion

Ethiopia works for equitable water share

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Over the last 13 years, along with the construction of the dam, which is not having a significant impact, Ethiopia has made the utmost efforts to conduct negotiations based on fair use of water with the downstream countries.

Although the Abbay River is a great asset for Ethiopia, the people have been suffering from shortages of electricity in the past. In order to permanently resolve this problem, the construction of the Nile Dam is underway, and now it is on the finishing line. Without priding by contributing over 86 percent of the water share to the Nile River, Ethiopia is also making great efforts to peacefully negotiate with the downstream countries based on fair utilization of the waters.

For centuries, Abbay, one of the great rivers of Ethiopia, was not used for the benefit of the country, causing frustration among the people. Even though there is a desire to hord the course of water and make use of the river for local use, the political and economic situation of the country does not allow it to do so.

When the construction of the Nile Dam started 13 years ago, the people who were depressed about the Abbay River contributed with their initiative and determination to bring the dam to its current level. The people of Ethiopia are contributing to the dam regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, and level of income.

Over the past 13 years, the government of Ethiopia has been making relentless efforts for negotiations based on fair use among the Nile basin countries, besides building the dam. As the dam is built on a transboundary river, extensive discussions and negotiations were held with the downstream countries.

So far, Ethiopia has been discussing the position of fair use of water in the negotiations. However, countries that use the Nile water, devising their own share, such as Egypt and Sudan, were arguing with the extreme idea that only we should use it. The position of these countries is against the international principle of fair utilization of waters.

During the negotiations, Ethiopia has done a great job in informing that

the dam will not harm downstream countries and has full rights to use the water as the sourcing country for the river. The negotiations had gone through many conditions. Ethiopia has reached the final construction stage of the GERD without stopping the negotiations.

Next, the GERD should be used properly. It is necessary to generate an income by selling the electricity produced from the dam to neighboring countries for domestic consumption. If there is a demand for electricity on the Egyptian side, the door of Ethiopia remains open. It is good to strengthen the existing economic ties for mutual benefit.

Since November 2019, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt have held dozens of trilateral talks on the filling of the reservoir and the operation of the dam, which were supported and attended by the US and the World Bank as "observers."

As they are sticking to the 1929 and 1959 colonial treaties, Egypt and Sudan have not agreed with Ethiopia on an equitable Nile water share yet. Upstream states believe a new agreement must replace the colonial treaties, whereas Egypt insists that any agreement must recognize the colonial treaties and those they continue to be binding. On the other hand, Ethiopia asserts that there is no legal ground to stop Addis Ababa from equitably using the Nile waters.

Even though Ethiopia did not get any development assistance from the international financial institutions to make the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, thanks to the generous support of all Ethiopians, the project is now on the verge of realization.

The point that anyone should underline is that every country has the legal right to use its own resources for the benefit of the people at large. Ethiopia is a source of the Abbay River, so nobody has a right to prohibit Ethiopia from developing the resource at hand and ensuring the benefit of its people.

Now, as the GERD is already made possible, the agenda we further need to talk about is the equitable utilization of Nile waters. For this reason, Ethiopia's door is remained open as always. Finally I would like to thank you our envious as you made us strong and sharp to do the better for our country!

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



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University expediting preparations to launch e-learning

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - Dire Dawa University said preparations are afoot to transform the traditional education method into digital e-learning aimed at enhancing academic and community services.

Speaking to Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), University President Ubah Adem (PhD) noted that the institution is among the five public universities selected by Ministry of Education to implement e-learning system.

Accordingly, she stated that standardized digital multimedia studio has already been built in the university to deliver educational service online and teachers who will deliver the online service have also received training so far.

She further noted that the University has



Ubah Adem (PhD)

developed five software and applications and licensed for each innovation last year.

All the applications are problem-solving

digital products showcasing the University's aspiration in its digital transformation, she added.

With the help of the University's innovation center, Ubah expressed that students are trying hard to bring about new innovations.

Moreover, the University is partaking in the effort to make Dire Dawa smart city. To this end, she stated that her university is supporting the Mayor office that heads the comprehensive measures being taken to categorize the city among the smart ones.

In related news, Ministry of Education has categorized all public universities making them to play specialized role. The Ethiopian Herald has learned that the distribution of technological apparatuses to fasten the transformation is also being carried out across universities.

ERCS, CBE ...

yesterday to approve the joint venture allowing state board members to take part in administrative issues.

Speaking at the assembly, ERCS President Abera Tola said the forum would be a significant milestone to curb the long-lasting and complicated cases that have been affecting the progress and execution of the building project for 28 years. "Despite the project being handled by giant local and international contractors, the progress of the construction process could not exceed the excavation stage."

Prioritizing the project, the Society has also been mobilizing resources by setting various initiatives and via its pharmaceutical centers to steadfast the construction progression and to meet the public demand. Accordingly, a feasibility study has been conducted on the viability of the project and to pave the way to commence the construction, Abera added.

"Although the center has immense resources such as land, stores and facilities it is still in a vicious circle to meet the dire needs of vulnerable communities. While international donors contribute 95% of the desired finance, the center is striving to exceed its financial capacity to 50% in the next five years."

The President further noted that the ERCS is taking bold steps to advance humanitarian capacity services and it has long been providing a wide range of life-saving activities to rescue scores of communities affected by conflict, flood, and other disasters.

Noting the existence of about 21 million citizens in dire need of humanitarian assistance across the country, he indicated the ERCS is working with local and international partners to reach them. The Society is also engaged in resource mobilization programs to provide health, education, food and rehabilitation services for people in need.

CBE Vice President Ephrem Mekuria for his part stated that the bank has been looking for ways to set up various forms of business in a bid to discharge its social corporate responsibility (SCR).

Considering ERCS' commendable role in the community, Ephrem the bank has been undertaking preliminary activities not just to facilitate the business feasibility modalities, but also to support the society.

The bank reached an agreement with the ERCS to construct the building in a co-ownership scheme with a view to boosting its financial capacity and meeting core missions, the vice president remarked.

Ethio-Engineering ...

the government's avid interest in backing the industry in its transformation phase. "The assembling of petrol and diesel-powered cars will no longer be a reliable business and we need to shift to environmentally-friendly electric vehicles."

The decision to stop importing petrol and diesel cars could be realized by transforming large-scale automotive industries as of the Ethio-Engineering Group. The industry has a capacity and experience that suits to assemble the needed electric vehicles and machinery, he remarked.

Ethio-Engineering Group CEO Suleiman Dedefo for his part said that the group is in a good position of assembling vehicles and industrial machinery.

Headed by the Office of the Prime Minister, a project of assembling touring vehicles is being carried out by the Bishoftu Automotive Workshop. The workshop is assembling agro-processing industries machinery, particularly wheat, potato, and tomato processors.

All these machines are instrumental to ease the work burden that challenges housewives and women in general, Suleiman elaborated.

"The assembling and body repair workshop is also helping us to supply water tanker vehicles and passenger cars to the market. Amid all these achievements, the industry faces raw material shortages though alternative approaches are being implemented."

Industry Minister Melaku Afeber stated on the occasion that the recently adopted petrol and diesel-powered cars import restriction is an opportunity for electric vehicles manufacturing and assembling industries. The market is now lucrative for electric vehicles producers and assemblers."

The minister also revealed the government's attractive incentives to promote green industry.

Fiche chamballala...

examine the movement and patterns of moon and stars to determine the exact date for the New Year.

The various clans of Sidama celebrate the New Year in their respective celebration venues called *Gudumales*.

The state wide celebration of New Year took place yesterday in the states capital Hawasa where the celebration venue is called the *Sorresa Gudumale*.

Speaking at the *Fiche Chamballala* ceremony at the *Sorresa Gudumale*, the Chief Administrator Desta Ledamo noted that the people of Sidama is endowed with the rich culture which is handed down from ancestors without losing its influence.

Oromia State Chief Administrator Shimelles Abdissa said on the occasion that all Ethiopians should maintain the culture as it helps to ensure peace in the country. "There are more values that bring us closer together than keep us away from each other. So we have to keep up the culture of *Chamballala* and

expand to others."

Culture and Sport Minister Kejela Merdasa said *Fiche Chamballa* as a symbol of peace, development, reconciliation, justice. It also gives due regard to nature like plants and animals.

Scholars and local people have responsibility to maintain this beautiful culture, Kejela indicated.

During the ceremony at the Hawasa *Sorresa Gudumale* thousands of elders have taken part in the traditional play called *Ketala*, while youth and children have participated in the celebration playing the *Faro* and *Farie*.

A day before *Fiche Chamballala*, the *Fetora* feast which means eve, took place at the Sidama Culture Hall in Hawasa.

The *Fetora* marks the end of the year and is observed through 15 days of fasting where people cleanse themselves from grudges and hatred before welcoming new year.

Reform gov't brings...

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Mayor stated that in Addis Ababa, the infrastructures that were laid after the reform have brought many changes to the metropolis and its residents. The construction and expansion of parks, roads, and other human-centered projects have changed the face of Addis and ensured the benefit of its residents.

Also, the reform has brought tangible results in Addis Ababa and officials in different capacities have to discharge their responsibility to keep the momentum. In

particular, he said market stabilization has been done by providing large financial subsidies to arrest the soaring increase in the cost of living.

Jantirar further highlighted that many students have benefited from the school feeding program and there is also a regular support of educational materials. The reform government will continue to strengthen the work started to address development and related problems in the capital.

Among the messages carried by the

demonstrators are "Our peace is in each of our homes," "The prosperity of Ethiopia will be ensured under the leadership of Abiy Ahmed," "Abbay Dam is a manifestation of our unity and strength," and "We will stand firm with the reform government to lift our country to greater heights" and others.

Similar public rallies were held in different parts of the country in support of the achievements of the reform government in the past six years. The rallies were held under the slogan "We will stand together for the prosperity of our country."

Opinion

Ethiopia's holistic pursuit of peace flourishing with remarkable progress

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is no gainsaying the fact that the aspiration to make certain enduring peace, democracy, and security needs the collaboration of each and every one residing under Ethiopian skies.

It is clear that unless everyone works together, achieving the desired goal will not be as easy as taking candy from a baby. In actuality, ensuring peace and security throughout the national territory requires the endeavors of the government and other stakeholders. Taking the aforesaid reality on the ground into account, pertinent bodies have been carrying out an enormous amount of effective strategies that can oil the wheels for peace and tranquility in all areas of the country.

As moving the country to the next level of accomplishment is unanticipated and unthinkable in the absence of peace, everyone has been pulling out all the stops to join hands with the intention of ensuring peace.

Peace is universally desired. It is not a matter of personal attitude alone, it is a question of establishing a new society founded on values, culture, and a way of life integral to peace at local, regional, or global levels. Peace can emerge from the kind of lifestyle and the type of value system that we cultivate among our children and grandchildren. It depends on the way we nourish or flourish the cultural traditions, according to sources.

No development can be effectively pursued without an assured and durable environment of peace and security. Earlier, it was argued that "if you want peace, prepare for war," but now it must be "if we want peace, prepare for peace." "We need to remember that preparing for peace is the most effective means of preserving peace." War must be unconditionally rejected, and peace must be promoted.

Notwithstanding the fact that the whole thing has been moving in the right direction, some naysayers have continued dragging the prevailing reality on the ground through the mud. As the country has been dedicated to making peace and tranquility happen, every Tom, Dick, and Harry should combine efforts with the government.

As the country is stepping in the right direction, the wider international community should stand by the side of the government to smooth the path of making peace happen at the earliest possible time. In the present climate, the federal government has been discharging a wide spectrum of tasks to conduct a national dialogue on a national scale. In actuality, it is expected that the national dialogue will play a paramount role in sowing the seeds of peace in every corner of the country.

It is common knowledge that Ethiopia has played a paramount role in effectuating the



Pretoria peace accord. Since the signing of the Pretoria peace accord, there have been tangible changes. Besides restoring peace, the peace deal has paved the way for the unfettered delivery of sought-after humanitarian aid. The restoration of basic services has also been carried out smoothly. And, the resolve of the federal government has been vital in making the grand deal effective.

As things currently stand, the federal government has been assisting the progress of the reintegration of former fighters into society with a focus on making them lead a harmonious and meaningful life. In addition to providing the former combatants with appropriate rehabilitation, which is vital to their existence, pertinent bodies have been greasing the skid for the disarmament and reintegration of TPLF fighters to the society. As it is impossible to take the country to new heights in the absence of all segments of society, they will be made to be part and parcel of development-related activities.

Immediately after the peace deal, both parties have begun putting the peace implementation into effect in accordance with the terms of the deal. In the aftermath of the commitment and determination of the federal government, they have been paving the way for the reinstating of essential services, smoothing the path of humanitarian assistance, and other things of a similar kind.

Subsequent to the peace deal, Ethiopia has sustained buttressing bilateral engagement and collaboration with various nations in various parts of the world, focusing on economic, political, and social matters in accordance with mutual respect and common interests.

Despite a considerable amount of unjustified pressure on the country from Ethiopia's adversaries working persistently to twist Ethiopia's arm and breach its sovereignty, the people of Ethiopia, in the fullness of time, turned out to be triumphant over their enemies. At this very moment, various nations have kicked off assisting the

progress of diplomatic relations with quite a lot of nations worldwide on quite a lot of matters.

In a similar vein, the federal government of Ethiopia has been carrying out various activities to conduct national dialogue on a national scale down the road. On the subject of the issue, various bodies at different stages have been forwarding their feelings, ideas, and thoughts.

Tagesse Chaffo, Speaker of the House of People's Representatives lately on the topic of the issue, said that active participation of the general public is vital in the upcoming national dialogue process to realize lasting peace and national unity. So far, the activities of the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission are encouraging.

The commission should strengthen its efforts to ensure inclusivity in the remaining preparation period so as to make the dialogue achieve its goal. All citizens have to actively take part in the national dialogue. Ethiopia set up the dialogue to bring lasting peace and national harmony through consensus. The engagement of all segments of society at all levels is vital to entertain diversified ideas and to achieve the goal of the dialogue.

In a previous interview with *The Ethiopian Herald* Asrat Asale, Peace and Security studies expert said, "Building sustainable peace and ensuring security is a complex and ongoing process that requires long-term commitment and collaboration among many stakeholders and the community at large. As peace and stability is core in offering a number of opportunities to personal growth, and an instrument to let people pursue their goals and aspirations, and enjoy a sense of safety, nurturing it through constructive fashion is fundamental.

Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, though the absence of conflict is certainly part of peace. True peace encompasses more than just the absence of violence or war. Peace is a state of harmony, tranquility, and mutual understanding among individuals,

groups, or the community.

Peace involves resolving conflicts in a nonviolent and constructive manner, addressing the root causes of disagreements, and promoting cooperation and empathy. Peace also involves fostering cultural understanding and respect, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring access to basic necessities such as food, water, and healthcare. There are negative and positive peace ideals. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence or overt conflict. It is characterized by the absence of war, physical aggression, or open hostilities between individuals, groups, or nations.

Whereas positive peace goes beyond the absence of violence and seeks to address the root causes of conflicts, promote justice, and build sustainable peace. It involves creating the conditions that foster social harmony, cooperation, and the well-being of individuals and communities. A number of nations around the world have experienced negative peace ideals through the use of power, but none of them can realize sustainable peace and stability. The crucial role of the government, the elites, and the general public is to safeguard peace and security rather than spend time applying negative ideals.

The other thing is that journalists should attach importance to peace journalism in view of the fact that it plays a huge role in ensuring peace all over the country. If all journalists are on familiar terms with inside-out journalism and act accordingly, bringing about lasting peace cannot be difficult.

Conflict reporting and framing by media outlets and the ripple effect has been a subject of great interest to conflict resolution scholars and experts, governments and all parties to a conflict. The question of how media can be an agent of peace without compromising objectivity has always been the argument when journalists and conflict scholars meet at around table. Peace journalism is possible when editors and reporters make choices of what stories to report and about how to report them that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent response to conflict, according to an article.

The pros of peace journalism have long been recognized by conflict management scholars, with opponents of the said concept coming out strongly to defend objectivity in media reporting when peace journalism is practiced. However, numerous conflicts are now happening globally, with conflict management experts raising concerns over the role of media in conflict management and escalation.

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

Business & Economy

Agglomerating university potentials for economic advancement

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that universities' teaching outcomes are significantly useful in improving economic performance as they could provide the nation with talented, knowledgeable, and expertise personnel.

Since innovation and economic development are pillars of industrial advancement and are two sides of a coin, Ethiopia needs to focus on universities to help every sector grow well.

Cognizant of this fact, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Amanuel Mosnie, an educationalist graduate from Addis Ababa University in Educational Planning and Management and attending his education in the same university in Economics, graduating class of course, to have a piece of information about the role of the universities for national growth and change.

He said, "Strengthening human resources, and science and technology capability, can potentially be the major pillars of real growth and development. The country has envisaged a key role for universities and industry in research and innovation, as a spur to increased competitiveness and economic growth. The role universities can play in economic development depends to a large extent upon the level of interaction that they have with industry and government."

The concept of Triple Helix needs to be injected here to help universities, industry and government boost change via working together to promote innovations which can contribute to economic growth. Basically, the Triple Helix comprises three elements: A more prominent role for universities in innovation on a par with industry and government in a knowledge-based society, he added.

A movement towards collaborative relationships among the three institutional spheres is increasingly an outcome of interaction rather than a prescription from government, and Ethiopia does have the capacity to promote innovation if it is determined to develop industry university linkage of course.

As to Amanuel, despite some constraints, the university sector offers the greatest potential to initiate and lead firm partnerships. Universities are expected to take the lead and become the gravitational centers that initiate the partnership and they need to further differentiate their institutional mission towards high quality application oriented research for the most knowledge intensive industries. As a small number of established universities have both sufficiently qualified human resources and the desire to be research-active, all across the nation have to be given due emphasis to make them competent enough.

"Ideally each of the key economic corridors would have universities with relevant research capacity, at least in a limited range of fields critical to the region, professionally oriented institutions capable of offering industry-relevant education quickly, as well as teaching focused institutions capable of producing a pool of flexible human resource,"



University-Industry Linkages to bolster economic progress

he opined.

As to him, universities and industries have, up to recent times, relatively separated and have been distinct institutional spheres. The role of government in relation to these two spheres is changing in apparently contradictory directions at present, if truth be told.

"True, the Ethiopian government is also shifting its relationships to economic institutions, becoming both much more involved in various activities to transform the economy of the country. The collaborative effort of universities with industry with a view to fostering knowledge transfer has progressively increased since recently, indeed!"

He said, "Many of the efforts exerted so far have been directed at industries or firms located at a distance from the university, and sometimes in a different country. Ethiopians have to well exploit the untapped opportunity and significance of industry-university linkage since the country is moving to embrace concepts of knowledge based economic development that brings the knowledge, productive and regulatory spheres of society into new configurations."

Amanuel further stated that in the era of science and technology, Ethiopians peculiarly scientists and researchers have to take the lead to play the decisive role in pushing the country a number of steps forward using science and technology in this ever changing national, regional, continental and global environment with a special focus on the universities' position in the newly emerging knowledge infrastructure and state-of-the-art technological advancement.

"Universities are currently undertaking a technology revolution these days, incorporating economic and social development as part of their mission. This can be regarded as the first academic transformation made research an academic function apart from teaching. Now the emerging entrepreneurial university integrates economic development as an additional function, too. Besides, a complex web of relationships has grown up among academics, university originated start-ups and larger firms," he underlined.

Innovation is a main driving factor for development and a crucial strategy for countries worldwide. Within the framework of an innovation-driven development strategy, industry-university-research

collaborative innovation plays an important role. The effective development of universities promotes resource integration and close collaboration between enterprises, universities, research institutes, and other innovation subjects, facilitating coordinated development that has an important and far-reaching impact on regional economic growth and scientific and technological progress, he added.

Contemporary scientific and technological innovation has broken through the traditional linear model of the innovation value chain due to the increasing complexity and speed of technological innovation and the continuous development of the global economy. The process of knowledge flow is utilized to enhance industrial innovation performance by applying knowledge effectively to all aspects of industrial innovation activities. In so doing, it could really be possible to bolster economic growth via agglomerating university potentials for economic advancement.

Yes, he said the industry can provide scientific research funding support for universities and research institutes and offer research thinking and inspiration from the perspective of enterprises, which promotes the innovation.

He said, "A dynamic synergy between industries, universities, and research institutions promotes economic growth within regions and drives collective innovation. Obviously, the interdependence of government, business, and academia in fostering innovation and knowledge transfer has to be given due emphasis, in fact. The process of idea development, trial, and commercialization are dynamic and interactive, marking a shift from the conventional linear model of innovation. Spatial convergence refers to the process through which economic differences across regions become less over time, while temporal convergence is the result of growth trajectories synchronizing across various locations."

The relationship of universities and government bodies fosters the creation of an innovation ecosystem, whereby the exchange of knowledge encourages entrepreneurial activities, improves competitiveness, and contributes to the economic growth of the area, as to Amanuel.

He said the importance of local knowledge networks and collaborative partnerships in

fostering innovation and achieving economic prosperity needs to be well emphasized and given to wider place if the country is determined to record real growth.

The collaboration of three major subsystems: enterprises, universities, and scientific research institutions is of paramount importance in bolstering national growth. Moreover, the interaction between various entities cannot be separated but must have a close relationship, which can be examined from the perspective of knowledge interaction, such as technology market share, cooperative publications, and patent number, he opined.

Moreover, the population quality, industrial structure, and scale are expected to be made more reasonable in Ethiopia and the economic development level has to rank acceptably. The government attaches great importance to the deep integration of industry, universities, and scientific research to promote economic and social development, he underlined.

Due to past lagging economic, scientific, and educational development in the country the economic radiation effect has not been highly pronounced, indeed! The very advantages and lessons from experience need to be well exploited through the way of 'learning by doing,' as in so doing the coordinated development of national and regional production, education, and research can be highly promoted.

The government should formulate a flexible and unified regulation and guidance system, principles, strategic positioning, and development goals of the vocational education cluster in the country thereby meaningfully exploiting universities' potentials for economic advancement and real change in all aspects.

As to him, such an intrepid move could promote the effective implementation of coordinated development measures such as cooperation between industries, universities, and scientific research institutions in running schools, resource sharing, teacher exchanges, and mutual recognition of tribute.

"Different vocational colleges in adjacent geographical areas require a gradual transition from point-to-point communication among colleges and/or universities to line-to-line connections among universities, vocational colleges and enterprises. Such a streamlined avenue forms a network distribution structure around national universities and industries to build a layout of colleges, universities and vocational colleges that empower the development of local industries," he said.

As to Amanuel, concerning the indicators of industry, universities, scientific research, and industry-university-research coupled with firm coordination, the development level of the country is going to develop through its universities and their relentless effort to bring about momentous shift and concrete change.

He wound up his opinion saying the researches that would be conducted in the future need to incorporate a variety of academic viewpoints and investigate the intricate connections among universities, government and industries thereby coming up with economic growth in various geographical settings and across the nation in general.

Planet Earth

Lake Hawassa's preservation task requires collective action

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

The lives of human beings are extremely attached to water bodies. Most commonly, a great number of populations reside in areas where water is abundant. Nowadays, thanks to the advancement of technologies, people have begun to live in dry areas as science and innovation have made easy use of the underground water.

In areas where people are densely populated, the water bodies are awfully polluted due to improper utilization of the resource. When the water is directly or indirectly exposed to pollution, the impact it would have is beyond our imagination. Especially the people who are in third-world countries do not properly understand the influence of polluting water bodies.

In connection with industry development, some reckless investors who invest in third-world countries are not managing industry chemicals properly. Instead, they simply run off into the rivers. As a result, the presence of harmful and undesirable chemicals in the environment will have a negative impact on living things and natural ecosystems.

Nowadays, water pollution has become a significant environmental issue in Ethiopia. As the nation's population expands, so does its need for water, which raises pollution levels in water sources.

Ethiopia deals with a variety of water pollution issues because of increased modern industrialization and population development. This issue has become more serious, as pollution can negatively affect both the environment and human health.

As mentioned earlier, rivers become contaminated due to the release of chemicals from factories and other waste. The contaminated rivers directly flow into the lake without any treatment. As time goes by, the lake becomes dead due to its impurity and gives off some sort of bad aroma. The aquatic animals would no longer have a chance to stay alive. In the process, water bodies minimize their size and are finally dried.

Hawassa Lake, a pride of Hawassa City, is one of the lakes exposed to greater pollution due to the runoff of chemicals. Observing the challenge the lake faces, city administration, Hawassa University professionals, and others interested in the matter have been exerting efforts so as to preserve the lake from dehydration.

Protecting Lake Hawassa is a broad and inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration platform established in 2017, currently facilitated by the NatuReS program to improve water security for people, businesses, and the environment in Hawassa, its lake, and its sub-catchment area. The



partnership brings together private, public, and civil society organizations to address shared natural resource risks.

The Protecting Lake Hawassa (PLH) partnership in Ethiopia seeks to improve water security for the residents and businesses established around Lake Hawassa.

The partnership sought to reduce sedimentation in the lake by undertaking afforestation and soil erosion control (ASEC), which planted trees in the upper catchment area of the lake. As part of this project, the partnership created a task force to develop a strategy to reduce sedimentation and soil erosion.

The team identified sites for afforestation and consulted with communities to understand how they might improve the livelihoods of communities that depended on farming and small-scale commercial forestry (for charcoal) on the land needed for afforestation. The team took this step to ensure that local communities would not be adversely impacted by the loss of cropland for afforestation.

The task force included the district offices Hawassa Zuria Woreda (SNNP Region) and Shalla Woreda (Oromia Region) in their activities so that these offices could maintain the work longer-term. The partnership trained district office experts and communities on how to conserve soil and water.

To support the community, the partnership provided nursery fruit trees, introduced poultry and beekeeping, and promoted water harvesting technology to reduce dependency on farming in the upper catchment area of Lake Hawassa.

To raise awareness in the local community about how poor solid waste management can impact local water supply, the partnership organized a half marathon in Hawassa with



a trash collection event the day before. They also organized smaller activities in the industrial park, including jerry cans with educational messages, and created an essay competition for local schools on the benefits of protecting Lake Hawassa.

Mekdes Huriso is the Culture, Tourism, and Sport Department Head of Hawassa City. She recently told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that her bureau, in collaboration with stakeholders, is working to preserve the lake by preventing waste from entering Lake Hawassa, based on the study conducted.

The bureau, together with the intended bodies, would work on safeguarding the lake, which is the natural treasure of the city and the nation as well. So far, the city administration has been conducting bids for planned activities to divert floods 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. Considering it is a long-awaited challenge,

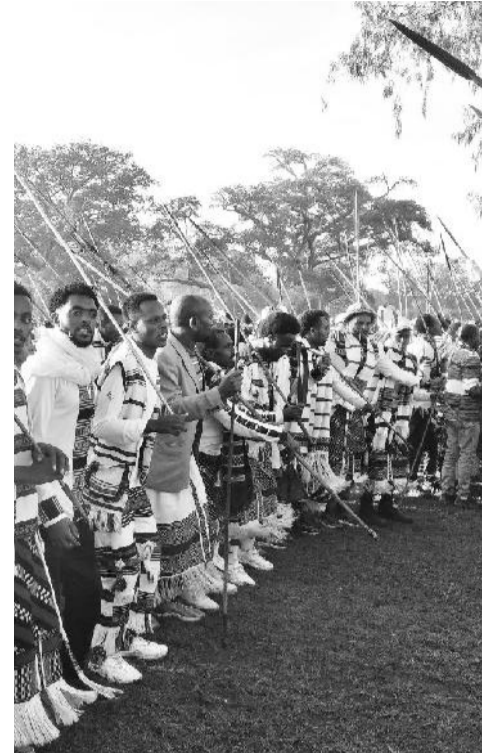
the city administration has planned to resolve the quandary by carrying out a study that is expected to bring a lasting solution, she expressed.

As the lake encompasses both Sidama and Oromia states, they must work hand in hand to solve the challenges that the lake encountered, she said, adding that her department has planned to involve all actors, including the surrounding communities, fishermen, boat builders, and farmers, regarding the protection activities.

Mekdes noted that significant development would be achieved if all stakeholders were committed to contributing to the conservation process, considering the enduring advantages of the lake. She also called on the Hawassa city residents to play their due role in preventing waste from polluting the lake.

The task of conserving Hawassa Lake and other water bodies should not be succeeded by the efforts of government bodies. The society at large and others who are interested in the matter should also throw a pebble.

Art & Culture



Fiche Chamballala: A feast beyond celebrating a new year

BY ZEKARIAS WOLDEMARIAM

According to one of Sidama folklores, a young woman used to visit her parents annually following her marriage. She used to carry gifts like the delicious Sidama traditional food called Bursame, made from enset and butter. Her annual visit is believed to be the origin for the celebration of *fiche chamballala*, the annual feast of Sidama new year.

For centuries thousands of elders, youth and children from various corners of Sidama state gather in a place called gudumale, to celebrate *Fiche chamballala*, which mainly marks the coming of new year.

Registered by UNESCO as one of the world's intangible heritages, *fiche chamballala* encompasses traditions that make it show its impact in peacemaking, respect to elders, children, women, youth, cattle and protection of the natural environment.

As the people of Sidama have been celebrating *fiche chamballala* since time immemorial it is difficult to tell what year the new year is as per the Sidama traditional calendar. But Sidama elders, called Ayantus use their ages old indigenous knowledge of analyzing the lunar system and astrology to determine the exact date for the new year. As they figure out the date for the new year, they declare a two weeks long fasting season.

The fasting season ends with a ceremony called fetora which is the eve of the new year. The tribal elder called ayantu inaugurates the fetora by passing through a hole called huluqa. His family and members of the society also follow the aganyu and pas through the hullyqa. The huluqa marks transition from old to new year, but all those who do this are expected to cleanse themselves from grudges and forgive others before transitting to the new year. This way *fiche* serves as a means of peace making in the society.

Though meat is the most favorite food through out Ethiopia including Sidama,



fiche is celebrated without meat. People do not cut trees or collect firewood in any way for the feast. This gives a unique regard to the natural environment and cattle. It is meant to give relief to animals and forest. If at all there is meat at home which is left there before the feast, people would prefer to move it out of home during the holiday. People even make due care not to scare the cattle on that special day. So cattle are allowed to graze special grass and appetizing saline black soil called Bole.

Parents do not punish children during the celebration of *fiche chamballala*. They are rather allowed to have fun around.

Just like Valentine's Day, *Fiche chamballala* is also an ideal moment for young men and women to choose or propose their future soul mates. At the gudumale, young boys play the faro dancing while girls play farie.

A boy then sends a tooth pick to the girl he chooses. If the girl accepts the branches she ushers in the start of a new chapter in the love life of the boy and her. But she has all the right to refuse the proposal if she doesn't choose the boy.

According to Dawit Lengiso, Sidama State Culture, Tourism and Sports Bureau Vice Head, the multiple impacts of the anniversary have made the people to eagerly wait for its onset every year. The people have also maintained the beautiful culture for centuries without eroding its valuable components.

The culture embedded in *fiche chamballala* has also paid back significantly as Sidama state is one of the ever-green places in the country. Sidama is well known for its green ecosystem which also includes diverse vegetation like the common cash crops coffee, khat, vegetables, enset ... etc.

According to Abebe Taffese, Communication Director with Sidama State Culture, Tourism and Sports Bureau, *fiche chamballala* was able to be enlisted as one of the intangible heritages of the world due to all these features, and the state would do all the necessary works to further uphold them.

Accordingly, Dawit indicated that due efforts are underway through the nationwide Green Legacy Initiative to nurture the green natural ecosystem of the region which is one of the legacies of *chamballala*.

The culture of forgiveness and reconciliation is also a timely and vital issue for the country which is bracing to carry out an inclusive national dialogue that is anticipated to cleanse the grievances of the past and bring about sustainable peace in the country.

Society

Addressing challenges of people with Autism

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Many believe that designating a particular date, week or month as international days or weeks has greater importance to promote issues of concern, raise awareness, educate the general public and grab the attention of policy makers, pertinent bodies and stakeholders to let them act accordingly.

According to the interpretation of the United Nations, international days are powerful advocacy tools to advocate for vulnerable groups, mobilize resources and address pressing challenges. They serve as a springboard to show commitment, to act and achieve the desired goals. Because each international day offers actors the opportunity to organize activities related to the theme of the day, it helps to gather as many audiences as possible, sensitize on matters of concern and mobilize them to action.

Taking into account this and to help improve the quality of life of those with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives, last Tuesday, April 2, the global community marked the World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) under the theme, 'Empowering Autistic Voices.'

Ethiopia also marked the day with various events including holding road runs, conducting awareness raising panel discussion among others.

In his keynote speech at an event organized by Nia Foundation, Health Minister Representative, Gobena Godana (MD) said that efforts are underway to support autistic people and those with other autism related health problems through putting in place working structure. The Ministry is working to have its own specialty and subspecialty section desk within the Ministry for persons with Autism.

The Ministry is keen to discharge its duties and responsibilities accordingly; and address the pressing problems of autistic people plus the challenges experienced by families for having autistic family members.

In 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared April 2 as International Autism Awareness Day with the aim to create awareness among the society towards people with autism and autism related health problems. This effort could produce a positive impact in letting communities get the right information about it thereby improving the lives of this segment of the society, he remarked.

According to Dr. Gobena, this year's International Autism Day theme is



“Empowering Autism Voice.” The ultimate goal of the workshop is to enhance the awareness of the communities and other stakeholders towards people with autism and make autistics engage in all areas of the activity.

Developed countries able to provide the required support and care to people with autism and other related health problems through arranging multi-disciplinary treatments, rehabilitation services as well as education and training programs to make them productive citizens, he further noted.

Mentioning that government and non-governmental organizations are duty-bound to improve the current autism center of rehabilitation and education to be supported by technology, he said the Ministry has been supporting Nia Foundation in various means based on the cooperation agreement.

Nia Foundation Executive Director Eleni Damitew also noted that the Foundation rehabilitated, educated and graduated about 29 autistics. Of the graduates, while 12 of them are working in the Foundation, 17 have joined their parents to work on their families' business.

As to her, the foundation will travel soon to the four states to mark the day and to raise societal awareness about autism as well as to highlight the need to accept and appreciate autistic people and their contributions.

“We want everyone to be clear that a person with autism could be transformed into a productive citizen and lead a normal life with the right care and support. It is commendable to put in place a working system to address health problems at an early stage. Families are responsible for preparing young children for adulthood. Nia Foundation holds that community's

support is a key factor in helping people with autism to achieve their goals and lead fulfilling lives.”

“Joy Center for Autism, which is being built in Addis Ababa, would accommodate 500 children with autism,” Eleni said.

At the panel discussion, papers regarding unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and issues related to the sexual reproductive health of persons with autism were presented.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Bahita Health Center Medical Director Yeshiwas Mitiku said that autism health problems hugely impact the way a person behaves, socializes, and interacts with others.

“The bold fact that we have to know is that autism has no cure but science has lined and designed working approaches to improve the quality of life autistic individuals,” he added

According to him, it is possible to improve the social functioning, learning and the quality of life for both children and adults with autism through providing sustained life skill training and therapies.

There are a number of therapies, like speech and occupational, as well as sensory integration, that could be provided for them. It is believed that these approaches could help victims integrate with the community and respond accordingly.

The best time to treat people with autism-related health problems is at an early age. He finally noted that children with autism need protection and understanding. In this regard, the role of families is irreplaceable. Thus, families need to have the courage to bring their child to schools and health and rehabilitation centers rather than hiding them behind locked rooms for fear of stigma. He also underlined that autism is simply a health problem and has nothing to do with any kind of evil spirit or curse.

He also called on health facilities to enhance health education and incorporate autism on their list as one of their agendas in the family health team. What is more, during pregnancy and after birth, mothers should visit health facilities and start prenatal and postnatal checkups to do away with birth related complications.

According to the latest research report from the CDC, the prevalence of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has grown to one in 36 (2.8%). This is an increase from one in 44 children two years ago, and it is believed that since the report was recently released, the data is likely to stay the same through 2024.

The best time to treat people with autism-related health problems is at an early age

Law & Politics

Abbay Dam completion: Ethiopia's diplomatic victory

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The construction of the Abbay Dam (Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD), is now practically fait accompli, a complete reality after so much resistance, perplexity, and opposition from various corners, which presumably do not have good feelings about Ethiopia's growth and prosperity. We can say objections against its construction are now as good as dead.

Ethiopians have demonstrated to the world that if a country is united and acts as one behind a legitimate cause, there is hardly any limit to its achievements. The important thing was that the objective was clearly stated and articulated, and there are no international laws that are violated. Ethiopia has also cleared itself of violating no rights of other countries.

Egypt, above all, has always been an obstacle to whatever plans Ethiopia had on the Nile water. The fact is that Egypt has used the water without any interference from Ethiopia. Eventually, it has evidently reached the conclusion that the former was the sole country which owns and has the right to use the river. On many international media outlets, we have repeatedly heard reports stating: the Nile belongs to Egypt; the Nile is created for Egyptians and that no one, including Ethiopia, could use any drop of it.

We have even heard intimidating statements from certain extremist military officials of Egypt that if Ethiopia planned to use even a drop of the water, Egypt would be entitled to take whatever measure necessary to stop that. We have also heard Egyptian academics and intellectuals arguing that Egypt and the Nile are indissolubly tied and that no force on earth could break this bond - a bond that is historical and natural and comes from a divine force. Every Egyptian is taught in their schools that the Nile is an Egyptian river; an Egyptian property that actually originates somewhere in Egypt! Some are even convinced that the Aswan Dam is the source of the Nile!

When Ethiopia officially declared that it was about to construct a dam on the Nile, the first reaction from Egypt was to protest vigorously and make statements that were in practice amounting to a declaration of war. All Egyptian media unanimously made statements suggesting that Egypt should not sit idle while Ethiopia is blocking the river by filling the water into its huge dam. Others who were rallied behind Egypt sang the same songs. Egyptian leaders began to campaign in multiple fronts against the construction, diplomatically and politically throughout the world explaining how their position was right and complaining about how Ethiopia was violating international law.

On the other hand, Ethiopia was diplomatically well organized and engaged itself in explaining how things were actually proceeding. Ethiopian diplomats were given the assignment to explain the case to the international community that what Ethiopia



was doing was not at all meant or intended to harm downstream countries. It was just harnessing part of the water of the Nile to a dam and generates electric power that would bring about light to millions of Ethiopians still living in the dark.

Capitalizing on the international practice and regime of trans boundary rivers, Ethiopia argued that it was not doing what others have not done and anyone in the shoes of Ethiopia would do the same because it has the obligation of properly utilizing its natural resources and potentials to change the livelihood of its citizens by uplifting them from poverty and misery.

This is also an obligation that the UN conventions on economic and social rights impose on governments to help improve the lives of their citizens. It would be a big failure for Ethiopia not to use and exploit its resources to change the lives of its citizens when it actually owns certain wealth such as the Abbay River. The famous arguments that downstream countries present against Ethiopia are not acceptable because they continue to claim that the river is their property given by nature. Some Egyptians even go to the extent of asserting that the Nile was created for them exclusively and Ethiopia does not have any right to use it!

Moreover, they are fond of saying that Ethiopia has multiple water resources. It has rivers. It has abundant rain and there is no need to engage in using the Nile water which, on the other hand, is the only source of life for Egyptians. They continue to refer to the colonial pacts Egypt signed in the nineteenth hundreds with Sudan and England. The previous colonial accords signed between the two downstream nations and their master on the Nile water was carried out openly by disregarding Ethiopia's every right on the water.

It is true that Egypt relies totally on the Nile for its existence because it does not have other resources. But recent studies have shown that if they dig underground they have

sufficient water resources to satisfy their needs. The only reason why they do not do it is because it requires some expenses and it is not bestowed them freely. They do not want to put themselves in the shoes of Ethiopia - a country with more than fifty percent of its population are in the dark. They do not want to recognize Ethiopia's rights to develop its water resources to change the lives of its citizens. They do not want to admit that Ethiopia has the legitimate right of using the water resource without inflicting significant harm on downstream countries. They know that is how other countries that own trans-boundary Rivers have done not to block the rivers but use them to hit the turbines to generate power and then let go its natural course.

This is how Ethiopia has planned to do in the GERD project. It is a project that is long overdue due to financial constraints because as a poor country, Ethiopia could not harness the financial resources needed to begin with the construction.

Egypt's campaign against any project on the Nile was highly supported by international financial institutions not to provide loans to Ethiopia. And, even Ethiopia's traditional allies refrained from availing funds to Ethiopia because of the protests and recommendations from former not to do so. Egypt, as a country with massive political clouts in the geopolitics of the Middle East - a region that is key to the strategic interest of the West, did exert its influence and managed to keep at bay any assistance regarding this project on the Nile.

However, Ethiopia has not been discouraged by these developments because it knew that its intentions were not to harm the downstream countries by taking all the necessary precautions. Ethiopia has engaged many experts to study the case, and the outcome shows that there will not cause any harm on downstream countries due to the project. Moreover, Ethiopia has shown to the world that the filling of the dam

was carried out by slow phases, gradually, without reducing the flow of the water in a manner that could harm the interests of downstream countries. After all, Ethiopia is reputed for its diplomatic records in the international arena and acted legally. The UN and other international organizations can testify to Ethiopia's immaculate records in terms of respecting international law and practice. The case of Abbay Dam is an example.

In building this dam, Ethiopia hence had to rely totally on its own national resources. It did not benefit from any international loans or concessions due to the negative propaganda spread by downstream countries particularly Egypt. However, united Ethiopians have realized this dream being an example to other countries which are trying to pull out their citizens out of poverty using their natural resources. Ethiopia has shown that no one can stop it from asserting its legitimate rights when people are united.

Ethiopians responded to the call and rallied behind their government to realize this dream. It had lots of ups and downs, but after thirteen years of continuous diplomatic and political battles, Ethiopians have won. They have shown to other African countries that they cannot be bullied by some countries who believe they are superior or have more rights than others presumed to be poor or without huge international influence.

United Ethiopia has also shown to the world that it can achieve any legitimate objective. Today, as we celebrate the 13th anniversary Abbay Dam project, we rejoice it knowing that in unity we can come over any challenge or obstacle as we were able to defeat colonialists at Adwa 128 years ago. The success of this mission will also be a part of Ethiopia's glorious history. The future generation of Ethiopians will be proud of this diplomatic success in a world that is increasingly being polarized and divided in factions and groups.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Fighting Our Own Fights!

Tough times; real tough times wherever you go on this planet of ours. Somehow things appear to be moving in a different directions than those we would have like to see them to take. So, naturally at least with individuals there are lots and lots of frustrations making life not only tough but even difficult. I remember sometime back there was this guy who falls out of favor with the top brass of his employers. If you had gone out trying to investigate the real reason why the guy was in such hot waters chances are you, too, would end up frustrated. The narratives don't come in full and in ways they could sway opinions.. The guy's stories and the official versions are so different you'd wonder if they were talking about the same issue. I mean it's astounding to the length we go to make our narratives sound legitimate. The most powerful and engaging words and terms are employed. Somehow is seem our hidden literary genes jump into action in such situations. The way the guy narrated the alleged abuse he suffered you'd think a slight push and he'd go over the red line and no one would even guess what he might do.

On the other hand the only official warning letter too was so powerfully structured you'd wonder if what should have been an organizational issue was personalized. After a couple of weeks of bureaucratic haggling the ax falls. As 'punishment' his status was downgraded one level and his monthly pay slashed mercilessly. To top it all he was assigned to an office hundreds of kilometers

from Addis not anywhere to his pre-crisis position but as a low clerk. The brass couldn't have made the 'punishment' any more biting! Even without knowing the mistakes (even 'sins') the guy has committed you can't help feeling sorry for him. One would expect the fellow who is a professional to call it quits and bang the door in the faces of his bosses; "Thank you and no thank you!" Bang! He was transferred to a branch office of the organization hundreds of kilometers from Addis.

It was only later that the truth, at least partial truth, started coming out. It happened this guy disagrees with his immediate boss about a certain project. The project was a multimillion venture and the organization expected to get much needed money. Now the fellow being the professional he is was supposed to put his signature of approval. He refused to do so saying there was especially one part which he said was confusing and had to be rewritten; confusing in the sense that it was open to be interpreted in a number of ways. Such confusing sentences or even paragraphs are inserted deliberately so some big shots would twist them to their benefits. The guy well aware of this fact to didn't want himself to be implicated in any wrong doing and demanded for a rewrite of the confusing part. The bosses refused outright and they didn't even take time to hear him out in full. The case is still wide open and he is appealing their transfer decision. Leaving for good would be a little tricky as he had taken he loans from the

organization and there was no way he'd get his release paper until he balances the books. Given the tough times we're in that in no way would be simple.

The talk is that his behavior is somewhat going off the rails as his nicer sides are thinning out. Frustrated as he's, so goes the narratives, he's taking his frustrations out on the innocent. On the frontlines are his wife and his two pre-teen kids. Look there is some 'common factor' in such narratives. The victims usually is painted as the innocent soul only handful of whom we might find on this planet of ours. Our guy is taken as the innocent victim in his fight with the brass. He might be the victim but him being innocent would be nothing than a fairy tale. At one time he was accuse of abusing those few people under him and playing the favoritism case. Here is the story he'd probably would do anything to bury. The talk was he had an affair with another married woman and this dented his reputation severely. That's why staff support for his disputes didn't materialize as he would have liked or as many would have expected.

So back to his change of behavior. It isn't that justice was done to him; only time and the records would tell that. But he's giving his wife a hell of a time for absolutely no reason. In fact in one drunken rage instance he told her that he never planned to marry her and theirs was an accidental marriage. For the first time □ the family's life he struck his nine year old son accusing him of the TV remote. He

didn't apologize.

They say he's accusing everybody of ganging up on him. He's scolding entire communists even trying to give things political angle. It's understandable that anyone abused or mistreated feels hurt. Theirs is the condition no one wants to find themselves in. But them taking out our frustrations on entire communities, groups or individuals isn't the smartest thing to do. Unfortunately these days pointing the accusing finger on everybody and anybody for wrongs done by individuals or small groups is more the common than we'd have liked to think. The social media has made things worse and we indeed are in raging waters when it comes to social interactions. Respect and the wonderful feeling of camaraderie is nowhere near where we'd want them to be.

If there is an unfaithful wife in a certain relationship accusing all womenfolk is probably a sign of minds which need some real overhaul. If the husband is a 24/7 alcohol guzzling beast who cares neither for himself nor for his family taking all husbands as irresponsible drunkards with "Oh, husbands! They do nothing worthy except go all over town filling their bladders with alcohol while their families don't have enough plates on the dinner table.

How about fighting our own fights and leaving the innocent and the uninvolved to their undisturbed world!

Nostalgia or Clean Slate!

There are certain issues you just can't avoid however much you want and actually try to turn your back on them. They come over and again with such frequency the logical outcome would be you probably would get tired of them. A couple of times we have talked about the generation gap that's so prominent in these trying times where there is no Plan B other to coming even more closer to counter the is tough issue time and circumstances throw our way.

A couple of guys were telling me they had one of the most heated argument with a gentleman in his late 60s. The topic was films and the gentleman was arguing that the few black and white films of ages gone were far better than the multimillion productions of the present days. They say he in fact said that people are no more making films but software. And, so they tell me, he concludes film have lost he human touch that's so important when. Have they seen the oldies black and white films? Maybe one; maybe two. Has he seen enough of present day films? Maybe one; maybe two! So what was the hell the whole argument about when both sides don't have enough source materials to base their arguments on? That dear readers sounds very, very familiar.

There are arguments all over the place. Not restrained so-called 'civilized' exchanges of ideas the game throwing terms and phrases around. The high ground, if there is any, is expected to be achieved not but by the purity and substance of ideas and concepts but by the

lethal power of the words and phrases launched from all sides.

Talking about the senior fellow and the youngsters they said they were the ones who first raised the film issue. How come! I mean it seems a little strange to raise the issue of films with someone who could as well have been their grandfather. Don't you see wavelengths very much apart in this scenario? One of them raises the issue of a highly popular recent TV series asking the senior what he thought about it. They say the man was dumbfounded a he had no idea what they were taking about. He as much tells them he watches not much TV except the evening news and some interviews deepening on the person to be interviewed. Then they ask him if he has seen any of the Amharic films in the cinemas in town. His answer, so they say, wasn't definitive; only some incoherent murmuring and then out of the blue, as mentioned earlier, he goes it a tirade of belittling present day films. He claims the few black and white folks of ages gone were far better than the one gracing the cinema houses. He mentioned the name of old time actors and actresses showering them with all the credit denying the present generation the slightest sign of acknowledgment even encouragement.

Look just for the sake of a little fact check these days in most places a cup of the commonest types of tea with a piece of the cheapest cake costs on either side of a hundred birr in most places. Of course I have to admit most of them

have this ambience of making you feel at home with good tables and chairs, and, this important, fully 'clean' table surfaces. It's rather shocking to witness that there are the most modern cafes and restaurants charging you insane amounts for their teas and coffees and yet fail to make sure new customers face cleanliest at the best when they sit down to be served. More than a few times you find tea or coffee and even cake crumbs unattended. That's not good hotel management, don't you say?

Seeing the triple figures on the bill you can't help being dragged further back in history. Here come the old genes knocking. Well there are those in the community who used to enjoy a cup of tea for less than ten birr. With twenty and thirty birr you could have the best date of your life and have some change to give to an old beggar or two.. (No! Absolutely not! I'm not sounding nostalgic!)

Here is not the issue of the good guys facing the bad guys kind of game. Sometimes you find people falling into this trap of making the other side a constellation of angels and the others a pack of Lucifer foot soldiers. This helps no one as it's wrong analogy however beautifully it might be presented. And this argument between the senior fellow and the youngsters we are not talking about; it's not, with apologies to Dan Brown, Angels and Demons. It's about generations who don't seem to be doing much to breach the ever widening gap.

The problem is with the spectacles with which

we are seeing things. You hear a lot of curses about the things that allegedly happened in the past. I don't balm most of the youngsters because very of the scant and highly biased information and sheer youthful bile leads them to act on the whim of their feelings and not on the strength of their ideas. Society has a lot to do to get the real pictures of the ages to the young. Only then would the country has conversations where the age difference wouldn't be an tissue.

On the other hand most seniors having locked all the doors leading to their brains it's next to impossible to put in new concepts and good arguments. Demonizing what happened or was thought to ages ago based on the algorithms of the present day is one thing that is prompting us to go for each other throats!

On one side...

Old books were better; old relationships were better; old politics was better; old social interactions were better etc.

On the other side...

New books are better; new relationships are better; new politics is better; new social interactions are better etc.

We're haggling over the most insignificant things while we can brilliantly use the time and energy under our disposal for more important issues that have to be settled while there is still time. There'll be time for nostalgia or clean slate!

In Pictures

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Metropolitans organize a grand rally in support of the national reform

In connection with sixth year of the national reform (reformist government), residents of Addis Ababa city organized a rally which was attended by the city dwellers. The rally which was organized under the theme “We stand together for our nation’s prosperity” was held yesterday at the Meskel Square.



Fiche Chambalalla festival celebrated

Fichee Chambalalla, New Year festival of the Sidama People was colorfully celebrated in Hawassa city yesterday. The people of Sidama and celebrants from across the country gathered in Hawassa city to celebrate the New Year festival.



Second round Second Generation Ethiopian Diaspora homecoming program commenced

The Second generation of Ethiopian diaspora homecoming program commenced this week. During the first-round homecoming program, over 74,000 Second-Generation Ethiopian Diasporas visited Ethiopia. Following the successful completion of the first round, Diasporas started arriving home for the second round homecoming program. Upon arrival at the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, members of the second round homecoming of second generation of Ethiopian diaspora were warmly welcomed by Ministers and senior government officials.

Construction of 60 thousand homes launched in Addis Ababa

This week, the construction of 60 thousand homes was commenced in Addis Ababa. According to Addis Ababa City Administration, the homes will be built by government and private partnership. OVID group in partnership with the city government will build the homes in “Gelan Gurra City” site in 558 hectare of land. The site includes residential houses, schools, modern commercial centers, health centers, recreational centers, green areas, children centers, sport centers with modern infrastructural facilities. The site will create job opportunities for over 250 thousand people.

