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Gelila Manufacturing invests 2 bln Birr in export production

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA- Gelila Manufacturing PLC has officially commenced production of export-standard shoes and soles at Bole Lemi Industrial Park, marking a significant milestone with an investment capital of two billion Birr.

The inaugural ceremony, held yesterday, was attended by officials,

See Gelila Manufacturing... page 4



GreenGursha: Savoring joy of healthy eating

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

The World Food Day 2024 event recently spotlighted the right to nutritious, safe, and affordable foods amid global conflicts, climate shocks, and rising costs. These challenges are making healthy diets unaffordable for millions.

See GreenGursha: ... page 4

Ethiopia, Malaysia forge stronger ties

• *Eye expanded trade, investment*

BY STAFF REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia and Malaysia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening diplomatic relations that have flourished for over half a century, according to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

During an official working visit to Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Abiy held

discussions with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, where the two leaders agreed to deepen bilateral ties.

In a media statement, Prime Minister Abiy emphasized the significance of the over 50-year relationship between the two nations. Both leaders underscored the importance of high-level visits and dialogue in elevating cooperation across key areas.

In a message to Malaysian businesses, Abiy encouraged them to explore Ethiopia's fast-growing economy, which offers promising opportunities for international collaboration. The two countries identified several strategic sectors for enhanced cooperation, including trade, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and renewable energy, aligning with Ethiopia's long-term development ambitions.

See Ethiopia, Malaysia ... page 4

Envoys applaud Addis' corridor project for image transformation

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ambassadors and heads of missions from various countries have commended Ethiopia's ongoing corridor development project, highlighting its role in modernizing the capital and enhancing its global image.

During a tour of key developments yesterday, the diplomats praised the city's transformation efforts in line with international smart city standards. The delegation visited several landmark



See Envoys applaud ... page 4

Addis ramps up housing efforts with public-private investments

• *Noah Real Estate delivers 750 units*

BY YOHANES JEMANEH

ADDIS ABABA – The government is intensifying efforts to address Addis Ababa's housing shortage by introducing legal frameworks that promote both public and private investments, Deputy Mayor Jantir Abay announced during the launch of new residential units by Noah Real Estate.

Jantir emphasized that the reforms, including recent macroeconomic adjustments, are part of a broader strategy to foster holistic development. Addis Ababa, now open to joint ventures, aims to improve resource utilization, accelerate structural transformation, and tackle development bottlenecks.

"As the third international diplomatic hub and seat of the African Union, Addis Ababa needs rapid growth to meet its governance, employment, and infrastructure demands," the Deputy Mayor said.

He acknowledged that despite continuous



government efforts, demand for housing has outpaced results. To bridge the gap, the city is creating a favorable environment for private companies and public-private ventures to expand housing projects.

Among the key players is Noah Real Estate,

which has constructed approximately 10,000 homes over the past decade. On Saturday, the company handed over more than 750 residential apartments with two- and three-bedroom units, along with 32 villas and 45 commercial shops. The properties feature amenities such as a swimming pool, groundwater systems, and sports facilities.

Noah Real Estate's Founder and CEO, Theodoros Zerihun, shared that the company recently delivered 900 additional units and plans to launch construction of over 5,000 new homes next month. "In the last decade, we've delivered over 9,800 homes and commercial spaces to more than 25,000 buyers," Theodoros said, reaffirming the company's commitment to meeting Addis Ababa's growing housing demands.

The Deputy Mayor praised Noah Real Estate's efforts, noting that the newly inaugurated apartments and commercial buildings meet the city's standards and mark a significant step toward alleviating the capital's housing challenges.

New irrigation projects set to boost commercial agriculture

BY YESUF ENDRIS

BISHOFTU- Irrigation projects currently under construction will play a critical role in advancing commercial agriculture, according to Irrigation and Lowland Minister Abraham Belay (PhD).

The Minister, who leads the steering committee for the Productivity Enhancement Support for Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks and Youth Employment (PESAPYE) project, stated that the government is working closely with financial institutions to expand irrigation infrastructure.

Three major irrigation sites-Taba, Belechit, and Gidabo-have been evaluated by the committee, and Abraham emphasized the need for seamless coordination to complete the projects on time. The projects will primarily benefit youth in the Amhara, Oromia, and Sidama states, offering them employment opportunities, though the impact is expected to extend far beyond job creation.

"These projects will shift agricultural activities toward a more commercial focus," said Abraham. He also highlighted that businesses have already begun engaging at the early stages of development, ensuring continuity from groundwork to full operation.

The growing agro-processing sector, which depends on reliable agricultural outputs, will also benefit from these irrigation initiatives. "Strengthening agriculture through sustainable irrigation solutions is essential to meeting the demand of Ethiopia's expanding agro-industrial parks," the Minister remarked.

Agriculture Minister and committee member Girma Amentie (PhD) praised the irrigation efforts and called for increased financial resources to accelerate completion. "These projects are not just about irrigation; they represent a critical step toward achieving commercial agricultural transformation," Girma emphasized, underscoring the importance of timely delivery.

Ethiopia pushes for animal welfare to foster healthier communities

• *Observes World Animal Day 2024*

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA-Strengthening policies, raising awareness, and advancing infrastructure are essential steps to improving animal welfare, which contributes to building healthier communities and sustainable economic development, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) announced.

The MoA hosted an event under the theme "Investing in Animal Welfare for Human Wellbeing and Economic Prosperity", with the global tagline "The World is Their Home Too." The event brought together government and non-governmental stakeholders to address the role of animal welfare in public health, food security, and economic progress.

Wubshet Zewdie (DVM), Animal Health Lead Executive Officer at the MoA, emphasized that animal welfare is not merely about kindness but is fundamental to creating sustainable communities. "Animals play a pivotal role in our society and economy, directly impacting food security, public health, and economic development," Wubshet noted.

He highlighted that Ethiopia's ongoing efforts align with the Yelemat Tirufat initiative, focusing on increasing livestock production, reducing imports, and boosting exports. "Livestock health is critical to transforming our economy, ensuring food systems, and preventing the spread of zoonotic diseases," Wubshet added.

Ethiopia has made notable progress by aligning its national animal health



Wubshet Zewdie

strategies with global standards, enhancing disease control systems, and securing the livelihoods of millions dependent on livestock. The MoA continues to collaborate with government entities and international partners to strengthen animal welfare regulations and disease prevention efforts.

Brooke Ethiopia's Country Director, Yohannes Kassim, underscored the importance of improving the lives of working animals and the communities that rely on them. "We focus on transforming equid welfare, building sustainable animal health systems, and advocating for lasting change," Yohannes said.

Brooke Ethiopia has partnered with veterinary teaching institutions like Jimma, Hawassa, and Bahir Dar universities to develop capacity among

veterinary graduates and foster empathy for animals. The organization plans to expand collaborations to other universities, promoting responsible behavior toward animals across Ethiopia.

"Animal welfare reflects our humanity. It is not just a moral duty but an essential part of a just society. Animals provide companionship, support, and play crucial roles in many livelihoods," Yohannes remarked, reiterating the importance of effective policies for safeguarding animal welfare.

The event underscored that improving animal welfare requires multisectoral collaboration across ministries, states, local communities, and the private sector, ensuring that animal health is prioritized as part of Ethiopia's sustainable development goals.

Editorial

Opinion

Resilient Ethiopia surging on the avenue of development circumventing hurdles

In its recent research release, Business Insider indicated that Ethiopia is among the top ten countries that portrayed the healthiest development in 2024. Based on this fact, it is possible to prognosis that if Ethiopia manages to keep the tempo it displays in the economic sector, the future will be rosy, for the aforementioned positive turnout attended the acid test the country went through and the perseverance it maintained.

Ethiopia's economic development showcases resilience in the face of adversity. It withstood the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and cushioned the devastating impact of the two-year-long war that ravaged the northern part of the country. These hurdles notwithstanding, resuscitating, the economy succeeded in standing out of the continental crowd, as adduced by disinterested partners.

Though Western financial support and loans, usually attached with strings, dried up, the country got back on its feet by mobilizing finance from its domestic sources and circumventing hurdles. At this juncture, it suffices to mention how the country handled the US sanction by precluding Ethiopia from the AGOA opportunity.

Even if Western countries and financial institutions withdrew their support, loans, and investments Ethiopia turning its face to the east attracted investment from China, Turkey, and India, among others. Most investors homed in on manufacturing and agriculture with a particular focus on horticulture. This way the country could obtain the badly needed hard currency. Its decision to join BRICS is also a showcase of sagacity, for such bold decision helps it to slash down conditional aid and support as well as aid divorced from a genuine partnership of development.

The incumbent as well brought into play macroeconomic reform by introducing a market-driven hard currency exchange. The circulation of dollars in the black market is downsized. Because of this conducive situation, banks could raise their hard currency deposit since the Ethiopian diaspora can send their money in formal channels. Ethiopia, aiming at an economic overhaul, also intends to open its financial market to foreign banks.

As the country is endowed with bountiful resources and boasts a climate that allows investors to keep themselves work round the clock year wise Ethiopia has proved to be a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) hub.

Ethiopia is a country singled out for growth by the sweat of one's brow. It untapped and abundant, skilled human resources and land are the allurements that attract entrepreneurs eyeing lucrative business as attested by investors that benefited from the industrial parks of the country. These parks are conducive to the manufacturing industry. In the agroindustry sector, better outputs with added values are being produced creating income hikes.

Ethiopia is also striving hard to supply the foreign market with a multitude of products. Aside from European countries, it is supplying fruits to Middle East countries and African countries. It as well is feeding electricity to neighboring countries.

If Ethiopia preserves its tranquility and unity given its strategic location for trade and investment it will be a powerhouse of economic development whose perks go beyond the perimeter of the country. Its inspiration and conviction for common growth as witnessed in the birth of the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) is exemplary. It calls for a tap on the back of all aspects.

As citizens maintained the country's sovereignty for long repelling invaders, by the same token, this generation has to do the same getting fettering poverty behind its back. Otherwise, the country will become liable to turning a pushover for superpowers that want to optimize their gains and see to the alacritous execution of their diktats contravening the sovereign rights of loan and aid recipient countries.

Magazines and journalists that bring such astounding stories to the light too deserve appreciation.

Reconciling civic nationalism and ethnocentrism needs due commitment

BY SOLOMOND DIBABA

In Ethiopia, the contradiction between civic nationalism and ethnocentrism reflects the broader challenge of reconciling a deeply diverse society with the need for a unified state. While civic nationalism aims to create an inclusive, stable political environment, ethnocentrism threatens this by fostering division and competition among ethnic groups. Finding a balance between these two approaches remains a critical issue for Ethiopia's long-term stability and development.

Notwithstanding the contradictions between territorial ethnic federalism and civic nationalism, there is also a complex difference between factions in the same armed groups and political entities. It would be enough to mention the differences and rivalry in TPLF the OLF.

A complex combination of personal interest to grab power and lack of solid strategy among the armed groups in Amhara region and Oromia explain why these groups are having it difficult to engage in a peaceful dialogue with the government.

Those Ethiopians in the diaspora who never get into war but trigger ethnic conflicts and finance them never care about the plight of children and their mothers who suffer from their actions but fabricate misinformation that is far from the reality on the ground.

As long as the demands of various ethnic groups for socio-economic development is answered as long as they are represented in the political order in the country, there should not be any contradiction between civic nationalism and ethnic self-assertion. The fundamental question is what is the interest of the people of Ethiopia and how do they hope to fulfill these needs and interests? There is far greater difference between elitist political conspiracy to gain power by the gun and the genuine desire of the people of Ethiopia which the government needs to address.

We are in a situation in which ethnocentric armed groups are looting public property and abducting innocent citizens in demand for ransom, a barbaric action which has nothing to do with liberation, democracy and self-determination. The wars in Amhara and Oromia regions in the name of "struggle for survival and inclusion in government structure without vote is now serving as an inlet for foreign powers to meddle in the affairs of the country.

Commercializing on the agony of the people of Ethiopia cannot go on unabated because citizens have every natural right to live in peace and stability. Ethiopia has more than 100 political parties who have so far done nothing for the people of Ethiopia except complaining and coming up with emotionally charged and unworkable press releases. Some so called politicians and political groupings are already busy trying to fish in troubled waters.

Apart from Ethiopia, ethnocentrism is already taking roots and spreading its tentacles across Africa serving as a tool for triggering conflicts among African countries. This has created a breeding ground for the resurgence of terrorist groups, seas pirates and arms dealers and traffickers. Ethiopia is already busy singlehandedly fighting these forces in Somalia. This seems to create a favorable condition for armed groups who try to destabilize the country from within.

Emotionally charged hatred, bad languages, wrong profiling of the leadership of the country will never add up to resolving the challenges that this country is facing. National dialogue is he only viable alternative to finding solutions for the outstanding challenges of the country.

Is it possible to reconcile civil nationalism and ethnocentrism in Ethiopia? The writer of this article believes that it is possible but how?

Reconciling civic nationalism and ethnocentrism in Ethiopia requires a strategic balance between promoting national unities while respecting ethnic diversity. Here are several approaches to help achieve that balance:

As stated above, civic nationalism focuses on the idea of a shared national identity that transcends ethnic divisions. To reconcile this with ethnocentrism, Ethiopia can promote cultural diversity within the framework of a unified state. This means encouraging an inclusive narrative that values the contribution of each ethnic group while fostering a sense of belonging to the Ethiopian nation as a whole. National symbols, holidays, and public messaging can emphasize unity in diversity.

Ethiopia's ethnic federalism system, which grants power to ethnically defined regions, often fosters ethnocentric tendencies. Reforming this system to maintain basic human rights without emphasizing ethnicity would help. Moving towards a model where regional governance is based on geographic, economic, or administrative considerations, rather than ethnic lines, could reduce ethnic tensions while maintaining self-governance.

Ethnocentrism often stems from perceptions of unequal access to resources. Ensuring fair distribution of resources, development projects, and opportunities across regions and ethnic groups can help mitigate feelings of exclusion or marginalization. Government policies should prioritize development that benefits all regions, particularly those that have historically been underserved.

Democratic institutions can act as neutral mediators between ethnic groups, ensuring that political representation is based on citizenship and democratic principles rather than ethnic loyalty.

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News

GreenGursha:

Despite these global difficulties, Ethiopia has made significant strides in combating malnutrition. The government, in collaboration with development partners, is expanding access to nutrition for mothers, children, and pregnant women. A new food system document was introduced to address nutrition challenges, though malnutrition remains prevalent.

Knorr's latest campaign, themed #GreenGursha, promotes incorporating greens into Ethiopian meals through the cultural tradition of Gursha-sharing food by hand. This initiative celebrates Ethiopian culinary heritage and emphasizes the importance of healthy eating.

According to Almetsehay Zergawi, Head of the Ministry of Health's Food and Nutrition Office, Ethiopia faces significant nutritional challenges despite its agricultural potential. "Thirty-nine

percent of children under five experience stunting due to chronic undernutrition," she reported. In response, the government has introduced food-based dietary guidelines and a new food system strategy involving 15 public institutions to address the issue.

Almetsehay stressed the importance of agriculture in improving nutrition and described food as medicine. "The Ministry of Agriculture is committed to working closely with partners like Unilever to promote healthier eating habits," she said. Almetsehay also emphasized behavioral change as key to overcoming malnutrition, encouraging meals containing at least four food groups per serving and six food groups daily as recommended by the GreenGursha campaign.

Nutritionist and consultant Abenet Tekele cited a study from the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, which revealed that 75%

of children under two have no access to fruits and vegetables. He also pointed to research showing that over 60% of people's emotions are directly linked to their diet. Deficiencies in essential vitamins, such as Vitamin D, affect 95% of the population, leading to issues like depression, fatigue, and dizziness.

Abenet highlighted the importance of foods rich in folate, magnesium, and vitamins D, B, and C to maintain physical and mental health. He urged greater attention to pregnant women, noting that folate deficiency affects 50% of women, which can lead to serious birth complications. Ensuring access to vegetables and fruits could significantly improve maternal and child health outcomes, he added.

Kidist Woldesenbet, Head of the Ministry of Health's Nutrition Desk, reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing the National Food and

Nutrition Policy. Supported by a 10-year strategic plan, the policy aims to foster a healthy, productive society. Partnerships with the private sector, including Unilever, are pivotal to the campaign's success.

Unilever Africa Nutrition Platform Director Selamerchristos Belay expressed excitement about the campaign's positive reception. "This initiative showcases our commitment to promoting green vegetables in Ethiopian cuisine and celebrating the richness of Ethiopian culinary traditions," he said.

Knorr enlisted popular comedian and TV personality Eshetu Melese to further promote the campaign. His humorous approach resonated with audiences, inspiring them to embrace greens as part of their daily meals. "Gursha with Greens" became a memorable slogan of the event, encouraging people to see vegetables as both delicious and essential to their diets.



Gelila Manufacturing...

invited guests, and industry stakeholders.

Speaking at the event, Deputy CEO of the Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) for Corporate Resource Management, Alemayehu Seifu, emphasized that the participation of local companies like Gelila Manufacturing would play a crucial role in advancing Ethiopia's economic reform efforts. "This operation will not only generate foreign exchange but also create job opportunities and add value to the leather sector," he stated, underscoring the IPDC's commitment to supporting both local and foreign investors.

Gelila Manufacturing Owner and CEO, Berhe Asefa, highlighted that the company's production currently stands at 2,000 pairs of shoes per day, with plans to increase to 4,000 pairs when operating at full capacity. "Our focus is on producing export-standard footwear to serve both local and global markets," Berhe said.

The company is also pursuing ambitious expansion projects. In collaboration

with Futon, Gelila Manufacturing is constructing a large bus assembly plant at Mekelle Industrial Park, covering 22,000 hectares. The plant, expected to be completed by May, will assemble electric, fuel, and hydrogen buses. Additionally, Gelila is partnering with an Italian company to produce high-standard chancy products.

The Bole Lemi Industrial Park, where Gelila Manufacturing operates, has already provided jobs for approximately 27,000 citizens, demonstrating the park's impact on employment and economic development.

Berhe affirmed the company's commitment to continue contributing to Ethiopia's economic growth by enhancing the leather value chain, generating foreign currency, and driving job creation.

The government is actively attracting private investment in manufacturing industry by providing export incentives, customs duty exemptions, tax holidays, and competitive land lease rates.

Envoys applaud...

projects, including the Adwa Museum, Bole Rwanda corridor, and other modernization initiatives aimed at elevating Addis Ababa's status as a vibrant, modern metropolis.

In an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*, Chargé d'Affaires of the Jordanian Embassy in Ethiopia, Emad Masalmeh (PhD), remarked: "I have visited many times, and the corridor development reflects Ethiopia's journey toward modernization. This is a significant achievement for both the city and the country." He added that the rapid urban development enhances the city's appeal to residents and tourists while reinforcing Addis Ababa's diplomatic importance.

The corridor development project has improved public spaces, enhanced residents' livelihoods, and boosted tourism, noted the officials. Addis Ababa City Government Culture, Arts, and Tourism Bureau Head, Hirut Kasa (PhD), emphasized that the city's transformation embodies a unique blend of tradition and modernity. "Tourism serves as a bridge to foster mutual understanding across borders, and our city's

remarkable transformation has enriched its appeal to global visitors," Hirut said.

She further highlighted that the corridor development fosters inclusive growth, creating vibrant spaces that celebrate the capital's historical and cultural heritage. "Addis Ababa's diverse heritage is preserved, connecting the past with the future," she added.

Minister-Counselor Elikem Ahadzi from the Ghanaian Embassy also expressed admiration for the rapid pace of change. "I have witnessed the transformation firsthand over the past few months. The development in areas like Adwa Museum has been impressive, with progress unfolding every day," he noted.

The ambassadors and officials toured multiple sites, including Bole Rwanda, the Addis Ababa Museum, and other corridor projects. They emphasized that the city's ongoing transformation not only enhances its global standing but also creates a dynamic, inclusive environment that aligns with Ethiopia's vision for sustainable urban development.

Ethiopia, Malaysia...

Abiy also expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by Anwar Ibrahim and the Malaysian people during the Ethiopian delegation's visit. "Such strengthened ties are essential for sustainable partnerships that benefit both nations," Abiy noted,

envisioning future collaboration that fosters economic growth and mutual prosperity.

During their visit to Kuala Lumpur, Ethiopia's high-level delegation visited various industries and development activities.

Opinion

Access to seaport pact: Panacea to hurdles, regional integration's linchpin

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

It is certain that the Memorandum of Understanding signed on January 1, 2024, between Ethiopia and Somaliland plays a paramount role in accelerating seaport access and oiling the wheels of import-export businesses as soon as practicable.

No matter what doomsayers enunciate on the topic of the seaport access deal with a focus on tarnishing the positive images of the deal, Ethiopia has sustained moving forward in the right direction, turning a blind eye and deaf ear to their usual figment of the imagination.

Notwithstanding the fact that naysayers deliberately proceed, giving the cold shoulder to the existing concrete realities, the wider international community has jumpstarted standing by the side of Ethiopia's unvarnished truth.

In actual fact, the agreement, which is in compliance with peaceful resolution, is expected to assist the country in generating employment opportunities and other socio-economic circumstances.

In the same manner, access to ports will have an abundance of importance in gearing up accelerated economic growth, which in turn makes certain harmony among the people.

In fact, apart from laying the groundwork for accomplishing the country's aspiration to assure access to seaports and branch out its stepping stone to seaports, the pact is considered a linchpin of cooperation and collaborative enhancement.

Speaking to ENA, Professor Joseph Yav who is also Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU) Life time member & Commercial Law Committee Co-Chair recently said, Ethiopia's ongoing quest for having access to seaport is acceptable.

Given its geographical, historical, economic backgrounds, Ethiopia has initiated discussions to secure sea outlet based on the principle of mutual benefits and partnership that provide amicable opportunities to strengthen shared development. Quest for coastal access to sea outlets is essentially considered as a legitimate right to Ethiopia with its sizable economy and population as well as the ever growing import-export trade.

Moreover, the country's direct coastal access is anticipated to increase physical economic growth of the people in the Horn of Africa (HoA), it was learned. For professor Yav, the ongoing Ethiopia's endeavor to secure seaport is extremely important to expedite regional economic growth and collaboration with neighboring countries.

According to him, there are pathways to achieve this goal through peaceful negotiations and international legal frameworks. "Ethiopia deserves access to the seaport like any other nation," Yav noted, urging for discussions that respect



international law and promote shared resources.

Noting that unlocking maritime opportunities lies in cooperation with neighboring nations, the law professor noted that advocating for agreements facilitate access to coastal waters. There is no doubt that the agreement will meaningfully play a part in developing cooperatively with other nations in the Horn of Africa.

It is an undisputable fact that access for additional ports for Ethiopia is fundamental with the intention of properly accommodating its progressively developing economy and population. If truth be told, there is no time like the present for the worldwide community to support Ethiopia's yearn for possessing access to seaport.

It is common knowledge that Ethiopia has been encountering economic and security challenges for dozens of years on account of absence of access to seaport.

If truth be told, it is now high time for Ethiopia to rummage around for additional ports for oiling the wheels of import-export businesses. In view of the foregoing, the country has been on the lookout for alternative approaches to access sea with understandable procedures. In a related move, the seaport access deal is crucial to ensure peace and stability in the length and breadth of the country.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), a Political Science Scholar, Prof. Biruk Hailu in the recent past stated that Ethiopia's acquisition of a sea gate in the strategic, yet volatile region is of great significance to the area's maritime security and repulsing criminal activities.

As to him, the security of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden will be more guaranteed if Ethiopia has direct access to a seaport and can participate well in maritime issues. Besides, the seaport plays a critical role in intensifying its commercial activities and deploying the naval forces. Therefore, Ethiopia's aspiration to direct access to port is justifiable and reasonable on legal, moral

and other grounds.

Taking its large population and economic prowess into account, Ethiopia has been suffering a lot in the past 30 and plus years due to the absences of direct access to seaport and the loss has also had a lasting impact on its security and the public wellbeing.

Ethiopia's acquisition of a seaport from Somaliland comes based on two sides' interests and a win-win approach, not by any pressure or coercion. Some interest groups' opposition to the port deal is influenced by the distorted information of our historical enemies.

As a matter of fact, the treaty signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland fixes attention on mutual benefits. It is no hyperbole to say to the deal for sure will smooth the path of the growth of the Horn of Africa and beyond in the shortest possible time and make the future of the region rosy.

Although some groups have continued sparing no effort to sow the seeds of hatred among the people of the Horn of Africa utilizing their usual bogus news stories and perplexing the region, all their endeavors have been missing the intended target and the deliberate objective.

In consideration of the foregoing, Ethiopia in black and white has made an effort at different points in time to familiarize the international community with the prevailing circumstances on the ground.

Albeit Ethiopia's stance is a bitter pill to swallow for them, worrywarts have maintained disseminating their usual fake news stories throwing the cold shoulder to the existing situation on the ground.

Taking the aforementioned facts on the ground, the various print and electronic media outlets of the country should play a paramount role in bringing into the light the international community as a whole with Ethiopia's self-evident truth.

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Ethiopia has signed with Somaliland is a critical move that would expedite trade and commerce in the

east African region, UNESCO Chair on International Water Cooperation Ashok Swain in the recent past said.

The MoU for Partnership and Cooperation inked by Ethiopia and Somaliland includes wide scopes of cooperation in social, economic, political, and military fields.

The memorandum is also intended to serve as a framework for the multispectral partnership between the two sides, and shall pave the way for realizing the aspiration of Ethiopia to secure access to the sea and diversify its access to seaports.

Speaking to local media, Swain stated that access to sea is imperative particularly for Ethiopia, which has been striving to become a regional economic powerhouse in recent years.

According to him, Ethiopia is also one of the sizable economies in the Sub-Saharan African region and also has growing population.

In particular, the UNESCO water cooperation chair pointed out that the MoU to get access to seas is extremely sensible as Ethiopia has an increasing number of population, strategic importance and economic growth.

"Ethiopia needs much more opening to sea and I think Somaliland is a good step in that direction," he said.

Most importantly, Swain stated that the MoU is important because it would open up the Red Sea for maximizing trade and commerce activities in this significant part of the global trade route.

The deal is also highly anticipated to accelerate regional integration and will enable countries in the region to develop together, he elaborated.

Trade and commerce are very important things not only for the development of a particular country but for regional economic integration.

As long as Ethiopia does not have an inkling of harming any nations, all stakeholders should stand by the side of the country to expedite the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland at the earliest possible time.

As the deal plays a huge role in taking the region to the next level of accomplishment at the earliest possible moment, pertinent bodies should play a part in assisting the progress of economic integration.

It appears clear that if all stakeholders stand in unison, taking the promising moves into account, the region can prosper together just around the corner.

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

Business & Economy



Industrial park showcasing Chinese extensive investment participation in Ethiopia

BY BACHA ZEWDIE

Ethiopia's peace and stability, effective activities carried out in the field of infrastructure development, incentives for the investment sector, as well as the country's potential natural resources and wide market opportunities, have allowed it to become one of the leading countries in Africa in terms of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This has played a typical role in the development of the investment sector and has contributed a great deal to the country's economic growth.

The country's investment sector is one of the sectors that have constantly achieved great progress and growth. However, in the past few years, the security problems created in different parts of the country, combined with the global COVID pandemic, economic crisis, and wars, had an impact on the country's investment activities.

Gladly, various measures taken by the government have allowed the investment sector to revive. The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) has stated that the problems that have put pressure on the investment sector are being solved step by step. For example, in the last fiscal year, it was possible to attract 3.82 billion Dollar of FDI. 329 new investment licenses were issued. 115.2 million Dollar of foreign currency was obtained from all industrial parks. MoU's have been signed with 70 companies that have shown interest in entering industrial parks. Monitoring and inspection activities have been carried out on 205 projects located in nine industrial parks.

Taking into consideration the current national and international situation and protecting the country's interests, revisions of bilateral investment agreements have been completed and new negotiations have been made. Preparations have been made to benefit from new regional trade and investment opportunities.

Ethiopia's investment potential and good opportunities have been introduced at many international investment forums and exhibitions. In addition to this, it is planned to attract 4.5 billion Dollar of FDI in this fiscal year and to issue new investment licenses for 341 projects (excluding industrial parks).

As efforts to increase investment continue, Foreign Direct Investment is on the rise. The number of domestic and foreign investors entering industrial parks has increased

significantly. Organizations engaged in investment activities are contributing significantly to product growth, foreign exchange earnings, job creation, and technology transfer and market linkages.

The development of Industrial Parks is one of the activities that have been given attention that will contribute to the realization of Ethiopia's structural economic transition. Industrial parks have the main fundamental missions of attracting FDI, expanding job creation and realizing technology transfer. The parks will contribute greatly to the national economic development by creating jobs for the community living in the areas where they will be built and creating a working environment that is suitable for the environment.

In addition to the 12 industrial parks built by the government and managed by the Industrial Parks Development Corporation and regional governments and the Diredawa Free Trade Zone, there are also industrial parks built and managed by private investors in various areas of Ethiopia. One of these private industrial parks is Eastern Industry Park. The industrial park is located in Dukem area, and 153 companies are engaged in production activities in the park. 95% of the companies are owned by Chinese investors, while the rest are owned by companies from India, England, and other countries. These producers are contributing significantly in terms of job creation, foreign exchange earnings, technology, and knowledge transfer.

One of the factories in the park is Di Yuan Ceramics. The manager of the factory, Xu Bo, pointed out that the factory was established seven years ago with an investment of 50 million Dollar, and said that it produces wall and floor ceramic products. It has created job opportunities for 800 Ethiopians and 50 Chinese. They also explain that Ethiopians are benefiting from the transfer of skills and technology. The manager also said that the support of the government has contributed greatly to the improvement of the factory.

According to David Zhou, General Manager of "Huajia Aluminum Industry PLC", the factory started working eight years ago with an investment capital of 181 million Birr and has created job opportunities for more than 170 Ethiopians. The factory has produced 16 types of aluminum profiles and is supplying them to the domestic market.

He explained that the investment of the factories in the industrial park will strengthen the Ethio-China economic ties and the good

relations between the two countries are contributing to the efficiency of the factories. He stated that the Ethiopian Investment Commission has been supporting the factory from the beginning and that the factory works in cooperation with the local community, the state and the federal governments.

On his part, Jay Yifan, General Manager of Linde Ethiopia Garment PLC, pointed out that the factory manufactures and markets different brands of textile products. More than one thousand Ethiopians are employed in the factory.

The Deputy Commissioner of Industrial Parks and Promotion of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, Zeleke Temesgen (PhD), said that "Eastern Industry Park" is the first among the private industrial parks in Ethiopia. According to him, the manufacturers in the park are contributing significantly to job creation, export trade and foreign exchange earnings. Most of the production work in the factories in the park is carried out by Ethiopian experts. This indicates that the skills and technology transfer plan is well underway. Apart from this, foreign investors are working with domestic investors.

According to Zeleke (PhD), there are currently 3309 Chinese investment projects in Ethiopia with a capital of more than 8.5 billion Dollars. These projects have created job opportunities for more than 325,000 citizens. Chinese investors are playing a leading role in the number of investment projects, capital capacity, job creation, and technology and knowledge transfer.

The deputy commissioner explained that the economic reform measures taken in the investment sector are contributing to accelerating the development of the sector. According to him, the Investment Proclamation has been amended in a manner that can increase the flow of investment. Proclamation of Special Economic Zone was also approved. Following this, the commission prepared guidelines and started working.

Stating the procedures implemented by the complete macro-economic reform will create favorable investment opportunities for foreign and domestic investors, Dr. Zeleke said that the investment flow in the first three months of this fiscal year has increased by 12% compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year.

Measures taken to make the investment climate more conducive have contributed to

this growth. One of the tasks of the commission is to monitor and support investors. He also explained that the monitoring and support activities will help investors to expand their businesses and other investors to come to Ethiopia.

"Currently, Ethiopia is the primary foreign investment destination in East Africa. In spite of this, there are many things that need to be done to attract more investments in terms of Ethiopia's potential. The potential of the country, combined with the economic reforms being undertaken by the government, will enable it to become a preferred investment destination at the international level. The flow of investment in various sectors is increasing significantly. Especially in the sectors identified as strategic (manufacturing, agriculture, information technology, mining, tourism), a high investment flow is being seen," he said.

Dagato Kombe, Deputy Commissioner of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, said that the country's potential investment capacity and the government's economic reform measures are among the reasons for the increase in investment flows. According to Dagato, the economic reform measures will create opportunities for investors to come to Ethiopia and engage in investment.

"When the investors come from abroad, they consider different options. And we have to offer a better option to attract the investors. One of the queries from investors is the lack of foreign exchange. The foreign currency is very important to purchase raw materials and to meet other inputs. Promising beginnings are being seen that the recently implemented foreign exchange management reform will contribute to easing the shortage of foreign exchange," he said.

As to him, one of the measures taken to improve the investment environment is the opening of business sectors that were previously closed to foreign investors. With this, it was decided that foreign investors should engage in expenditure, import, wholesale, and retail business activities.

Since July 2024, 72 requests have been submitted following the decision. Out of these, 41 are requests for participation in import and 31 are for participation in export. Among the 22 companies that submitted proposals, the requests of 12 companies were approved by the Ethiopian Investment Commission. Eight Chinese companies are among those whose requests were approved.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia takes action to combat the looming threat of sound pollution

BY FIKADU BELAY

The environment is facing unprecedented challenges due to climate change, pollution, and unsustainable practices. It is human activities that improve their lifestyle, but there is no one to take responsibility to protect our planet for future generations. The results of climate change are scary for animals and humans too, so in this sense, increasing awareness and taking action can significantly contribute to conserving the planet.

Pollution stands as one of the most pressing challenges to environmental conservation in the modern world. As industrial activities and urbanization accelerate, the delicate balance of ecosystems is increasingly threatened by contaminants in the air, water, and soil.

The widespread degradation not only endangers wildlife but also disrupts the intricate interdependencies that sustain natural habitats. The repercussions of pollution extend beyond environmental harm; they pose significant risks to human health and the livelihoods of communities reliant on natural resources.

Waste pollution, particularly plastic waste, poses a significant threat to the environment. Not only waste but also sound pollution is often overlooked and it affects the environment and human health. Noise from traffic, industries, and urban areas can disrupt wildlife; interfere with communication among animals, and lead to increased stress levels in humans.

To address the issues, the Ethiopian government navigates this complex landscape, it becomes imperative to prioritize both environmental integrity and human wellbeing in our efforts to combat pollution and conserve the planet's precious ecosystems.

In a recent press briefing, Dida Driba, General Manager of the Addis Ababa Environmental Protection Authority, stated that the significant measures taken to combat environmental pollution in the city. In the first quarter of the 2017 E.C. fiscal year, action was initiated against around 701 institutions identified as contributors to environmental degradation.

He mentioned that over the past three months, monitoring efforts were expanded to include 2,316 institutions. The proactive inspection aimed to bolster the city's efforts in controlling pollution, especially in densely populated areas where industrial and residential overlaps often lead to environmental challenges, he said.

A primary concern highlighted by the General Manager is noise pollution, which has been a recurring complaint among residents. To address this, four expert teams were deployed to evaluate more than 200 households, identifying sources of excessive noise. As a result, warnings were issued to those found violating noise regulations.

In addition to noise complaints, the authority received over 190 petitions from



Noise from traffic, industries, and urban areas can disrupt wildlife; interfere with communication among animals, and lead to increased stress levels in humans

the community regarding various pollution issues, with noise being the most frequently mentioned. He also emphasized the importance of community involvement in the fight against pollution, acknowledging that public awareness is crucial for sustained environmental protection.

For fostering environmental awareness among the Communities must be informed about the causes and effects of climate change, waste pollution, and sound pollution. Schools, local organizations, and community centers can host workshops, seminars, and informational campaigns

to educate residents about these issues. Providing accessible information empowers individuals to make informed choices in their daily lives.

He expressed confidence in the effectiveness of the pollution prevention initiatives launched in the last six months, noting that these efforts have significantly raised public awareness about environmental issues. "The environmental pollution prevention movement will continue to be a regular activity," he assured, indicating a commitment to ongoing monitoring and action.

Technology will play a crucial role in future initiatives, as Dida explained that various technological supports are being integrated into pollution control measures. The approach aims to enhance the efficiency of monitoring and enforcement, making it easier to identify and address pollution sources in real-time, he said.

Organizing community events such as clean-up drives, tree planting, and sustainability fairs can engage residents and promote a sense of collective responsibility. These events not only beautify neighborhoods but also provide hands-on experiences that reinforce the significance of caring for the environment. Sharing success stories from these events can inspire others to participate and take similar initiatives.

Partnering with local environmental organizations can amplify efforts to raise awareness. These organizations often have resources, expertise, and networks that can enhance community initiatives. Collaborations can involve joint campaigns, educational programs, and volunteer opportunities, creating a more extensive support system for environmental conservation.

Additionally, encouraging sustainable practices within the community is crucial

to promoting recycling programs, and composting initiatives, and encouraging local businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices. Moreover, communities can advocate for policies that support renewable energy, public transportation, and green spaces. By leading by example, communities can inspire individuals to adopt sustainable habits in their daily lives.

Furthermore, communities should engage with local officials to advocate for policies that address climate change, waste management, and sound pollution. It can lobby for better waste disposal services, stricter noise regulations, and investment in green infrastructure. Active participation in local governance can lead to effective environmental policies that benefit the entire community.

Developing parks, community gardens, and green coverings can enhance local ecosystems and provide residents with spaces to connect with nature. Green spaces not only improve air quality but also offer recreational opportunities, fostering community cohesion. Involving residents in the planning and maintenance of these spaces can further instill a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Moreover, Dida pointed out the positive impact of ongoing corridor development and riverside projects within the city. These initiatives are not only improving the urban landscape but also contributing significantly to reducing pollution levels. "These projects are essential for building an ecologically sound city," he stated, reinforcing the authority's commitment to sustainable urban development.

Furthermore, individuals can take practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Simple actions like using public transportation, biking, or walking can significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the community should use energy-efficient appliances and practices, such as biogas and improved ovens, to contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle.

Building a supportive environment for conservation efforts requires collaboration among community members, local governments, and organizations that amplify the impact of initiatives. Also, local governments can provide funding and resources for environmental programs, while organizations can offer expertise and volunteer support.

Additionally, each individual has a role to play, and together, that can create a healthier, more sustainable world for us and future generations. The time to act is now; every step we take towards raising awareness and promoting conservation makes a difference. These united efforts help to protect the planet and ensure a thriving ecosystem for generations to come.

Besides, the authority's proactive measures reflect a commitment to building an ecologically sound city. By tackling environmental issues head-on and fostering a culture of awareness, Addis Ababa aims to ensure a cleaner, healthier urban environment for all its residents.

Art & Culture

Photo: Hadush Abreha



Gamo Dubusha: The Indigenous culture as an exquisite community administration

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

In examining a given nation, the cultural asset of that nation takes the greatest share. African people have been unique in preserving their indigenous cultures for centuries. These artistic practices did carry the potential, efficacy and intelligence of the people. In the cultural portrayal of a given nation, the philosophy, belief, and mental excellence of the people are mirrored through it. Thus, since these artistic practices are exhibited as per the identity and context of the holders, it is logical to say that these cultures are also opportunities to be used for transforming and advancing the people.

Ethiopia embraces a variety of cultural identities that coexist with harmony and peaceful cooperation. Among these cultures, Gamo people who are located in the southern part of the region are the ones that have their own impressive culture and values. In the area where one needs to raise the culture of these people, *Dubusha* takes the highest share.

Dubusha is the most adored and respected notion in the people of Gamo. It is the term that conveys the who of the people's identity and culture. Everything in the area is connected with it. Thus, what does it mean? ...was the interest of *The Ethiopian Herald* crew? We ran to the area and contacted the scholars and elders. We also noticed some practices in person.

Tafesse Welea, Community Service Coordinator at Social Science and Humanities College of Arba Minch University, is a researcher who has been studying the culture of *Dubusha* and from the culture too. He had an exclusive interview with *The Ethiopian Herald*.

I picked up the term *Dubusha* and asked him to explain it to begin our conversation. He said, "*Dubusha* did mean meeting. The coming together of people to discuss any issue which can be done anywhere is

Dubusha. But in the issues that commonly concern the given Derie or culturally portioned region, the meeting place is already assigned by the people. And that place is called *Dubusha*." The researcher further explained that the people of Gamo had been administered by the cultural and indigenous knowledge of the elders that they received it from generations.

The background of the Indigenous knowledge that these people cultured to peacefully administer their regions or Deries is the orally transmitted mythology. As Tafesse said, this mythology dictated that when the people of Gamo quarrel and suspicion occurs among themselves, then the Holy Spirit send a rule and regulation to the people to be respected. It affirms that the community should live peacefully and respectfully; otherwise, something bad could happen to them and their generations. This mythology then excels from generation to generation. Though the tendency and the magnitude of its application are slightly varied across Deries, the major cultural rudiments are still prevailing in the community as a whole.

"*Dubusha*, at the given community is going to be prepared based on some necessities. These are the place should be positioned on the top surface of the given village." As Tafesse explained the reason for making this is to make it visible to the community. In addition to that, if it is placed on the top area, it is possible to view the natural settings that are very relevant during the oath process of the suspect who finally gets up there. That is at this top place it is possible to see the mountain, the graves, the trees, and the elders that could face the person in that setting. The next thing to be considered is the place should be eclectic and plain. This is deliberately done to make it comfortable and accommodating.

Dubusha can happen at the family level. The pillar of the house is the husband or the elder male section in the family. Thus, this man can bring the family members together

and discuss issues that happened in the house or could narrate about the culture to the family. This is *Dubusha*. But if there is a community -concerning issue then it could be taken into the meeting place *Dubusha*. This culturally believed judgment place is assumed a sacred place. Thus it is a highly respected and preserved area.

Dubusha in a given Derie or cultural region is recognized as the place where fair and sound justice is delivered for the community equally. At this type of *Dubusha*, lots of cultural events take place. Since the people are administered by cultural leaders or *Halekas* and *Hudugas* and on top-level *Kawos*, these power transitions and appointments had been taking place at this place.

Kawo Tadesse who is the top leader or king of Deries, told to Herald the following. "*Dubusha* is the most adored and blessed place in the eyes of Gamo people" as he asserted any case that the community faced in their life, they brought to *Dubusha* and there are appointed leaders that are responsible for cases as per their subject. Then a responsible leader or *Haleka*, could try to solve the raised issue after a cautious and fortitude hearing and understanding of the issue from the community. Though there are top leaders over the given *Haleka*, no one could try to interfere in the power exercising right of the given leader.

While I was at Dita to contact the cultural leader of the area, I was directed to the Culture and Communication Office of the area by Zone department. When I got there, the legal cultural office leader was waiting for me. I talked to him and asked him to call the cultural leader. Then a very old and gorgeous man with cultural decor wearing style and with half metal made stick arrived. In the office, the officer introduced me to him and invited him to sit on the officer's chair. But this old man refused. I said why. He said, "That is not my chair and responsibility. I have my own place to sit. In this context, I am a customer not a leader

at this place." Then the officer took us out to the area's meeting place or *Dubusha*. There, this old man plugs in his stick and sits on the bench made from stone.

Tafesse mentioned that, unlike the modern procedure in courts, cases that happened in the community of Gamo are not expected to have evidence. If there is evidence, it is good and could be used to help the criminal confess his deed. But in the culture of Gamo people, the steps they follow to solve problems and make judgments are quite different. For whatever wrong did happen in the area, the suspect is simply called and asked for the issue.

In Gamo zone even before the legal procedure was seen in court, the people were managed by their indigenous knowledge and culture. This cultural administration had its own system and hierarchy. Issues are uniquely headed by a particular leader or *Haleka*. For instance as the approached elders assured there is one leader or *Haleka* that is responsible for the preservation and management of *Dubusha*, and there is another *Haleka* that takes care of the preservation of indigenous plants and so on. On top of them, there is a top leader called *Huduga*. All the *Halekas* take care of their responsibility. If things go beyond their scope, they could bring it to *Dubusha* and call *Huduga* for top decision. The *Hudugas* again are led by a top leader called *Kawo*. This *Kawo* is responsible for heading more *Deries* or *Hudugas*. Though he is the top leader, he never interferes with the responsibilities of *Hudugas*. He could avail himself if there were cases that needed his confirmation.

This hierarchy and cultural administration have been there in the area for centuries. Thus, the people are very respectful and cooperative when approached by their elders. Therefore, this asset could be used as an opportunity to ensure togetherness and complementarity between people in the country and the continent too. Our indigenous identity, I believe is the best way to achieve our prosperity goal.

Society

African Hall: A home, icon of Pan-Africanism

BY TEWODROS KASSA

For the past five plus decades, located in the heart of Addis Ababa city, the African Hall has stood as a symbol of unity, pride, and resistance. No doubt, this iconic building has no doubt served as a beacon for those seeking a sense of belonging, fostering a community that celebrates the rich diversity of African culture. Today, every African from all walks of life witnesses that the African Hall has become a cornerstone of Pan-Africanism.

According to historical records, the African Hall was founded in the early 20th century by a group of visionary leaders who sought to create a space where the voices and experiences of Africans could be celebrated and uplifted. Originally established as a cultural center, the hall quickly evolved into a hub for political activism, intellectual discourse, and artistic expression.

Through the decades, the African Hall has weathered storms of oppression and colonization, emerging as a steadfast sanctuary for those who seek to honor their heritage and challenge systems of injustice. It has become a place of pilgrimage for Pan-Africanists from around the world, drawn to its walls imbued with the spirit of resilience and solidarity.

Moreover, the African Hall holds a special place in the hearts of many, serving as a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who came before us in the struggle for liberation and equality. It stands as a testament to the power of community and collaboration, offering a space where individuals can come together to celebrate their shared history and envision a brighter future.

More importantly, the African Hall has played a crucial role in shaping the narrative of Pan-Africanism, offering a space where ideas can flourish and alliances can be forged.

Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and UN Secretary-General António Guterres inaugurated the African Hall.

Originally inaugurated in 1961 by Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, Africa Hall is the birthplace of the former Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), and has witnessed numerous pivotal moments in Africa's history.

After years of intensive renovation, Africa Hall, the iconic birthplace of the Organization of African Unity, was inaugurated yesterday. The venue reflects on Africa's past and present; with a focus on a sustainable future.

The renovation amplifies its cultural significance as a heritage with tourism potential for Ethiopia, beyond one of the state-of-the-art conference venues with modern facilities, a visitors' center, a permanent exhibition, and a cinema room for screenings and public events, while respecting the architectural and artistic vision of the '60s.

The new visitors' center will welcome the public to learn about Africa's history, the



African Union, and the United Nations.

The renovation offers a 360° upgrade: from updating conferencing equipment to complying with current fire hazard requirements and building codes.

It also includes accessibility for people with disabilities, lighting, waterproofing ceilings, and restoring original furnishing.

Accordingly, the Africa Hall is a prestigious landmark where the continent's history is shaped and returned.

Meanwhile, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Executive Secretary Claver Gatete said that the renovated Africa Hall is an important investment that positions Ethiopia for greater tourism growth given its Pan-African legacy and rich history.

During the inaugural ceremony, the UNECA Chief expressed a special gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for the gift of Africa Hall in 1961, which became the starting point of an African renaissance.

According to him, the Africa Hall is emblematic of Africa's past struggles and triumphs when the OAU Charter was signed right here in 1963 – a signal for a new beginning, he said, adding that “Now, more than ever, it makes a sound economic sense to invest in sectors like tourism that harness our history, culture, and heritage,

to mobilize resources for national and continental development.”

He mentioned some of the world's iconic landmarks such as China's Great Wall, America's Statue of Liberty, France's Eiffel Tower, and India's Taj Mahal, providing practical examples of how history and culture can draw millions of visitors annually, and also contributing to shared prosperity.

And Africa, too, with over 130 world heritage sites, has its rich history waiting to be shared with the world, he underlined.

For him, given Ethiopia's Pan-African legacy and rich history, a renovated Africa Hall is an important investment that positions the country for greater tourism growth, while celebrating Africa's collective history and future.

Gatete also underlined that it is time for more Africans and visitors from around the world to discover Africa's stories here at Africa Hall.

“Furthermore, through initiatives like the Africa Continental Free Trade Area and visa relaxation policies, we can honor our founding fathers' vision of an integrated Africa by enhancing intra-African travel and creating a vibrant tourism market,” he said.

Efforts have been made to meticulously

preserve the materials from the original 1961 construction, blending the past with the present to create a rejuvenated space that reflects Africa's proud heritage.

The hall now stands as a modernized facility, equipped with state-of-the-art amenities, a visitors' center, and permanent exhibition space and conference hall to host high-level meetings, while maintaining its architectural and historical significance.

One of the standout features is the open design of its chamber – an intentional homage to Emperor Haile Selassie, who believed that critical discussions should not be held behind closed doors.

“Sixty years ago, visionary leaders gathered in this very hall to lay the foundation for African unity by signing the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, he stated underlining that “When the next generation gathers here in the decades to come, it is only right that they should be inspired by the efforts we make today to advance the cause of Africa's transformation.”

Emphasizing the newly inaugurated iconic African Hall, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that the Hall is where Africa came together to give life to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU) times were very different.

Guterres added that the Hall is a bridge between Africa's past and future, honoring shared struggles and achievements while embracing common aspirations.

For him, the African Hall has been a symbol of the continent's collective aspirations, a testament to its resilience, and a beacon of hope for entire generations for more than 60 years.

In sum, the African Hall is a place where history is made, voices are amplified, and revolutions are born. Let us continue to cherish and support the African Hall, ensuring that its legacy remains strong for generations to come.

Law & Politics

Reasserting Ethiopia's bid to host AFCON 2029

BY FITSUM GETACHEW

The fact that Ethiopia has made a serious and official bid to host the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2029 implies that it is committed to fulfilling all the required preconditions and making them a success. It is great news for the millions of devout Ethiopian football fans and for those who want to see their country in the spotlight of not only the African community but also in the larger international arena.

Ethiopia is a founding member of the Confederation of African Football, CAF, and it has hosted the tournament twice in the past, once in 1962, and the second in 1976. It is now almost half a century since the country last hosted this prestigious continental showpiece. As one of the most prominent states of Africa and a founding member of CAF and the African Union as well as the seat of the AU Commission, one would expect it to host the AFCON's more than two times in more than thirty runs. Of course, to be able to host such events there are certain preconditions such as the necessary infrastructure, up-to-standard sporting facilities such as stadiums and training grounds with the necessary accessories, hotels and transportation amenities besides of course a real sense of peace and security in the country that bids for staging the tournament. In this sense not always was Ethiopia up to the highest standards even if its reputation as a wonderful venue for international conferences including the yearly AU heads of state and government summits may be intact.

The truth is that not all its sporting facilities were of the best types and FIFA and CAF are pretty exigent on these specific points. In the past, we have seen Egypt having the privilege of hosting the tournament multiple times because of its ever-ready sporting venues. Other countries such as Ethiopia did not have similar chances because of some conditions lacking. This time however it seems that the government is fully committed to meeting all the demands of the CAF and that is why the bid is serious and it has come from the mouth of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and has been endorsed by President Taye Atske Selassie.

Ethiopia is now in a position to prepare and stage the 37th edition of the event 'AFCON 2029'. This means that it has four years to finish all the outstanding conditions that CAF may be posing, such as finishing well with the preparation of all the venues and facilities in time and proving that there is the right socio-economic climate that facilitates the smooth success of the event.

Providing adequate transport facilities along with the up-to-standard hotels in all the venues is another requirement, and in this regard, the reputation of Ethiopian Airlines is more than a guarantee as it is a worldwide trademark in its own right and would accommodate all requests for transportation not only from outside to Ethiopia but also

internally, following the potential demands of movements of expected large crowds of fans anxious to attend the matches.

Sport is one of the most significant social activities in this world today also because it has become a huge industry and an immense economic phenomenon. There are very big international companies that compete between themselves to sponsor huge international sporting events and contests. Sport is also having huge space among governments and countries because it easily attracts massive audiences and they can use it as a means of reaching billions of people across the world in no time and even advance their political and cultural objectives. Sport can promote the image of a country, a people and a government. It is indeed a massive force.

In the past, we have seen stiff competition to organize and host huge sporting events. Besides the traditionally strong countries or economies that have lots of experience in this respect, we are also experiencing many so-called 'emerging economies' fighting to be at the center of attention by hosting certain very important international events.

Today the major world sporting events are hence no longer a monopoly of a few countries. The economic gaps could be well filled by lavish sponsors. The success of these smaller countries in this regard is also due to the organization and execution of the competitions with little shortcomings.

Ethiopia is a country where many sports attract and fascinate citizens. Particularly football and athletics are among the most popular ones. Irrespective of the lack of shining results, football remains the most popular sport among Ethiopians and their passion is visible when there are football competitions anywhere in the world. People are amazed to see Ethiopia's stadiums are sold out whenever the national football team plays in any competition. That is also probably why Ethiopian football has attracted DS TV Channel from South Africa to come to Ethiopia and pay significant fees to air the local league matches. This is considered a major achievement for Ethiopia's football fans because this would stimulate the trade.

Ethiopia is one of the founders of the Confederation of African Football, CAF, in 1957 and had in the person of Yidnekatchew Tessema in the lead of this body for years. Besides, Ethiopia did manage to win the 3rd AFCON tournament in front of its fans and the then Emperor Haile Selassie amidst great enthusiasm. That was when Ethiopia showed the world how hot its fans were and how they appreciated the unprecedented success in the trade.

Ethiopia had the opportunity to shine on that occasion just as on other fronts such as diplomacy, history, cultural and archaeological discoveries etc. Unfortunately due to a variety of reasons our standard of football never grew to match the expectations of its fans. Many people especially in the sporting world say

that Ethiopia had other priorities and has probably not given it the kind of attention football might have required. In the past years sport, especially football, has been so popular that many countries even tiny ones have given it extraordinary attention and focus to reach levels of excellence enough to challenge even traditionally strong footballing nations.

With Ethiopia's repeated triumphs in the athletics world, people have come to recognize it as a successful nation besides its huge reputation as a country of successful diplomacy, a rich history of Pan Africanism and its shining contribution in the fight against colonialism and injustice.

It is hence undeniable that sport is a very important social, economic, diplomatic and even political factor that is bound to have a huge influence on the image of a country. It contributes to the growth of tourism, trade, investment and even people-to-people ties. Countries which otherwise would hardly be spotted on the world map have managed to be huge powerhouses due to their athletes' brilliant exploits.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has made the bid to host the 37th AFCON of 2029 to be held here in Ethiopia recognizing the importance of such an event to the country and its millions of eager fans. This could represent a huge paradigm shift in Ethiopia's policies towards sports in general and football in particular. Fans were very enthusiastic to learn this news. With the response being potentially positive, preparations could now be spearheaded with new enthusiasm and commitment. Ethiopian football would have the hope of a new revival as during the good old days of Yidnekatchew Tessema dubbed by many as the 'father of African football'.

Several stadiums are on the verge of completion and just a few days ago on the occasion of the CAF Congress carried out in Addis, the FIFA and CAF authorities have been toured around to inspect the progress at one of the most modern stadiums called Adey Ababa in the heart of Addis. It was Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who showed around the progress this stadium was undergoing and would definitely be ready for the AFCON 2029 along with several others which are in the final stages of completion trying to fulfill all CAF standards.

This event would definitely be a significant boost to Ethiopia's image as a successful country with dynamic economic development and progress. This would be a further stimulus for the economy to continue with the current trajectory and pace and dismiss all the negative rhetoric forwarded against Ethiopia. Forces that do not want Ethiopia to succeed may try to dismiss its efforts to assert certain reasonable and legitimate rights through diplomatic means and secure access to the Red Sea waters. They may also object to its legal sovereign rights to harness the water of the Nile by constructing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, GERD which by the way is also a huge expression and demonstration of sovereignty.

The hosting of AFCON 2029 will be a wonderful occasion for Ethiopia to showcase itself once again as the true champion of African advancement adding to its reputation as one of the founders of the African Union and the Confederation of African Football. It will once again have the opportunity to shine on the world skies and dismiss all negative narratives against it disseminated by certain forces which do not want to see its emergence as a likely powerhouse of African economy and diplomacy.

Ethiopia's long and historic role in its involvement and commitment in international circles particularly at the African level is known to be strong. The upcoming hosting of a reputed tournament that catches the attention of many millions of spectators and fans, will give further impetus to the name and fame of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa will have the wonderful occasion to showcase to the world how beautiful a city it is thanks to the ongoing renovation of the city under the Corridor Development Project and all the newly constructed resort areas across the country.

Definitely, there will be better days for Ethiopia despite all the challenges and obstacles that some may try to pose against it. Ethiopia will have another opportunity to reassert its high position as one of the leading nations on the continent in many respects. No wonder it's joining of the BRICS community is also another stimulus in its ride towards new frontiers in the world at large giving priority more to its national interests rather than being constrained by committing to partisan political or ideological divisions.

Ethiopia hosting the AFCON 2029 would have the golden opportunity to show to the world that it is a growing country in all aspects, a 'land of origin' and successful not only economically and socially but also diplomatically.

As the sport has been a huge locomotive of change and growth, governments are now giving it more attention than in the past. The sport also contributes to forming a new generation of healthy youths trying to emulate the successful ones. There is a certain frustration that African footballers have not had the recognition they deserve because of the poor results they record in world competitions. It was only two years ago in Qatar that an African national football team managed to reach the last four in the World Cup! But this does not show the real potential of Africa. It has so many excellent players who contribute to the strength of European football teams. These players not having ideal conditions at home are destined to migrate to Europe. The next ambition of any African team must be to win the World Cup and if the right planning and execution is carried out it would not be impossible to reach that goal soon. In the meantime, Ethiopia may register a huge breakthrough if it manages to conquer CAF's green light to host AFCON 2029. This opportunity is now nearer than ever before.

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

It is all About Money! Is it?

Browsing the social media I came across a line which runs something like, “Money is everything and everything is about money.” In another piece written by some old-time columnist, I read this line, “Money is behind all evil.” On the surface, it’s rather challenging to dispute any of the two. But indeed you know money could create as many problems as it supposedly solves. You don’t have to make plans to prove or disprove those things as life would throw them your way whether you like it or not.

There is this fellow who lives near you and you don’t have much other than those slight head nods as greetings. One day he breaks the invisible wall and approaches with a friendly hand ready for the very first handshake between you two while at the same time saying, very first handshake and said, “You know for a long time I really wanted to introduce myself to you. I hope we can become a little closer.”

Why not! There is no harm in striking a friendship with a person who lives some four or five doors down from you. After that the greetings become warmer, the handshakes stronger and the ‘friendship’ brighter as if you two have been real friends for a decade or so. A couple of times you two sit down for some beer and talk about all the nonsense and irrelevant things first-time friends talk about. Of course, since you don’t know much about each other hotter issues like politics, religious beliefs and what have you. The verdict is in; “I think he is a nice guy. He is a cool guy and nothing about him gives me any discomfort.” Well, one more friend in times when friends don’t come cheap.

One Sunday morning you’re out for a

morning stroll and a cup of real strong coffee at your favorite coffee house. Only an hour and I’m back home!” You promise your family. After about a half hour or so walk you go for your cup of strong coffee. Surprise, surprise! Who do you find there? Of course, your new friend! Well, that was enough to disturb an eyebrow or two. The fact is you’ve never seen him there and he has told you he doesn’t drink coffee because of some health problems. Then what the hell is he doing in a coffee house noted for its strong coffee and nothing else? No need to rush; you’ll soon know. Before you’ve time to digest things he practically springs up and hugs you with a big “Hi!” Your “Hi!” is almost inaudible and your hands hang in mid-air not knowing where to take them. One thing was that you weren’t to direct them towards the back of the guy for the return hug.

Suddenly really hits you “OMG! Did the guy just hug you? Yes, he did. Now, that was not a good sign at all. One thing is that you almost never hug with friends or even relatives. The other thing is that you have been closer to this guy barely a full month and he hugs you destroying your Sunday morning!

The unrestrained hugs are only for your better half and your three siblings. And now this guy, who for all practical purposes you don’t know as well as you should have almost chokes the breath out of your lungs! Something is very wrong. You just can’t believe it! He has the audacity to hug you like he was dealing with a long-lost dear friend! The fact is hugs from whomever else they come seldom give you comfort. Case closed. But you have to play it safe and there is no need for the storm in the teacup.

“Don’t tell me you’ve started drinking coffee! Did your doctors give you the green light?”

“No,” he says pointing to the full cup. “I didn’t take a single sip.”

“Then why did you order it if you weren’t to drink it?” Yes that was the question of the moment, wasn’t it?

“I was waiting for you.”

“Oh!” ‘Did I hear what I think I heard?’

“I knew you’d be here every Sunday morning.”

Now that’s the nastiest thing you have heard since sometime back. It was not because he was waiting for you without any appointment thug that in itself could be worthy of a full volume questions and narratives. But he just told you that he knew you’d be there every Sunday morning meaning he has been following you! The nerves start to do a disservice to your rather calm facial features and you’re not particularly Brad Pitt when the nerves start swelling! You pull a chair and sit at the opposite side of the table. You decide to go for the direct hit.

“May I ask why you were waiting for me? I hope it’s nothing bad.”

No! No! It’s nothing bad!” he says. But the facial features were practically screaming, “He’s lying. It’s as bad as bad could be.” You wait for him to make his next move.

“You know I had this problem and I wanted to talk with you about it. I think you’re the only person to find a way out of it.” What!

You don’t even know if he had any family or lived alone. You don’t know not where

he works, or even he works at all. Oh, the list is long. And now you, the stranger to the fellow, are the ‘only’ problem solver.

“I’m not sure I could be of any help, but let’s hear it.” The guy starts talking about his parents being in very critical problems. He then indulges in narratives which sound so fictitious you’d be pardoned for admitting the creative juices in that brain of his. Time for the question that overrides all questions;

“Now what is that you want from me?”

“I thought you could lend me fifty thousand birr which I’ll repay within a month.”

You have stopped listening to what he was saying after the “fifty thousand birr” sledgehammer. And before you didn’t waste valuable seconds to tell him your decision.

“Sorry, I can’t lend you fifty cents let alone fifty thousand birr!” You leave him without as much of a farewell as his anatomy crystalizes in the chair!

Now a little confession; much of what is written happened to a fellow though in slightly different ways. But the very last part where he tells the guy he wouldn’t give him fifty cents let alone fifty thousand birr played out for real. The sad part is he is somewhat paying for his no-nonsense action as the guy made sure his reputation is muddied as ugly as possible. He innocently thought he had a new friend and ended up opening his doors to the worst of the worst enemies!

Yes, money might not be behind all evil; but it sure is behind a lot of evil. There is no need to be surprised if money many times rhymes with evil!

“What, are They Talking About?”

I’m not sure if it was it was one of those classic moments in which you’re glad you didn’t miss. One thing the presidential candidate said during her interview with Fox ... indeed must have hit more than nerves. At one point she says, “You and I know what I’m talking about.” In normal circumstances, you’d expect the interviewer would have shrugged it off as one of those interview moments that would make no difference whether they are included or thrown out. But not this with this guy; he says, “I don’t know. What are you talking about?” Isn’t that some real journalism? From the flood of comments from viewers, you could understand this response made people almost jump out of their seats. Many gave the guy their thumbs, “He nailed her for good, didn’t he?” Others were furious; “What! What kind of a rude question is that?” Well considering it was all about politics in an election that seems to be growing more bizarre as the day reckoning draws nearer.

Now I don’t know what is really on the line here as the many things coming from all sides (Because there are not only two sides but many more too!) are confusing as well as more and more confrontational. Well, it is their game and I’m not sure many over there know these ‘rules,’ if there are any that is. Anyways we back here are watching perhaps one of the most interesting, highly confrontational and a study on how behaviors of people could go to the extreme

when things come to politics. (Does anyone feel there is a lot of backstabbing going on over there!)

So what about that exchange mentioned above? Well, that got me thinking about the situation back here. We’re left completely in the dark when it comes to reliable info because the presenters are probably thinking “They and I know what I’m talking about.” Since many times than not the opportunity to respond “We don’t know. What are you talking about?” doesn’t present itself we the people in the street are left lost and confused in the info-darkness circle.

A few days back a friend told me to watch a certain local interview on YouTube. “Why should I?” Well as the guy is well aware I was not very enthusiastic about many of the interviews going all over the place it was rather unexpected ...for him to tell me to watch one. He says it was an issue I was interested in and might help me in my future writings. No, it won’t help me in my future writings or anything else as it was an issue I think wasn’t worthy of interviews or any sort of exposure. After a few minutes of trying to watch what the hell was about the interview that interested my friend so much I was not the guy whom you’d have asked out for a cup of coffee at that moment. As unenthusiastic as I was I was already thinking of giving my friend some on-the-phone dressing down for wasting my time over such nonsense!

It was one of those interviews where the interviewer knew little or nothing about the topic and the interviewee was not any better.

Say some so-called expert sits down to be interviewed about some issues connected with water or any other day-to-day issue. People would want to know about the provision of water its health benefits and things like that. And they want everything delivered in the simplest style where they don’t have to be confused over technical jargon which the interviewee himself knows nothing about. What does the guy do? Trying to prove to the world that he is probably the smartest dude on this side of the earth he delves into the technical jargon which even he just fished out of some social media site and he knows practically nothing about dives into jargon which even the real experts themselves shun. Now it’s only one of the hundreds of interviews being conducted all over the place and the guy makes it appear he was talking in some workshop of experts or whatever. He probably is thinking “They know what I’m talking about.” well wise guy, we don’t! We don’t know what you’re talking about and could you be kind enough to tell us what you’re talking about? But of course, as we don’t have that opportunity the guy keeps on talking until he has nothing more to talk about. Of course all the time he was also talking largely about nothing. There isn’t a single sentence about the provision of water which was the main issue of the

so-called interview. Also when it comes to the next important issue about the health benefits of water the guy practically ignores it or keeps away from it as he has no idea what to say.

With the humblest apology, I have to say that in most interviews you spend an entire hour or so trying to grasp what everything is all about and at the end you’re feeling the ants crawling all over you. Why? I’ll tell you why. You don’t have any idea of what the fellow was talking about and the lingering question is “What was he talking about?” He never stopped talking and you’re left with nothing! Yes, something is very wrong. Aha! Here we come to another concept that practically seems to have taken hostage the reporting of the presidential election. Word Salad! That’s the thing! And when they tell you what it was supposed to mean you can’t help saying, “Wait a minute! Doesn’t that sound familiar?”

Well, back here some souls think that we know what they are talking about. In fact, they don’t even have to ask “Do you know what I’m talking about?” It’s taken for granted we know and the story ends there. Well, the connection never happens! And the vital connection not having been achieved how the hell could we know what the persons in question are talking about? And ask the whole lot of you...

What, in the world are they talking about?”

A busy week for PM Abiy

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

PM Abiy, Guterres inaugurate renovated Africa Hall



On Monday afternoon, prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres along with African Union Commissioner, Mousa Faki Mahmat and other guests inaugurated the renovated Africa Hall.

During the day, PM Abiy received UNSG António Guterres at his office and discussed on regional and multilateral issues.

PM Abiy arrived in Kazan city, Russia ahead of BRICS Summit

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) and First Lady Zinash Tayachew accompanied by ministerial delegation arrived in Kazan City of Russia on Tuesday to attend the 2024 BRICS Summit. The delegation received a warm welcome upon the arrival at the airport in Kazan.

After endorsing Ethiopia's BRICS membership last year, Ethiopia became a full member of BRICS since January 2024. For the First time, Ethiopian Government delegation led by Prime Minister Abiy attended the official BRICS Summit organized in Kazan city of Russia this week.

