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Ethiopia, Canada foster deeper ties in range of fields

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

ADDIS ABABA—Canada is bolstering its excellent bilateral relations and cooperation with Ethiopia in a range of fields, Ambassador Joshua Tabah stated.

He mentioned the ongoing program of international assistance and cooperation for women rights that has been in place for over 50 years as the largest and longest project the North American country has ever had in Ethiopia.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Canada's Ambassador Joshua Tabah said that Canada has

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Ministry's move on health, export trades

• Ethiopia launches seven-year Nat'l Food Safety, Quality Strategy

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADAMA – The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) disclosed that it has been developing and trickling down viable initiatives and primary agricultural processing interventions to protect consumer's wellbeing and promoting export trades. In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Ministry's Food Safety and Quality Desk Head Wubshet Asnake (PhD)

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Gov't turns attention to bacterial-wilt onset disease

• Researchers insist on integrated approach

BY BILAL DERSO

WOLKITE- The political wing embraces the researchers' appeal to consistent attention to prevent and control bacterial-wilt onset disease, the Gurage Zone Chief said.

Zonal officials, agricultural researchers, members of the academia, and other stakeholders paid a field visit on Friday to various parts of the Gurage Zone of the Central Ethiopian State to examine the magnitude of the disease.

Approached by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) at the field visit, the Gurage Zone Chief Administrator Lacha Garmua stated the current administration has the desire to change the inconsistent

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Missing the bull's eye: Sales funnel leakage in flower export sub sector

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Ethiopia harnessing renewable energy to contribute to global de-carbonization efforts

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State harvests 31.5 mln quintals of agri'l products

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADAMA – Central Ethiopia has harvested 31.5 million quintals of crop products from 147,000 hectares of land in *Bega* irrigation period, State's Agriculture Bureau said.

Bureau Head, Ousman Surur said that the state produced 31.5 million quintals of various agricultural items such as vegetables and cereals in this *Bega* irrigation period.

The agricultural activities that have been undertaken in the aforesaid period have also created over 33,000 jobs, he noted.

Of the collected products, over 100,000 quintal is wheat harvested from 2,600 hectares of land, according to the Head.

Ousman told *The Ethiopian Herald* that the Bureau is advancing wheat production to ensure food self-sufficiency and gain remarkable economic significance.



Ousman Surur

He added that the state is well known for producing different vegetables like cabbage, green chili, tomato, onion, and the likes.

Besides, by implementing an integrated

agricultural activity, he said, the State has started *Bega* wheat irrigation and introduced products such as zucchini and watermelon.

"Although the Bureau planned to produce 434,000 quintals of wheat by cultivating 11,130 hectares of land, farmers could not easily get into the *Bega* wheat business as planned as they have deep association with vegetables, but there is an encouraging start," he noted.

Ousman further stated that the state is benefiting from access to market, tourism activities, and job creation through utilizing its proximity to Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Arba Minch, Wolayeta Sodo, Jima, and Adama cities.

"However, we are left with a lot of assignments so as to ensure sustainable benefit of residents through utilizing proper and legal system of water resources management," he expressed.

AALA stepping up efforts towards urban transformation

BY EYUEL KIFLU

ADDIS ABABA- Over 42,000 leaders had received training and carried out over 55 scientific research projects, The Addis Ababa Leadership Academy (AALA) disclosed.

The AALA held its 4th National Research Conference yesterday under the theme: "Research for Urban Transformation and Digitalization." The event showcased the academy's efforts to empower qualified leaders and drive urban development through cutting-edge research.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopia Herald* Gedy Desta (PhD), one of the research presenters, the smart city approach is instrumental in solving the multifaceted challenges faced by cities, ranging from economic issues like poverty and unemployment to service sector concerns such as education, health, and environmental problems.

"To address these pressing issues, it is necessary to implement smart city initiatives," Desta emphasized.

The AALA President Tassew Gebre (PhD) on his part highlighted the importance of research-backed initiatives to empower qualified leaders.

"The results of the research conducted by the academy have significantly contributed to the effectiveness of various institutions," Tassew said.

He stressed the need to transfer these research findings into tangible action, calling on all stakeholders to play their part in this endeavor.

The conference featured the presentation and discussion of five research works, showcasing the academy's dedication to driving urban transformation and digitalization.

The Amhara State Leadership Academy Vice President Chuchu Alebachew (PhD) also shared his insights, stating that the institution has conducted parallel studies to contribute to the broader efforts in this domain.

He added that he learned about the importance of follow-up for researches and its implementation from the conference.

The event was attended by senior officials from the city administration, heads of educational and research institutes, and other key stakeholders, underscoring the collaborative nature of the endeavor.

Association urges government to overcome PwDs challenges

BY FIKADU BELAY

ADDIS ABABA- Ethiopian National Association of the Deafblind has urged the government to support the participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), especially the deaf-blindness, in national affairs.

Association Director Roman Mesfin, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the PwDs should be allowed to actively participate in various national issues and should be treated without discrimination when accessing services.

The Association is working to create a dedicated forum in parliament where people with disabilities can voice their concerns and contribute to policymaking, she said.

She highlighted the unique challenges faced by the deafblind community, including cognitive delays in speech and language development, poor academic performance, inadequate psychological support, and high levels of stress.

"To properly address the needs of the hearing impaired, the government must expand access to comprehensive medical facilities that can accurately diagnose and treat ear-related issues," she urged.

Roman also emphasized the importance of including the deafblind and other PwDs in finding solutions to the problems they face in the law, education, and creative sectors. "While we have had some representation in the National Dialogue Commission, the lack of translators remains a significant barrier. May the government could provide financial support for translation services, it would greatly improve our ability to participate," she added.

The Association's call for greater



government support and inclusion of the disabled community in national affairs is a crucial step towards achieving true equality and empowerment for PwDs in Ethiopia.

Inclusive Women and Social Affairs Executive Director with the Ministry of Health, Fatuma Seid on her part stated that currently there is no comprehensive hearing screening service for infants available across Ethiopia.

To address this issue, she explained that the Ministry is working to construct rehabilitation center and expand access to

these critical services nationwide.

"To solve the problem in all areas, we are focused on supplementing the trained manpower and capacity building in the medical service, as well as investing in medical equipment and resources," she said.

She noted that her Ministry is collaborating closely with various stakeholders, including local and international partners, to develop and implement a sustainable plan to resolve the challenges the entire PwDs encounter across the country.

Editorial

A fructifying diplomacy

Regarding diplomatic chemistry, Ethiopia, displaying a huge population wealth dominated by the youth, stands shoulder high for its proximity to the Middle East and Europe. Its Geopolitical advantage affords it the allure to be chosen as a bridge between Africa, Europe, Asia, and beyond. Its flag bearer Ethiopian plying the global sky has lent impetus to its desirability as a bridge as well as a destination when it comes to investment, trade, tourism, transport, and economic relationships.

The situation mentioned above has entitled the country to a springboard role for the fructification of its endeavors in the socioeconomic and political spheres.

The country is also endowed with a favorable climate, inexpensive labor, an easily trainable workforce as well as abundant natural wealth begging for harnessing tasks.

Among the virtues that let the country privileged treatments are found the hospitality of its people on top of its disposition to common growth joining hands and hearts.

Mindful of this fact various heads of state, diplomats, development partners, and entrepreneurs are inclined to strike a deal with Ethiopia to let the ball of multi-pronged development rolling. This move, picking steam by the day, dates back to the inception of the country's diplomatic journey. Cognizant of the investment potentials and alternatives of the country, preferring a win-win approach many developed countries are inking agreements of common moves of growth in areas of technology, logistics, transport, and agriculture.

The recent visit of Ethiopia's PM to the Far East testifies to Ethiopia's desire to take its economic status to a higher level and to enjoy tangible perks from its thrust in the economic plane.

In the Korean African Summit, both parties held discussions both in joint and individually. Ethiopia, on its part, had held various discussions with higher officials of South Korea. PM Abiy Ahmed had discussed this with his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk Yeol. The two countries had a relationship that spans 6 decades have agreed to consolidate their socioeconomic relationship.

Finance, trade, investment, technology, and agriculture are the main areas where the countries want to cement their relationship. As part of the bid to solidify economic ties, during PM Abiy stay in South Korea, Ethiopia, and Korea have signed a one billion USD Financing Framework Agreement. This agreement zeroed in on infrastructure, science, technology, capacity development, health as well as urban development. The Agreement will be implemented in the coming four years.

In PM Abiy's stay in Singapore the two countries have reflected on their 55-year old relationship. The Singapore investors have shown a disposition to come to Ethiopia and widely participate in the agriculture, logistics, and electric maintenance sectors.

Ethiopia is a gate to Africa to click with Far East countries. It is not hard to surmise therefore the significant role it plays in bringing Africa and the Far East Countries.

Ethiopia and Singapore are showing a willingness to forge relationships in transport, connectivity, digitalization, and capacity building down the road. Such a type of relation that precluded no party plays quite a role in strengthening Ethiopia's connectivity role between the above-mentioned continents.

The diplomatic relationship aiming at working cooperatively in so far as for common profit must be pursued inexorably in different areas of the globe too. As long as the country optimizes its return in a cautious and win-win move it will press ahead with its set objective of buttressing the political, economic and social sectors.



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The Ethiopian Herald

Opinion

Mainstreaming green development for a fruitful outcome

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

Home to 120 million people, Ethiopia is one of the world's most drought-prone countries. It has a high degree of vulnerability to hydro-meteorological hazards and natural disasters. Dependence on sectors that are climate change sensitive such as rain-fed agriculture, water, tourism, and forestry as well as a high level of poverty are the main factors that exacerbate Ethiopia's vulnerability.

Therefore Ethiopia has to take a well-planned, long-term initiative to address its vulnerability to climate change and its consequences. In addition to this, such initiative should be implemented with the joint efforts of the government, private sector and humanitarian or social foundations.

One of the large-scale and well-organized environmental protection and green development initiatives is the Green Legacy Initiative. It is a participatory and continuous program that is implemented across the nation every year.

Ethiopia developed the Green Legacy plan years ago, outlining the nation's long-term commitment to addressing environmental concerns and the impacts of climate change. Implementing this strategy has greatly benefited Ethiopia, as it not only helps mitigate climate change effects but also creates job opportunities, especially for young people.

It is evident to all that supporting this initiative economically and socially is crucial for its success. The government has already approved the plan and is putting significant effort into its execution. To break free from dependency and pave the way for prosperity, all Ethiopians must increase their contributions to the national Green Development Strategy.

Through tree planting, Ethiopia has made a significant contribution to reducing desertification and flooding while instilling a culture of environmental protection among its people. The ongoing National Green Legacy program aims to involve all communities in environmental preservation efforts.

The annual tree-planting program has become a highly anticipated event in Ethiopia, symbolizing unity and cooperation towards sustainable prosperity. Last year, the country set a record by planting 500 million tree seedlings in a single day, making Ethiopia a more habitable place for all citizens.

This year, preparations are underway for the implementation of the National Green Legacy Initiative nationwide. The initiative aims to preserve natural resources, combat climate change effects, support agriculture, and prevent disasters. By showcasing these efforts, Ethiopia's media outlets play a crucial role in promoting the nation's internationally recognized green legacy and its impact on climate change mitigation globally.

All Ethiopians need to strengthen contributions towards the successful implementation of the national green development strategy, which is a viable tool to pull the nation out of the social psychology of dependence and pave the way towards national prosperity.

The ongoing national green legacy agenda has been nurturing the culture of environmental protection among Ethiopians, in addition to its vast contribution to mitigating desertification and flooding by planting trees.

The country is engaged in preparing and planting billions of tree seedlings to prevent the devastating effects of floods and desertification as strategies of environmental protection by mobilizing all communities. Hence, the launching of the tree planting program has become a day that all Ethiopians look forward to happening every year.

After the inception of the national reform program and following the exemplary role played by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, regional governments and city administrations have come together to make the issue of the national green legacy initiative a hub of convergence and point of intersection.

The strategy has become instrumental in effectively detesting dependency and working towards sustained national prosperity under the theme "Let us Plant Today for Tomorrow," depicting and fostering unity on our common agenda with steadfastness and cooperation in planting 500 million tree seedlings in a single day last year, setting a global record for the country in building a livable Ethiopia for all citizens.

A wide range of preparations and programs are underway this year to implement the National Green Legacy Initiative at the national level.

The Green Legacy Initiative aims at transferring a preferable green ecosystem to the coming generation, retaining and using our natural resources, to effectively combat the effects of climate change, promoting the agricultural sector on crop and livestock production, preventing sporadic floods, and other related natural and manmade calamities. The Initiative will enhance patriotic self-reliance and prevent dependency syndrome.

The media houses play a greater role in further promoting Ethiopia's globally recognized green legacy initiative and the role the country is playing at the international and regional level in curbing the effects of climate change by setting a practical example for the neighbouring countries and nations across the world.

Over the last few years, the green legacy strategy and its implementation have given Ethiopia grace in the eyes of the world. To strengthen the implementation of the strategy, all stakeholders should play their part.

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

Accessing seaport eases importing research inputs: HU

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

HARAMAYA - Ethiopia's efforts to get access to the sea and alternative port ensures quality education through facilitating research inputs importation, Haramaya University (HU) said.

Haramaya University President Jemal Yousuf (PhD) told *The Ethiopian Herald* that responding to Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea would assist the Horn countries in solving regional problems through research and other activities that will influence the area.

According to him, Universities that are located in the eastern part of the country, particularly Haramaya University, do problem-solving research, technology

transfer, and community engagement activities using their limited resources.

As a result, he pointed out that Ethiopia's efforts to get a port in the eastern part of the country will enable the university to expand its work and jointly develop problem-solving and impactful research across the Horn countries.

The President noted that since its inception, the university has invited internationally renowned scholars and professors, and researchers to undertake research.

Nonetheless, agricultural, health, and community service resources needed in research are taking longer time to arrive, which has had a detrimental influence on university-based research, he added.

Hence, Ethiopia's present endeavors to get

access to the sea and a port will thus assist Haramaya University and other comparable institutions in inviting international researchers and academics to undertake research, either alone or in collaboration, and so on, he clarified.

Furthermore, the universities located in the eastern part of the country have easy access to research resources required for teaching and research. It is also critical to lower the cost of research activities, as universities import research inputs on time and at a reasonable cost. This, in turn, helps the country assure high-quality education, he said.

He also stated that having access to the sea and a port will be critical for the resources that were imported into the country for research purposes to be returned overseas



to repair, refresh, and replace parts that need to be replaced, among other things.

Gov't turns...

and campaign-based approach that failed to control the problem.

Noting the Gurage people's reliance on the enset crop, Lacha indicated that the administration has also attached sustained focus to curtail the spread of the disease that has so far caused immense damage to the enset crop.

Also, attempts have been made to enhance the public's awareness of preventive mechanisms that include sanitary measures, burning the affected tree, and avoiding sharing of the farming tools.

"We have also given prime attention to translate enset-related research into reality and to mobilize the public to the disease control."

From the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) Mekuria Tadesse (PhD)

stated that the integration of enset-related researches would have pivotal importance to the disease that has put the livelihoods of over 20 million Ethiopians in danger.

"Owing to its higher nutritional value and drought resistance capacity, the government's attention and follow-up for the enset crop is critical."

Sharing the above rationale, the Wolkite Agricultural Center Director Betel Neker said that academicians have come to consensus to bring the enset-related research into one center to get better results in controlling the bacterial-wilt disease.

the Addis Ababa University Microbial, Cellular, and Molecular Biology Prof. Tesfaye Alemu (PhD) emphasized the multidisciplinary approach to deal with the bacterial-wilt enset disease.

Prof. Tesfaye further highlighted that the government needs to put in place a

stricter mechanism for the importation of improved seeds to curtail future damage in local crops. "It is also crucial to form a quarantine system to prevent the bacterial-wilt enset disease and related challenges. Equal attention should also be given to certify imported seeds."

The government is expected to consider enset among strategic commodities and attach significant attention to reverse the disease's impact in the farming community, the researcher remarked.

According to Mekuria (PhD), some four million USD was secured from exporting enset and enset derivatives to the global market in eight months of the current fiscal year.

The field visit and panel discussion on bacterial-wilt enset disease is organized by the EIAR in partnership with the Wolkite Agricultural Center.

Ministry's move...

said that food safety measures would have a paramount significance to protect consumer health and promote export trades.

He further underlined that food security exists when the people in all walks of life consistently have the physical, social and monetary access to satisfactory, safe and nutritious nourishment that meet their dietary needs for a functioning and wellbeing life.

Thus, it is highly crucial to put well-coordinated efforts and employ strategic approaches to address the effects of food safety and quality problems of various products that occur due to poor infrastructure, management systems among many potential limiting factors at the required level, he underscored.

According to him, food contamination is impacting public health in different ways which include suppressing immunity, rural incomes, food supply chain and many others.

Familiarizing food safety, nutrition and food security, Wubshet pointed out that as the recent data indicated the country lost above 700 million USD due to food safety problems.

He said: "Apart from increasing export values, this strategy is also important to improve food and nutrition security, and reduce incidents of foodborne illnesses. It also helps reduce trade barriers by institutionalizing the food safety and quality promotion, management and control systems of primary agricultural produce throughout the country from 2024 to 2030."

It was learnt that the planned budget for the successful implementation of this strategy requires about 248 million USD. Accordingly, he reiterated that the government, private sectors, development partners and other institutions have a greater contribution towards implementing the strategy successfully.

Ethiopia,

conducted extensive research and collaborated with

partners worldwide to determine the most important factors in helping countries develop and achieve not only equality but also prosperity for all citizens.

These cooperation activities involve placing women and girls at the center of cooperation efforts, he said.

Referring to the new 65 million CAD project, which is designed to enhance the dignity and rights of women and girls, which is one of the largest projects Canada has ever had in Ethiopia, the Ambassador emphasized understanding how women and girls can drive societies and communities forward, Canada ensures that all supported initiatives have

a feminist interpretation and orientation to strengthen gender equality, including addressing sexual and gender-based violence and supporting survivors of these human rights violations.

According to the Ambassador, the project with UNFPA is the largest and longest project Canada has ever had in Ethiopia.

It is expected to be a game-changer in providing women survivors of GBV and sexual violence with better access to treatment in one-stop centers and safe houses across the country, he said, adding prevention and protection efforts will also be prioritized to eliminate gender and sexual-based violence.

The government of Ethiopia is a strong partner in eradicating these issues in the country, and positive outcomes are

anticipated over the next seven years, according to Tabah.

Addressing gender-based violence necessitates a commitment from all members of society to protect women and girls and uphold their dignity. "I urge all men in Ethiopia to refrain from violence against women. Additionally, community organizations, health centers, and government entities should raise awareness about these challenges and mobilize action to eliminate gender-based violence in Ethiopia," he said.

Canada supports every state in Ethiopia with international assistance projects that focus on enhancing gender equality and promoting the prosperity and economic growth of all Ethiopians, the Ambassador added.

Opinion

Reclaiming ourselves and our radical roots: Engaging freedom as never a final fact

MAULANA KARENGA (PhD)

Our people came into being in the midst of righteous and relentless liberating struggle, and there is a radical history to know and honor here. In this struggle, we remolded and remade ourselves through a triple resistance of opposition, affirmation and aspiration. We opposed our enslavement at every site possible through cultural resistance, day-to-day resistance, abolitionism, emigrationism and armed struggle. We affirmed our humanity in the most inhumane context, practicing as best we could, our own unique, and equally valid and valuable way of being human in the world, being African, being Black.

And we aspired in thought and practice to reclaim our freedom and ourselves, and our own distinct and dignity-affirming sense of ourselves. And although the enslavers outlawed our learning, our reading and writing, we found ways to achieve the knowledge and in less than a century out of the Holocaust of enslavement, we created a world status literature second to none in its creativity and special message and meaning to us and the world.

And we became a new nation, African Americans, new Africans, as Haji Malcolm taught, “a nation within a nation,” a distinct people within a multicultural country. And what we brought to the US was vibrant, vital and transformative in spite of the callous and cold-blooded genocidal campaigns against us, physically and culturally.

We put forth a radical refusal to be defeated, dispirited or diverted from this sacred struggle. Moreover, we turned the enslaving religion the oppressor taught into a liberating spirituality and ethics of liberation. We transformed our groans and grief, our faith, hope, happiness and aspirations into songs and dances of reaffirmation, resilience and resistance. And were fashioned mute matter into an art and literature that spoke of love, life, work and struggle and of a creativity, sensitivity, soulfulness and beauty born of African memories of freedom, lived and living experiences and aspirations of reclaiming ourselves, our freedom and our future.

It was an earnest and constantly endangered struggle to be ourselves and free ourselves from the brutish, soul bruising and anti-life system, in which we were oppressed, objectified and degraded. Thus, we had no illusions about the perverse conception of humanity and human life of that/this system with its insatiable and warped will to dominate, dehumanize and claim divine sanction for the various forms of savagery conjured up and imposed on us and other vulnerable peoples.

In the midst of the Holocaust of enslavement and during the savagery of segregation, our vision of a just and good society was not to simply assume the identity, ideals and pathologically oppressive practices of our oppressor against the devalued and vulnerable. It was about breaking chains, repairing and rebuilding lives, radical social change and reclaiming freedom and justice as natural rights and needful responsibilities of every human being.

It is about constantly reconsidering the question of being human in the world, reimagining a whole new world and future and building them in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways, ways worthy of the name and history of being African and human in the world

We cannot and do not need to deny the presence of a varied range of political thought and practice among us in the midst of our struggle for liberation. But at the core of concern and commitment of our Black Liberation Movement was a shared aspiration and ongoing struggle of reclaiming our freedom as a people. And this freedom was to be achieved not by a mythical and manipulated “melting pot” ideal and illusion which asked us to lose ourselves in the acidic witches-and-warlocks brew of assimilation in hopes of gaining a new identity and respect as an anonymous American ethnic person or people.

Rather, it was a commitment to be ourselves in self-defining, self-determining and dignity-affirming ways without punishment, penalty or oppression. And it was to free ourselves so we could be ourselves, knowing full well we couldn’t free ourselves if we wouldn’t be ourselves; and we couldn’t fully be ourselves unless and until we fully free ourselves. And so, we strove and struggled to push this place called America beyond its history of unfreedom, injustice and oppression.

Yet in spite of the impressive heaviness of this history, we are, especially now, vulnerable to losing our way, settling for less than who we are and what we deserve, submitting to the seductive and suppressive power of the dominant society and shamelessly forgetting and forsaking the lessons of life, work and struggle taught by our ancestors and elders, the way openers, the keepers of the faith, the all-seasons servants and soldiers for a new society and world.

Moreover, we might have lapses of memory about who we are in this confusion coded context of misinformation, disinformation and lying as a way of life. And thus, we might not have an accurate and rightfully informed conception of ourselves and might adopt narrow notions of our identity and ethical obligations as African people; instead of self-consciously embracing our ancient African moral imperative to bear witness to truth and set the scales of justice in their proper place especially among the voiceless, vulnerable, devalued and oppressed.

Also, we might see ourselves as having no relationship to the suffering, oppression and resistance of the people of Palestine or other places, or even the peoples of Haiti and Sudan or Congo, and other Africans. After all, as Haji Malcolm explains, if you are not vigilant and rightfully resistant, media propaganda can make you see your own people as strangers, your friends and allies as enemies, and your enemies as allies and friends.

Indeed, we might see ourselves through the logic and language of the dominant society simply as autonomous individuals with rightful concern only for ourselves and those we choose for various small and self-interested reasons. And thus, we forget or determine it is no longer tenable or reasonable to remember Nana Anna Julia Cooper’s teaching that we must and do “take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life and the unnaturalness and injustice of all favoritisms” of any and all kinds.

Or we might fly the tattered flag of a mindless and mimicking patriotism of a racist, ranting, untutored and untethered Trump or a Biden, complicit and cooperative in the [...] genocide of [innocent] [...] people, constantly adjusting his redline of claimed concern as the killing fields in Palestine expand each day with the dead, dismembered, and starved and starving bodies of innocent and unarmed children, women and men, grievously unable to defend themselves.

Nana Martin Luther King warned us against the gross immorality of the betrayal of silence and complicity in the face of an unjust war against the vulnerable and devalued, and its waste of lives and resources better used for human good. And let’s remember too Nana Fannie Lou Hamer’s teaching that freedom requires that we “fight every step of the way.” For there is no easy walk or way to freedom. Indeed, it is born, midwived and brought into being in the womb of hard work, service, sacrifice and ceaseless struggle.

Thus, let us remember in this pivotal point in history to recommit ourselves to struggle not only to achieve every measure of freedom and justice possible in our time, but also to teach and demonstrate the quest and commitment to constantly expand the realm of good and possibilities in society and the world. I think here of the ancient Egyptian Kawaida Maatian moral obligation to constantly extend the existent good and to repair, renew and remake the world and ourselves, and the ancient Yoruba Ifa moral imperative to constantly bring and increase good in the world.

And I link this ethical understanding to Nana A. Philip Randolph’s beautiful teaching about the righteous and relentless everlasting struggle for freedom and justice. He says, “Freedom is never granted; it is won. Justice is never given; it is extracted. Freedom and justice must be struggled for by the oppressed of all lands and races, and the struggle must be continuous. For freedom is never a final fact, but a constant process of higher and higher levels of human social, economic, political and religious relationships.”

Indeed, it is about constantly reconsidering the question of being human in the world, reimagining a whole new world and future and building them in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways, ways worthy of the name and history of being African and human in the world.

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture and Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis, www.MaulanaKarenga.org; www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.Us-Organization.org.

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

Business & Economy

Missing the bull's eye: Sales funnel leakage in flower export sub sector

BY MEKONNEN SOLOMON

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Ethiopia has been trying to diversify its export base with a view to generate new sources of foreign currency and reducing its exposure to price volatility that characterizes international markets. Ornamental and cut Flowers farming have become an important venture of agricultural investment to meet export needs of the country since 1982. For the last two decades, floriculture industry in Ethiopia has become a fast-growing export business and counted as an important foreign trade sub sector next to coffee.

The attainment of this growth is mainly attributed by export incentive policy measure taken by the government to promote and encourage private sector to engage in flower export business. Among these incentives; easy access to rural and urban agricultural land with least possible rental rate, exemption of income tax up to five years, duty free importation of equipment's, vehicles, building materials, irrigation set and machinery, easy access to loan, and other public utilities, duty free importation of raw materials etc are the most important ones. As a result, around 120 investors have been flowing into floriculture sub sector to produce flower for export for the last three decades.

Despite considerable physical and non-physical incentives were given to private sector to encourage flower export in Ethiopia, quite a number of flower exporter companies are now inclined to sale substantial volume of their flower product to domestic market or local market.

Today, in many corners of Addis Ababa and other main towns of different regions, large number of Flower Gift Shops have become the phenomenon and the most vibrant market place offering a great deal of Flower Bucketing Service.

The principal source of flower for these gift shops are commercial farms that are originated from the existing clusters namely from Holeta, Bishoftu, Sebeta, Ejere, Wolisso, Welkitie, Sendafa and Bahir Dar. In addition to these, after utilizing export incentives, it is not infrequent where some of the flower producing and exporting farms have gradually changed their projects' orientation partly from foreign market to home market like propagation and supply of fruits and vegetables seedling (Avocado, Onion, Garlic, Tomato etc. seeds and seedlings to home market)

This trend and leakage have a wide implication on opportunity of the country to diversify its agricultural products and a profound impact on effectiveness of export incentive. As a result, many people viewed this resource diversion as game of Missing the Bull's Eye.

The concern of this incentive diversion in other sectors was also addressed on 22nd Conference the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts held in Kigali, Rwanda few years ago, under the theme:



Ethiopia's flower export needs attention

'Implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area in Eastern Africa: from Vision to Action'. On this important conference, Mulu Gebreyesus (PhD), Senior Research Fellow of Ethiopian Development Research Institute, stated state; "Despite various export incentives and support programs, companies have become increasingly interested in the domestic market sales rather than export market."

Like Coffee, the Ethiopian law neither prohibits the sale of export-quality flower to local market nor tightly controlled the proportion of allowable sale for export and domestic purpose under existing jurisdiction. The current pressing question raised by some observers of this trend is how long will the government continue its commitment to incentivize flower export while the flower growers have an appetite to supply flower to local market without any legal limit?

Many Flower producers and exporters often expressed that they do not have any desire to supply flowers to local market. Local market supply is considered by some companies as "throwing good money after bad". According to some commercial flower farm managers, the type of flowers supplied to local market are inferior and low in product quality, non-exportable type, very short vase life, poor grade, and indeed, in very low volume which otherwise disposed or composed. The question is if that is the case, why flower gift shops are now expanding, growing vigorously and becoming the prosperous business venture in main towns of the country?

People often have heated discussions about whether the flower export is in downturn. How can we tell? Many people argue that it the rise of local demand the corresponding price reward offered by buyers are factors that make farms to supply and sale their exportable product to local market. According to this argument, local market

for flower is now becoming more lucrative and attractive for growers because of price reward.

On the contrary, many other people argue that it is due to inefficiency or failure of farms to produce and supply quality of flower to Global market that drive them to sale low grade product to the local market. This inefficiency is expressed by failure of farms to look and diversify new market; lack of skill in identifying the right customers and their current needs; lack of good communication with customers; poor product timing; lack of market information and knowledge about different market channels; poor pricing strategy and lag of their business in adopting digital marketing and e-commerce.

At macroeconomic level, there are several intuitive arguments that can explain a negative relationship between domestic demand and exports. One possible reason is related to the demand side. In particular, when domestic demand is growing, the associated inflationary pressures can lead to a decline of the price competitiveness of exports. There are also arguments from the supply side.

On the one hand, during the business cycle, the availability of resources for the exporting sector is affected, which can influence the export performance. Alternatively, in the presence of very different developments for domestic and foreign markets, investment will be most probably oriented to activities that draw more heavily on the most dynamic market.

As many studies revealed, export performance is modeled as a function of the foreign demand for a country's product outputs and a country's price competitiveness indicator. The foreign demand is proxied by the evolution of imports in the trade partners and its relative evolution with regard to exports is used as a measure of market share expansions.

The relative price advantage of a country over its competitors is often captured by the real exchange rate. In fact, it is likely that domestic conditions influence firm's willingness or ability to supply exports. In a context of high domestic demand pressure, firms will work at full capacity and will not be able to follow, in the short-run, external demand increases.

In contrast, during a domestic downturn, firms will be able to allocate more resources to exports. In other words, in periods of slacking domestic demand firms try to compensate for the decline in domestic sales through increased efforts to export while in boom period's production can be mainly sold on the domestic market.

In Ethiopia, flowers are now visually appealing and come in a wide range of colors, shapes, and sizes in many flowers gift shop. Their beauty can evoke positive emotions for many people and start to associate the flower with different sentiments, such as positive image, attractions, love, friendship, gratitude, and sympathy. Different people consider flower as symbole of growth, renewal, and the cycle of life. For some, being around flowers meant feel more connected to nature and grounded.

Now, we have two choices on issue of our flower business. One is to emphasis on local market sales and the other one is to focus on export market. For me, it is a choice of joy and diet under Ethiopians Context. When deciding between these kinds of two alternatives, we should be careful not to miss the bull's eye.

The preferred alternative always need to have:- no opportunity costs or forgone output, greater reward than the other alternatives, less expensive, greater incremental wealth than the other alternatives. Unless some measure is taken soon, funnel leakage in supply chain of flower business might end with missed opportunity.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia harnessing renewable energy to contribute to global de-carbonization efforts

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia is on the cusp of an energy revolution. Long reliant on traditional sources, the country is now embracing the transformative power of renewable energy, ushering in a new era of sustainable development.

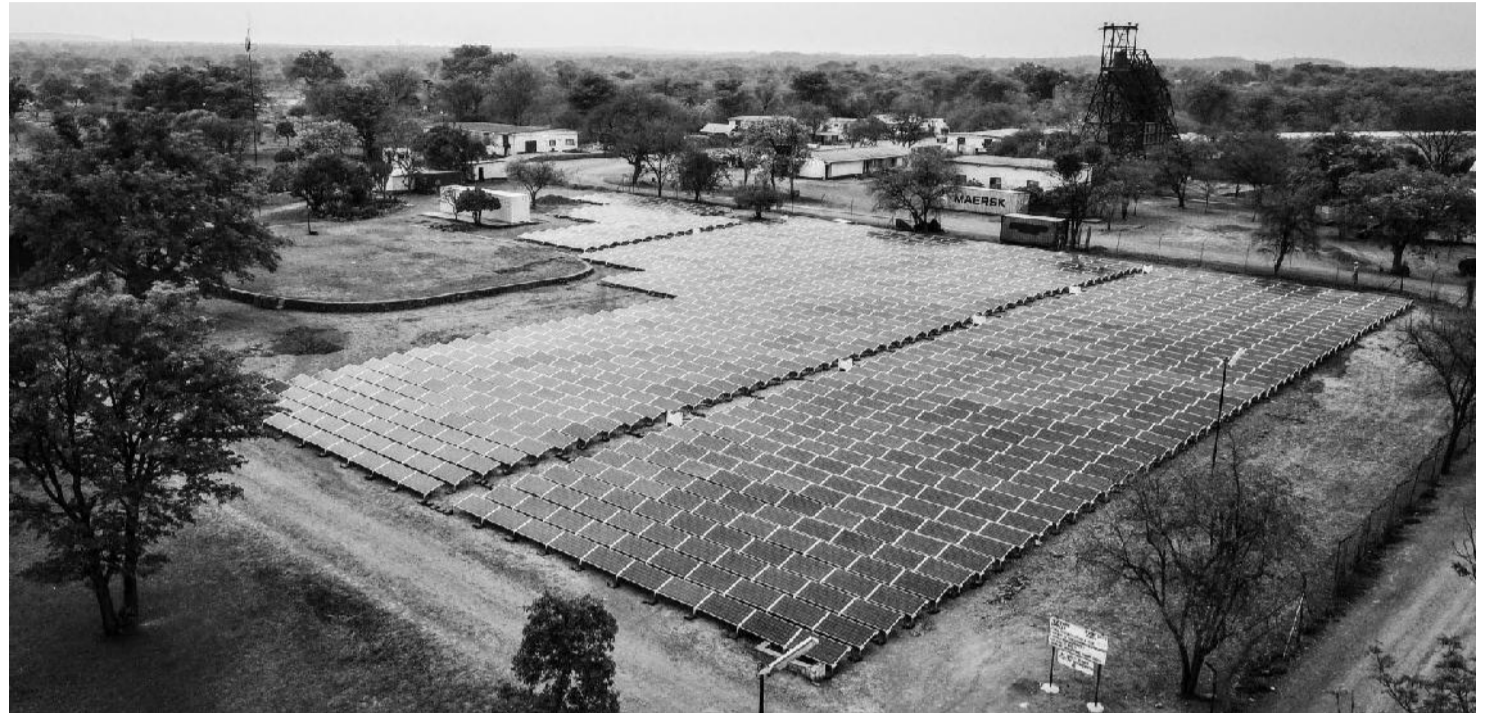
Blessed with an abundance of untapped renewable resources, Ethiopia is poised to harness the immense potential of solar, wind, and hydropower. The country's strategic location near the equator grants it access to ample sunshine, while its diverse terrain offers prime conditions for wind farms and sprawling hydroelectric projects. This wealth of natural assets has not gone unnoticed, as the Ethiopian government has made renewable energy a national priority, investing heavily in infrastructure and incentivizing private sector engagement.

According to the reports, Ethiopia's hydropower resources are particularly notable, with an estimated potential of over 45,000 MW, of which only around 5% has been developed so far. Major hydroelectric projects like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam are harnessing this vast hydropower capacity. The country also has significant geothermal energy potential, estimated at 10,000 MW, with plans to develop this resource to generate electricity and provide direct heat. Meanwhile, solar and wind power are increasingly being deployed, with the government setting targets to install over 7,000 MW of solar and 5,000 MW of wind by 2030.

The benefits of this shift are manifold. By reducing the nation's carbon footprint and lessening its dependence on fossil fuels, Ethiopia is charting a course toward energy independence and environmental stewardship. Moreover, the renewable energy sector has emerged as a robust job creator, empowering local communities and fostering economic growth. As the country continues to make strides in this arena, the ramifications will be felt far beyond its borders, serving as a shining example of how developing nations can leapfrog traditional energy models in pursuit of a greener, more resilient future.

The Executive Energy Advisor of the Minister at the Ministry of Water and Energy, Gosaye Mengste, stated that it provided an update on the country's renewable energy initiatives. This push towards sustainable energy is being driven by the government's focus on promoting projects that improve the social and economic development of communities across the country, he stated.

Ethiopia is making significant strides in expanding its renewable energy capacity, with plans to increase the number of projects from 11 to over 200 in the coming years, he said. Ethiopian Electricity Service, along with its stakeholders, is making concerted efforts to expand electricity access across the country. As part of this initiative, they are working on more than 200 rural towns



By reducing the nation's carbon footprint and lessening its dependence on fossil fuels, Ethiopia is charting a course toward energy independence and environmental stewardship

that are located far from the main grid, he noted.

To enable these remote communities to benefit from electricity, the institute has designed and implemented 25 solar mini-grid projects. These mini-grid systems will provide electricity to the rural towns that are not connected to the main power grid, he mentioned.

According to the Ethiopian Electricity Utility (EEU) data shows that the national electrification program aims to achieve 65% grid-connected electricity users and 35% alternative energy users. The program, collaboration between the institution and private organizations, is working to bring electricity to over 200 remote rural towns.

The total budget for this project is 400 million USD, with the primary objective of providing economic benefits and improving

the living conditions of people residing in areas distant from the main grid, based on the EEU reports.

The EEU Reports mentioned that once implemented, the project will facilitate knowledge transfer and create widespread employment opportunities. Additionally, it will connect 145,169 new customers to the electricity network. The project entails the construction of 8 MW of total generating capacity, 68.7 km of medium-voltage lines, and 233.3 km of low-voltage lines.

Mengste mentioned that the access to these clean energy sources will enable the proliferation of solar technologies that can increase productivity, modernize energy use, and support critical services like healthcare and education, especially in rural areas.

Indeed, many of the existing 11 renewable energy projects have already begun to transform communities; he explained that these projects are providing enough electricity to power health centers and schools, playing a vital role in increasing the efficiency of small manufacturing industries as well.

However, Mengste acknowledged that the country's energy demands continue to outpace the government's capacity to meet them through its own projects.

The demand for energy in the country is high, and it is not possible to meet the needs of society with projects carried out by the government alone, he said. "That is why we will be working in closer cooperation with private institutions engaged in the renewable energy sector to make these technologies accessible to everyone."

Advisory of Presize Ethiopia Company, General Manager, Henok Asefa, on his part discussed how his firm is leveraging renewable energy solutions to drive economic growth and technological excellence across the country.

It is difficult to make Ethiopia Electricity Utility available only through large,

centralized power projects in Ethiopia, so it is necessary to utilize other renewable energy options, he noted. That is why we are focused on expanding access to alternative technologies that can provide energy to rural communities and support critical sectors like healthcare and agriculture, he said.

Henok mentioned that his company is providing solar-powered exploiting machines to farmers and smallholders around Bishoftu, as well as spreading technologies that help modernize and facilitate irrigation development in the agriculture sector and also expanding this drift in the Amhara region.

Adoption of solar-powered technologies will help produce large quantities of products at low cost, particularly in the country's lowland areas, he noted. "We expect these alternative energy solutions to play a crucial role in accelerating economic growth and technological progress in Ethiopia."

While the government's focus on renewable energy is a positive step, he emphasized that the participation of the private sector is also essential. The government is not the only actor at this time - the private sector has an important role to play in strengthening and expanding alternative technologies for electricity supply, he said.

Indeed, the combination of government-led projects and private sector innovation appears to be the key to unlocking Ethiopia's renewable energy potential. Mengste expressed optimism about the country's future in this regard, stating that the number of renewable energy initiatives will increase significantly in the coming years.

As Ethiopia continues to prioritize renewable energy, the benefits are expected to ripple across the country's social and economic landscape. By harnessing the power of the sun and other clean sources, the nation is poised to provide more equitable access to energy, drive sustainable development, and position itself as a leader in the global transition to a greener future.

Art & Culture

Festivals and celebrations over, bracing for a warmer rainy season

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

This columnist is not a weatherman but as climate change has become a household name, he is indeed interested and sometimes alarmed how Ethiopia's climate is undergoing a sharp change from cold and moderate to warm. Many places, localities, regions, and towns that were known as having temperate climates are now increasingly assuming arid and hot features. Addis Ababa itself is not spared from the impending climatic calamity. If allowed to continue at this pace temperatures might continue to rise and change the Ethiopia capital into one of the hottest spots in Africa.

How many of us have noticed how the month of Ginbot or May was unusually hot even by Addis Ababa's standards? Drive the short distance south of Addis and when you reach the small town of Dukem, you feel as if you have reached Dire Dawa as the heat abruptly raises breathing becomes labored and you often reach for your water bottle. You start to feel the heat as soon as you reach Kaliti, which is now a booming district with a new road that is serving as the main gateway to the south of the country.

According to the Ethiopian calendar, the month of Ginbot or May on the Gregorian calendar, is a time of preparation for the next three months of rain and shine not because we are going to go through something remotely resembling the European winter, but because the following month will usher in the season of farming and tough work on the farms. As the first raindrops announce the coming of the rainy season and the harvest that will only come after four months of arduous work in the farms and fields.

The two months that followed the big fasting season of Lent are usually allocated for feasts and festivals. Most of the weddings take place during this interval. There are at least two reasons for these weddings to take place at this particular time. First, the fasting season is over, and people are free to enjoy their much-loved meat and butter dishes they wash down with strong liquors. In Ethiopian culture, both in towns and the countryside, a wedding ceremony without meat and butter is not only unthinkable but it is considered anathema. That is why weddings have to be postponed until the fasting season is over. The second reason why most weddings take place during the two months of Ginbot and Sene (April and May) is that the rainy season is not considered the most ideal time for weddings to take place. In the countryside in particular, most people are busy with farming and resources are so scarce that nobody thinks about organizing weddings and festivals that are expensive by Ethiopian standards.

What is amazing about Ethiopian culture

What is amazing about Ethiopian culture is that the year is divided between a season of work, a season of fun and a season of rest

is that the year is divided between a season of work, a season of fun and a season of rest. This did not come by decree or by consensus. Nature itself has allocated the time of the year in such a way that it reflects the cultures and ways of life of the people. The rainy season is of course the time for work as most people live in the countryside and are engaged in farming activities. The time for fun comes both after September or the New Year followed by a time for rest from farm work and other activities. Most workers take their leave after September. The time for fun also comes after the end of the fasting season although it lasts for a relatively short time.

I guess that nowadays, the rainy season may not look and feel like the "old" rainy season, a generation or two back when people spent days and nights listening to the incessant showers that beat their roofs and prevented them from going out. The old rainy season was famous or infamous for the terrible cold that accompanied it and people were buying additional blankets to ward off the biting cold of the nights. The streets of Addis looked more like the Italian city of Venice without the boats floating on the lake. Addis is now enjoying better roads but most of them have no modern sewerage systems and as soon as the rain starts to fall, they turn into rivers. As the little drainages are clogged, accumulated garbage tends to obstruct the flow of traffic and may lead to fatal accidents.

Amid all the discomfort, the rainy season in Addis has also its particular charm for at least two events. First, it's the graduation season as hundreds of thousands of students leave high school or college and the mood around campuses is one of relief if not celebration. Hard-working and successful students may miss the disruption or end of campus life, but their less enthusiastic peers may feel like they are released from prison despite the farewell parties that accompany graduation time.

The second social event that gives Addis a more vibrant allure is that the rainy season is generally considered the season of book publishing, book reading, and book business. The season is regarded as the best time for reading because the rains prevent people from going outside and even create the mood for staying in bed with a good book. As schools close their doors, most students have nowhere else to go and are believed to visit public libraries and places of culture. Of course, there are other recreational or educational outlets these days as technology has created alternative ways of "killing time" as some people call it.

The rainy season is also a season of book publishing as demand for reading materials rises and publishers are working harder to meet the demand. However, with the sharp and frequent rises in publishing costs, it may be difficult for most authors and publishers to enjoy the rainy time.

However, booksellers may enjoy a sharp rise in business and profits. Booksellers are not involved in the production of books incur lower costs and enjoy more profits. They face fewer risks and a good time for selling popular titles and educational materials in particular.

A few years back, book exhibitions were popular in Addis, and the capital's only exhibition center was often crowded with ordinary book buyers, students, and book lovers in general. It is not clear whether this culture is still alive since the boom time for publishing books seems to have passed a long time ago and there is less appetite for reading. Again, technology has stolen the show as more people are attracted to ready-to-use and ready-to-enjoy alternatives. They carry entire libraries in their pockets, something that was unthinkable even in science fiction movies a couple of decades back.

A warm and rainy season may sound like a paradox because the two are often considered mutually exclusive. It is either a warm season or a rainy season. A rainy season is usually supposed to be cold. In Ethiopia, many natural phenomena are replete with paradoxes. In old tourist posters, the country was often portrayed as the land of "13 months of sunshine" which is now replaced by a more realistic or more captivating and less exaggerated motto—the Land of Origins.

Ethiopia was once called "the water tower of Africa" or "the breadbasket of East Africa" although it mostly failed to feed its people in times of drought. It was also called the "Island of Christianity" as if it were the only land for Christians even when most people were turning their backs to God. More pious people may prefer to consider it "the land of God's promise" However, all those popular misconceptions have largely passed into the realm of mythology.

One may wonder why tourists from Europe and America usually love the Ethiopian rainy season. The answer can hardly be esoteric because what is known as 'the Ethiopian rainy season' is not the same as European winter. Most tourists visiting Addis during the rainy season wear T-shirts and while residents who are strangers to extreme cold put on two or three layers of clothes before going out for work during the peak of the rainy season. For Europeans, a visit to Addis during the rainy season may feel like a recreation during their summertime at seaside resorts.

Anyway, you look at it, the rainy season is more interesting than the dry and sunny time that is almost looking at the exit door now. Most people have been irritated by too much heat during the day and even at night and looking at climate change as a real threat to their comfort zone. The rainy season will certainly bring in a time of relief and cold comfort. After all the ups and downs of life, people need some time to breathe until hectic times return.

Society



Principle of detonating patriarchy and African women political leaders' experiences

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

These days African scholars and critics are recommending contextual notions and approaches for the continent in order to preeminently understand and solve its own issues. The Nigerian Law Professor logically explained why Africans need their own definitions for especially sensitive issues like democracy. Gender study is one of the most controversial and yet unaddressed issues.

By considering the solid sociocultural and political identity of Africa, philosophers and experts suggest principles as way outs to the unfair treatment of gender based relations. Among these, the theory of Nego Feminism is the leading one, I believe, in suiting the reality of African society. From the concepts raised in this principle, the idea of detonating patriarchy is the most important one.

The speculator of the theory Obioma Nneameka suggests the idea of detonating patriarchy as a principle to be adapted by African females. The model mainly focuses on three major themes which are explained with practical reference to the experiences of African women leaders in politics.

The first one is that African women should know and comprehend the extent and type of patriarchy around them very carefully. In other words women and girls should be very active in detecting their sociocultural reality. Understanding their environment and position is key to looking forward to solutions. Females should be strong and exceed the mean of their challenges they face in the society for the sake of their future. Here the first democratically elected female President Ellen Johnson of Liberia can be mentioned as the best example to show how considering the real situation and looking for elucidations did mean practically. During her visit to America, she said, "we inherited a broken country devastated by war, displacement of people and dysfunctional infrastructure. ... but we said that we are going to make Liberia rise again."

As per her words, she showed her best efforts. As different sources showed, she took a quick measure and revealed a greater commitment to rule of law and performed her judiciary body. She was a very strong and visionary woman who lived for the achievement of her promises. She relatively succeeded and

improved the nation greatly. Here is the evidence. The previous US president Barack Obama witnessed the deeds of Ellen as, "the country reformed on development, we see a continued determination on her part to have a fore continuing some of the tragedies that took place earlier making sure that the country is refocused on development and bowering the tackle of corruption."

In addition to that, President Ellen was the Nobel peace prize winner. The chairman of the Nobel Prize Committee Thorgjoen Jagland praised Ellen's performances as, "since her inauguration in 2004, she has contributed to secure peace in Liberia, to promoting economic and social development and strengthening the possession of women."

Since Ellen possessed a problematic country, she was meant to face lots of difficulties. The extreme challenge that she encountered was on how to keep smart so as to be taken as a best example for African women. In this regard she said, "I have an opportunity to open the doors for more African women to hold high political positions though it is challenging because I represent the aspirations and expectations of Liberian, African women and maybe women all over the world, and therefore the pressure is on me to make sure that I succeed." This responsible view of the President, I believe, gave her the passion and moral to stick on her mission.

She considered her surroundings and the meaning of her in the position then started acting ahead. She transferred the country as she promised and addressed this to the world as "I came today on the behalf of the Liberian people to say that we have made a lot of progress in that commitment."

This experience is spotted to get in line with the idea of females' activeness in understanding their situations and their smartness in designing way outs strategically. This is the skeleton of the theory of Nneameka. Ellen had passed through lots of challenges as a woman and as a leader of that nation. She is the most notable leader of the continent. She was the only African woman listed on Forbes as 'the most powerful woman in the world'. Thus, she did a remarkable job in history to be seen as a model for females in the world.

The second idea that is highlighted in the concept detonating patriarchy is African women need to keep dreaming or set their

life goals. Nneameka suggested that after understanding their real context, African females need to have their own targeted fate to be reached at.

Betty Mould Iddrisu, an acknowledged lawyer and politician of Ghana, was talking about the relevance of females' dreams. She was on VOA to narrate about her experience as an African woman who is successful in politics. She said: "A woman needs to be very confident; she needs to believe in herself. She doesn't need to surround herself with people who think or may possibly pontificate that 'you are the best or you add in to the best'. She needs to free herself from the stereotypes. She needs to have a certain comfort level, and that comfort level is very basic within the political climate or environment within which she operates. You know I hate to say this 'I dreamt that it could be ... I don't want to dash any woman's dreams. She should always...always reach for her dreams. Always try to climb the top. When you tumble, you will tumble down. The secret is to pick yourself up and move on."

Betty, as the principle equivalently underlined, asserted that though African females are tied up with rooted patriarchy, it is up to the female to stay conscious and goal oriented to succeed in any sector. Females need to have a dream. At the same time, they need to work hard to meet that dream.

The third point under the theory is the idea of detonation. The word 'detonation' here is used to mean the efficacy of females in penetrating and winning over patriarchy for achieving their goal. The penetration is systematic and done in a cooperative sense so that the relation with males around them stays peaceful.

Currently, a number of women and girls of Africa are joining the political arena and confronting their counterparts and the sociocultural system too. Some instances can be listed here. The Gambian Vice President is a very strong promoter for women and a human rights defender. The Zimbabwean Vice President was also a very strong woman in debating policies and laws of Robert Mugabe. Diane Rwigara, is a young, energetic and ambitious girl who is challenging Paul Kagame's regime. She was thrown to jail. But she continued to be a beacon of hope for the women across the

continent and the world.

As various studies and reports indicated, Africa has been characterized by patriarchy. This patriarchy is challenging the females from equal participation and inclusion with males. Thus, the nations in the continent are continuing to face unsustainable development and fail to be transformed as it is required. The former UN Executive Director Phumzile Mbambo Ngouka on the 2016th women conference was stressing the issue of gender as, "the governments amend amended constitutions, pass good laws but because we have not transformed society, we have not removed the pillars of patriarchy. We are transforming within a patriarchal society. We are not moving as fast as we need to."

In Ethiopia too the political sphere is progressively detonated by women and even young girls more than ever before. Very strong women leaders and directors in the past have done a remarkable job in their positions. The current political system, though there are lots to be done, is opening the political scope for females. Even though critics criticized the nomination of President Sahle Work Zewde of Ethiopia saying that it is ceremonial, she is the best example for Ethiopian females in winning over patriarchy. She is, I believe, there to echo the efficacy and potential of women in leadership. This is very encouraging but still the percent to be achieved is not yet addressed. Different organizations, NGOs and stakeholders which centralize women rights and inclusion have also a long way to go.

The conclusion is, till the diminution of patriarchy, serious measures and committed laws and policies with sound executions need to be implemented and applied by the governments of African nations that entertain women participation and inclusion in every sector. It is, I believe, one major act in fostering gender equality and inclusive development since women constitute the half even more than half share of the society in the continent. I need to raise Betty's wonderful expression as a closing remark. That is 'When you tumble, you will tumble down. The secret is picking yourself up and moving on... believe in yourself; don't surround yourself with those who fill you with compliments.

Law & Politics

A big step forward in National Dialogue

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

After seven days of deliberations at the Adwa Memorial Hall in Addis Ababa about two thousand representative residents of the city have terminated their discussions with the setting up of agendas to be presented to the National Dialogue Council that will eventually be subject to further and deeper discussions. Professor Mesfin Araya the Chief Commissioner has given a press conference relating to the deliberations carried out during the scheduled seven days. He said the choice and selection of the agendas to be tabled later on after being prioritized by the National Dialogue Commission based on the urgency and significance of the issues has ended with huge success, the first important step in the long journey.

Ethiopians, Mesfin noted, have once again demonstrated their commitment and desire to carry out the discussions among themselves in a spirit of friendliness and passion to bring to a halt the seemingly endless and vicious circles of disputes, misunderstandings and false narratives and begin a new life devoid of the same old arguments and claims and counterclaims particularly characterizing the recent past decades.

In the long run, the Commission believes that such discussions among the population contribute to building up a new tradition of ironing out differences with moderate and calm discussions in an atmosphere of peace and respect among one another without personalizing the differences and the criticisms or losing hope due to potential disagreements. Professor Mesfin continued it will be a new beginning because we must avoid going to armed conflict on any issue without resorting to and exhausting every available peaceful means of discussing the issue and searching for ways of compromise and concessions so that peace is not disrupted and communities do not suffer the avoidable negative consequences.

Learning from our past mistakes and observing what other nations have done to come out of similar circumstances, we must realize that any attempts to resolve our differences using force or inviting insurrections and armed conflicts have not got us any remedy or solution to our problems except finding ourselves in deeper trouble and suffering untold losses and sufferings. The cycles of violence that we have been involved in even recently must teach us that the final result has been only more damage and more losses and no definitive final solutions to our long-standing problems.

Only just a few months ago we have seen how the two-year conflict in the north has plunged us into deep losses, tremendous damages and enormous sacrifices both in terms of human power as well as other resources. Many have estimated that the conflict in the north has caused the regression of the country's economy by three decades and to recover the losses and

return to where we were before the conflict would take us at least four years!

This would be a huge burden for any country let alone for a country such as Ethiopia which avails limited resources and is obliged to resort to loans, concessions and grants coming from abroad from our development partners to continue to advance and meet its development objectives and at the same time cover all the expenses of the nation.

It is easy to guess that with total peace and stability in the country, there are conditions under which the country would go ahead and fulfil its development targets. Needing to divert the limited resources we have to fight conflicts here and there and waste much of the capital we manage to raise is a huge challenge for the continuation of the state with its plans. There are already several challenges in the country and having to face extra issues such as security and peace challenges would just be unimaginable because it becomes a huge obstacle to overcome. That is why initiatives such as the National Dialogue Commission have been launched and here the entire population could contribute to the discussions with its representatives by presenting what they consider are critical issues that affect their day-to-day livelihoods.

Naturally, not every issue can be presented to the Commission for discussion because there will be selections made based on the importance of the issue but they will be noted and then sent back to the relevant local administrators so that they can resolve certain cases in their backyards. However, the issues that are of national relevance and urgency will all be selected and prioritized in the order of importance and relevance and presented to the National Dialogue Council which in turn will discuss them in depth at subsequent occasions.

At present the selection of agendas in Addis has terminated after a week's deliberations and discussions in an atmosphere of harmony and respect with no cases of imposing one's ideas on others and an atmosphere of friendship committed towards one goal only. This according to Commissioner Mesfin was a huge success that satisfied all of the participants regardless of the heated and passionate discussions. The Commissioner has expressed his wishes and confidence that this process will be repeated in all other regional states and city administrations to be carried out soon.

If the process is transparent and inclusive no one's idea is dismissed as useless because every participant has the right to be heard and not silenced by others. The credibility of the process will not be put at risk because many already have been heard stating that the process cannot be trusted because not all ideas are listened to or considered. This has been proved unfounded and the Commissioner has repeatedly invited every citizen to present to the Commission what they think should

We must realize that any attempts to resolve our differences using force or inviting insurrections and armed conflicts have not got us any remedy or solution to our problems except finding ourselves in deeper trouble and suffering untold losses and sufferings

be considered and discussed as an agenda. The process has been designed to be all-inclusive, all-embracing including those who are currently in the bush engaged in hostilities here and there because they feel their people or constituencies are not well represented in the central government or any other issue that pertains to their interests.

For decades Ethiopians have not been able to agree on certain issues that have been continuously raised by certain sectors of the society alleging that they were neglected and sidelined by the establishment dominated by certain selected forces only. Many narratives have been developed and peddled throughout the country especially now in the digital revolution period and many falsehoods have also been very easily disseminated throughout the country. These narratives have only been breeding mistrust and suspicion among communities who have always lived in peace and harmony exchanging values, customs and cultures and intermarrying very naturally in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect among themselves.

These forces which have been very busy raising certain issues that have no foundations have only been trying to destabilize the country and obstruct it from following its fast development trajectory that began a few years ago. They have been engaged in conflict and violence rather than commit to discuss their cases openly and peacefully. However, the current National Dialogue Commission has repeatedly invited them to come to the table putting down their arms in an atmosphere of peace and committing to abide by fundamental principles such as respect for the constitution and the rule of law without which any discussion would be carried out let alone reach a meaningful and lasting consensus.

The major issue it seems for these forces is that they do not trust the process and consider this exercise as a limitation to their narratives and claims. They do not want to believe that the process is not rigged this way or that way because it is being carried out by non-political actors who only represent the interests of the nation and would like to put an end to all claims and counterclaims as well as narratives that only have the intention of sowing seeds of hate, distrust and enmity among communities that have lived together even before the advent of political officials and governments.

The history of Ethiopia shows that communities have been living together, resolving their problems and differences in traditional ways of resolving problems. But when there were attacks that came from alien lands they immediately ganged up together leaving aside any differences among them and foiled the aggressions by fighting together as one. This is a part of Ethiopian history and reputed tradition that has been repeatedly proved and appreciated by scholars and whatever narratives to the contrary can only be taken as politically motivated aimed to take undue advantage at the expense of the sovereign nation. It is also probable that behind such narratives there could be the long arms of certain alien forces that have axes to grind against Ethiopia, a nation that has always lived in independence and freedom resisting colonial and imperialist adventures against it and trying to unmake it. This is a story that has become emblematic to the entire African continent and even the world at large and the history of Ethiopia is written with these golden words of freedom and dignity for centuries. Hence all those forces who do not want Ethiopia to be a symbol of independence and dignity in the third world would like to undermine it and try to penetrate it through forces that are supported and encouraged by them including reserving to them lavish space in their media outlets and propaganda machines.

That is what Ethiopia is trying to combat and defeat. It attracts and invites all forces and citizens that have valid issues and claims to join the conversation at a national level and make their voices heard and no one is left behind in this process. The National Dialogue Commission and the discussions that are being carried out throughout the country are testimonies to this wide opening for every social and political group or force. Countries before Ethiopia have carried out this process with success where there was a valid and fair process that accepted the participation of all relevant bodies and in an atmosphere of freedom and peace without any restrictions except the observation of basic ground rules such as the respect for the integrity of the country and the respect for the constitutional order until there could be a stage when it will decide by the public to be changed with another one or amended as required by the circumstances.



Ephrem Endale
Contributor

Between you & me

Hubby in the Kitchen and *Siga Wot* !

I'm not your kind of diary-friendly person. But I should start writing my diary. Yes what is there to lose? There is so much to write about. You know maybe literary agents could find some magical thing and give you a call. "How about you writing an outline of say about twenty pages and the hundred thousand dollars would be on its way to your account." Nice, wouldn't you say?

Now, the diary should start in the morning when you get up whining and cursing everything. Why is that most of us act it's maybe the worst day of our life every morning we get out of bed. In fact getting out of bed demands real nerves. So the first line would be, "I woke up at about six fifteen. It takes me another twenty five minutes to get off the bed. Why? I'll tell you why. I was in the middle of this dream where I was a millionaire and I was practically kicking everyone around. And people obeyed and respected you. Well they acted like they respect you. It is later that you ask "Were those dudes play acting and making fun of me?"

Then I wash up fast and go to the kitchen. Many times I cook my own breakfast if you really have to know. Note that I'm good at it and know my way around the kitchen. But then you don't need to be any smarter than the average weirdo in the streets to cook a couple of eggs. Make sure the skillet doesn't stick and that does it. At least you make sure you don't go to the office empty stomach.

Now while we're at it there is still this tendency

to think that kitchens are for women. Yes the only thing men have to do is roll up their sleeves sit at the dinner table and comment...

Years back there was this comical incident. This married guy used to go to the kitchen often. In fact the plan agreed with his better half is that on Sundays he reigns over the kitchen the whole day from breakfast to dinner. And he publicly boasts in his own home he has become a five star chef. Of course he seems to have odd culinary creations to his credit. Of course only his wife and two teenage children feed on those creations. He has this way of starting to make some pasta dish and ending with porridge! Isn't that a genius of a man! Ha!

One Sunday his wives parents come from the countryside. Now usually his wife took the greatest care so that no one from her relatives knows this secret of hubby-in-the-kitchen of hers. That unfortunate Sunday midmorning she was out to buy certain things and hubby was in the kitchen preparing lunch. The program for the day was purely traditional lunch with *Siga Wot*... sort of 'meat stew;' (not very helpful, is it?) When he hears the knock on the door he rushes out all with his apron. Also as he opens the door the world literally flipped, His wife's parents where so shocked they must have thought the came to the wrong house.

What the hell is their daughter's husband, the very man thought to be the 'iron fence' protecting their loved child with an apron and the scent of

the *Siga Wot*? Hubby later said he wasn't simply shocked but literally terrified so bad that for a minute or so he lost command on his vocal nerves. They hug the strangest of hugs (jelly hugs!), so he says, and he shows then into the house. Once they sit the problem was he couldn't sit with them. No way! Or else the *Siga Wot* would go into violent spasms, surge over the edges of the pot and flood the kitchen's floor! That's not going to happen when he has sacrificed his morning to make "the best" as he boasted to his wife. He excuses himself and rushes into the kitchen leaving the visibly shocked and confused parents mute and unresponsive. But all was to change when a smiling jovial wife burdened under the weight of her groceries comes. She later says in all her life that was the most... shock she experienced.

Her parents so it seems were very conservative and left no space for the ifs and buts of city life. When they kissed and hugged their daughter the usual smile of happy parents wasn't there. There was not much talk however much their daughter tried to save the day. The hubby-in-the-kitchen never came as an agenda. Then it was lunch time and their daughter set up the dishes and what. They stretched their hands without any comment and the injera and hubby's *Siga Wot* was set on the table. The man of the house joins them of course without the apron. His wife puts the injera on everyone's plates and opens the ... which holds the *Siga Wot* and this time her daddy stops her. He asks;

"Who cooked the *Siga Wot*?" Though there was nothing to hide this was the question hubby

dreaded. Their daughter tries to go into some preliminaries and still daddy cuts her short and with the strangest of voices he says, "I asked you, who cooked the *Siga Wot*!"

"It was me," hubby answers and daddy was the real daddy every cell on him threatening to burst. "Take it away!"

"But dad..."

"I said take it away. His daughter does so. The day was already spoiled and her parents who planned to stay overnight refuse to stay any longer and go to spend the night in another relative's house. Since it has been sometime since this happened I can't tell you what happened later.

Anyways how did I go into all this hubby-in-the-kitchen talk! Yes, I was talking about preparing my breakfast but look where we ended up. Maybe leaving the diary thing for another time is better.

Maybe, just maybe the hubby in the kitchen scenario would most probably solve many of household problems. Well the better half should be the one to handle the in-laws. "If you don't like the *Siga Wot* my husband makes it means you don't like me too."

How about that? I mean such a no-nonsense declaration (because it's a declaration, isn't it!) might win one parent over and the next time hubby with the apron opens the front door the hugs would probably be firmer. Hey, would you care for delicious *Siga Wot* hubby made? Case closed!

Heaven and Hell on the Job

Nothing could be as painful, as losing one's job especially in these tough times of global economic turmoil. Skip hopping from one job to the other is no more easy. I mean there might have been times when someone lost their jobs today and got new jobs in the next couple of days have been given various names. Of course we can't say they were times of jobs for the asking. But however difficult, however trying, seldom were they as they are now to a multitude of issues. So you can't help feeling a little blue every time you hear someone lost their jobs because you know the search for a new one is a whole lot of a different world.

Being fired from work have been given various 'politically correct' names over the years though they do little or nothing to ease the pain and lessen the subsequent suffering. With fewer dishes on the dinner table, the surge of monthly bills shaking the households' economic status, and the cost of living moving like a train which jumped its rails and was crushing through every structure in its way creating chaos and destruction. Believe me, especially these days the reverberations losing one's job impact not only the victim but a lot of people near and far and especially the family which already were in an economic straightjacket. Almost every other person on earth being in hard times losing one's job is for some could come as shockingly as a death warrant.

You don't even want to hear about someone losing their job because you know that this would be a very hard life to lose. From the household lives behind the walls to the greater open social interaction the aftershocks might not die down anytime soon.

Amidst all this it doesn't mean all dismissals unfair and gross injustice. Some probably get because it might be the only way to make them come back to their senses the boot because they should get the boot! In every place of employment there are rules and there are rules! It's as simple as that. At times you hear people who have lost their jobs say they have been downsized for absolutely no reason at all. It is only human to try to play down the reasons for which you've been shown the door especially if those reasons are real tough. "Oh it was absolutely for nothing. Even a verbal warning would have been too much. And frankly speaking sometimes here could be dismissal for reasons which have absolutely nothing to do with the actual work one is assigned to. And the way in which the unfortunates are informed of the decision could be humiliating.

"Are you saying they served you the dismissal paper?"

"They haven't yet served me any dismissal paper yet."

"What do you mean? Then how do you know you've really been kicked out of your job?"

"I was told verbally."

"You mean you were told you've been kicked out verbally and just collected your things and walked out after so many years of serving them?"

"That's what happened."

More or less that is a story which we heard sometimes back. But a couple of questions blew the 'absolutely no reason' wall apart. This guy's case was personal with one of the brass. "One of those things..." you might say.

But this guy happened to date a young lady who was outdoors girlfriend of one married heavyweight. Not even a top brass himself he somehow managed to get this guy kicked out, and verbally too! That is how the story goes. The crux of the story was the dismissed fellow was warned that his flirtations with the particular young would not go well with the heavyweight whose affair was public knowledge even, as the rumors contend, to his own wife! Good stuff for another TV serial, wouldn't you say?

That isn't the end of the story. There was the issue of the dismissal paper, which when it came landed with a big bang. The fellow was accused of indiscipline about which he got repeated verbal warnings which he failed to heed; that he was also spreading false rumors among the staff attacking the management. Now even those who hate him say the accusations were false but who cares! He touched the untouchables and got himself in searing hot waters. But what has flirting with a married heavyweight's girlfriend has to do with actual work performance? Search me.

So there could be a hundred one reasons for being kicked out ninety of them probably have nothing to do with actual work performance. These days when talk of downsizing staff comes there are lots of stories making the rounds. Not that you believe all stories you hear. In fact just to be fair enough eighty percent or more could be intentionally created and edited to serve their purpose, which most of the time is about character assassination. Stories of flirtations among the wrong people are a dozen a dime; then there are stories of favoritism based on identity, beliefs and the like. Hearing such

stories you wonder of we've overplayed the maxim "Birds of a feather fly together." It might work for the good old birds up there looking down on us and probably wondering "What the hell is happening with these human beings?" But when we try to customize it for humans well it'd probably end up a story which is wrong in its every aspect.

"I heard they kicked out that finance department guy."

"Yes, they did."

What did he do? Don't tell me he sent his hands into the coffers of this always in-the-red office!"

"No, no that. They say he clashed with the general manger not connected with work."

"And, what was that?"

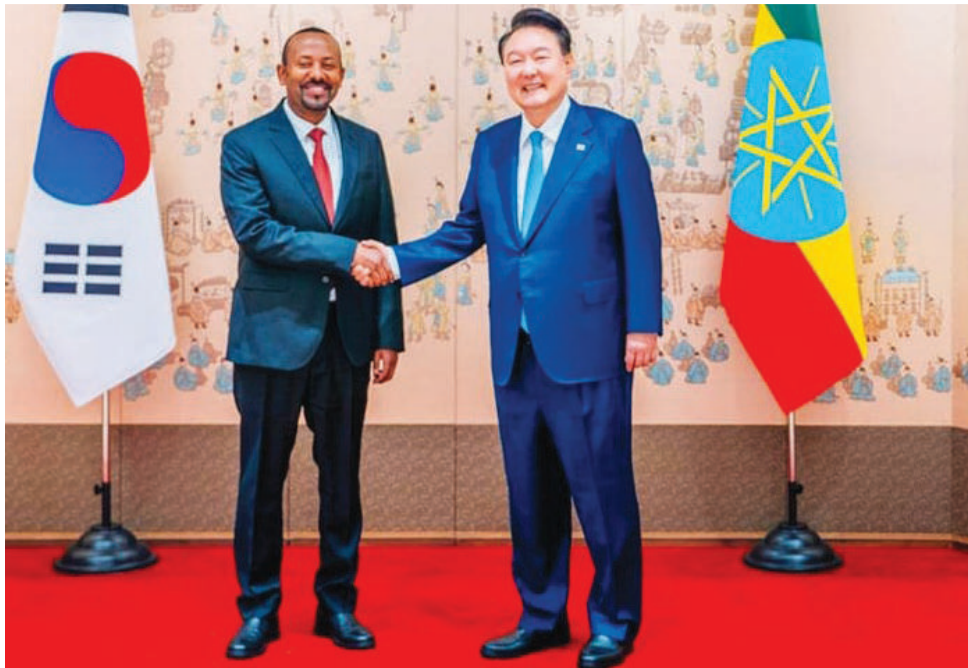
"I don't know the whole story. But I suspect it has to do about heaven and hell."

"Ha! Ha! That was a real Tyson Fury uppercut, wasn't it?"

"If you say so..."

So conventional wisdom about job losses at that, you wish no one lost their jobs for the wrong reason! By the way about this heaven and hell thing, probably all places of employment must have their own Heaven and Hell; the only thing is that in some places you might be the worst sinner walking upright on planet Earth and do not have to worry of ending up purgatory; or the only things you lack for being an angel could be two wings and still you might end up knocking the doors of hell! Bad, ineffective, abusive management could be that bad!

In Pictures



PM Abiy's successful sojourn in Asia

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

PM Abiy discusses with South Korean President Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), with his delegation, arrived in Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea to attend the first South Korea- Africa Summit. During the visit, PM Abiy was received by President Yoon Suk Yeol at the Office of the President of the Republic of Korea. The two sides with their respective delegations held bilateral discussions. During the bilateral engagement, the two countries signed financing framework agreement in the amount of USD 1billion to go towards projects that will be implemented within the next four years in Ethiopia.

PM Abiy, First Lady Zinash in Chuncheon city

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew received a warm welcome by the city of Chuncheon, in South Korea.



PM Abiy received a warm welcome at Santana

Following the completion of his South Korean official visit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) with his delegation arrived in Istana, the official residence of the president of Singapore. PM Abiy and his delegation received a warm welcome by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.



PM Abiy, First Lady laid wreath at the monument of Ethiopian veterans in S. Korea

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Lady Zinash Tayachew laid a wreath at the monument of Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War. The memorial honors the Ethiopian Kagnew Battalion, which fought alongside South Korean and United Nations forces during the Korean War.



PM Abiy discusses with President of Singapore

During his official visit to Istana, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam. The two sides exchanged views on political, economic and social issues and agreed to strengthen the existing ties and to explore new eras of cooperation, according to Office of the Prime Minister.