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Decolonizing colonial treaties Signing of CFA into law creates watershed moment for the Nile basin region

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The Nile River Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) represents a collective effort to rectify historical inequities in the utilization of the Nile's resources, experts say. The CFA officially came into force last Sunday, despite the absence of Egypt and Sudan. It aims to ensure fair access to the Nile for all basin countries, breaking the long-standing monopoly of the river's waters by downstream nations.

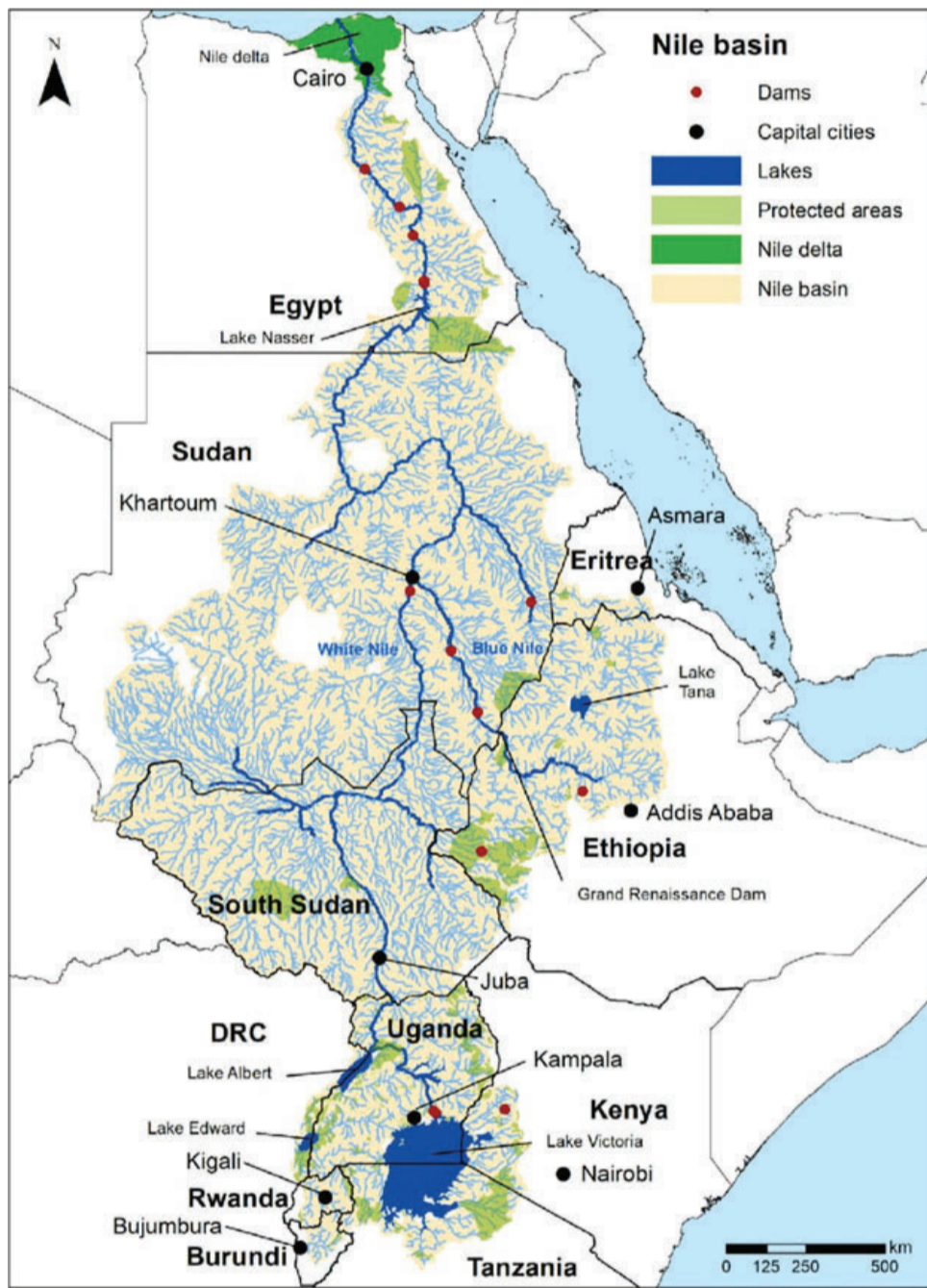
A key element of the CFA is the establishment of a commission tasked with equitable water management. Initiated by Ethiopia, the CFA was shaped through consultations involving a Panel of Experts between January 1997 and March 2000.

Rather than imposing fixed water allocations, the CFA provides a cooperative framework promoting sustainable development and integrated water management. The agreement aims to conserve the river for future generations while fostering harmony among the basin countries.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Fekahmed Negash, a former Abbay Dam negotiator and water resources researcher, emphasized the importance of a robust legal framework like the CFA. He noted that such agreements not only safeguard the interests of all basin nations but also encourage collaboration and attract funding for water-related projects.

The CFA also lays the foundation for the

See Decolonizing ... page 4



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Ethiopia charts path to capital market growth

BY HAILE DEMEKE

Ethiopia has been undergoing a significant reform process and experiencing steady economic growth since 2018. The government has implemented

See Ethiopia ... page 4

African defense leaders rally to avert security threats

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

In response to the volatile global order and contemporary security challenges facing the continent, African defense ministers and military attachés convened a critical conference aimed at addressing Africa's complex security landscape.

During the gathering in Addis Ababa, delegates explored Africa's military evolution and future strategies, emphasizing the need for continental cooperation to counter emerging security threats in the global arena.

See African defense ... page 4



Toyo Solar Energy to invest 7 bln USD in Hawassa IP

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA - Japanese company Toyo Solar Energy, valued at over seven billion Birr, is set to commence operations in Hawassa Industry Park, according to the Industry Parks Development Corporation (IPDC).

See Toyo Solar ... page 4

Economic reform spurs Chinese investment, job creation in EIZ

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA – The Homegrown Macroeconomic Reform, implemented in late July, has positively impacted forex-dependent industrial manufacturers, according to Chinese firms operating at the Eastern Industrial Zone (EIZ) in Dukem.

Companies in the park reported that the reform has addressed foreign exchange shortages, allowing them to resume halted production. Shia Xu, a member of the park's management committee, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the reform has empowered businesses to import essential factory inputs, leading to increased output and job creation.

Hua Jian Aluminum PLC, one of the park's companies, has ramped up production, boosting job creation and government revenue through taxes. "As our manufacturing capacity grows, we are contributing to Ethiopia's economic development," Xu said.

She also highlighted that investments in the park align with China's Belt and Road Initiative. Ethiopia's membership in BRICS and strengthened diplomatic



ties with China have further increased investor confidence. The strategic partnership between both countries has facilitated smoother cooperation, benefiting industrial growth.

The expansion of factories in the park is ongoing, creating opportunities for local employment. Hua Jian Aluminum alone has generated 170 jobs for local residents while collaborating with stakeholders at both state and federal levels.

Xi Bo, General Manager of Di Yuan Ceramics, another major player in the park, emphasized the positive outcomes of the reform and Ethiopia-China relations. "The reform has enhanced business

operations, and we encourage Ethiopian investors to explore opportunities in China," he said.

Di Yuan Ceramics, which has been operating in Ethiopia since 2016, produces and distributes ceramics locally, employing 800 Ethiopians and 50 Chinese workers. The company continues to contribute to Ethiopia's industrial development, thanks to the improved economic environment.

Chinese investment in Ethiopia has grown significantly over the past two decades, making China Ethiopia's largest foreign investor. This investment spans various sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, telecommunications, and energy.

Amaranth: The forgotten superfood driving nutrition, women empowerment

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

Amaranth, a versatile plant known for both its seeds and leaves, holds significant nutritional and medicinal value, yet it remains underutilized across Ethiopia. Traditionally known in various states, including the Southwest Ethiopia, Konso, and Hawassa, it has the potential to enhance food security and generate income if integrated into the nation's food system and produced at an industrial scale.

According to a statement by Amaranth Farm Ecolodge, fully utilizing this crop could incorporate it into traditional food systems, creating opportunities for women and youth while boosting national food security. Other countries have successfully tapped into amaranth's potential, setting a model Ethiopia could follow.

Amaranth Farm Ecolodge co-founder and Executive Director Mulunesh Jebessa has made it her mission to promote amaranth as a climate-smart, nutrient-dense crop. As a social entrepreneur and environmental advocate, Mulunesh emphasizes sustainable practices, eco-friendly tourism, and empowering women through nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

In her conversation with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Mulunesh highlighted that despite amaranth's dual-purpose use as food for humans and livestock, it remains neglected. She believes scaling up its production and processing into staple foods could revolutionize Ethiopia's food culture and address malnutrition. "Our goal is to integrate amaranth into the traditional food system, combining it with other nutritious ingredients like cabbage, yam, and cassava," she said. "Processed amaranth products could also serve as life-saving food for vulnerable groups, including migrants."

Mulunesh and her team are actively working to connect with international partners to exchange knowledge and promote amaranth-based food systems. She also stressed the importance of raising awareness about amaranth's high protein and micronutrient content, positioning it as a valuable subsistence crop that grows well alongside maize.

As a women-led organization, Amaranth Farm Ecolodge not only focuses on food security but also serves as a platform for women's economic empowerment. "We are committed to empowering women to become change agents in the green economy," Mulunesh explained. "By incorporating women, youth, and individuals with disabilities into climate action initiatives, we ensure that our efforts are inclusive and sustainable."

Her organization also promotes solar-powered solutions, such as solar pumps and energy-saving technologies, as part of its climate action efforts. Mulunesh believes these innovations can help communities adopt alternative, sustainable practices and improve livelihoods.

Ultimately, Mulunesh calls for collaborative efforts to scale up innovative ideas led by women, fostering a sustainable food system while addressing the interconnected challenges of nutrition, climate action, and social inclusion.

Lawmakers pledge unity, dev't

• Call for efficient resource management, lasting peace

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA – Members of the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) and the House of Federation (HoF) have committed to advancing development, addressing resource management challenges, and promoting national unity.

Moga Ababuligu, a member of the Foreign Relations Affairs Committee from Jima, Oromia State, told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Ethiopia requires a unified vision to achieve success across economic, political, and social sectors, emphasizing the importance of cooperation between leaders and citizens.

"Despite the country's abundant resources, we waste time on unproductive issues and conflicts. Therefore, we (the members) must take responsibility to resolve these issues by implementing effective resource management, raising public awareness, and finding constructive solutions," he stated.

Moga further noted that peace is the foundation of all development efforts, requiring mutual understanding, trust-building, and sustainable collaboration. Resolving disputes through dialogue, he noted, is essential for lasting peace and inclusive growth.

Almaze Asele, an MP from Wolayta Zone, acknowledged Ethiopia's achievements despite challenges, including the



successful completion of mega projects showcasing the nation's potential. She stressed the MPs' responsibility to support ongoing constructive efforts, emphasizing the need for cooperation between the government and the public to create a new chapter in Ethiopia's history while respecting multiculturalism.

"Success requires sacrifice, and creating awareness, fostering national consensus, and achieving reconciliation are critical for realizing Ethiopia's ambitions for prosperity," she added.

She also mentioned various ongoing development initiatives in Wolayta Zone, such as tourism, the green legacy project,

and corridor development, aimed at ensuring food security.

Tadelch Amar from the House of Federation stated, "Though Ethiopia has untapped resources, they are not yet managed efficiently. It is crucial for MPs to supervise, assist, and understand the broader picture to ensure sustainable benefits for the people."

She emphasized the importance of MPs and the House of Federation representatives sharing experiences and knowledge across cities and towns to achieve common goals of development and lasting peace.

Editorial

Ethiopia's magnetic pull in light of BRICS' win-win approach

Ethiopia, with over 120 million people, boasts bountiful natural resources and is strategically located in terms of export and import trade, putting itself atop the list of sought-after investment destinations. The Red Sea and Indian Ocean are not that distant from Ethiopia. This economically emerging nation is also bolstering its infrastructural development, bringing gigantic hydropower dams, industrial parks, and entrepreneur-friendly policies into play.

In the sphere of diplomacy, it is using a strategic move to avoid the twisting of arms by some superpowers and big organizations. In so doing, to a certain degree, Ethiopia could parry diktats for obligatory structural change and privatization. It as well could forestall preconditions such as 'the government should exclude itself from investment ventures even like infrastructural development.' It is also joining friendly blocks like BRICS to insulate itself from undue political influences and inimical economy-related coercions. Things have to be handled in a win-win manner and as per the demand and context of the support-seeking developing nation.

Against the aforementioned backdrop, Ethiopia saw it fit to join BRICS which proved willing to embrace it with stretched hands in a win-win or fair-minded manner.

As has been practically witnessed, the coming into the scene of BRICS is allowing developing countries to enjoy political-ligatures-unattached soft loans, technical support, and free markets. No alternative was there for developing countries before the birth of BRICS to choose and pick so as to properly determine their economic and political fates.

In a business forum held recently in Moscow, PM Abiy Ahmed (PHD) has called upon member countries of BRICS to outlay their wealth in lucrative investment ventures in Ethiopia. His speech was in the following wavelength.

Ethiopia's economy in the upward trajectory has ushered in ample opportunities for BRICS' member countries to dive into investment ventures, economic cooperation, and trade.

Ethiopia's untapped natural wealth and agricultural potential draw the attention of the wider African market. The world-noted Ethiopian also offers added opportunities for cargo flight and civilian transport.

Besides, Ethiopia, currently vigorously engaged in the expansion of infrastructural facilities, is endowed with affordable renewable energy and skilled manpower making the country a looked-forward investment hub.

The macroeconomic reform the country is going through is rendering Ethiopia more preferable for business activities. The market-driven foreign currency exchange task wards off roadblocks hampering Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Such changes allow the country to be competitive in the global market and investors get their due perks.

To ensure common benefits among member countries BRICS must set an example for others to emulate. Aside from benefiting member countries, BRICS could serve as a role model for international finance organizations.

Vigilant, member countries of BRICS, which comprises 50 % of the world population, must see it that the global administrative structure addresses the challenges of developing economies. BRICS potential augurs its positive influence on the growth of the world's economy and sustainable development. To unleash this potential action is called for. Towards this end, the global administrative structure has to be all-inclusive, representative, and responsive.

Ethiopia's magnetic pull in agriculture, manufacturing, mineral, renewable energy, technology, and tourism sectors is huge.

Ethiopia will play its due role in the successful implementation of the BRICS's 2025 economic cooperation strategy.

Opinion

If we are not part of the solution, we are part of our problems

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

If we are not part of the solution to the multi-faceted problems and challenges of this country, we are certainly part of the problem as there is no third way or an option to sit on the fence. The nation needs urgent support from citizens here and abroad to ensure her safety, peace, territorial integrity and socio-economic development. The author of this article has no intention of agitating anybody but attempts to reveal the bitter truth about the challenges that Ethiopia is facing.

The current reality in Ethiopia shows that the nation is entangled with challenges that are homegrown. These homegrown challenges are paving the way for intervention by powers near and far into the internal affairs of the country. Our politicians which are revered on social media are busy duplicating press releases that are of no use both for their parties and the country at large.

The nauseating blame games with flowery words by our ethnocentric politicians and their polemics over imported ideological issues on liberation, democracy and human rights are capped with advocacy for taking power by the barrel of guns. However, the farmers and their families, children, elderly fathers and mothers are not interested in social media politicking but seek nutritious food, adequate health services, education for their children and sustained peace above all.

Over the last 50 years, Ethiopia has experienced internal conflicts every year with no interruption. Since the early 60s and early 70s, the Ethiopian youth have remained divided over imported ideologies none of which has fit for the ordinary Ethiopian on the street and in rural areas. The student movements accelerated the division among citizens capped with Marxists-Leninist, Maoist, and focoisim which is a strategy for revolution associated with Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and formalized by Che and the radical French writer Régis Debray.

These imported ideologies focused on class struggle which is based on the proletarian revolution which failed to materialize in this country. In a country where there is no heavy industry or strong working class, we used the military power of the Derg to impose it on the people who cared less. This led to the advent of the coloured terror in the country in which generations of youth were annihilated. Some of us including the author have experienced the situation which is now seen to be in the dustbin

of history. Today we are talking about democracy, political self-determination and justice while quite a few of the youth are engaged in bloodletting and killing rampage in the name of struggle for survival. Those who took to the jungle claim to liberate the country after 4000 years of independent existence of this glorious nation.

Ethiopia has more than 100 political parties that have been registered to operate in the country based on the rule of law. What are some of the practical indicators that show a number of these parties are operating in total defiance of the Constitution, the rule of law and federal regulations with no accountability? The author would wish to mention some of these.

The TPLF has conducted an illegal conference and appointment of party officials as well as banning officials appointed by the Federal Government to lead a transitional Regional Government pursuant to the Pretoria Agreement.

In the Amhara Region, several armed groups have proliferated with the assistance of foreign-based Ethiopians who wish to take power by force in an unconstitutional way serving the interest of foreign powers who labor from dawn to dusk to balkanize the country on ethnic bases.

A considerable number of groups of thieves are busy damaging hydroelectric power grids and railway lines in an attempt to fulfill their financial interests and through support from armed groups.

Bank robbery is going on in Amhara and Oromia regions to commercialize the challenges that the country is facing. Armed groups in Amhara and Oromia have opened a propaganda war on the National Defense Forces of Ethiopia which is constitutionally authorized to ensure the peace and sovereignty of the country.

It is regrettable to observe that no legal party registered in the country has condemned such illegal banditry and vandalistic activities being perpetrated by lawless groups. Every opposition party is engaged in sitting on the fence while the country they wish to rule in the future is facing challenges. Open discrediting of the achievements of the country and defamation of the elected leaders of the country with rude words and insults have become fashionable on social media. Some political parties have openly declared that they will not take part in the upcoming national dialogue while the armed groups have followed suit.

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



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News

Ethiopia charts ...

bold economic measures to make the economy more inclusive, including the liberalization of key sectors like telecommunications and finance. With a projected economic growth rate of 8.45 percent for the coming year, these reforms have yielded positive outcomes such as inclusive and sustainable growth, increased government revenue and investments, reduced debt, enhanced competitiveness of state-owned enterprises, foreign exchange gains, a more competitive finance sector, and improved sectoral productivity.

Privatizing state-owned enterprises and opening the economy to the private sector are central to the government's liberalization strategy. To support this process, the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) was established two years ago as part of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's (PhD) push to attract greater private investment. The ESX aims to serve as a platform for the privatization of state-owned enterprises and to help Ethiopian businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises, raise capital.

Recently, the ESX signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) and iCapital Africa Institute to strengthen the growth and development of capital markets in Ethiopia and the broader Horn of Africa region. ESX CEO TilahunEsmael (PhD) stated that the partnership between Ethiopia and Kenya, two of the region's leading economies, would drive economic integration and boost investment opportunities. The strategic collaboration will enhance the growth of capital markets in both countries through various initiatives, fostering a more competitive business environment.

The collaboration focuses on integrating the capital markets of Kenya and Ethiopia by leveraging the expertise of the NSE and Capital Africa Institute. It will prioritize knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the promotion of cross-border investments. This partnership is expected to accelerate the growth of Ethiopia's capital market and position the country as a key player in the regional financial landscape.

The ESX, designed to educate the public on the benefits of regulated securities investments, is set to play a crucial role in Ethiopia's economic transformation. By promoting financial literacy and a culture of investment, it empowers Ethiopians to actively participate in the capital markets.

The MoU represents a significant step towards strengthening financial markets in Ethiopia and the wider East African region. It includes several initiatives, such as joint training programs for market participants, the establishment of a robust regulatory framework, and the development of innovative financial products. The ESX is a key component of Ethiopia's financial sector reform, enabling companies to raise capital and offering new investment opportunities to the public.

Capital Africa Institute CEO Gemechu Waktola (PhD) emphasized the importance of the MoU in fostering the development and integration of capital markets in Kenya and Ethiopia. He highlighted the focus on knowledge exchange, capacity building, and promoting cross-border investments as critical to enhancing financial inclusion and market growth in the region.

NSX CEO Frank Mwititi also praised the partnership, stating that it is crucial for driving cross-border investment and regional integration. He noted that the collaboration would unlock significant opportunities for issuers and investors in both countries, making the region more attractive to both domestic and international investors.

Decolonizing colonial treaties ...

Nile River Basin Commission, which will operate independently, fostering regional development and ensuring smooth cooperation between upstream and downstream countries. Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Energy hailed the CFA's enactment as a significant step toward sustainable water management and regional collaboration.

Fekahmed contrasted the CFA with outdated colonial-era agreements from 1929 and 1959, which primarily benefited Egypt and Sudan. He explained that the CFA reflects the collective will of upper basin countries to reject those inequitable arrangements. The agreement strengthens regional ties while prioritizing fair resource distribution.

Ambassador Ibrahim Idris, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Transboundary Resources and a former legal advisor to Ethiopia's Abbay Dam negotiating team, shared the above rationale. He emphasized that the CFA reinforces the rights of upstream nations, challenging Egypt's historical dominance. Under the CFA, the approval of six countries makes the agreement legally binding.

Ambassador Ibrahim criticized Egypt's inconsistent stance since the CFA was signed in Entebbe in 2011. Initially, Egypt pressured upstream nations to withdraw support, attempting to block ratification. However, these efforts failed, with South Sudan recently

becoming the latest country to endorse the CFA.

Historically, Egypt has relied on colonial agreements to justify its water claims, particularly against Ethiopia's Abbay Dam project. Ethiopia's leadership in negotiating the CFA has shifted the dynamics toward more equitable water sharing. As the first country to sign and ratify the agreement, Ethiopia set a precedent for other nations to follow.

Fekahmed highlighted that while the CFA's ratification is a major milestone, establishing a functional commission will require continued negotiation and preparation. He urged the international community to recognize the CFA's legitimacy, as it aligns with international water laws.

Looking forward, Fekahmed speculated that Egypt might eventually ratify the CFA to safeguard its interests. However, he cautioned that resistance from Egypt could lead to diplomatic challenges, particularly around the formation of the Nile River Basin Commission.

Ambassador Ibrahim stressed Ethiopia's extensive efforts from 2001 to 2008 to counter opposition from Egypt and Sudan. A pivotal moment occurred in 2008 during a meeting in Kinshasa, where Ethiopia secured support from other upstream countries. This momentum culminated in the 2010 Sharm

el-Sheikh meeting, where several nations agreed to sign the CFA.

Despite Egypt's reluctance, Ambassador Ibrahim argued that the CFA's implementation will proceed. He emphasized that Egypt stands to benefit by participating, as international water laws tend to favor downstream nations. Refusal to engage could marginalize Egypt in future negotiations.

The CFA challenges the outdated 1959 agreement, which allocated 55.5 billion cubic meters of water to Egypt and 18.5 billion to Sudan, leaving upstream nations with little say. The CFA promotes a fairer distribution of resources, fostering cooperation among all basin countries.

In conclusion, Ambassador Ibrahim urged Egypt to engage in negotiations and ratify the CFA. He warned that attempts to undermine the agreement, such as exerting influence through Somalia, would not yield positive outcomes and could increase regional tensions.

Although the CFA is now legally in force, Fekahmed cautioned that challenges lie ahead. Establishing a functional commission and managing ongoing negotiations will require careful coordination and collaboration. The international community's support will be vital to ensure the CFA's success and long-term stability in the Nile Basin.

African defense leaders rally to avert...

Ethiopian Defense Minister Ayisha Mohammed (Eng.) stressed the importance of strengthening knowledge and collaboration to tackle the growing threats of cyber-attacks, organized crime, and human trafficking. She highlighted that building resilience among African nations requires unified efforts.

"It is impossible for a single nation to confront these challenges alone. Building strong cooperation between African defense forces is essential to shape Africa's defense strategy against adversities," she said.

AU's Political Affairs and Counter-Terrorism Head Babatunde Abayomi acknowledged Ethiopia's leadership role in continental and global peacekeeping efforts as part of the AU's peacekeeping mission and the United Nations multinational force. "The AU recognizes Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to peace," he stated.

The conference also emphasized the importance of enhancing the African Standby Forces (ASF) for rapid deployment in crises across the continent. Abayomi called for new

funding mechanisms and renewed political commitment from AU member states to optimize ASF's effectiveness. "Despite some progress, the ASF remains not fully operational due to a lack of political will and finance," he noted.

He also warned that increasing geopolitical competition and rivalries among major powers are undermining Africa's collective efforts, leading to border conflicts and political instability, which threaten the AU's Agenda 2063.

During a panel discussion, Ethiopia's National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) Director-General Redwan Hussein (Amb.) advocated for a Pan-African defense cooperation strategy to counter foreign intervention in the continent's internal affairs. He stressed the need to strengthen African defense forces against terrorism, extremism, insurgencies, and cross-border conflicts.

Burundi's National Defense and War Veterans Minister Mutabazi Alain (Eng.) praised Ethiopia's role in regional and continental

peace. He added that Ethiopia's strong air force base positions it as a potential training hub for African nations.

Panelists emphasized the importance of intelligence sharing, allied training, and mutual support in peacekeeping efforts to ensure resilient security systems across the continent. The delegates also toured key Ethiopian defense and security institutions, including the Ethiopian Air Force Headquarters, Ethiopian Defense Engineering Industry Corporation in Bishoftu, NISS, Artificial Intelligence Institute, and the Federal Police Headquarters.

Africa faces a range of security threats that vary across regions, including terrorism and violent extremism from groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabab in Somalia. Ethnic and sectarian conflicts contribute to instability, and political instability and coups undermine governance. Maritime insecurity, particularly piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and Red Sea, poses risks to trade routes, while expanding digital infrastructure has led to rising cybersecurity threats.

Toyo Solar Energy to invest

IPDC's Investment, Promotion, and Marketing Sector Deputy CEO Zemene Junedine told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Toyo Solar Energy is finalizing preparations to begin operations with a capital of seven billion birr. The company has been allocated approximately 1.2 million hectares of land and manufacturing spaces, with operations expected to start within three months. Additionally, the company plans to rent over 200 apartments.

Upon its launch, Toyo Solar Energy aims to export its products to markets in the Middle East, India, and the United States, while creating permanent employment opportunities for around 400 individuals.

Zemene noted that the company's established reputation and experience would boost the park's potential to attract further investment, contributing to entrepreneurship, technology transfer, human capital development, and foreign direct investment in Ethiopia.

He also highlighted that following recent macroeconomic reforms and policy incentives, several investors are exploring opportunities in various sectors, particularly in the Dire Dawa free trade area.

The Deputy CEO mentioned the rising interest from Japanese, American, and Russian investors in the Dire Dawa Free

Trade Area, while noting the significant growth of Chinese investments, particularly in the Bole Lemi, Kilinto, and Kombolcha industry parks.

The Corporation is collaborating closely with the Ethiopian Investment Commission, the Foreign Ministry, and other key stakeholders to attract more international investments. It is also working in partnership with consulates around the world to facilitate these efforts.

Emphasizing efficient and effective service delivery, Zemene added that IPDC remains focused on engaging more investors in the country's industrial parks.

Opinion

Globally occurred natural disasters need collaborative effort

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Several countries in the world, regardless of their any status, are exposed to recurrent natural disasters. They suffer from heavy rain falls, landslides, and overflow of rivers, storms, and unexpected weather changes. Being engaged in agriculture for their livelihood, many Africans, including Ethiopians are exposed to various kinds of natural disasters. Yet, as farmers and cattle raisers, they are the major contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of their countries.

According to experts in the sector, agriculture contributes to high employment and income of the rural people. It is also a major earner of foreign exchange by providing outputs for export. Based on this reality, Ethiopia has adopted a strategy of agricultural development-led industrialization (ADLI). One of the objectives of this strategy has been poverty reduction through the generation of output, employment and income that would reduce poverty. This strategy also underlines poverty reduction and economic growth with emphasis on smallholder farming. This strategy is viewed as a means to improve the living standards of the Ethiopian people in general. However, agricultural production is mainly characterized by low productivity, poor access to land and inputs.

There is little capacity in the African regions, particularly the Horn region to avoid natural disasters that affected agricultural activities. There is insufficient knowledge in risk management, technology and skill to avoid or evade disasters. Added to these problems are poor infrastructure and underdeveloped institutions. The challenges mentioned earlier and the various constraints of development exacerbated the vulnerability of Africans, including Ethiopians. They are exposed to climate change, leading to food insecurity and social conflicts over accessing natural resources.

Studies reveal that chronic food insecurity affected the Africans, including Ethiopians, even in times of sufficient rainfalls. Most of the people do not earn enough income to access basic goods and services. Studies have also shown that crop cultivation and pastoral activities are very sensitive to climate changes. These changes have caused food insecurity and poverty in the African rural areas. The lives of rural people are closely linked to seasonal rainfall patterns, with hunger declining significantly after the rainy seasons. Yet, climate variability negatively impacts rural livelihoods.

Studies confirm that drought is the most destructive natural hazard in the Horn countries. Researchers suggest that climate change would reduce the GDP drastically, mainly through its effects on agricultural productivity and production. These changes also impede economic activities and aggravate existing social and economic problems. Thus, the Horn countries, including Ethiopia become vulnerable to drought, epidemics, and flood induced by climate change. This also entails pests, wildfire and landslide among others.

Studies indicate that these hazards occurred with varying frequency and severity. Some

resulted in disasters and social conflicts, while the impacts of others were more localized. There have occurred several national and localized droughts in the past. The rural communities have managed most of these disasters using their own coping mechanisms. In the past several decades many major droughts had occurred affecting most parts of the Horn area.

The magnitude, frequency and the effects of droughts have increased through time. Also, the frequency of regional droughts caused severe food shortage affecting millions of people. Experts are of the opinion that the effects of drought are often combined with other disasters. Specially, migratory pest or locust infestation has been a serious problem in some parts of the Horn countries, including Ethiopia.

The prevalence of some crop diseases has also increased when climatic conditions were favorable for pests and locusts. Moreover, the increasing trend of disaster associated with drought and other hazards, was manifested in the increasing size of people demanding food aid. Several millions of people needed food assistance amounting to thousands of tons annually. There were also people who needed food assistance during normal years and these have been included in the productive safety net programs. Also, the number of people negatively affected by drought has been significant in most parts of the Horn region.

Both human and livestock epidemics are also induced by climate change shocks. Another shock induced by climate variability is flood. Rivers overflowing their banks have negatively affected people and their properties, especially in the lowland areas. Some of these floods have caused disasters which claimed the lives of several people. These floods also displaced thousands of people and destroyed their economic assets.

The Horn countries, being mountainous with rugged and steep slopes have faced extensive deforestation. Rains are sometimes heavy and torrential. Rivers converge in low basins causing huge flows of water. Studies show that the watersheds of the major rivers are highly degraded with small cover of vegetation, reducing permeation into the ground and increasing runoffs. In some years, unprecedented water flash and river flood disaster occurred during the winter season, with a devastating impact, damaging the livelihood and homes of people. Some of these people lost their lives and their productive assets worth millions of dollars.

The flooding due to river bank overflow has claimed the lives of several people and damaged the productive assets of thousands of people in most countries of the Horn, including Ethiopia. As mentioned earlier, drought, flood and epidemics, and conflict in these countries have also strong relation with climatic shocks. They caused scarcity of productive resources among rural community.

The climate changes induce shocks leading to communal conflicts. These social conflicts have been going on between different groups of people residing as neighbors. The causes of these clashes have mostly been shortage

of arable land, grazing areas and freshwater along the borders of districts and villages.

The struggle for resource control has been the major cause of tension among the rural people in the Horn region. As a result, many people have lost their livelihoods, assets, and lives. Studies also show that other disasters like landslides, volcanic eruption and earth quake are categorized as non-climate ones. They mostly occur in some parts of Ethiopia causing damage to infrastructure, human lives, and livelihoods.

Though detailed information on the effects of hazards is very limited, there have occurred internal displacements of people due to conflict and climate change. The properties of these internally displaced persons have already been damaged. Climate change is considered as a variation in the properties of the climate system over a long time. Thus, average fluctuations in rainfall, temperature, and other factors over a longtime may represent climate change.

Experts suggest that variability may result from natural changes within the climate system. This is related to the major livelihood activities of the rural people in Ethiopia. These activities are crop production, livestock rearing, and natural resource extraction. Only a small number of the rural people are engaged in off-farm activities. Due to inherent link of these livelihood activities to natural resources, the rural people are mainly at the mercy of uncertainties caused by climate change, including flooding and drought.

In the previous decades, climate changes have been recognized as additional factor which will have heavy influence on the Ethiopian rural livelihood activities. The spatial distribution of impacts will vary based on the ability to respond to them. However, these impacts may be unexpected and appropriate measures may not be easily applied in advance.

Effects of climate variability on the agricultural sector are manifested directly on changes in land and water resources. These, in turn, lead to changes in the frequency and intensity of droughts, flooding, and storms. Climate change may result in long-term water shortages, worsening soil conditions, drought and desertification. They also cause diseases and outbreak of pests on crops and livestock. Climate change also raises sea levels and over flooding of rivers. Areas that are vulnerable are expected to face reduction in agricultural productivity and fall in crop yields. Increasing use of marginal land for agriculture activities may compensate for food shortage.

Experts believe that in the absence of relevant strategies to respond to climate change and

variability, diverse negative impacts are expected. As a result, the likely effects of climate change on the agricultural sector may cause concern over the future food production in the Horn area. Early global estimates predict significant reduction in grain production due to global warming. Given the range of warming predicted, regional and local variations in agricultural production is expected to be high.

Experts predict that the worst impacts of warming will be in tropical regions. Globally, a spatial shift of crops and agricultural practices take place away from the tropics toward the temperate and polar regions. These events lead to losses in production in both the developed and developing countries. Dry land areas where rain and water shortages are the norm, they are likely to be among the most vulnerable. Declines in aggregate production are anticipated in most of African countries, including Ethiopia. Experts are seriously concerned that climate change is on the rise given the linkage of the agricultural sector to poverty.

It is expected that adverse effects on the agricultural sector will exacerbate the incidence of rural poverty. Also, low productivity in agriculture has negative effects on poverty stricken people of the Horn, including Ethiopia. Its effects are severe where the agricultural sector is an important source of livelihood for the majority of the rural people. It is revealed that the economic effect of climate change on the agricultural sector could comprise a large share of the GDP.

In Ethiopia, it is estimated that nearly 85% of the population is dependent on the agricultural sector. Moreover, its sub-sectors, such as crop, livestock, natural resource extraction, fishery, etc are vulnerable to climate change effects such as natural resources degradation, flood, diminishing household assets, etc.

With low technological and capital stocks, the agricultural sector is unlikely to resist the additional pressures of climate change. As a cause of rural poverty it poses immense challenges on rural households and social development in Ethiopia.

There should, therefore, be a realistic strategy of economic development that may reduce or minimize exposure of the Ethiopian people to natural disasters. Collaborative efforts are essential to resist natural disasters and rehabilitate the victims.

Collaborative efforts are essential to resist natural disasters and rehabilitate the victims

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

Business & Economy

Enhancing role of Diaspora in the nation's economic development

BY ABEBE WOLDEGIORGIS

According to sources obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about five million Ethiopian Diasporas are resided in USA, Europe, Canada, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

Most of the Diaspora living in the economically advanced countries are employed and earn handsome amounts of money and send portions of it to their relatives living in their home country in the form of remittances, which contribute to the nation's Gross National Product (GNP).

Most Ethiopian Diasporas residing in the Middle East and Gulf States are working as housemaids and supporting their relatives at home by sending hard currency.

Cognizant of the role of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the nation's economic development endeavor, government in the last three decades tried its level best to attract them to come here and be part on the development efforts. It provided land to construct their residential houses, facilitated them to open bank account and to deposit their hard currency and use it as per the requirement of the National Bank.

Currently, a number of Diaspora has come here and invest their money and engaged in large scale farm, manufacturing and service sectors and created job opportunities to thousands.

Recently, the Ethiopian Diaspora Service (EDS) announced that, the new macro-economic reform has created favorable conditions geared to benefit the Diaspora community by providing substantial benefits

As part of the country's macro-economic reform, an application called "unite. et" that enables the opening of accounts and transfer of foreign currency has been launched, it was learned. Through this application, it is possible to open foreign currency accounts with the desired amount, including current, savings, and fixed-term options.

Ethiopians living inside the country and abroad as well as foreigners of Ethiopian origin and foreigners residing in Ethiopia can access the service. The Ethiopian Diaspora Service Deputy Director General, Belayneh Aknaw told local media that the macro-economic reform has brought numerous benefits to the Diaspora community.

One of these benefits is enabling the Diaspora community to legally exchange foreign currency and prevent illegal transfers. Allowing the Diaspora community to open foreign currency accounts within the country will enable them to participate in various investment sectors, he added.

According to him, this will increase the country's foreign currency reserves.



The reform provides opportunity for the Diaspora community to significantly contribute to the country's economy, both directly and indirectly. The Deputy Director General revealed that the country expects to get 6 billion USD in remittances this Ethiopian fiscal year.

In addition, the Diaspora community has been strengthening its participation in the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). For instance, 329,000 USD has been raised through a recently launched platform, Belayneh stated.

Since the beginning of the GERD project, the Diaspora community has contributed 50 million USD, and efforts are being made through various initiatives to raise 3 million USD this year.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Service revealed that Ethiopians in the Diaspora and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin have legally transferred an average remittance of over 4.5 billion USD annually during the last five years, it was learnt. The participation of the Diaspora in the calls for nation in the development of the country is ever growing.

He also said that the amount of foreign exchange remittance legally sent home by Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin is steadily growing. The amount of remittance transferred during the reform years have greatly increased compared to the amount transferred during the pre-reform years. This is due to the reformative actions taken to enhance the participation of the Diaspora in the national economy, Belayneh stated.

The Deputy Director General noted that various activities have been conducted in cooperation with concerned stakeholders to establish an efficient and alternative legal means and systems in which the Diaspora can transfer money.

He further stated that over the last eight months of last fiscal year, 1,745 Diaspora members have opened accounts in

domestic banks and deposited more than 2.2 million USD.

According to the Deputy Director General, lands have been delivered for the execution of 210 development projects of the Ethiopian Diaspora worth 17 billion Birr during nine months of the last fiscal year. He added that 21 of these projects have now become fully operational providing employment opportunities for 1,000 Ethiopians.

Furthermore, more than 17 million USD has been collected over the last 9 months from the Diaspora in kind and cash to the construction of GERD, Dine for the Nation initiative and other philanthropic and development programs.

Belayneh stated that differences on outlooks on various issues of the country did not deter members of the Ethiopian Diaspora community to participate in all development issues of the country.

He further explained that the government is doing everything to scale up the participation of the Diaspora in cooperation with concerned stakeholders and regional governments urging the Diaspora to continue responding to the calls of their country and participate in the development of the nation.

Minister of Planning and Development, Fitsum Assefa recently delivered reports on the economic performance and the Second phase of Homegrown Economic Development performance to the Council of Ministers as well as key development plan for the next fiscal year. Over the last 10 months of the past fiscal year, Ethiopians in the Diaspora have delivered a remittance of 4.2 Billion USD, the Minister reported.

As to her, to attain Ethiopia's economic development endeavor obtaining money, technical support, knowledge transfer and capital is critical and to that end, the role of the Diaspora is immense. She further said that countries such as China and Japan, in their economic growth formative years, the Diasporas' money brought from

abroad in the form of remittance that played pivotal role in lifting up millions out of abject poverty.

Particularly in 1980s, 10 billion Dollar remittance was sent by the Chinese Diaspora and helped the country in expanding the manufacturing and transforming agriculture from subsistence to surplus production.

She also said that currently, the government has identified sectors that need foreign investment and among others, manufacturing, Information and Communication Technology, tourism and mining can be mentioned.

According to the International Migration Organization, many countries' experiences indicate that Diasporas not only send remittance to their country of origin but also brought their technical skills and knowledge and engaged in various economic activities.

For instance, thousands of Nigerian Diasporas working as physicians and engineers in USA and Canada and side by side with sending money, they came to their country to engage in serving their country and teach in universities and to that end the government plays pivotal role in supporting their programs.

The inflow of remittance money is vital to shore up foreign currency shortage, enhance the nation's foreign currency reserve accumulation, strengthen the nation's capacity to serve its debt and stimulate the economy. But it only happens when the money comes in the formal and legal channel. The other way round has its own negative consequence.

If it came through the informal channel, it exacerbates black market, aggravates inflation, creates scarcity of commodities in the market, dry up the flow of hard currency to the banks in the formal way, recess export and increases illegal trade and consequently hampers economic growth.

In the past, there was a huge gap in the Dollar with Birr exchange rate between the formal and the parallel market. as the result, the Diaspora living abroad preferred the informal channel to send money to their relatives because in the parallel market their relatives earn more Birr than in the formal channel which is in bank. And such practices for long had detrimental effect on the economy.

The recently introduced new exchange rate regime more or less narrowed the gap of the exchange rate of Birr-Dollar and inspired by this new development, Diasporas enhanced their sending remittance in the formal channel which in turn alleviates the nation's hard currency shortage.

Hence, the ongoing measures taken by the government to create enabling environment to the Diasporas to send the remittance in the formal channel and deposit it in bank can be said remarkable.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia's National Contribution to Hunger-Proofing the World

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Ethiopia will soon host an international conference on World without Hunger from November 5-7, 2024, in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia will showcase her achievements and challenges in combating hunger and food insecurity through the representation of a high government delegation including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh, Melaku Alebel, Minister of Industry, Belete Mola, Minister of Technology and Innovation, Dr. Engineer Habtamu Etefa, Minister of Water and Energy and Dr. Girma Amante, Minister of Agriculture.

The World without Hunger Conference is expected to deliberate on the gravest challenges of our time. It is a three-day long event consisting of solution-oriented technical sessions, an investment forum, and a high-level political forum.

Over 1,500 high-level stakeholders, including Heads of State/Government, Ministers, UN agencies, the private sector, financial institutions, donor community, DFI/IFI, civil society, non-governmental organizations, academia, and media will attend the conference.

The conference is co-organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Government of Ethiopia, with technical assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

It is reported that the Conference will deliberate on three main agendas each for one day, including challenges and solutions to combat hunger and food security issues, Mobilizing Investment for Sustainable Food Security Initiatives and High-Level Political Forum on Global Action Against Hunger.

The general definition of hunger denotes that it is the distress associated with a lack of food. The threshold for food deprivation, or undernourishment, is fewer than 1,800 calories per day. Undernutrition goes beyond being a shortage of calories. It signifies deficiencies in energy, protein, and/or essential vitamins and minerals.

FAO defines hunger as an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume a sufficient amount of calories (dietary energy) regularly to lead a normal, active, and healthy life. For decades, FAO has used the Prevalence of Undernourishment indicator to estimate the extent of hunger in the world; thus, "hunger" may also be referred to as undernourishment.

According to the FAO, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

According to a report issued by WHO on July 24, 2024, around 733 million people faced hunger in 2023, equivalent to one in eleven people globally and one in five in Africa, according to the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report published today by five United Nations specialized agencies.

The annual report, launched this year in the

Addressing the multifaceted challenges of food security in Africa is essential to ensure a better future for the continent's growing population

context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting in Brazil, warns that the world is falling significantly short of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger, by 2030. The report shows that the world has been set back 15 years, with levels of undernourishment comparable to those in 2008-2009.

Despite some progress in specific areas such as stunting and exclusive breastfeeding, an alarming number of people continue to face food insecurity and malnutrition as global hunger levels have plateaued for three consecutive years, with between 713 and 757 million people undernourished in 2023—approximately 152 million more than in 2019 when considering the mid-range (733 million).

Regional trends vary significantly: the percentage of the population facing hunger continues to rise in Africa (20.4 per cent) and remains stable in Asia (8.1 per cent)—though still representing a significant challenge as the region is home to more than half of those facing hunger worldwide—and shows progress in Latin America (6.2 per cent). From 2022 to 2023, hunger increased in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and most African subregions.

According to CONCERN WORLDWIDE, the world produces enough food to feed all of its 8 billion people, yet 733 million people (1 in 11) go hungry every day. Hunger rates in Africa are especially high, with 1 out of 5 people going hungry each day. In addition, the organization reports that 2.8 billion people around the world cannot afford a healthy diet—35% of the global population. In low-income countries, 71.5% of people cannot afford a healthy diet. In high-income countries, that figure drops to 6.3%. According to the 2024 Global Hunger Index, hunger levels are ranked serious in 36 countries.

The 2024 Global Hunger Index also rates

hunger levels as Alarming in 6 countries: Burundi, Chad, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen. The number of people experiencing hunger has gone up by approximately 152 million since 2019. As of this writing, the Integrated Food Phase Classification (IPC) estimates that 1.33 billion people around the world are experiencing famine or famine-like conditions. Half of all child deaths are linked to malnutrition. Furthermore, 10.9 million people die from hunger-related causes every year; many are children under the age of 5.

If current trends continue, about 582 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030, half of them in Africa, warn the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Program (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO). This projection closely resembles the levels seen in 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted, marking a concerning stagnation in progress.

What does the situation look like in terms of food insecurity in Africa?

Food shortage is a widespread issue in several regions across Africa, with some areas experiencing higher levels of food insecurity than others. Some of the major hunger-prone areas in Africa include: parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, and Djibouti, has been prone to recurrent droughts and conflicts. These factors have led to food shortages and acute malnutrition.

Countries in the Sahel, such as Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Senegal, often face food insecurity due to a combination of factors like erratic rainfall, desertification, and conflicts.

Ongoing conflicts and civil unrest have disrupted agriculture and led to severe food shortages and famine in South Sudan. The situation is exacerbated by displacement and limited humanitarian access.

The eastern part of the DRC, in particular, faces chronic food insecurity. Conflict and displacement in CAR have disrupted food production and access to food, making many regions of the country vulnerable to hunger.

The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's northeastern regions has led to widespread displacement and food shortages.

Conflict, displacement, and limited humanitarian access in Sudan and Kordofan have contributed to food insecurity in these regions while economic challenges and drought have led to food shortages and hunger in Zimbabwe.

In terms of agricultural production, much of Africa's agriculture is characterized by smallholder farmers who often lack access to modern farming techniques, improved seeds, and adequate infrastructure. Low agricultural productivity is a significant constraint on food security.

Land Degradation: Soil erosion, deforestation, and land degradation are common problems in many African countries. These factors reduce the available arable land and make it difficult to sustain agricultural practices.

Despite the availability of a large number of

river basins and other water bodies

Water scarcity: Access to clean and reliable water sources are essential for agriculture, and many African countries face water scarcity, which hampers agricultural production and productivity.

Abject poverty and income inequality in many African countries limit people's access to food. Even when food is available, it may be too expensive for many to afford.

Political conflicts and civil wars in several African countries disrupt food production and distribution systems, leading to food insecurity for affected populations.

Inadequate transportation and storage facilities hinder the efficient movement of food from farms to markets. This lack of infrastructure contributes to food waste and higher prices.

Lack of access to markets is another inhibitor to the promotion of food security in Africa. Many smallholder farmers have limited access to markets, which can result in the loss of potential income and discourage agricultural investment.

Food loss and waste are other problems that challenge the promotion of food security in Africa. A significant portion of food is lost or wasted in the supply chain, from production to consumption, exacerbating food security challenges.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, efforts to address the problem of food security in Africa include the above-mentioned strategies but are not limited to those indicated below.

Among other things, the introduction of Improved Agricultural Practices by promoting sustainable and modern farming techniques, providing access to high-yield seeds, and implementing efficient irrigation systems can enhance agricultural productivity in Africa.

Investment in Infrastructure: developing transportation and storage infrastructure can reduce food losses and ensure that surplus food can be stored and transported to areas in need.

Developing climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies to mitigate the impacts of climate change could serve as a strategy that could help to promote food security.

Furthermore, providing smallholder farmers access to credit and financial services can enable them to invest in their farms and increase their productivity.

Implementing social safety nets, such as food assistance programs, can help vulnerable populations during times of food scarcity.

Promoting education and training for farmers can improve their skills and knowledge, leading to increased agricultural productivity.

Addressing political conflicts and instability is crucial to ensuring a stable environment for food production and distribution.

Efforts to improve food security in Africa require collaboration between governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Addressing the multifaceted challenges of food security in Africa is essential to ensure a better future for the continent's growing population.

Art & Culture

Magnificent cultural demonstrations at Damera...Dubusha

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

(Travel Story)

Culture is the element that portrays the identity of human beings exceedingly. It encapsulates the identity of a person and his or her viewpoint and character in general. Ethiopia, the mother of thousands of cultural identities, is characterized by its wholeness in the issue. Among the interesting and unique cultural features, Gamo Zone had peculiar beauty and merit in its culture and identity. *The Ethiopian Herald* was there to witness this fact.

We arrived at Arba Minch from Addis on the evening of Meskerem 15. The next day we got up early and headed to the office of the Culture and Tourism Department of Gamo Zone. After we introduced ourselves and our objectives to the officers, we were welcomed by the department head, and we got the communication expert to come with us to help us in advance facilitate things. Together with Dr. Seid Mohammed, who is the research director of the Chamo Campus of Arba Minch University, we started our journey to Dorzie at 9:00 am. We got in Dorzie at around 1:20 p.m. Dorzie is a small district. But that day it was forced to accommodate things beyond its capacity. Lots of guests, tourists, journalists, musicians, and demonstrators of the culture were thronging the marketplace of the district. Everybody was too fascinated with the unfolding event. I was taken by surprise by the strange happening. Everything I was seeing was peculiar and very attractive. New things began to happen without allowing the first to cease. Awe-inspiring events were taking place here and there. First I was calling the cameraman to take pictures, but then I preferred just to understand things as much as I could.

At that marketplace, over 2000 oxen were slain. Lumps of raw and fresh meat were laid on green leaf carpets here and there. Some were smoking cultural pipes. Cultural dances and singing instantly took place. Older ladies sat apart at the other edge of the market, gulping cultural liquor called Korefe. People continued uttering Yo Maskela Yo Yo with an eye-catching jump. Out of a sudden, Dr Seid alerted me to start our journey to Kogota, where the following cultural event took place.

We arrived at the place at around 4:00 pm. Before reaching at the meeting cultural place called Dubusha, our coordinator let us alight out of the car to see an event. The action was so fast that the cameraman and I were almost running to catch up. We saw a crowd of baby boys in the age bracket 7 and 9. They had put on culturally made trousers like Dinguza. They added the leather of a tiger on their shoulder. One



Photo by Hadush Abreha

criterion for these boys was their being uncircumcised. They were barefooted. These boys were walking fast through the cereal food plants that did not have pathways. They were simply walking. My mind was about to bust out. Many whys.... I finally got up with the Halka or chief of that area and other guests who were very familiar with the culture.

They all told me that those boys were the ones who received the leadership position called Kalona. This shows their appointment by the leaders of the community or that Derie chief. These boys were highly recognized and respected by the people. Whatever they say the command was respected and translated into action with alacrity by the community. Their basic responsibility was preserving the field of Dubusha. The field is seen as a sacred one that the grazing of cattle and other human activities are prohibited in the field. Particularly when Meskel holiday draws close, the field is reserved. To show this these boys warned the people and the chiefs stemmed the areal plant called Kerkeha. If this plant is cut and poled in the field, it means that it is forbidden to let the cattle graze it. Thus, their power

transition which is made per year or two is made at Damera or eve of Meskel.

The other fascinating culture that took place at the same day was Sophie. In Gamo culture when a woman gets married, she is taken to the family of her husband. The host family take care of the bride by feeding her delicious and relevant foods. Besides this, the woman is not expected to take care of household chores. It is the mother and sister of her husband who prepares food and takes over the routines of the house. Before she got out to Sophie at Dubusha on the mentioned date, she should not be seen by the community. It is a taboo to watch a woman at any place before she gets out at Sophie. Though the marriage is made legally or culturally, the marriage is going to be approved if the couples are seen at Sophie. At that day, the woman especially is expected to be decorated well. She wears a very respected and adored costume dress made from cotton in the area. She puts Buluko on it. She also put on various attractive jewelry and bracelets. On top of her dressing, she put on the garment made from leather. More than such decorations the most attractive thing was the amount of butter she had carried on her head. The

butter is layered smeared) higher on her hair to show how respected and well of the family of her husband economically and genetically is. Atop the butter, a leaf of ostrich is seen. Here again, the amount of the leaf, as the interviewed elders said, is a sign to mark how her tribe is great and generous in the society. Thus, the couples get up on a hilltop at Dubusha that the crowd can see them easily and identify who is going to be the one that fit the beauty and comfort competition. Thus, beyond getting recognition from the gathering, the people also made labeling on who is beautiful and whose body is kept well. Then the one that won this criterion is going to be the cause for the uplifting of the family and the tribe too.

After this cultural exhibition, there was another cultural program to take place at Dubusha. A power transition session was organized. Since this zone has been administered by a cultural system, leaders at different levels and chiefs are going to be alternated as per their tenure. The dressing and the protocols of the chosen chiefs used to be very different and the expected personal traits were quite different from the usual ordinary one. The chief or Huduga of the given Derie that means the culturally parted region, wears a cultural garment to be stylistically tied at his waist. He is not allowed to have any shorts inside. The implication as the interviewed elders said is to show how he frees his people. That is his sexual organ is supposed to stay free signifying he never oppresses the people he is leading. He is also expected to put on the respected garment called Gabi with the design of Dinguza at its edge. Dinguza is the artistic pattern that is made by interweaving black, yellow, and red threads which are used to mark the mean of Gamo people. The edge of this garment is supposed to be ended up in the right side of the person's shoulder. As the chief of Dita told to Herald, the meaning of making it to stay at this side is to imply that the chief is humble, optimistic, cautious, and always ready to serve his people. The chief added that the chiefs of a given Derie are supposed to hold a half metal made stick called Hurusa.

Though the ceremony was taking place at Damera at that Dubusha was proceeding apace,, time constraint was not allowing us to stay anymore. We had to get back to Arba Minch. We got into our car. Suddenly a resident of the locality asked us for a company. We invited him to join us. I asked him if he had any clue about the cultural proceeding that was taking place on the field. He was the right person. He briefed us on each activity that was taking place that day. I then categorized the issues to be addressed in different themes. Thus, major cultural portrayals seen during the day will be covered in the coming articles.

Society

Highlighting disability: Improving media representation

BY LEULSEGED WORKU

The role of media in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes is profound, particularly when it comes to representing marginalized groups, such as individuals with disabilities. Media serves as a powerful platform for influencing public opinion, providing a narrative that can either reinforce stereotypes or promote understanding and inclusivity. By giving visibility to the experiences of people with disabilities, media can challenge misconceptions and advocate for social justice, addressing the systemic barriers that hinder full participation in society. It is crucial for the media to recognize its responsibility in fostering empathy, awareness, and positive change.

With the growing recognition of the diverse experiences of individuals with disabilities, media outlets have a unique opportunity to serve as allies and advocates. Through thoughtful and accurate representations, media can highlight the strengths, capabilities, and contributions of individuals with disabilities, rather than focusing solely on the challenges they face. This shift in narrative is essential not just for entertainment and news purposes but also for educating the public and dispelling myths that contribute to discrimination and albinism. In doing so, media can play a critical role in normalizing conversations around disability and enhancing societal understanding.

Furthermore, inclusive media representation can empower individuals with disabilities by giving them a voice and a platform to share their stories. When people see themselves reflected in diverse media—from television shows and films to social media platforms—they experience validation and recognition of their lived experiences. This representation can bolster self-esteem and encourage individuals with disabilities to advocate for their rights and interests, fostering a sense of community and belonging. The media's commitment to inclusive storytelling can ultimately lead to a more equitable society where individuals with disabilities are viewed as integral members of the community.

Ultimately, the media has the potential to be a transformative force in promoting the interests and rights of individuals with disabilities. By prioritizing authentic representation and advocating for accessibility, media can bridge the gap between diverse communities, fostering understanding and compassion. As the dialogue surrounding disability continues to evolve, it is essential for media professionals to recognize their power and responsibility in shaping a more inclusive narrative that uplifts and celebrates the rich tapestry of humanity.

A frequent concern arising in discussions



By elevating the voices of people with disabilities through intentional and mindful coverage, we create a richer and more equitable media landscape for everyone

across various forums and media platforms is the inadequate coverage of individuals with disabilities. In a nation with a significant population of people living with disabilities, it is troubling to note that media programs dedicated to this community are grossly insufficient.

Coverage for people with disabilities should not merely entail the creation of programs labeled “People with disabilities.” Instead, it is crucial to promote the integration of inclusive content across all media formats—be it recreational, economic, or political. This integration means analyzing issues through the lens of people with disabilities. For example, when discussing economic matters, it is essential to include analyses that take into account the specific challenges and perspectives of disabled individuals.

Merely organizing a program exclusively for people with disabilities on a weekly or fortnightly basis does not equate to meaningful coverage. Such limited representation fails to foster true equality with other societal groups. Disability should be recognized as an essential aspect of society and should be addressed in the same context as other demographics, such as youth, women, teachers, or engineers.

Moreover, it's important to consider how disability is portrayed in media. Overemphasizing or misrepresenting disability creates discomfort not only for individuals living with disabilities but also for audiences at large. For instance, a person with a leg injury may find climbing stairs challenging; therefore, rather than expressing sadness or pity, we should focus on making environments more accessible. Such efforts illustrate a commitment to inclusivity, and it is

crucial to approach the topic with a sense of practicality and determination.

Another critical issue in media representation is the language used to describe disabilities. The nuanced use of language often stems from well-intentioned but misguided attempts to avoid offense. For example, the term “blind” has evolved over time; while it accurately describes a condition, it may not encapsulate the profound experiences of those living with visual impairments. Some argue that the term carries connotations that disregard the capabilities and inner visions of blind individuals, promoting instead a more respectful language that recognizes their experience.

To enhance the integration of people with disabilities into media coverage, there is a pressing need to consult with individuals from this community and relevant advocacy organizations. Their insights will help shape a more inclusive approach to language and representation. Coverage for people with disabilities should not be relegated to special segments; instead, it should be woven into the fabric of all content, ensuring that these vital perspectives are part of our broader societal discussions.

Furthermore, it is essential for media organizations to invest in training for their staff on disability awareness and inclusive journalism practices. Such training can help journalists understand the societal and economic barriers that people with disabilities face, enabling them to report with empathy, accuracy, and depth. Workshops and seminars led by individuals from the disabled community can be highly beneficial in equipping media professionals with the tools they need to showcase the true diversity and richness of disability experiences.

Equally important is the need for policy change at various levels of media regulation. Advocacy for more inclusive content creation should be paired with a push for regulations that require media outlets to adhere to standards of representation and accountability. Establishing guidelines can ensure that all media professionals recognize their role in shaping public perception and fostering a more inclusive society.

Promoting inclusive content in media is not merely a matter of representation; it is a step toward fostering understanding and compassion among all segments of society. By elevating the voices of people with disabilities through intentional and mindful coverage, we create a richer and more equitable media landscape for everyone. Embracing diversity in media is not an option but a necessity, one that can lead to groundbreaking shifts in societal attitudes and behaviors, ensuring that the lived experiences of every person are accurately depicted and valued.

Law & Politics

Unholy alliance with boomerang repercussion

BY EYUEL KIFLU

The Horn of Africa, a region rife with historical tensions and geopolitical complexities, appears increasingly vulnerable to destabilization. Central to this turmoil is Egypt, whose focus seems more aligned with its interests in the Arab world than with fostering constructive relationships in Africa.

Egypt's primary concerns revolve around its relationships with other Arab nations rather than engaging with the pressing issues facing its African neighbours. This is particularly evident in its long-standing disputes with Ethiopia over the Nile River, a critical resource for both nations. Egypt, as a downstream country, has historically sought to control the river's resources, often relying on colonial-era agreements to assert its claims. These agreements, however, have been contested by Ethiopia, which advocates for equitable water resource management that benefits all countries dependent on the Nile.

In a significant move towards collaboration, Ethiopia, along with five other upper basin countries, recently ratified the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). This agreement is aimed at promoting sustainable and cooperative management of the Nile's resources, a step that Egypt views with worry. The CFA represents a shift in the balance of power regarding Nile water rights, one that undermines Egypt's historical claims and its attempts to monopolize the river's use.

Egypt's dissatisfaction with Ethiopia's progress on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and by the CFA has further fuelled tensions. The GERD, which Ethiopia views as a symbol of national pride and a means to achieve energy independence, has been a source of anxiety for Cairo. As Ethiopia moves forward with this mega project, Egypt's attempts to destabilize the region seem to be intensifying.

Rather than seeking dialogue and cooperation, Cairo appears to be exploiting existing disagreements between Ethiopia and Somalia to further its agenda. The recent military agreements between Egypt, Somalia, and Eritrea raise alarms about Egypt's intentions in the region. Presenting itself as a peacemaker in Somalia, Egypt's actions could serve to exacerbate tensions rather than alleviate them.

The potential consequences of Egypt's involvement in Somalia are concerning. Analysts fear that these military

agreements could destabilize not only Somalia but also the wider Horn of Africa, which is already grappling with issues such as terrorism, political unrest, and humanitarian crises

Furthermore, the alignment of Egypt with Somalia and Eritrea could lead to increased military posturing and conflict, undermining efforts for peace and stability that are crucial for the Horn of Africa's development.

Dawit Mezegebe is a lecturer at Dilla University and a Ph.D. candidate at the Centre for African and Asian Studies of the Addis Ababa University (AAU-CAAS) and is also a member of the African Studies Professional Association think-tank. He raised concerns regarding Egypt's recent agreement with Somalia. Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), he argues that the agreement is not intended to benefit the Somali government but rather serves Egypt's goals of regional destabilization.

Dawit asserts that Egypt's military support for Somalia extends beyond merely arming the militant group Al-Shabaab; he describes it as an illegal arms transfer. He warns that this threat is not limited to the Horn of Africa but poses risks globally, given the interconnectedness of terrorist networks.

According to Dawit, Egypt's objective is to equip Al-Shabaab and similar groups to further its own interests rather than engage in genuine diplomatic efforts. He explains that the weapons supplied to Somalia could enhance the operational capacity of Al-Shabaab. He points out that the unchecked proliferation of arms from powerful nations in on-going global conflicts contributes to this issue.

Reflecting on historical context, Dawit notes that Ethiopia played a critical role in establishing a transitional government in Somalia following the fall of Siad Barre in the 1990s. He emphasizes that the Horn of Africa is not lacking in weaponry but rather in ambition for regional infrastructure and development.

He highlights the challenges posed by the absence of a permanent African seat on the United Nations Security Council, which exacerbates rivalries on the continent. He advocates for diplomatic solutions, emphasizing that cultural, linguistic, and religious ties connect the region.

Dawit highlights the African Union's weakness in addressing Egypt's actions, emphasizing that Egypt's involvement in the Horn of Africa affects Somalia's

neighbouring peace efforts. He advocates for a diplomatic approach to African issues, rooted in the principle of African solutions, and suggests legal measures for accountability.

Director of Interaction for Change in Africa (ICA), an Independent Think Tank, Worku Yakob (PhD), offers a contrasting perspective. He does not believe that Egypt's military support will significantly strengthen Al-Shabaab but warns that it could exacerbate existing tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia. He argues that the collaboration among Egypt, Somalia, and Eritrea lacks meaningful significance, particularly in light of recent arms deals amid rising tensions.

Worku contends that Egypt's ambitions to control the Nile's waters have led to increased regional destabilization, particularly as its previous diplomatic efforts have faltered. He suggests that one of Egypt's goals is to undermine the Ethiopian government in the ongoing proxy war, diverting attention from the contentious Abbay Dam issue.

He concludes that if the Ethiopian government navigates the situation carefully and raises awareness about these developments, the tripartite agreement involving Eritrea, Somalia, and Egypt may exert less pressure on Ethiopia. To counter Egypt's agenda, he advocates for the swift operationalization of the Abbay Dam to electricity production for Ethiopians and all consuming nations.

Overall as the situation unfolds, the importance of dialogue and collaboration among the countries of the Horn of Africa cannot be overstated. To navigate these complex relationships, it is imperative that regional leaders prioritize mutual interests and work towards equitable solutions for resource management. Only through cooperative efforts can the Horn of Africa hope to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Ethiopia's commitment to equitable water resource management, alongside its neighbours, offers a pathway to a more harmonious coexistence. However, the continued interference from Egypt presents a significant challenge. Also, the best option for Cairo is to ratify the CFA and refrain from exacerbating regional tensions. As a downstream country, Egypt should accept the equitable utilization of the Nile River; otherwise, it risks taking wrongful actions. During a press briefing on the CFA's officially entered into force, Ethiopia's Minister of Water and Energy, Engineer Habtamu Itefa, urged Egypt to join the CFA for the benefit of all basin countries.

To navigate these complex relationships, it is imperative that regional leaders prioritize mutual interests and work towards equitable solutions for resource management. Only through cooperative efforts can the Horn of Africa hope to achieve lasting peace and stability

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

Justice served!... Maybe!

It was a couple of years back. A group of us were in this café whiling away time over cups of coffee. This moderately dressed gentleman comes in and sits at a table near us. There was nothing particular or out of the normal that made you look at him twice had it not been for the way he placed his fame on the chair. It was as if someone threw him from a certain height. Someone who was in a hurry and came in for a quick cup of coffee wouldn't have done such an injustice to him practically slamming his backside on the hardwood chair as it was a very humble place and those were the best chairs they could do. Once he sat, in the process drawing more than a couple of curious eyes, it was clear this was a man maybe burdened by some uncomfortable thought; you now maybe his boss who never had good words for him once again getting on his nerves or his better half reading him the riot act.

Of course, the curios stare didn't last long as this was something perhaps most of the customers experienced every few days or even more frequently. Perhaps in his late thirties or early forties, he didn't seem to enjoy attention his actions brought to him. Mind you at least no one in our group knew who he was and no one cared until he did something which made almost everyone dig their angry eyes into him. His order of a cup of coffee was still being made when he does the unthinkable; he

pulls out a cigarette packet and draws one to the shock of everyone including the café staff. He was about to light it when a tiny waitress very cautiously and with her voice no louder than a whisper told him smoking was prohibited.

At first, he glares at her as if she had done him some wrong. Then he dismisses her with an aggressive wave of his hand. Another staff member who appeared to be the head waiter comes and with the politeness he could muster tells the gentleman that smoking was prohibited. This time the person calls him the foulest names and threatens him something bad would happen if he just doesn't get lost. It was some action which didn't win him any friends. If there had been any they now would have dropped him. In fact, with the fighting mode, he was looking for a real physical squabble with someone, anyone. A member of our group was halfway up his chair says he'll talk to him when a couple of hands pull him back. The message was conveyed. None of us craved the peacemaker role! By this time the guy was all horns and fangs!

The tiny waitress who first approached him and was waved away goes out of the café. Not more than a couple of minutes passed when she returned with a couple of young policemen and pointed out the man who at this time was already smoking. One of the policemen tells him it is illegal

to smoke in cafes. You know what the guy says? Something like, "It is no one's business and I can do whatever I want? What! Talking back to the policeman and with such a hostile tone this guy must have either lost his mind or was about to lose it with a couple of police batons getting the best of him. The mood was so tense more than a couple of customers hurried out.

The policeman tried to reason with him but his colleague must have made up his mind as he ordered the man to get up and follow them. The sarcastic laughter of the fellow was so stinging that it infuriated everyone so much that the second policeman in a succession of swift actions violently pulled him up turned him around and locked a pair of handcuffs on him. Believe it or not, some customers clapped! You know what happens then? The modern-day gladiator having been reduced so low starts pleading. The police were having nothing of it and while escorting him away one of them turned towards the customers and whispered the guy was a kebele official.

The guy was probably telling us in that place at the time that he was above the law. The fact is that many think on this line of being above the law because they hold some position in someplace. It is that "You don't know with whom you're dealing with!" thing.

A few weeks back I heard a similar story

but with a different twist. It was a few guys trying to smoke in a crowded place. This time the fellow who told me about the incident says the cigarettes smelled like anything but cigarettes. And this time there were three of them who appeared to have been drinking heavily. At first two male waiters confront them warning them smoking is forbidden. They laugh like anything, so say the fellow who told us the story. The waiters being young men in their twenties or somewhere around there do their best to control their emotions. They stood up to the aggressive behaviour of the three dudes. But that didn't help and the whole place was buzzing with tension as anything could happen any minute. The three display signs of being ready for anything like physical confrontation. Then what happened was not something not seen often.

A couple of older and somewhat stockier waiters from the neighbouring bar come in all prepared to take things into their own hands. The tension was growing as they told the three to leave the bar. Now faced with opponents larger and angrier than them the three appeared to hesitate. But having had drinks earlier they held their ground and started talking about their rights to be served. The stocky waiters have had enough, and the fellow tells us that one by one they drag the three brats off their seats things and throw them out into the street. Justice served!

Taking Sides!

Having relocated to the edge of town several months back after decades of living around the centre of town my idea of having a good time is going back to downtown or other areas closer to the center and having chats with a few friends of mine. I mean those are precious moments which you value as they mostly are free of talk about the darker sides of life, free of talk about events which do a disservice to your nerves and practically spoil your day.

On one such day recently we were having quite a good laugh with a friend when a guy we know came with two other guys; guys who at first sight give you that feeling that these were members of that breed who chase attention wherever and whenever they think they have the chance. Such are guys who practically kidnap your agenda with topics you have no interest in. So it was no wonder for us when the three of them pulled the chairs to our table without us offering them to join us. And there weren't also introductions as to who the hell they were and who the hell we were! Not a nice scenario. Of course, it wasn't that the fellow we know was any brighter having any form of a chat with people you completely know isn't very comfortable as more time than not you ran into difficulties for things you say or end up cursing yourself for having to listen to all the rubbish that comes from the strangers.

They ordered beer and to our delight, they

were told the cafe doesn't serve beer at that time of the day, not even barely 9:00 A.M. Though not happy they settled for the hot drinks. Now, I don't know how the actual talk (They did much of the talking!) got into the particular agenda of what was going on in the Middle East. I can tell you that it wasn't the sort of agenda I and my friend enjoyed during those times of small talk. The fellow we know says that one of his two friends with a somewhat bushy beard was a well-travelled guy and knew a lot about the rest of the world. Aha, here they come! We were in for some talk from one of those guys who knew everything to know under the sun. (By the way the info. About his being a well-travelled fellow, so we later heard, was that he travels to Dubai a couple of times a year! Well-travelled!)

The fellow indulged in talk about what was going on in the Middle East and we knew our day was already spoiled. His so-called information and 'analysis' were so bizarre that we struggled with ourselves not to just jump up and flee the place. Even if your knowledge of the place and all the mayhem currently going on over there is highly lacking you still would know the guy was narrating fiction the only true things being the names of the sides which were fighting. The other stranger was always nodding his head even when the fellow negates himself, something which happened every few sentences.

Then he turned to us and asked which side we supported. What the hell is going on here? Why should we take sides for all we care about events where there is more mystery than hard facts? Of course, even in his highly fictional story, he says he was all for one side and the reason he gave makes you think that the fellow wasn't only one of those attention seekers; but he must have some mental issues also. My friend stays numb while sizzling inside! All he wanted at that time was to give the fellow one good knock on the head with whatever came into his hands. I tell him that I don't take sides. He goes ballistic and demands that anyone cannot choose sides! You know what we did? The two of us got up almost at the same time and headed out settling our bill on the way. The so-called discussions were descending into some sort of torture! We later heard that this fellow was taken an expert not only on Middle East affairs but also the important issues of the world! It's a real tough, tough world! I tell you the issue of taking sides over many things is a very delicate matter even breaking apart the strongest of friendships.

Getting to the softer side of life recently a person back home for a couple of months of vacation asks me "What's your favourite book?" Ok, that is one question you come across now and then and it might appear to be the most harmless and easiest to answer of questions. Of course, more times than not it depends on whom you're talking to.

And I tell you, for most, it's a very difficult question to answer as there are many books one likes for different reasons. And also the very fact is you don't have to have any favorite book unless you're some book critic or something.

I tell this guy there isn't any title I can tell him is my favourite as I don't categorize the books I read on that line. The other problem is you might come up with ten titles and the fellow who asked you knows not a single one of them! That is a situation you might find yourself in more times than you would have expected. Believe me, when it comes to the book reading issue over here things are so muddled up I think the jury is still out. We're into times when some 'newly published' guy tells you he never reads Amharic books. The guy has just published an Amharic book of a couple of hundred pages and he says he doesn't read Amharic books! Yes, things over there are so bizarre. You even come across young people with flimsy books of poems in their names but haven't read a single book of poetry!

As the fellow insisted I tell him my favourite book I decided it was time for some upper-cut swing to put him in his place. So I say something like, "Are you asking me about the classics or the contemporary novels?" There was that "What the hell is this dude talking about!" and I knew it was what they call a homerun in American football! That did it! He changed subjects!

In Pictures

Introspection and cooperation

BY NAOL GIRMA

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed convened the Council of Ministers for a 100-day cabinet performance review, in which macroeconomic progress and key parameters were presented



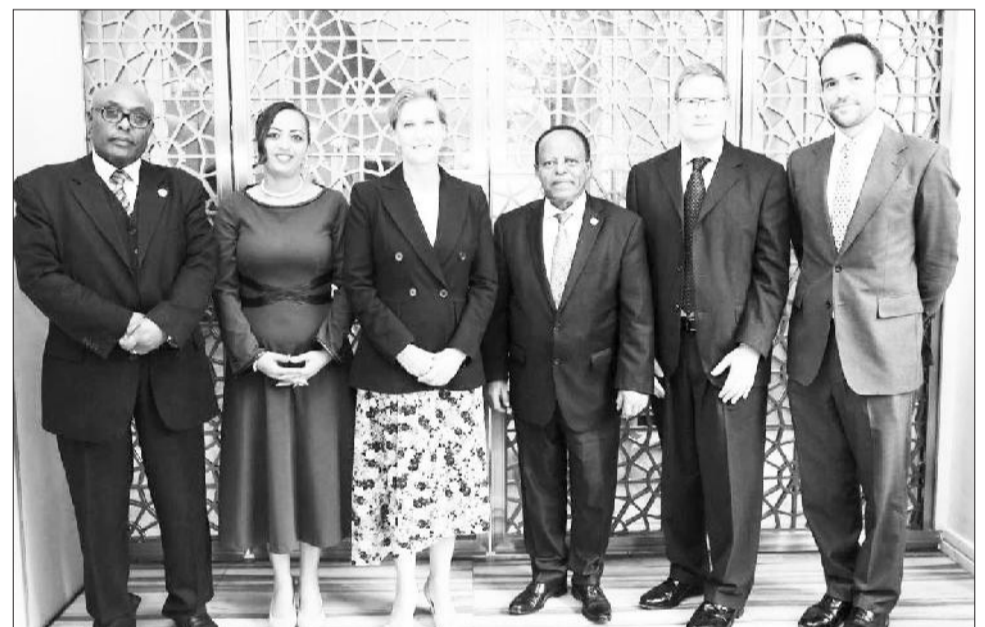
“We have commenced the 100 days cabinet performance review to set direction for the next quarter. We will review the reforms undertaken recently and identify key issues that will need to be addressed in the next quarter”
PM. Abiy Ahmed



“On behalf of the city administration, I am honored to congratulate you on winning the 2024 Smart City Leadership Award, chosen from among 72 countries and 115 peer city administration mayors at the event in South Seoul. We are deeply grateful for this recognition. The 2024 Seoul Smart City Leadership Award is a testament to the collective efforts of our city and the invaluable participation and coordination of our people. The achievement belongs to all of us”
Mayor Adanech Abeibie



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, in session of the BRICS Business Forum, has encouraged investors from the bloc to seize the opportunities available in Ethiopia.
In his video message at the plenary session of the forum in Moscow, the premier called on those investors from BRICS countries to engage in Ethiopia particularly, in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, renewable energy, mining, ICT and tourism.



President Taye Atske-Selassie received and held discussions with Her Royal Highness Sophie Helen Rhys-Jones, the Duchess of Edinburgh, during their meeting. President Taye briefed Her Royal Highness on current national and regional issues.
The president also expressed the gratitude of the Government of Ethiopia to the British Government for its support at the conference held in Geneva to jointly raise humanitarian aid for Ethiopia.

Head of Political Affairs and Counter Terrorism Focal Point for the African Union (AU), Babatunde Abayomi Taiwo commended the commitment of Ethiopia for its positive contribution to peace and security in Africa and globally.
The first African Defense Ministers Conference organized by Ethiopia on its own initiative kicked off in Addis Ababa at the Adwa Victory Memorial Museum this morning.

