



The Ethiopian Herald

Vol. LXXX 240 16 June 2024 - Sene 9, 2016

SUNDAY EDITION

Price Birr 10.00

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

Medhin Decor

የተገጣላል ደንቅ የሰርግ አዳራሽ ከነ ሙሉ የውበት ስራ የተሟላ የምግብ ዝግጅት ከሙሉ ሙከራ ጋር

አድራሻ 1ኛ ቦሌ ጌቱ ኮሚርሽን ጀርባ 2ኛ ከቃላቲ ማሰልጠኛ አለፍ ብሉ ቆርኪና ጣሳ ፋብሪካ ገቢ ብሉ
Contact Us 0911222993/ 0911208918



Council urges faithful to support disadvantaged

• Muslims celebrate 1445th Eid Al-Adha

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA –The Addis Ababa Islamic Affairs Supreme Council has called on Muslims to observe the 1445th Eid Al-Adha by supporting the needy and upholding active participation in peace-building activities.

Muslims across the globe are marking the 1445th Eid Al-Adha today.

In a message he delivered in connection with the holiday, Council President Sheik Sultan Aman Eba said that the faithful need to show kindness and genuine love to people in need while observing the day. “It is

critical to extend the culture of sharing with disfavored and enabling the latter to spend the holiday joyfully with the rest of the Muslim community.”

Sheik Sultan elaborated that Eid Al-Adha is

See Council pleads ... page 5



Premier sends greetings on Edi al-Adah

• Pushes for overcoming challenges to succeed Nat'l Dialogue

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - In connection with the celebration of Edi al-Adah holiday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) emphasized the need to make sacrifices for the successful

See Premier ... page 5

Nile Basin Commission on horizon

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – Amidst a growing number of countries ratifying the Cooperation Framework Agreement (CFA), a commission dedicated to Nile water utilization is expected to be formed, the Water and Energy Ministry said.

Speaking to journalists at the sidelines of the 3rd Annual Forum for Regional Integration

See Nile Basin ... page 5



Photo: Dagne Abera

Commission sees improved FDI inflow

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA - The government's new approach is bringing promising outcomes in increasing the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow and ushering anchor companies' involvement, the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) said.

Taking the various business delegations' desire to invest in Ethiopia into account, it is easily understood that the FDI inflow keeps growing, the EIC Commissioner Hana Arayaselassie told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA).

Companies drawn from Europe, Asia, and Gulf Arab countries paid a visit to Ethiopia's

various investment sites, and the ongoing bilateral and multilateral business forums are expected to facilitate further business networks.

“Many investors are currently conducting market assessments. The exact number of

See Commission sees ... page 5



Hana Arayaselassie



Nation entails effective tax system to enhance economic growth: MoR

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia requires taking rigorous tax measures to encourage tax payers and investors, Ministry of Revenue (MoR) said.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, MoR Tax and Custom Training Center Head, Tesfaye Mergia expressed that the country should further improve its tax system in a way convenient to the payer and investors, who would benefit from infrastructures built with tax revenues.

He cautioned that if the tax rate, payment system and services are not convenient for the taxpayer, it can have a negative impact on the economy by discouraging investment.

"Therefore, when the tax system is designed, it should be implemented and create a comfortable environment for the taxpayer," he suggested.

While Tesfaye acknowledged that Ethiopia's tax policies are not perfect, he stated that there have been improvements. The Income Tax Act, Excise Tax Act has amended and Value Added Tax Act amendment is on the way, he noted.

He also said that the country's investment law provides tax exemptions to both domestic and foreign investors in sectors deemed crucial for changing Ethiopia's economy.

Addressing the reduction in the country's tax-to-GDP ratio over the past five years, he explained that the agriculture sector, which has a large share of Ethiopia's GDP, has not contributed significantly to tax revenue.

He also cited capacity limitations within the tax administration as a contributing factor.

Therefore, Tesfaye said, the effective utilization of tax revenue is vital for expanding infrastructure, which in turn enables investment to flourish.

He noted that the tax system can be employed as a tool to encourage specific economic sectors that the government believes will contribute to the country's development. This can be achieved through the provision of tax incentives to stimulate investment.

Institute moiling for tourism dev't

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Tourism Training Institute (TTI) disclosed that it is striving to foster the tourism industry through nurturing skilled human resource and promoting cultural foods.

Institute Deputy Director General, Yetaseb Seyoum told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the institute has been carrying out various activities to promote the tourism sector through overcoming capacity limitations.

According to Yetaseb, the institute is working with polytechnic colleges to ensure human resource development in the sphere in addition to promoting cultural foods to attract visitors.

Mentioning China's food promotion success that enabled its cuisine to be known all over the world including Addis Ababa, the Director General expressed that Ethiopia requires to do more in promoting cultural foods given that what it does have at hand.

As tourism brings people together



around culture, knowledge, food and clothing, the sector has been helping Ethiopia to creating jobs, increasing market access and promoting mutual coexistence, he added.

Yetaseb also noted that the institute is working in collaboration with

stakeholders to document cultural dishes from five states as part of its tourism promotion activities. This practice is significantly useful in transferring historical identity to the next generation and increasing tourist inflow.



Charity calls for concerted effort to support elders, children

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Sew Lesew Elders and Child Support Charity Organization called on all concerned bodies to play part in overcoming challenges facing children and elders.

The Organization launched a telethon yesterday under the theme "Lets reduce our challenges; support relatives."

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Organization's Founder and General Manager Zebenay Asfaw said that some 340 elders and children are receiving support in the organization that was established even years ago with one

child and five elderlies in a residential charity house.

As to her, the organization gives due attention for humans' bright future though it has been facing lack of adequate budget to run its operation.

Zebena said that at least some 47 million birr required to construct a shelter for the needy people.

She further stated that the government has provided 5,000 square meter land in Jimma, Oromia State, to address the Organization's limitation regarding shortage of land.

The organization has planned to receive 200 children, 500 elderlies,

and 100 people with mental health issue. Therefore, all concerned bodies can contribute fair share to success of this humanitarian activity, she said, expressing that 0965020202 is the number to contact the organization to offer any kind of support.

Jimma's Women and Children Affairs Head, Ekram Abdu on her part said that the organization helps people who need support for various reasons.

Ekiram added that Jimma town will support such type of organizations engaged in helping the needy. When people help each other and work in concert, it would be easy to achieve what the country needs-overall growth.

Editorial

Eid Al Adha portrays obedience, sacrifice, generosity

Eid Al Adha Arafah is one of the prominent holidays among followers of the Islamic faith observed annually worldwide. It signifies obedience, sacrifice, and generosity. Above all, it depicts considerateness on the part of the creator of the universe.

Allah-reverential Ibrahim was about to slay his son Ismail with shaking hands and a determined heart on the altar of obedience when his strength of faith was put to the test by the Almighty. But getting a God-sent ram in a nearby thicket Ibrahim sacrificed the ram instead of Ismail. This scenario portrays Abraham's obedience and the Almighty's considerateness. The same applies to governments and people or executives and subjects or parents and children with the framework of considerateness on the former side and obedience on the latter. Otherwise, things could go astray to wreak havoc.

Obedying the Almighty and following His dictates are expected from the faithful in the true sense of the word. Piousness goes a long way to ease man's life apart from its benefits on the spiritual plane. Religiosity is a fecund earth for tranquility, harmony, and development of a nation.

Throwing our full weight behind developmental goals mapped out by the government to turn around the nation and paying all necessary sacrifices to the realization of set objectives are the lessons citizens could pick from this religious event.

The faithful in their turn with a spirit of consideration must learn to share the sacrifices they make by way of slaying a sheep or a goat to the needy. By extension, citizens must extend helping hands to displaced people or the needy. All the more so, the number of the needy has snowballed following to-dos in some parts of the country. Cementing family and societal bonds pays in more ways than one.

Hospitable Ethiopia is marked as being a safe haven for refugees. This is exemplified best by the treatment it showed to followers of the Prophet Muhammad who found solace in Ethiopia running away from their assailants in the 7th century. The Alnejashi Mosque, the earliest mosque outside the Arabian Peninsula and the first Mosque in Africa, is built in Mekele by these followers of the prophet. This site is drawing global attention.

For a long, Ethiopia has been one of the prominent nerve centers of Islamic civilization. Today, these historic landmarks and sacred spaces draw spiritual seekers and cultural tourists from around the globe.

One of the jewels in the walled city of Harar, a UNESCO World Heritage site that serves as the spiritual capital of Ethiopia is Islam. It is the 3rd Islamic holy city of the world. Within its antique fortifications, visitors can wander through a web of over 80 mosques and shrines, including the 16th-century Jami Masjid Mosque with its striking Yemeni-influenced architecture.

The nearby tomb of Sheikh Abadir, a revered Sufi saint, is another major pilgrimage site, attracting devotees who come to pay their respects at his shrine. Harar is considered one of the holiest places for Muslims outside of Mecca and Medina. It has been a center of Islamic learning and culture for centuries. Beyond Harar, the country boasts an array of other lesser known yet equally captivating Islamic landmarks. In the eastern city of Dire Dawa, the historic Jami Masjid mosque dates back to the 16th century, its elegant minarets and domes a testament to the region's Yemeni architectural influences. Further south in the Bale Mountains, the sacred Lake Zeway has drawn Sufi pilgrims for generations, its shores dotted with monasteries and shrines.

Ethiopian Sof Omore cave, named after the Muslim holy man, is one of the longest caves in Africa. This natural and historic wonder is one of the religious allurements Ethiopia boasts.

Towards the renovation of such religious and touristic sites and nearby infrastructural development international supports are there. It is heartening to know that.

Opinion

Ethiopia – An ideal place to invest, grow your business

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the most stable in the region. The peaceful transitions of power to new Prime Minister in 2012 and 2018 have showcased the stability of Ethiopia's political system and parliamentary form of government. Since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April 2018, Ethiopia has experienced unprecedented radical political and economic reforms.

The country is one of the few African countries that has seen long periods of sustained economic growth. What many people don't realize about this landlocked country located in the Horn of Africa is that it is the second-most populous country on the continent. Additionally, Ethiopia is one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, according to the World Bank. This growth is largely attributed to the construction, agriculture, and service industries.

Only a handful of countries in the world can boast of successive economic growth. Ethiopia has also seen significant development in its social and public infrastructure, boasting a complex network of roads and industrial parks ideal for business.

One of the main reasons to consider investing in Ethiopia is Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD). Since taking office, the Prime Minister has pushed Ethiopia towards a more flexible economic state, announcing the privatization of key sectors previously controlled by the government. With a large working population and abundant untapped resources and opportunities, Ethiopia offers attractive incentives for foreign investors.

The government of Ethiopia has made significant efforts to ensure all investors are well taken care of. Incentives include customs duty exemptions, refund options for raw materials, income tax exemptions for certain industries, and export incentives. Improved infrastructure, including information and communication technologies, irrigation, sanitation, power, and transport, has contributed to Ethiopia's GDP growth.

Ethiopia has a working population of approximately 40 million, providing a wealth of labor resources. With 60% of the population comprising the labor force, skilled labor is readily available, with a median age of 19, ideal for training programs.

The country has shown successful

transitions of power and administrations, leading to unprecedented economic and political reforms that have improved the country. Political stability, reforms, and policies encouraging economic development make Ethiopia an attractive destination for investors.

The government's commitment to investors, operational reforms, and improved investment environment has made Ethiopia a top investment destination in Africa. Infrastructure investments have made Ethiopia a convenient destination for investment, with incentives offered to the manufacturing, agriculture, and pharmaceutical industries.

Ethiopia's efforts have attracted foreign investors, with significant interest from Saudi Arabia in agriculture and agricultural products. Ethiopia aims to increase production and productivity in agriculture to boost exports and meet the demand for food imports from countries like Saudi Arabia.

Country's investment climate has seen significant improvements, with the Ethiopian Investment Commission attracting global investors through events like the "Invest Ethiopia" conference. Key policy changes, such as duty-free imports for the manufacturing sector, have boosted foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows.

The country attracted USD 3 billion in FDI during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, putting the Ethiopian Investment Commission on track to meet its annual target. China remains the leading investor, contributing to nearly half of all incoming projects.

The government has made many operational reforms and changes to improve the investment environment. Ethiopia has become the number one investment destination in East Africa in the last five years. Strong work is being done to bring more investments to Ethiopia in the future.

In any kind of business you would like to engage in, you have to be sure that Ethiopia is the reason for your business to thrive. If you are highly interested in growing your business, you could not find a better place than Ethiopia.

For investors looking to expand their businesses quickly, Ethiopia offers numerous opportunities for growth. With a business-friendly environment and supportive government policies, Ethiopia is an ideal location to invest and grow your business. If you have a business idea, consider investing in Ethiopia. Come and invest in Ethiopia today!

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

ECWC, KAM Ceramic Products ink MoU on ceramic material production

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation (ECWC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kam Ceramic Products PLC to produce quality and accessible ceramic products.

Speaking at the signing ceremony on Friday, Corporation General Manager Yonas Ayalew (Eng.) said that this accord is a timely and a significant milestone between the government and private sector to play a great role towards providing quality products at a reasonable price.

He said the Ministry of Industry has long been extending consistent support for the seamless progression of the agreement.

“As part of the government’s strategic development plan, the corporation has

been toiling efforts to beef up construction productivity and import substitution,” he remarked.

Yonas further remarked that the corporation has been employing various trustworthy undertakings thereby building the capacity to cope up with the forefront private sector.

It was indicated that the corporation has taken 30% of the total capital of the local firm, accounting for two billion and eighty million Birr.

Praising the role of the government and various stakeholders in the entire progress of the project, Yonas emphasized that the country highly requires the sector to promote the export volume to neighboring countries which in turn brings foreign currency.

On his part, KAM Ceramic Products PLC General Manager Wario Galgalo stated that

the sector needs to be the country’s priority since it has a multilayered outcome.

The construction of the project has been delayed for the last seven years due to Covid 19, foreign currency, access to land shortcomings, it was learnt.

“The project, situated at Bishoftu Town, is now remaining with civil works and slated to be operational three months later. Upon completion, its production capacity will be 20,000 square meters of ceramic tiles per a day, which help balance the supply and demand side in the long run,” Wario said.

Moreover, he said, prime attention has been given to the project since recently because of the availability of domestic raw materials and import substitution promotion.

At the event, Industry State Minister Tarekegn Bululta asserted that the government has

made viable structural shifts and given priorities to the development of the industry which is now at the infant stage.

Besides, streamlining technologies, skilled manpower are critical inputs to garner decent job and expedite nation’s sustainable economic development, he noted.

Mentioning the minimal contribution which is less than 7% GDP share, Tarekegn underscored that the government has given wider spaces for private sectors, share companies in a bid to tailor the country’s immense potential.

According to him, this agreement would be the pioneer homegrown ceramic industry which is highly believed to curb dependency on foreign companies supply, construction shortage, and foreign currency glitches among many others.

Council pleads...

among the main Islamic holidays which is to be celebrated with various religious rituals for three consecutive days throughout the country.

Alongside this, he urged Muslims to uphold their collaboration with the government in ensuring lasting peace and extending meaningful participation in the National Dialogue that would best serve their interests. The faithful are also advised to contribute to ongoing development projects including the clean Ethiopia initiative.

On his part, the Council Media and Communication Head Ustaz Hassan Ali stressed that Eid Al-Adha is a real testimony of obedience and happiness and is instrumental in keeping Ethiopia’s much-cherished culture of sharing with the poor. “It is high time for us to stand with the people who are in dire need of support and under the challenging situations to share our happiness wholeheartedly.”

The celebration of Eid Al-Adha is to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim’s devotion to Allah and his readiness to sacrifice his son, Ismail.

new investors initiated by these forums will be revealed in the future because it takes time for them to submit proposals, which the commission will then review and decide upon.”

The commissioner further highlighted that the commission is dedicated to supporting investors in translate their business ambitions into reality. “Identifying the interests of foreign companies is a key task

realization of National Dialogue.

Prime Minister Abiy said as Eid al-Adha is festival of obedience and sacrifices, Ethiopians have learned that the outcomes of perseverance are worth than the difficulty.

He said: “Dialogue will not always succeed coming up with best ideas or being knowledgeable, rather it is through making huge sacrifices.”

The Premier noted that it was also obvious that making the nation great and prosperous would

Commission sees...

given to the commission.”

The Ethiopian government incentivizes foreign investors that are engaged in shipping and logistics and other priority sectors and entitle them to tax holidays and custom-free importation of capital goods.

According to the five-year continental investment data, Ethiopia ranks first in East Africa and third in Africa for the fastest-

growing FDI flow. To maintain and enhance this status, the government is organizing bilateral investment and business forums to inform investors about available opportunities, Hana remarked.

During the past few months, high-level business delegations drawn from Malta, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia visited Ethiopia and explored the country’s business prospects, *The Ethiopian Herald* learned.

Premier sends greetings on...

not be easy and sacrifices had to be made to encounter the previous and the already existing challenges once for all, he stressed.

People had to cope up with challenges related to facilities such as water, road and other infrastructure problems though their sacrifice was worthy given the final outcome of the corridor development, he underlined.

“To expand the corridor development throughout the cities, sustain and make the peace resilient, as well as to ensure the successful realization of the National

Dialogue, we are ought to sacrifice few things. Let us make our ideas fight not us, let’s us focus on works not wars, more importantly, let us prepare to sacrifice the things that matter to us for the sake of our nation,” he underscored.

Highlighting that Eid al-Adha festival is the day of sacrifice, he expressed best wishes to all Muslims to have a happy Eid al-Adah holiday.

Eid al-Adha festival is the day of sacrifice. It marks the culmination of the hajj (pilgrimage) rites at Minā, Saudi Arabia, Mecca, it was learned.

Nile Basin Commission...

and Reasonable Utilization of the Nile (AFRIRUN), Water and Energy State Minister Sultan Wali (PhD) said that Ethiopia remains optimistic in the establishment of the Nile River Basin Commission though the process is delayed.

The number of countries that are required to establish the commission is approaching the minimum requirement.

Some riparian countries have ratified the Nile River Basin Cooperation Framework Agreement which was initiated 14 years ago. However, more countries are expected to join the ratification and facilitate the framework’s transition to a formal commission, Sultan (PhD) elaborated.

According to him, the commission’s establishment is expected to proceed swiftly. The Nile River region, particularly the Horn of Africa, is characterized by

diverse and often conflicting interests and Ethiopia believes that regional integration efforts will help address these differences.

“Cooperative water utilization and regional power integration are essential for sustainable development. The cooperation we seek aims to foster regional development. Without equitable water utilization and energy integration, sustainability cannot be achieved.”

Ethiopia, as an advocate for regional energy integration, has been supplying electricity to Djibouti for ten years, to Sudan for eight years, and to Kenya for two years. Despite having one of the lowest electricity supply rates for its citizens, the country provides its neighbors with affordable electricity to maintain regional stability rather than for financial gain, the state minister emphasized.

“Ethiopia cannot develop without regional integration and generating hard currency is a secondary goal for us.”

He further highlighted that economic development downturns lead to conflicts, and since 1970, global history has shown that electric power consumption correlates with economic health. “Therefore, cooperation in energy infrastructure development and equitable Nile River water utilization is critical.”

During Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s (PhD) recent visit to Dodoma, Ethiopia and Tanzania agreed to energy transmission. A similar agreement exists with South Sudan, and a request is also coming from Somalia. “No East African country can overlook Ethiopia’s role in the power integration.”

Sultan (PhD) added, “Ethiopia is the sole supplier of energy to the East African Power

Pool, which was established 13 years ago.”

Speaking at the opening of the 3rd AFRIRUN, Foreign Affairs State Minister, Misganu Arega reiterated Ethiopia’s commitment to expedite the establishment of the Nile Basin Commission.

Welcoming experts and participants of the forum, the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Executive Director Jafar Bediru highlighted the necessity of replacing unconstructive approaches with cooperative agreements for Nile water fair utilization.

The forum, held under the theme ‘Shared Resources for Shared Future and Prosperity: Cooperation and Regional Integration through Equitable and Reasonable Utilization of the Nile,’ saw participation from experts and government officials from Nile riparian countries.

Opinion

Shortages, Speculations

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Causes of shortages of goods in Ethiopia have been linked to supply chain disruptions, production issues and economic policies. Other factors including political, environmental, infrastructural, market speculations and population growth contribute to shortages of goods and services. The disruption of the supply chain is closely linked to transportation and logistics, in which poor infrastructure is a major factor. In Ethiopia, the inadequate road networks and inefficient logistics disrupt the timely distribution of goods. This is very true mostly in the remote rural areas of the country.

Also, shortage of modern storage facilities contributes to wastage of agricultural produces. Lack of these facilities in the rural household's also causes wastage of inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, insecticides and pesticides. All these lead to low productivity and lesser production in agricultural outputs. The import of these inputs requires foreign exchange which is in short supply in Ethiopia.

The inputs for agricultural and industrial production made developing countries dependent on imports. Ethiopia relies heavily on imported goods for various products produced by different sectors of the economy. Any disruption in the global supply chains, such as delays in shipping or trade restrictions, can lead to shortages. Any disruptions in port services have negative implications on the timely use of inputs for both the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Low agricultural productivity caused by shortage or lack of imported inputs will affect a major portion of Ethiopia's economy.

The county's economy largely depends on agriculture, which contributes to both the domestic and external markets. It supplies raw materials to the local industries and earns foreign exchange through its exports. It is also a major employer of the people in the rural areas of Ethiopia. If it is not given proper attention, it may suffer from low productivity due to outdated farming techniques, limited access to modern inputs, and climate variability. Moreover, these factors may lead to food shortages due to lack of proper attention.

Considering the manufacturing sector, its capacity to produce goods is critical for both the local and external markets. This sector may lack the power to meet domestic demand due to limited technology, insufficient investment, and skilled labor shortages. With low investment, it is difficult to use advanced tech for production.

Similarly, lack of skilled workers and efficient managers slow down the ability of enterprises to produce at full capacity. These difficulties could be controlled if the economic policies are designed to address

them. Investors may be discouraged by price controls and subsidies that may cause market distortions. These measures reduce incentives for investors to supply goods to both the local and external markets. These measures, in turn, result in artificial shortages. Also, shortage of foreign exchange reserves limits the capacity to import basic goods, inputs, and raw materials, leading to supply constraints in the country.

Political instability and local conflicts lead to insecurity which breeds shortages and speculations. In Ethiopia, ongoing conflicts and political instability driven by alien forces may disrupt production and distribution in all sectors of the economy. These disruptions ultimately lead to serious shortages of goods and services in the country.

Some of the conflicts have immensely affected the supply and availability of essential goods and services required by the people. Conflicts lead to uncertainty and frequent changes in strategies which, in turn, create doubtful business environment. These developments discourage investment and production, which result in unemployment, low income and poverty of the masses of the people. Low income leads to reduced demand for goods and services, which ends up in a vicious circle of poverty.

Investors are also discouraged by low demand for goods they produce and would be forced to reduce their workers. These circumstances force them to pay lesser tax to the government thereby widening the vicious circle. In these situations, speculators or economic saboteurs would be prepared to mercilessly maximize their margin of profit.

In some developing countries, the economic crises are further stretched by natural forces. Environmental factors, including climate change and natural disasters create havoc on the economic performance of poor countries such as Ethiopia. Droughts, floods, and other natural disasters have severely affected agricultural production, leading to shortages of food and other goods.

Studies have revealed that land degradation have been caused by overuse and poor management of land resources. These situations have led to reduced agricultural yields and food shortages. Aggravating these hardships in Ethiopia are market speculations, including hoarding and black market operations. Anticipation of future shortages of goods and services or price rises may be leading individual consumers and businessmen to hoard goods, exacerbating the existing shortages. Of course, it is said that "a businessman has not country but his profits." To maximize the margin of profit, Ethiopian businessmen are reported to engage in black market operations.

Shortages may give the businessmen the

opportunity to operate in black markets. In these markets goods are sold at inflated prices, making them inaccessible to most of the Ethiopian consumers.

Inaccessibility is mainly caused by deficiencies in infrastructure development. These contribute to shortage of energy supply, causing frequent power outages. Studies reveal that unreliable energy supply hinders the manufacturing of goods and services. Shortage of energy reduces planned production and causes diminishing returns to huge investments in the sector.

In Ethiopia, shortage of water supply may lead to inadequate energy production. Also, inadequate water infrastructure negatively affects both agriculture and industry, leading to diminishing production capacity. With rising demand caused by high population growth, the supply chain is broken. In other words, if supply does not keep pace with demand, shortages occur. Again there is a vicious circle of population growth leading to high demand in the face of low supply, causing inflation.

To reduce the impact of speculation there is a need to undertake studies on its causes. Researchers have identified market instability, inflation, and supply chain disruptions as the major causes of speculation. Market instability leads to economic uncertainty or unstable economic conditions. This leads to unpredictable government policies that create an environment in which speculation thrives. Consequently, individuals and businesses would attempt to cautiously circumvent the obvious potential risks. One of these risks is volatility of price.

Studies indicate that high inflation rates and price fluctuations encourage speculation. Traders look for profiting from the expected price increases. This practice of traders leads to supply chain disruptions that cause anticipation of future shortages.

Thus, the supply chain disruptions may lead to stockpiling of goods for speculative purposes. This practice of businessmen exacerbates shortages that lead to price hikes. The speculative enterprise flourishes due to regulator gaps. Lack of effective regulation and control in markets may encourage speculation to flourish.

Apart from strict regulation, there are a few mechanisms to control market manipulation by businesses. Concerned State agency may be forced to "control prices" before they go out of its reaches.

On the other hand, imposing price controls may lead to black markets in which goods are sold at inflated prices. This situation may encourage the expansion of speculative behavior among businesses. This practice of businessmen could be extended from the domestic market to the global one. They may be speculating in foreign currency by limiting access to it.

These speculators may engage in the purchase and sale of goods that are

imported. As traders, they anticipate that the future currency devaluations would affect import prices. The value of the Birr may be devalued against the Dollar, making domestic prices in Ethiopia extremely high and unaffordable by the low income citizens.

Some of the effects of both shortages and speculation may be, as briefly mentioned earlier, inflation, social unrest, inequitable access, and economic inefficiency.

Studies reflect that shortages and speculative practices cause higher prices for essential and basic goods. They become unaffordable and inaccessible for many Ethiopian consumers thereby exacerbating their poverty. The experiences of other developing countries facing the same problems have posed social unrest. Persistent and continuous shortages and high prices may definitely cause social unrest. They may also express their dissatisfaction with the agencies responsible for the issues that potentially destabilize the political situation in the country.

Persistent shortages cause inadequate access of goods and services to the Ethiopian people. These situations lead to speculation which often results in inequitable access to goods. In this regard, those with greater income and resources may collect and save basic goods, while vulnerable groups suffered from shortage or scarcity.

The socioeconomic situations briefly presented earlier have caused market distortions in the country. These distortions may create speculation that may lead to inefficient allocation and misuse of resources. This hinders the overall economic growth and development in Ethiopia. One, therefore, may conclude that shortages and speculation in the country are caused by complex relations of factors, including supply chain disruptions, low production capacity, economic policies and political instability.

Also, environmental challenges, and infrastructure deficiencies have impeded the development of comprehensive strategies that may improve infrastructure, enhance agricultural and industrial productivity. Political stability is believed to ensure the implementation of sound economic policies.

By tackling the underlying causes of instability, Ethiopia may be able to mitigate shortages, eliminate speculative behavior of businesses, and ensure a more stable and equitable supply of goods for its people.

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

Planet Earth

Ethiopia's Green Legacy program minimizes environmental shocks

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Countries in the Nile Basin launched the Nile Basin Initiative, a regional intergovernmental cooperation, on February 22, 1999, with the objectives of promoting regional security and peace, benefiting from substantial socioeconomic advantages, and cooperatively managing and developing the Nile Basin's shared water resources.

Furthermore, the ten countries are collaborating in a cooperation pact to promote sustainable development and environmental conservation in the region. In order to support communities and mitigate the effects of climate change, the Nile Basin has implemented a number of ecological programs.

For example, the effort aims to guarantee that water resources are managed in a coordinated way across the region. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of managing water resources, which comprises doing so in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

The Nile Basin Initiative's numerous programs that support sustainable land management conserve and restore ecosystems, and address challenges like soil erosion and deforestation are the main reasons why the initiative addresses environmental conservation issues. Additionally, it promotes climate change adaptation. One of the initiatives to help the countries of the Nile Basin adapt to the effects of climate change is the creation of strategies to mitigate the effects of changing weather patterns and extreme events.

The program also encourages the creation of sustainable renewable energy sources. This lessens reliance on fossil fuels and lessens environmental harm by encouraging the development of sustainable energy sources in the Nile Basin, including as hydropower and renewable energy.

The Nile Basin Initiative helps countries protect their biological variety. The distinctive biodiversity of the Nile Basin is protected and preserved, and this includes supporting the preservation of natural places and endangered species. Thus, the project aims to address environmental problems in the Nile Basin and promote cooperation and sustainable development among riparian countries.

The Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Secretariat Florence Grace Adongo told local media that one of the main cornerstones of the Nile Basin Initiative is environmental sustainability, thus it has persisted in pressuring the riparian nations to strengthen the program at the national level.

She also stated that the Nile riparian countries' national environmental initiatives had made significant contributions to the



basin's long-term viability. "What we are doing is encouraging countries at the national level of their environmental re-forestation and restoration program." The most crucial question is: what role does Ethiopia play in this endeavor?

In this context, Adongo praised Ethiopia for its admirable efforts in carrying out numerous environmental projects, including the Green Legacy Initiative. "Ethiopia has done very well and we appreciate that," she said.

Ethiopia is, in fact, making several efforts to lessen the effects of climate change. According to the Government Communication Service (GCS), the government would strive hard to make a green Ethiopia a reality, until the GreenLegacy Initiative is regarded as a culture among Ethiopians. In June 2019, Prime Minister Abiy launched the Green Legacy Initiative, as a flagship program of the country.

Because of this, Ethiopia has carried out its Green Legacy Initiative by planting 32.5 billion tree saplings across the country. The Initiative is a huge project with a 50 billion tree seedling target by 2026. Of the 32.5 billion seedlings that have been planted so far, more than 90 percent have survived. When natural resource conservation and biodiversity management are enhanced and maintained consistently, it is possible to contribute to efforts to lessen the impact of climate change, GCS noted.

As stated by Adongo, "Other riparian nations, such as Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi, have similar programs and initiatives with annual targets as well." She said that we should recognize nations for their contributions and commended their national efforts, which have a significant influence on the sustainability of the Nile Basin.

"Along with the environmental initiatives,



Florence Grace Adongo

the executive director indicated that the Nile Basin Initiative secretariat is requesting resource mobilization to carry out other projects for the basin. As the secretariat reiterates its commitment, we are also looking at resource mobilization and moving projects ahead", Adongo explained.

The executive director mentioned essential pillars for managing and developing the shared Nile Basin, noting that some do not draw resources as easily as others. "We're taking an integrated strategy. If we are operating in one basin, for example, producing hydropower, we should consider the watershed. If the watershed of that basin is not maintained, the infrastructure we have constructed will become unsustainable."

Regarding NBI's role in over 25 years of participation, Adongo stated that it acted as a forum for discourse, a catalyst for change, boosting regional integration, increasing

competitiveness, and unleashing the Nile Basin's enormous potential for Africa and beyond. NBI encompasses 10 percent of the African continent and is home to about 25 percent of its inhabitants.

Despite their enormous potential for great growth, Nile Basin nations confront critical development issues like as water security, energy security, food security, and vulnerability to environmental shocks caused by the negative effects of climate change.

Recognizing the aforementioned issues, Adongo stated that no country can tackle them alone. As a result, she emphasized the need for countries in the Nile Basin to work together to find a shared solution to such common issues.

In reality, the growth and implementation of regional environmental projects like Green Legacy depend heavily on the participation and collaboration of the states that make up the Nile Basin. Ethiopia is getting close to the Green Legacy planting season this year. Sites are being ready for planting, and seedlings are receiving continual care.

Ethiopia's annual Green Legacy campaign brings communities, schools, and organizations together to plant billions of trees with the goal of promoting environmental sustainability, combating climate change, reversing deforestation, and reducing land degradation.

Therefore, it is essential to expand and carry out this project in a coordinated manner in order to establish a Green economy that is robust to climate change. Thus, the detrimental effects of climate change on natural resources, agriculture, and health care are lessened. In addition, the Nile Basin Initiative countries can achieve increased productivity and output by implementing the Green Legacy Initiative in an integrated and systematic manner, which enhances soil fertility and long-term soil health.

Art & Culture

Ethiopian Muslims Celebrate Eid al-Adha with devotion, ecstatic vibe

BY NAOL GIRMA

The streets of Addis Ababa get filled with the sounds of joyous celebration as Ethiopian Muslims gather to observe Eid al-Adha, the Islamic festival of sacrifice, on June 16. Eid al-Adha commemorates the willingness of the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God. It is one of the most important religious holidays in the Islamic calendar and is celebrated worldwide by the faithful of the Islamic religion. In Ethiopia, which has a Muslim population of over 34 million, the occasion is marked by special prayers, feasting, gift-giving, and acts of charity. "Eid al-Adha is a time for us to reflect on our faith, strengthen our bonds with family and community, and share our blessings with those in need," said Fatima Ahmed, a resident of Addis Ababa.

Early in the morning, worshippers gather at mosques across the capital city to perform the Eid prayer. The main event is held at the historic Anwar Mosque, where thousands of people, dressing in their finest traditional attire, filling the courtyard to take part in the communal prayers usually led by Islamic scholars.

"The Eid prayer is a profound experience, where we brush shoulders as equals before Allah," said Ismael Hassen, a 42-year-old businessman. "It fills us with a sense of unity and belonging to the global Muslim community."

Following the prayers, families return to their homes to enjoy special Eid meals, often featuring dishes like Doro Wat (chicken stew), Injera (flatbread), and traditional sweets. Children eagerly await the gifts of new clothes, toys, and cash from their elders.

But the spirit of Eid al-Adha goes beyond personal celebration. Across Ethiopia, Muslims engage in acts of charity and humanitarian support. Many slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the less fortunate, in keeping with the tradition of sacrifice and generosity.

Eid al-Adha is a reminder that we must look beyond our own needs and care for those who are struggling. It is a time to strengthen our commitment to social justice



Haji Toha Harun

and community welfare.

As the sun sets over Addis Ababa, the streets reverberate with the sounds of laughter, songs, and the calls to prayer. For Ethiopia's Muslims, Eid al-Adha had once again brought the nation together in a celebration of faith, family, and the pursuit of a more just and compassionate society.

Muslims perform the Eid prayer in the morning and may also carry out the ritual sacrifice of cattle (known as udhiyah). Pilgrims who have performed the Hajj complete additional rituals on Eid al-Adha.

It is sometimes called the "Greater Eid."

The 1445th Eid al Adha (Arafat) will be celebrated in a warm atmosphere among the Ethiopian Muslims. Followers of the religion celebrate the festival by slaughtering animals and the religious teaching is that they should take their share of the slaughtered animals and distribute the rest to relatives and the poor, said Imam of Anwar Mosque Haji Toha Harun. Always Eid al-Adha is celebrated with love, unity, and brotherhood, he said, adding that the Muslim community should preserve their Ethiopian unity and brotherhood.

Haji Toha Harun told the Ethiopia Press Agency that able-bodied people buy sheep and goats and slaughter them and distribute the meats to the poor and dine and enjoy tea and soft drinks together. Al Adha is known as the festival of charity because it is the teaching of the religion to share the animals slaughtered for the poor.

Eid al-Adha is the second and biggest of the two main holidays celebrated in Islam. It honors the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ismail as an act of obedience to Allah's command. The act of sacrifice is carried out following the Eid Prayers, which are performed in congregation at the nearest Mosque on the morning of Eid and consist of slaughtering an animal as a sacrifice

to mark this occasion in remembrance of Prophet Ibrahim's sacrifice for Allah.

The mutual aid should continue not only once a year during the festival but also at other times, Haji Toha said, adding that building and repairing houses for the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing those with tattered clothes, and helping orphans will be popular activities during Eid al Adha. According to Islamic teachings, it is wrong to ignore people exposed to natural and man-made disasters, displaced people, hungry and thirsty people and we should help the poor and vulnerable people, he said.

On the other hand, Islamic religious education supports the ongoing work of building and repairing houses for the poor through civic service delivery, he said.

Understanding the situation in our country and helping the displaced people and those in various difficulties to provide necessary support is a blessed work, loved by Allah and man.

Sharing with the poor, especially during festivals is a recently developing and spreading custom and tradition, he said, adding that this custom and tradition of helping and supporting each other must continue to spread in the country.

Oh Eid Adha, a Muslim holiday...

BY ABD TAALA IBNALI

From God, over all
In whose praise muezzim's call
To Arafat tall,

Prophet Abraham
Greeted an angel, "Salaam"
Who said, "O Imam..."

"...The God most misname
As Creator; all the same
Says you are to blame..."

"...The God wants your son
On Arafat mount begun
As gift to God, One."

Abraham cried, "O,
Not my son whom I love so,
But I can't say no..."

"...If Great God says do
Whom am I to oppose who
Made both me and you!"

Then, a knife appeared

For Ishmael to be speared
As Abraham feared.

Abraham's arm moved
Downwards with intent thus proved
As angel removed.

And, angel switched ram.
With the son of Abraham
As sacrificed lamb.

Thus, God isn't cruel
Testing all under His rule

Whom Satan does fool.

And, from lamb given
A sacrifice is shriven
Eid Adha driven.

Muslims fast and pray
To Arafat's sunset slay
To Eid feast next day.

This fast equals near
A year before and after dear
of sins removed clear.

Business & Economy

Budget utilization for bolstering import substitution, export promotion

BY MENGESHA AMARE

It is well recognized that budget is an important economic instrument of national resource mobilization, allocation and economic management. It is also an important tool for facilitating and realizing the vision of government in a given fiscal year. A budget has to be well-designed, effectively and efficiently implemented, adequately monitored. Based on such widely acceptable maxim, the government of Ethiopia has allocated some 971 Billion Birr for the next fiscal year and a number of activities have been undertaken to help companies and industries boost production thereby withstanding the impacts of high cost of living and other related economic hurdles.

Having this in mind, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Serawit Tadesse, an economist graduated from Addis Ababa University. He said, "True, budget is an instrument for measuring the performance of the economy a given nation. This is because it provides adequate control for monitoring expenditure for proper financial management. It is also used to measure the performance of the economy by indicating the performance of the economy in the previous year, making it possible to account for any gap between the expected and exact targets projected under the budget."

As to him, budget allocation and control would be fruitful if the government keeps focusing on a well-defined budget as it can potentially attract shiny marketing strategy and successful monetary trek. Such a lucid trend helps promote accountability, encourage responsibility, foster a culture of data-driven decision-making, and reduce wasteful spending.

Besides, this trend would be of significantly useful in allowing authorities to continuously monitor and adjust budget based on performance and current circumstances. It also drives strategic decision-making as good budgeting forces concerned bodies to make strategic choices.

Truly speaking, he said export-led growth has been successfully used by the nation and has been becoming newly industrialized nation. The significance of export promotion in economic growth in Ethiopia is to increase the market share for local products and services in foreign nations.

Import substitution is also essential for it increases trade independence in nations like Ethiopia. It develops different sectors within the domestic market. The import substitution is also a strategy to move from substituting short-term consumption goods by domestic products to diversification of export and import trade step by step, he added. Food and beverages, textiles and garments, leather and leather products, chemical and construction materials as well as metal and engineering products are identified as sectors that can be fully produced locally.

As to Serawit, currently, the manufacturing



sector has been given due emphasis as efforts are being exerted to change this dependence on foreign products with the help of strategy. According to him, the development of the agricultural sector will create a favorable opportunity for the production of food and beverage products in the country and the issue of value addition will be worked upon. Natural resources, the large number of trainable manpower and energy supply options are among the potentials that help achieve the plan, while lack of infrastructure, shortage of foreign currency, financial supply and security are the main challenges.

Serawit further elucidated that the new policy is built on two main pillars. It has in the first place aimed at enabling the manufacturing sector to produce inputs required by manufacturers of finished products. It has also sought to boost domestic manufacturing output to reduce reliance on imported goods.

Recognizing the pivotal role of local investors in industry growth, the policy prioritizes their involvement. With a shift towards market-led manufacturing industry development, the policy has been revamped to emphasize productivity and competition, necessitating stable macroeconomic conditions, adequate financing, and access to land, infrastructure, and logistics. The country is implementing manufacturing industry promotion means to shore up production channels for each stage of a product's development. Besides, import substitution industrialization is a trade and economic policy that advocates replacing foreign imports with domestic production. It is based on the premise that a country should attempt to reduce its foreign dependency through the local production of industrialized products.

The significance of export promotion in economic growth is to increase the market share for local products and services in foreign nations. With an increase in market share for the foreign nation's local products, the value of a country's exports will increase. Export promotion allows the nation to diversify its revenue streams by venturing into international markets. Export promotion initiatives often lead to the creation of new jobs and employment opportunities within the domestic economy. As businesses expand their operations to cater to international demand, they require a larger workforce to

handle production, logistics, marketing, and other related activities. This, in turn, reduces unemployment rates and contributes to the overall socio-economic development of the country.

"Export-oriented industries often require higher standards of quality, efficiency, and innovation to compete in global markets. To meet these demands Ethiopia must in technological advancements and innovation. Export promotion can also attract foreign direct investment into developing economies as enterprise, companies and factories from developing nations like Ethiopia often seek opportunities to establish manufacturing facilities or form partnerships with local businesses in countries with export potential. These investments bring in capital, technology, know-how, and access to international markets," he added.

According to Serawit, export promotion also provides businesses with access to new markets, which translates into increased sales. By tapping into new markets, businesses can gain access to new technologies, resources, and expertise that can help them improve their products and services. Additionally, by operating in different markets, businesses can learn from their competitors and adapt their strategies accordingly.

Exporting goods or services to other countries can expose businesses to various risks such as non-payment, political unrest, and natural disasters. These risks can be detrimental to the financial health of a company and can lead to the loss of hard-earned profits. Export insurance is a type of insurance that helps mitigate these risks, providing peace of mind to businesses that engage in international trade. The benefits of export insurance are numerous, and they can be viewed from different points of view.

To speed up economic development in developing countries like Ethiopia, is required to import of machinery, technical knowledge etc. from abroad. The three main sources of foreign exchange are: Foreign exchange reserves and gold reserves, foreign loans and aid and exports promotion. Foreign exchange reserves in the country may not be enough to pay off overseas payments. So it cannot be completely dependent on this source. Foreign currency can be earned through foreign loans and aid, but there

are various conditions and uncertainties associated with this aid. Therefore, this source can neither be a viable solution to meet the foreign exchange requirement.

The strength of exports has a large role in determining the current account deficit. A permanent solution is possible to the current account deficit of the country's transaction balance through using the foreign exchange earned through export expansion to meet the cost of imports export promotion.

Reducing the burden of foreign debt, Ethiopia needs a lot of foreign exchange to meet the interest and principal of foreign loans. Export growth has become essential for the repayment of interest-bearing loans as the debt burden is huge. If this is possible, the country will be free from the humiliating conditions of foreign loans. Increasing exports facilitates the compression of the expenditure of mass production. The increase in exports also increases the foreign exchange reserves in the country which in turn increases the import capacity. As a result of this, it is possible to increase the production of import substitute goods and export commodities by importing raw materials, machinery, technical knowledge etc.

As to him, if the import capacity increases, it will be possible to import sophisticated equipment and techniques, which will accelerate the development of the country's economic situation. Growth in exports can create employment. If exports expand then the volume of domestic production will increase and if production is to increase it wants a lot of manpower which will increase employment. So in a hugely populous country like Ethiopia, unemployment is a serious problem and the solution to the problem is possible through export promotion policies. If exports expand, there will be a need to increase production. To increase the volume of production, a large quantity of input is required which can be obtained from the domestic market. Therefore, it is possible to increase the speed of national income and economic development by increasing production through proper utilization of domestic resources.

Above all, it appears that export trade or export promotion policies help Ethiopia's economic development in many ways. Export expansion will not only increase the income of the country, but also the overall development of the country. The economy of Ethiopia is full of problems of unemployment, poverty, proper utilization of national resources, industrial sickness, etc. Many of these problems can be overcome through massive export expansion. If we look at the developed countries, we will see that one of the main reasons for their economic development is the policy of export expansion.

In a nutshell, as budget allocation can balance revenue and expenditures, it has to be well defined, managed and pumped accordingly to hit the target set.

Law & Politics

Promoting the National Dialogue Commission through media

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

We have heard many times in the past the phrase 'Ethiopia is at crossroads' referring to certain crucial moments in its history. We have heard it during various epochs of the recent history of the country when people felt that something pivotal was about to happen to the country. This kind of assertion was also heard from among the academics, intellectuals or people who are considered as knowledgeable and keen observers of the country's history. They make these remarks based on what sort of developments were about to take place in the society and the establishment as a whole. These observers refer to past stories developing and events actually taking place including during possible regime changes or other critical events that may determine the fate of the country.

For instance similar observations were made when the monarchy was living its final days due to widespread protests against the way things were being handled. In the pivotal year of 1974 there were conditions in which the country was at crossroads. Unprecedented developments took place. The military began to complain loudly by voicing their woes to the monarchy.

Civil servants, the business community as well as teachers and other sectors of society voiced their opposition against the worsening economic situation of the country. The protests took another shape with the joining of the military to the masses and the exposure of the nation to a potential enemy aggression. The conditions in which they were forced to live were according to them unsustainable. Hence they boldly presented their case to the emperor; and this was also supported by the student movement. Therefore, it was clear that the country was at crucial crossroads.

With the deposition of the monarchy and the taking over of the military the country seemed to head to a more stable situation. But soon even the military government was to face opposition from various fronts including those who craved for the right to self-determination of certain communities. There arose fierce guerrilla activities in many areas in the country and after a while it was again clear that the country was at crossroads. Its future was once again at stake.

Ethiopia never had any scarcity of enemies given its crucial geopolitical situation and Ethiopians were constantly reminded of this case by having to mobilize to deter any aggression from outside or even by forces which were acting on behalf of the enemies from outside. Again there was the feeling that the country was at crossroads with the future not very clear or bright.

With the increasing assault of certain forces that struggled for cessation from the country led by the military, it was difficult to predict

that the future would be bright because peace and stability was dwindling and people had begun to worry about the future. The policies and records of the military government did not convince Ethiopians in general and the lack of peace and stability for quite a while presented more challenges to the country. The future was once again put at serious risk. Many observers began to raise the issue of the country being at crossroads again.

Some people even began to support the guerrilla fighters so that the military regime is done with. People wanted peace and harmony among communities ridding of the trigger happy military government. Then, another new chapter was written with the deposition of the Derg and the take over of power by the EPRDF coalition.

It seemed that the series of wars and military campaigns were destined to end and people would never hear the sound of guns again. The new regime presented itself as a kind of 'saviour of the country'. However, after a few years, once again a new cycle of discontent erupted. The policies of the government were accused of discriminating among nationalities and that power was systematically abused by the new tsars. People who felt that they did not get what they deserved began to present a stiff opposition not only in peaceful ways but also arming themselves and getting into the bush. Those forces that were actively helping the now in power government to reach the current stage felt betrayed because they felt marginalized from power sharing and their voices disregarded.

The resistance movement of many of these forces continued for years before the EPRDF government was deposed by a wing in itself that formed a kind of 'reformist party'. EPRDF was made to vanish and a new party called Prosperity Party was founded by the new leaders such as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and others. Again a new hope seemed to emerge from a distance and many observers again used the phrase 'Ethiopia is once again at crossroads' because what it does now will be crucial for its continuation as a state embracing all the nationalities within it and making them feel comfortable with the new government machinery. The new government promised that no ethnic group or nationality or indeed political force would feel discriminated or sidelined from the central authority. Each will have their say in the affairs that concern them a lot and opposition forces that were stationed abroad were invited to return home and take part in a peaceful political discourse.

With certain forces still raising the perennial issue of the lack of participation of all of them in the country's government, there seemed to persist a sense of discontent that has persevered along the years despite the measures of the reformist government trying to change things so that the old injustices would be redressed. Again many people remarked that the country was once again finding itself at crossroads. The success of this government was put very much in the

balance if it could not embrace all political forces in its endeavours and listen to their voices attentively.

The circumstances that led to the outbreak of the conflict in the north and the instability in certain regions of the country were attributed by many to this sort of not attaining full consensus in the country among various political forces. The promise that every group would be duly represented and there would not be distinction between nationalities or groups and that every group would be heard was challenged.

It was also in reaction to these presuppositions that the so called National Dialogue Commission was founded and every political or social force or group would be given the chance to air their voice in the deliberations. During the past few years since the formation of this Commission, there have been made significant progresses towards identifying the major issues that divide the country, the possible solutions that people envisage and how to go about reforming the country along fair and equitable lines in terms of sharing power and the resources of the nation.

Perennial issues are to be well identified according to what people actually feel and well deliberated solutions are to be prospected by this National Dialogue Commission that is meant to embrace every segment of society including those who have resorted to armed struggle. This move of the Commission is crucial because no one force or group would be excluded from the deliberations. The role of the media here becomes fundamental because it needs to responsibly cover what is being done in the country regarding the activities of the Commission.

Undoubtedly, the media is a very powerful force in society considered by many as the fourth branch of government. Indeed in the current situation its responsibilities have doubled because the emergence of social media has complicated and tried to diminish its role. To avoid the risk of being eclipsed by the social media that are very popular, direct and immediate, the conventional media needs to present itself in a responsible and professional manner raising its profile higher than any of the social media outlets who try to outshine it or even push it out of business. That is why the media needs to be professional, reliable and trustworthy and not be economically motivated to take the wrong side. It needs to show people that it always keeps the major interests of the country above every other force or interest.

The Ethiopian media needs to support the efforts of the Commission in its attempts to gather as much input as possible without any bias from the participants because the success of the efforts of the Commission will contribute to build a society and a nation that is based on a certain consensus. The views of every group would be guaranteed of representation and consideration and no one would

feel excluded from their fair share of the national pie.

The one huge issue that this country has been struggling against is the fair or equal representation of its nationalities in the federal government and how power sharing has been devised.

In a country such as Ethiopia where there are tens of ethnic groups and languages, the way power is shared has always presented a challenge also because there are external forces in the country who try to drag the nation into turmoil and fish in troubled waters. They try to abort its development to a powerful force in east Africa and the continent as a whole. For such sabotage there are multiple agents and forces particularly in the social media trying to sow discord among Ethiopians. That is where the media should flex its muscles and show its resistance.

One of the main duties of the media is hence to expose these destructive forces and convince people that they are enemies of the people who are busy peddling unfounded narratives and venomous assertions among communities. The media should give due emphasis to these developments and actively support the efforts of the National Dialogue Commission reporting on each and every development and keep the public well informed so that they have trust and confidence in what the Commission is doing.

Ethiopia cannot afford to squander this opportunity once again as it has done in various other chapters of its history. Opportunities do not always recur easily because things continue to evolve. The country's position vis-à-vis outside forces is also bound to change. We need to seize the moment and take full advantage of similar developments so that the country addresses its crucial issues and go ahead one step to the right direction.

Attaining full peace and permanent stability would facilitate the growth of the country. For all this the role of the media cannot be overestimated. It is a key force capable of swaying things to this direction or that one. It can be destructive but also constructive. Hence, we can once again assert that Ethiopia is at crossroads. But we must not let it take the wrong path. The efforts and positive contribution of the media are precious and irreplaceable. We should all realize and acknowledge the importance of this fact and support the media because we cannot afford to fail in this endeavour.

The development trajectory of the country can not continue if we fail to settle this issue of national consensus through the efforts of the National Dialogue Commission. And the efforts of the Commission need to be well covered and promoted by the media so that people are well aware of what the implications are and not be sabotaged by the enemies of the country.

EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

The curse of third-party interference!

Third party uncalled for interference in anyone's life seldom does end with all sides having a nice time. No, way. Many times than not third parties who interfere in the lives of others come with this "If I say do it, then you do it!" arrogance of being on the highest 'throne' possible. Believe me, third party interferences are responsible for the breakdown of marriages and friendships and for the innocent to take the wrong path only to end up in the worst of situations.

Look, few people, if any, feel comfortable with others trying to dictate them what they do with their lives and the choices they should make. Third parties dive so deep into the personal lives of people that 'privacy' becomes just a meaningless term, despite what the dictionaries claim it means.

"That guy I saw you with this morning is your best friend?"

"You bet he is."

"We don't believe you should hang out with him." What! What the hell is the dude saying?

"What do you mean?"

"Well I and the guys think he is a very arrogant fellow who doesn't even greet people." So what!

"You guys should know that we've remained best friend for almost two decades and you're telling me to breakup with him! What wrong have you seen on him to tell me to break my

friendship?"

Of course the answers wouldn't be any near to convincing as their misgiving probably is that he's the type of guy who holds for himself; a confident, self-assured fellow who refuses to roam the watering halls of the city with the packs whose only goal about life seems to be, "Drink, and as much as you can!" Third parties give themselves the right of deciding who your friends should be while you've never asked for their opinions. Third parties mean the most uncomfortable thing happening to you.

I remember quite a while ago a young man whose choice for a future wife was almost thwarted by so-called relatives who decide they were the ones who should make the final call. Mind you, there was no outstanding problem on the part of the young lady except that she was one of those wonderful souls who was confident of herself and never shied away from letting people realize that she was indeed the master of her own fate. Initially these relatives attempted the age-old ways of trying to turn her into a person who bowed to everything they said. No, she was not ready to fall for that. In fact things go to the extent of telling her how she should treat her husband once they were married.

They called her arrogant and a lot of names just because this young lady held her head up and refused to be dragged into backward practices playing the underdog just because she was a lady and young.

Things took a nasty turn when a member of her family who got wind of what the young man's relatives were trying to do decided that he was not the right man for their beautiful young lady. Now through all these the young man never desisted from standing by the side of his future wife. But this relative of the young woman was someone the type of whom takes no prisoner. Through all these time the parents of both of them never interfered and accepted the choices of the children. It was the so-called third parties who were messing up things.

Despite the strong pressure from these determined to throw the marriage plan on the rocks the youngsters got married their own way. They convinced their families that there was no need for overdoing things and theirs was quite a solemn and quite ceremony where only fifty or so of carefully selected relatives and friends were invited. In fact the marriage ceremony was more of a secret! Yes the interfering horde of relatives found out about the whole thing after both the youngsters vowed, "I do;" and there was nothing they can do about it.

In the old days people who think they have the right to choose the future of youngsters tell their parents, "Your son should be a pilot."

"Your daughter should be a housewife and her husband will provide her." It is a verdict of the whole future of the lady. Still clinging to shockingly primitive idea if a woman's job was in the house to it astounding there

are those who still hold such a notion. We have heard of well-educated people some of whom in fact who had contact with the outside world thinking that a woman's place was in the house! Would you believe that! Do believe it, because it happens even in the highly informed age we're in. Sometimes those close having high consideration for these people it can't be said their interference wouldn't bring about any difference. It could bring about devastating results.

I have once heard of a marriage which just crumbled because the husband finally decides his wife should leave her quite comfortable office job and become a housewife. They say no one knows where the hell he got the idea. And this gentleman was supposed to be a fairly informed modern man who is expected to know much. His better half refused to budge while he kept on insisting home was her place. At that time, only a few years into their marriage, they didn't have any children and there was no argument of the wife playing the mother role. Finally she had had enough and applies for divorce. Her decision came a sort of ICBM that caught her husband unawares. It was probably a move he never expected to happen. He then relents and says that he has dropped his request and his wife can keep her job; just like that. But the damage was already done and she said enough was enough. The marriage just ended up on the rocks. I wonder how the two of them are doing now.

Castles and Dungeons

How can anyone feel comfortable with people who tell him he should drop his long time fiancé just because she refuses to join their league and play along because theirs and theirs only was the perfect league to join? How can anyone feel comfortable with people who try to tell them what sort of political outlook they should have because that was their line and their line is always right? (Sort of the golden Road' to Heaven!) "I'm the only prolific actor in this country because I feature in so many films and I still get the calls by the scores. (Well, that would have been somewhat possible had it not been for the fact that in these days appearing in many films doesn't mean one is an Oscar or Golden Globe material. The ways in which some are rumored to get many roles despite being just another of the hundreds or even the thousands of actors and actresses in the crowd could have many side stories, of course, not-so-nice side stories. Not many chances for back-patting there!)

"We're the best political party with the perfect outlook of the outstanding problems of the country and there foolproof solutions because our top brass have been in it for decades and have lived through it all! Our members could tear down the arguments of any other political groups or activists and render them worthless because when it comes to politics the buck ends with us."

Well, nice that they have lived through it all and were lucky enough to tell their stories through marathon interviews and heavy volumes. But, if the efficiency of politics or any other field was decided by how long the practitioners stayed put in the business many politically bent old-timers wouldn't

have created so much confusions and ended up messing up things. Well, unfortunately the narratives and the realities on the ground seldom agree. I mean when it comes to politics or things that rhyme with it in these country it is astounding to realize that decades of involvement or 'experience' didn't put a single loaf of bread on the table! So people are pardoned to see the picture of the past as a completely messed up because it that some of that mess which slipped through to the latter years.

"Look, the guys has been to many to the top educational institutions abroad. I tell you he's a very smart guy."

"Well if he is so smart why isn't able to see eye-to-eye with the local staff? From what I hear he carries around an ego which is so inflated everyone in that place is offended one way or another."

"That's because we back here have difficulty to think as effectively as a smart guy like him who worked and lived with the ferenjis think."

Well, well, well! Look the worship of anything from across the oceans is a problem that we don't seem to cast off that easily. It seems our minds have been so intentionally tailored in ways that close every door to our own wonderful and great sides and look across the oceans. The worship of those who return after years of training and living abroad goes over the edges many times. As mentioned above if there are problems in places run or administered by such returnees the fault is always lies with the local crowd. "Oh, they are so backward minded that they are not ready to change not only the way they

do things but also the way they think. What do you expect the guy to do in such instances?"

By the way when we talk about returnees there is also one outstanding fact. Many have returned home after years of being away in search of knowledge and done great things to make the right and most effective changes in institutions and such places without bulldozing the values and wonderful customs of the locals. Such people don't try to impose what they got from wherever they have been onto the people. No, that's not how they do things. In fact they customize their knowledge in such ways that the locals take up useful changes without compromising their own values.

We are talking about the others who try to always play the "I have been trained, worked and lived for years abroad so accept whatever I say and whatever I do without any question!" game. Just rewind a few decades and look at the politics (again!) and try to comprehend without any prejudice or bias what really happened when it comes to the involvement of those from across the seas and the oceans and some of the maladies we still are trying to save ourselves from.

While we are at it there is this story of many of our compatriots making it back home and the expectations of the locals were that the new factories and big businesses would practically mushroom in no time. There is nothing wrong with such positive convictions. So people asked, "So what is that guy who studied electrical engineering in Germany in the US doing now?"

"Oh, didn't you hear? He opened a wonderful

restaurant in Bole area."

What about that lady who studied software engineering in the US doing? I hope she has by now set up a big tech company."

"She has opened a trendy nightclub and you can't believe how crowded it could be on weekend nights!"

So much for the factories and big businesses!

Anyways this trend of putting oneself in the glass castle and trying to look down on everyone else as second class human beings is the worst kind of behavior. It would have been nice if we could say, "Oh, luckily such individuals and groups don't exist amongst us." Well, I'm sorry to break it to you if indeed I'm doing that; they do exist!

I mean when someone thinks they are always on the right the chances for any civilized discussions go out of the window, because the doors on the other side are all bolted. When you're on the wrong path of something and refuse to acknowledge it regret wouldn't be long in coming. Maybe, just maybe, it is high time we took people and groups for what they are and not that they are supposed to be; because we are in time when what you get is not actually what you should get and smartness comes in being able to root out the differences.

So individuals and groups who act as if they are in the castle on the highest peak of the highest mountain and the rest of humanity is down there in the dungeons could do justice to themselves if they only take a good and innocent look at themselves.

Society



Eid al-Adha: Festival of sacrifice, sharing

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

Eid al-Adha, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is one of the most significant festivals celebrated by Muslims across the world. The festival commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, as an act of obedience to Allah.

According to The Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, the Feast of Sacrifice originates from the historic event when Prophet Ibrahim was commanded by Allah in a dream to sacrifice his son, Ismail.

Respecting the order, while Prophet Ibrahim was at the point to sacrifice his son, Ismael, Allah replaced a ram, which was to be slaughtered in place of his son and instructed him to sacrifice the ram as a ransom for Ismael.

Since that time, Muslims around the world celebrate Eid al-Adha to honor Prophet Ibrahim's devotion and obedience to Allah—Obeying Allah to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Thus, during the feast of Eid Al Adha, Muslims re-enact Ibrahim's obedience by sacrificing oxen or sheep.

Ethiopian Muslims also celebrate Eid al-Adha in a manner honoring Ibrahim's devotion and obedience to Allah. They usually gather for prayers on open prayer grounds or mosques and perform the Eid prayer. After the prayers, friends and family will usually come together to share meals and exchange gifts. What is more, those who are able both physically and financially travel to the Holy City of Mecca in Saudi Arabia and perform Hajj pilgrimage which is one of the fifth pillars of Islam and at the same time it is an obligation to perform it at least once in their lifetime.

Extending a helping hand to the homeless and the needy in the form of money, food or clothes is also another religious value of Islam which has special significance for Muslim community.

During the festival, families who can afford to sacrifice a ritually acceptable animal (sheep, goat, camel, or ox) do so and then divide the meat from the slaughtered animal equally among themselves, friends and

neighbors as well as the less fortunate ones; to fulfilling another Pillar of Islam—Zakat.

In connection to the celebration of the 1445th Arafah Holiday, Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council conveyed a message to all Ethiopian Muslims to mark the day with compassion and act of generosity.

In an exclusive interview with The Ethiopian Press Agency, Advisor to Council's President and Foreign Affairs Relations Head, Asst. Prof. Adem Kamil, urged the Muslim communities to celebrate the Arafah festival in a manner fulfilling their age-old religious responsibilities of supporting the needy, which is the manifestation of Eid al-Adha.

Asst. Prof. Adem said that is a holiday where common social values, togetherness and supporting one another are entertained. In this regard, the Muslim community should extend its support to the needy; he said adding that while marking the holiday it is an obligation to reflect kindness and generosity to those who are less fortunate.

"The Muslim community should fulfill their religious obligations by nurturing the culture of cooperation and stretching hands to the needy, which is one of the values of the Arafah festival," he reiterated.

According to the teachings of Islam, Eid al-Adha is the festival in which Prophet Ibrahim displayed humility and obedience to Allah when he willingly prepared to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, in response to Allah's command. In this way, he showed complete humility and respect which led Allah to see the obedience of the Prophet Ibrahim and replace a ram to be slaughtered in place of Ishmael. In this regard, it is compulsory to practice selflessness and share some portion of the sacrifice to the needy.

Adem also said that the Festival of Sacrifice is a special day for it is a holiday where common social values of the community, such as sharing whatever there is and the acts of generosity are entertained widely.

During Eid al-Adha, Muslims, who can afford to sacrifice ritually acceptable cattle such as sheep, goats, camels or oxen, are expected to slaughter cattle and share the

meat equally to neighbors, to families and the less fortunate ones. The practice is a true manifestation of the teachings of the religion and a ritual that further strengthens the culture of belongingness and togetherness, eating together.

He also said that Arafah, which is a festival of sacrifice and obedience, has a special meaning among followers of the religion; and Muslims with better health and financial capacity are expected to make a pilgrimage by visiting the Holy land, Mecca, at least once in their lifetime. The festival of Arafah, which is celebrated by the followers of Islam, is the place where the biggest Hajj is celebrated. Owing to this, it is a festival that demonstrates the equality of human beings, considerate and respect to each other.

Regarding the meaning of Arafah, Asst. Prof. Adem, who is also a Historian, said that it is a place where Adam and Hawa first met. On the actual day of the festival, more than two million followers of the religion, regardless of language, color, race or identity, will join together in the Holy Land to pray and glorify the creator. Adem said that those Muslims who did not get the chance to travel to the Holy Land will perform the Eid prayer in their respective places.

Mentioning that Ethiopia is a country that accommodates different religions, he underscored the importance of working together so that every citizen can live in equality and peace. "For a country whose symbol is peace and unity, it is crucial to sustain peace and tolerance to live in harmony," he added.

In his message, Adem said that the culture of supporting one another and extending hands to the needy should not be confined only in times of holiday. It should be a day today practice and religious fathers have an important role to play to ensure peace, stability and development.

"As a means to further ensure the culture of extending helping hands to the needy and strengthening the culture of cooperation and supporting one another, which are the values of Eid al-Adha, religious leaders should teach and inculcate the values among their followers," he remarked.

During Eid al-Adha, Muslims, who can afford to sacrifice ritually acceptable cattle such as sheep, goats, camels or oxen, are expected to slaughter cattle and share the meat equally to neighbors, to families and the less fortunate ones

In Pictures

Walking the talk!

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Addis Corridor Dev't Project consummated by PM Abiy ,senior gov't officials visit



Lately, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) evaluated the performance of the Addis Ababa Corridor Development Project with Addis Ababa City Administration officials and behested the completion of the project soon. This week, PM Abiy with senior federal government officials and Addis Ababa City Government Officials, including City Mayor Adanech Abiebie, visited the completed part of the Addis Ababa Corridor Development Project, which was completed as per the schedule. The above picture was taken while PM Abiy visiting the completed project with government officials.



Walking with residents of the metropolis

This pictured taken around Piassa area, near the recently inaugurated Adwa Victory memorial. Prime Minister Abiy, First lady Zinash Tayachew, DPM Temesgen, Addis Ababa City Mayor Adanech Abiebie and Finance Minister Ahmed Shide shown at the front. The senior government officials are walking in the street with the residents of the city while visiting the corridor development project. Appreciating the development works being undertaken in the capital, residents of the city are displaying their support to the project.



Greetings Addis Ababa!

While walking in the streets to see the completed phase of the Addis Ababa Development Project, residents were parading to meet PM Abiy. This charming and smiley old man met his Prime Minister and provided a polite greeting. PM Abiy also responded a smiley and polite greeting to that deserved man.



Visit the beautiful Addis Ababa

The Addis Ababa Corridor Development Project makes the city beautiful, attractive and livable city. The Corridor Development Project includes over 48 kilometers of asphalt road development, four underground walkways, 96 kilometers walkways, and 100 kilometers bicycle routes. In addition, five kilometers running track and 48 new bus and taxi terminals that can facilitate the transport activities of the city are part of the corridor development project. Generally, it covers more than 240 kilometers road and related infrastructural development, 70 green centers and parks that can serve the residents of the city, fountains and green spaces, recreational centers, children centers and public plazas, 120 modern rest rooms and modern drainage system. The project is making the city among the best ideal tourist destination cities in the world.