



The Ethiopian Herald

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Photo: Berihun Tadele

Irreechaa spreads Ethiopians' fraternity, gratitude

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

The Irreechaa festival, an annual thanksgiving celebration of the Oromo people, was joyously celebrated yesterday in Addis Ababa, uniting thousands from

across Ethiopia and beyond. This vibrant event not only showcases a rich cultural tradition but also emphasizes fraternity and gratitude among all Ethiopians. The festival promotes coexistence, reconciliation, and love, drawing large crowds, particularly from Oromia State.

Participants sang, chanted, and donned traditional costumes to honor their Creator in a spirited atmosphere. The palpable energy of the celebration fostered joy and cultural expression, highlighting its significance in bringing people together. Many Ethiopians from various states joined in
See Irreechaa ... page 4

Ethiopia touts major expansion in tea, spice production

• Targeting 4 bln USD in exports
BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA- The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has announced ambitious initiatives aimed at significantly boosting tea and spice production in the coming years. In a recent interview with The Ethiopian Press Agency, Director General Adugna Debela, PhD, shared the authority's plans to enhance both the quality and quantity of these vital agricultural
See Ethiopia touts ... page 4



Africa's call for UNSC representation: Push for inclusion, change

BY HAILE DEMEKE

Africa, the world's most populous and resource-rich continent, has long been
See Africa's call ... page 4

ECCSA provides capacity building support

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) said that it has been providing policy advocacy and capacity building support for upholding efficient business ecosystem and promoting private sectors in continental market share.

ECCSA Deputy Secretary-General Wubie Mengistu made the above remark at the workshop sought to navigating trade barriers and enhancing private sectors partaking in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

He reiterated that the chamber has been identifying business barriers via research, development of business issues, public private partnerships and dialogues in its



Nibret Bantigegn
policy advocacy efforts, thus, addressing their pressing business hurdles, ensuring unity of purposes between and among



Wubie Mengistu
government and private sector actors in their doing business.
See ECCSA provides ... page 4



Tewodros Getachew

PALU summit to empower Ethiopian legal community

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA- The 14th annual Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU) summit is set to take place in Addis Ababa, providing Ethiopian lawyers with a vital platform to exchange international and continental experiences, the Ethiopian Bar Association (EBA) announced.

EBA President Tewodros Getachew, who heads the organizing committee, confirmed that the summit will run from October 16-19 at the Skylight Hotel. He emphasized the importance of active engagement from Ethiopian lawyers to seize the opportunities presented by this significant continental event.

Tewodros noted that hosting the PALU conference allows national institutions to showcase their achievements while learning from others. The EBA is collaborating with international event organizers to ensure the summit's success, which is expected to attract around 300 participants from 54 African countries. Currently, PALU has a membership of 6,700 across the continent.

Tewodros, who also serves as PALU's Vice President, noted that the conference will focus on critical issues such as social justice, business laws, and trans-border legal frameworks. He highlighted the pressing challenges in the continent's legal sector, particularly the human capacity gap that hinders effective legal practice.

The summit aims to equip legal professionals with the knowledge necessary to foster equitable economic, social, and political developments across Africa. By facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing, the conference seeks to strengthen the legal community's role in promoting justice and advancing the rule of law throughout the continent, Tewodros remarked.

Founded in 2002, PALU aims to enhance the role of lawyers in advancing human rights and the rule of law across Africa. It serves as a vital network for legal practitioners, providing resources and support to address legal challenges on the continent.

Experiencing Irreechaa beauty awesome : Tourist from London

ADDIS ABABA (ENA) - Ethiopia is a good example for African countries relating to extending appreciation to one another's culture, show love to one another's cultures, and honor one another paving the way for a United Africa, said Naledi Roos, a visitor from London.

The Irreechaa festival which is celebrated by the Oromo people in Ethiopia every year, is a vibrant and culturally rich event that attracts Oromo origin of Ethiopian Diaspora from around the world and tourists.

Marking the end of the rainy season, Irreechaa is a time of gratitude, renewal, and community celebration.

Visitors can experience the colorful traditional music, dance, and attire, and what have you against the striking stunning landscapes of Ethiopia, often near lakes.

The festival manifests unity and cultural heritage, drawing a large crowd of people together in a spirit of love, chanting, joy and festivity.

Tourists will also have the opportunity to explore cultural beauty, attire, chanting and rich heritages of Ethiopia.

Hence, the Irreechaa festival offers an unforgettable experience for those seeking to explore Ethiopia's Oromo rich traditions.

Naledi Roos who came from London to celebrate Irreechaa said "I arrived in Addis Ababa on Friday, Ethiopia, all the way from London to visit Addis Ababa and participate at the beautiful Irreechaa festival."

This is my first visit to Ethiopia, and I feel deeply honored to be part of this experience, she stated.

She added that from the moment I set foot in



this beautiful city, I have been overwhelmed with joy and awe.

"Since I stepped in, I have just been amazed, in awe, wonderful, seeing everybody in their traditional clothes, hearing the wonderful songs and understanding some of the histories of the meaning behind the festival, how important it is to the people, how much hope and joy it brings to the people," she elaborated.

Noting the warmth and kindness of the Ethiopian people is amazing, she said that they are incredibly humble and welcoming, making me feel right at home.

Roos participated recently at the 6th Irreechaa Peace Forum held under the theme: "Irreechaa: for Our Culture Renaissance," at the Adwa Victory Memorial.

"Being here at the festival today, I have learned much. I have seen so many amazing things. Just the unity, the togetherness of

the people, is so important."

"I think Ethiopia is a good example for the rest of African countries on how to appreciate one another, love one another's cultures, and honor one another, moving forward as United Africa," she said.

Moreover, Roos added that Ethiopia manifests the beauty of unity in diversity.

Therefore, she stated that it's crucial for people from other African countries to see how Ethiopians relate to one another within their tribes, to relate to other African countries and peoples.

"Ethiopians are very welcoming, very loving and every African should come and experience such beautiful and wonderful energy," she said.

The celebrations of Irreechaa took place yesterday at Hora Finfine in Addis Ababa, followed by Hora Arseddi in Bishoftu today.

Tourists express excitement over vibrant Irreechaa cultural experience

ADDIS ABABA- (ENA)-The Irreechaa festival is a place where tourists can explore a vibrant culture and have a truly unique experience, festival attendees told ENA.

The visitors also expressed their excitement with the stunning and richness of the Irreechaa's ritual practices depicted in the event.

The Irreechaa festival was celebrated yesterday in a vibrant and beautiful manner at Hora Finfine in Addis Ababa, drawing hundreds of thousands of participants, including Aba Gadas and Hadha Sinqes.

This magnificent event reflects the values of unity and brotherhood, bringing together a diverse crowd to honor the tradition of Irreechaa.

In addition to the celebrations, the festival showcased stunning fashion shows that portray the beauty and diversity of Oromo people attire and captivate many tourists.

Visitors had the chance to immerse themselves in the richness of Oromo fashion, featuring everything from colorful garments to intricately designed accessories.

Martin Days is a tourist from Germany who participated in the Irreechaa festival for the first time.

Days is extremely enthralled by Irreechaa's cultural and ritual values which the atmosphere was filled with joy and a sense



Martin Days

of community as everyone came together to celebrate this important occasion.

"As a tourist here on holiday, I'm completely mesmerized by the vibrant culture and the immense crowd celebrating at the Irreechaa festival," he elaborated.

He recalled that I have never witnessed anything like this before—especially the impressive all-night festivities that started yesterday.

Although Days has traveled to many other countries, the marvelous experience of Irreechaa celebration is truly unique for him.

This Germany's tourist recommended that his friends visit Ethiopia to see Addis Ababa and explore its other cultural beauties and tourism sites.

Another tourist from Japan, Yuhi Miyauchi



Yuhi Miyauchi

is overwhelmed by the celebration of Irreechaa

Miyauchi, who is also his first time to see such crown people at the Meskel square expressed joy over the festival.

"I am very impressed with a lot of people with traditional dress and dancing, and people are very friendly, so I take so many photos with the Ethiopian friends, and very much enjoy the atmosphere."

Witnessing such a large crowd at Meskel Square is a memorable experience for me, he said, adding each group showcases different traditional dances, and they are all wonderfully captivating.

"This is such a fantastic experience. I would like to recommend my Japanese friends to come to work here to see this festival."

Editorial

Unity and Peace: Vibrant essence of *Irreechaa*

September in Ethiopia is a rich tapestry of holidays and celebrations, each reflecting the country's diverse cultural heritage. Among these, Irreechaa shines as a powerful symbol of hope, unity and joy. This year, festivities commenced at Hora Finfine yesterday and have continued at Hora Bishoftu today, gathering thousands in a collective tribute to the earth and the values that unite them.

Irreechaa, the Oromo thanksgiving festival, transcends mere celebration; it embodies the spirit of community and harmony. The lively colors, rhythmic traditional music, and warm smiles of participants create a vibrant display of cultural pride. The celebration at Hora Finfine was nothing short of spectacular, showcasing the collective spirit of a society that cherishes love, peace, and mutual respect.

The significance of Irreechaa extends far beyond festivities. It serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of unity in diversity. With over 80 ethnic groups contributing to Ethiopia's rich cultural mosaic, Irreechaa highlights our ability to come together despite our differences, celebrating shared values and heritage. This year's events beautifully illustrated how cultural practices can nurture understanding and respect among diverse communities.

Rooted deeply in the Oromo people's respect for nature, Irreechaa is a time to give thanks for the year's blessings, particularly the harvests. Pouring water and planting flowers symbolize renewal and the hope for a prosperous future. This connection to nature reinforces essential values of stewardship and gratitude, vital for nurturing both our environment and our communities.

The way Irreechaa was celebrated this year is a testament to the resilience and unity of the Ethiopian people. Joyful gatherings filled with songs and dances reflect a society that holds love and peace dear. The colorful attire worn by participants visually represents the diversity within Ethiopia, underscoring our shared identity as Ethiopians, despite our varied backgrounds.

Irreechaa also holds the potential to heal and unite communities that may have faced challenges. In a time when division can easily arise, the festival serves as a powerful reminder of the attainability of peace. The smiles and laughter shared during the festivities embody a collective yearning for peaceful coexistence, reinforcing the belief that harmony flourishes through understanding and collaboration.

The participation of diverse groups, from youth to elders, highlights the inclusive nature of Irreechaa. It invites everyone to partake, fostering a sense of belonging that transcends age and background. This intergenerational engagement is crucial for passing down cultural values and ensuring future generations appreciate the importance of unity and mutual respect.

As celebrations continue today at Hora Bishoftu, the message of Irreechaa remains clear: love, peace, and unity are essential principles that should guide our lives. The festival serves as a powerful reminder that, despite the challenges we face, we can unite in celebration of our shared humanity and strive for a brighter future for all.

In sum, Irreechaa is more than a festival; it is a celebration of life, culture, and community. It embodies Ethiopia's spirit—a nation that thrives on diversity while united in its pursuit of peace. As we reflect on this year's celebrations, let us carry forward the values of love, unity, and gratitude, ensuring they continue to light our paths in the journey ahead. The success of this year's Irreechaa not only underscores the strength of our traditions but also offers a hopeful vision of a future where harmony reigns.



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Office of the CEO

Tel. 011-126-42-22
Fax. 251-011-156-98-62
email- epa@press.et

Advertisement and Dist. Department

email: etpresspromotion@gmail.com
Tel. 011-156-98-73/011-811-13-15
Telegram :- 0976084707 - press
Editor-in-Chief: Worku Belachew
email- workubelachew@press.et
Address- Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city
Woreda - 05, House No----
Tel- +251 111 26 41 98

Managing Editor: Wakuman Kudama
Email: wakuma220@gmail.com

Deputy Editors-in-Chief:

Alem Hailu
Elizabeth Mengistu
Zekarias Woldemariam
Desta Geberehiwot
Daniel Beyene

Website: www.press.et
email: ethiopianherald@press.et
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Opinion

Irreechaa, a spring traditional festival of Ethiopia celebrated by millions in the country

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

Traditional cultural celebrations in Ethiopia play a crucial role in preserving the country's rich cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion, and contributing to national unity. They show the multi-faceted spiritual culture of united people of Ethiopia and the wonders of their age old intangible heritage.

Traditional cultural celebrations in the country need to be documented and researched in the manner that they can be used for promoting the country's tourism industry.

Celebrations like Irreecha, Meskel, Timkat, and Enkutatash are essential for keeping Ethiopia's diverse traditions alive, passing them down from generation to generation. They reflect the values, beliefs, and identity of the various ethnic groups in the country

These festivals bring people together, regardless of ethnic, religious, or political differences, reinforcing a sense of community and shared identity. They help promote peace and understanding among Ethiopia's many ethnic groups.

Traditional festivals often attract tourism, both locally and internationally. This boosts local economies by providing opportunities for artisans, vendors, and hospitality businesses to thrive during these celebrations.

Many of Ethiopia's traditional celebrations have religious significance, offering spiritual renewal and the opportunity for individuals and communities to reflect on their moral and ethical values.

Traditional festivals serve as a platform for promoting Ethiopia's image globally, showcasing its deep-rooted cultural and historical legacy, and attracting international attention.

These cultural practices are not just celebrations but serve as a bridge between the past and present, keeping Ethiopia's multi-ethnic and multi-religious heritage vibrant.

One of the most important cultural festivals in Ethiopia take place in the month of September relating to New Year cultural festivals. For instance the celebrations of Fitchee Chambalala among the Sidama people, Gifaata celebrations among the Wolayita people, Misillelaa celebrations among Kambata people, Heboo among the Yem people, Yahooodi Meskela among the Hadiya.

These celebrations vividly depict the colorful traditional costumes among the ethnic groups, their traditional cuisines which is enjoyed during the celebrations.

In a couple of days, the people of Ethiopia, the Oromo people in particular are going to celebrate the Oromo festival of Irreecha. The author of this article dedicates the current contribution to this festival which is celebrated by millions across the country.

Irreecha is a significant cultural and religious

festival celebrated by the Oromo people of Ethiopia, typically held in September or October. Also known as the Thanksgiving Festival, it is a time for the Oromo to give thanks to Waaqa (God) for blessings, harvests, and peace (naaga) after the rainy season. Traditionally, the festival is celebrated at Hora Harsadi near Bishoftu, but it has expanded to other places, including Addis Ababa at Hora Finfine

The rituals of Irreecha involve people gathering around a body of water, such as a river or lake, to offer prayers and thanks. They often carry grass and flowers, which symbolize peace and prosperity, and dip them in water, offering them to Waaqa. The festival also fosters unity (Tokkuma), peace (naaga) and reconciliation (arrarra) The festival is celebrated every year at the beginning of Birraa (Spring), the new season after the dark and rainy winter season, at sacred lakes across Oromia and particularly at Hora Harsadi, Bishoftu, 45 kms south of Addis Ababa. The name Irreechaa itself indicates 'green and fresh grass'.

More than a million people have attended Irreechaa in Bishoftu in recent years, and it makes for a fascinating and colorful carnival, with a wonderful atmosphere, with men and women dressed in their traditional clothes dancing and singing.

Irreecha has grown in significance beyond its religious roots and is now seen as a symbol of Oromo identity and cultural pride. The festival serves as a time of reflection, joy, and community celebration and peace for the Oromo people and the people of Ethiopia at large.

Irreecha or Irressa also known as Irreecha Melka and Irreecha Tulu is a traditional Oromo thanksgiving celebrated every year at the bank of a river in the case of Irreecha Melka and on a hill top in the case of Irreecha Tulu.

While Irreecha Melka is celebrated right at the end of the regular rainy season, Irreecha Tulu is marked in the Ethiopian spring or Birra.

Irreecha is based on the traditional thanksgiving event to the Waka or Wakayo who is believed to create the heavens and the earth. The Oromos thank the Waka for good harvest, promotion of family human and soil fertility and livestock health and primarily for peace in their communities.

As it has been reportedly celebrated among the Oromos for thousands of years, the traditional cultural celebration of Irreecha certainly precedes the introduction of institutionalized religions like Christianity, Islam and other religious institutions in the country.

To date, Irreecha continued to be celebrated annually at Hora Arseddi close to Bishoftu town about 45 kms, from Addis Ababa and this year it is marked in Addis Ababa for the

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

News



Ethiopia touts...

products.

Ethiopia has a rich heritage of tea cultivation, dating back over a century. However, the country currently utilizes only about 4,000 hectares for tea production, primarily managed by private sector players. Despite having the potential to generate 7 million USD from tea exports, the nation currently earns only 3 million USD. "Tea thrives in acidic soil and marginal areas, yielding productive harvests for up to 40 years," Adugna noted.

Recent developments in Oromia State display the authority's commitment to expanding tea cultivation. Last year, tea was planted on 10,000 hectares across Jimma,

BunoBedele, and Illubabora. Looking ahead, the state plans to cultivate an additional 30,000 hectares over the next three years, showcasing a clear strategy to enhance production capabilities.

In addition to tea, Ethiopia is home to over 50 varieties of spices, with ECTA identifying 20 of these as key export products. Packaging efforts are underway for 16 spices, ensuring they meet international quality standards. Currently, the country secures approximately 20 million USD from spice exports, but ECTA is focused on ramping up production and marketing strategies to increase this figure substantially.

The Authority's overarching goal is to

achieve a remarkable 4 billion USD in combined exports from coffee, tea, and spices in the near future. By leveraging Ethiopia's unique agricultural conditions and implementing targeted strategies, ECTA aims to position the country as a leading player in the global tea and spice markets, ultimately maximizing economic benefits and enhancing livelihoods for local farmers.

Ethiopia's strategy to enhance agricultural exports includes expanding tea and spice production alongside its established coffee industry. With diverse agro-ecological zones suited for high-value crops, the country is well-positioned to capitalize on global demand.

ECCSA provides ...

In addition to improving African trade and growth the AfCFTA is supposed to improve African trade and growth visions, Wubie emphasized that it is believed to upturn market access to meet the needs of 13 billion Africans.

The agreement promotes investment, fosters innovation, business development and jobs, however, it poses potential threats such as unfair competition, regulatory challenges, undermining local products and dependency on imported products, and investment risks related to FDI overshadow local firms.

"Time consuming bureaucratic procedures, cumbersome custom procedures and clearance processes, border-crossing issues such as discriminatory treatment on women in business including goods confiscation, violence, and detainment are barriers to reaping AfCFTA agreement."

He emphasized coordinated, sustained and collaborative efforts to ensure the Ethiopian private sector reap those benefits and ensure

better implementation of the strategy.

Emphasizing streamlined organizational structure, bridging awareness gaps, and sector specific platforms for SMEs, he said, adding that digital systems should be harmonized to tackle the possible barriers.

Moreover, the chamber has been undertaking activities with government and development partners such as MoTRI, CIPE and ECA in a bid to maximize opportunities for the business communities to seize the ample market access in the international market, he noted.

Stressing the need to strengthen sector specific associations and structural shifts, he said exerting efforts on customs, procedures, processes, and border trade securities are crucial to facilitate seamless interactions with neighboring countries.

For his part, Amhara State Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association Secretary-General NibretBantigegn highlighted that since the country is mainly

focusing on agricultural products, the agreement would help promote private sector benefit.

Moreover, with the goal of creating a single market for goods and services to deepen Africa's economic integration in accordance with the pan-African vision of "an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa" enshrined in Agenda 2063, it is crucial to facilitate trade and investment between African nations to capitalize the opportunities available through AfCFTA.

"Inclusive and equitable economic and integration systems should also be developed," the Secretary-General added.

In order to effectively manipulate the agreement, transparency and awareness mechanisms to the private sector and the business community should be created. He added that policies and other barriers with the rules and regulations for impactful involvement in the agreement should be streamlined.

Africa's call...

sidelined on the global stage, often lacking a meaningful voice in international affairs. With approximately 1.4 billion people, the continent's immense potential remains underrepresented, particularly in influential bodies like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As global actors increasingly recognize Africa's significance due to its strategic location and abundant resources, the call for greater representation has become urgent.

For decades, Africa has sought enhanced representation at the UNSC, the body responsible for global peace and security. Recently, the UNSC announced plans to include two African countries as permanent members, albeit without veto power-this marks a significant yet partial acknowledgment of Africa's aspirations. Since its establishment in 1945, the UNSC has faced criticism for its lack of credibility, especially due to the absence of representation for a continent housing the majority of the world's population.

A researcher at the Africa Research Center of Addis Ababa University, Dechasa Abebe (PhD) noted that discussions about global governance have gained momentum, particularly from the perspective of Global South countries. "Africa's quest to reform the UNSC has captured the attention of the Global North," he stated. However, the representation of Africa-54 countries and 1.4 billion peoples- often mistakenly seen as a monolith rather than a diverse region with varied interests and needs.

The scholar highlighted the ongoing exclusion of African nations from decision-making processes that impact their futures. While the recent UNSC announcement is a positive step, the lack of veto power remains contentious. "The Security Council must be representative, inclusive, transparent, effective, and accountable," he asserted.

Echoing these views, Director of Interaction for Change in Africa, Worku Yacob (PhD), stressed that Africa's significant population and resources should not be overlooked. Despite the continent's potential, its voice has often gone unheard on global platforms. "It is essential for African countries to unite in advocating for comprehensive reforms of the UNSC," he urged, emphasizing the need for a common African position.

Since its establishment, the UNSC has faced criticism for its exclusivity, leading to a decline in credibility. African nations deserve permanent representation on this crucial council, which plays a vital role in international peace and security. The African Union (AU) must also enhance its efforts to advocate for the continent's rightful place in global governance.

The recent proposal by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, for two African countries to gain permanent seats at the UNSC is noteworthy. While this reflects an acknowledgment of Africa's significance, it highlights the limitations of the current structure, where five permanent members hold veto power and considerable influence over global decisions, including binding resolutions and sanctions.

As the world order evolves, Africa must assert its rightful place in global discussions. The continent's collective efforts to enhance its representation at the UNSC are crucial not only for its own interests but also for the global community. It is imperative that Africa's diverse voices are heard and valued in shaping the future of international governance, the experts remarked.

Irreechaa spreads...

the festivities. Singer Tamrat Tekle, who traveled from Dawero Zone, emphasized the festival's importance: "This unique event strengthens brotherhood, cultural bonds, and solidarity among our people. It is a joyful occasion where everyone, regardless of religion, age, or gender, comes together to celebrate. Sharing this experience with fellow Ethiopians from different states and abroad brings a happiness that is hard to describe."

Amare Alambo, attending from Sidama State, noted the festival's crucial role in fostering unity. "Irreechaa is a celebration for all Ethiopians. I feel a special connection being

here for the fourth time, celebrating with everyone. It bridges gaps between diverse cultural backgrounds."

Kassahun Lemma, who traveled from Hadiyaa Zone, echoed similar sentiments about the festival's role in national reconciliation. He encouraged all Ethiopians to embrace Irreechaa as a celebration for everyone. "I witnessed the beautifully decorated festivities and the evolution of cultural attire, which showcase our rich heritage and promote our country and the festival on a global stage," he noted.

Reports indicate that Irreechaa typically attracts hundreds of thousands of participants, marking the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvest. Each year, the festival draws tens of thousands of Oromos, along with non-Oromo visitors from across the country and beyond. This gathering not only celebrates agricultural abundance but also underscores the importance of cultural solidarity in Ethiopia's diverse society. As the festival continues to grow in popularity, it remains a vital symbol of hope, unity, and shared identity for all Ethiopians, it was learned.

Opinion

Ethiopia's unparalleled role to counter Al-Shabaab's threat, tranquil the Horn

BY HIZKEL HAILU

The Horn of Africa is at a critical juncture, characterized by a complex interplay of geopolitical tensions involving Somalia and Egypt. As the specter of Al-Shabaab looms larger, these tensions threaten to spiral into a broader regional conflict, drawing upon historical grievances, political ambitions, and nationalist fervor.

Thereupon, it is paramount importance to delve into the current dynamics among these nations, exploring Ethiopia's contributions to peacekeeping in Somalia, the implications of Egypt's military presence coupled with the rise of Al-Shabaab, and how these factors intertwine with Ethiopia's quest for access to the sea.

Ethiopia has been a prominent player in peacekeeping efforts in Somalia for over a decade. The Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) have been engaged in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its successor, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), aimed at stabilizing the anarchic landscape wrought by decades of civil strife and bolstering the Somalia federal government against the threats of terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab.

Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia was perceived not just as a commitment to regional stability, but also as a strategic necessity to curb the influence of Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups along its border. However, Ethiopia's role in the peacekeeping mission has been challenged in light of its recent activities concerning Somaliland.

According to documents from AMISOM, at least 4,000 Ethiopian troops operate as part of ATMIS, to counter the threat of Al-Shabaab. Ethiopia's military presence has, at times, been met with criticism, especially as tensions escalated following agreements perceived as encroaching on Somalia's sovereignty. The recently announced military cooperation between Egypt and Somalia, alongside the planned deployment of Egyptian troops, has exacerbated these tensions, sparking concerns regarding Ethiopia's security interests.

While Ethiopia announced the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland, which involves leasing coastal land, Somalia has started viewing this agreement as a direct affront to its sovereignty, prompting calls for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops stationed as part of AMISOM. This is interpreted wrongly by the Somalia side.

Somalia's leadership has demanded an end to Ethiopian military operations within its borders, further complicating Ethiopia's mission in the country. The Somali Prime Minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, has stated that without the annulment of the MoU, Ethiopian forces cannot participate in future missions, jeopardizing regional security efforts.



Ethiopian troops serving under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

In recent weeks, Egypt has significantly ramped up its military presence in Somalia, threatening the region. Following a security pact with the Somalia government, Egypt delivered military aid for the first time in over four decades. Egypt's engagement is primarily motivated by its longstanding concerns over Ethiopia's construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River.

Egypt's military deployment in Somalia is viewed as a strategic maneuver designed to counterbalance Ethiopian influence in the region. Recent reports of Egypt dispatching up to 10,000 troops to Somalia and the simultaneous supply of weapons signify a substantial escalation in their military engagement.

Egypt's involvement is not merely rooted in a desire for increased security within Somalia; it also reflects Cairo's long-standing concerns regarding Ethiopia's impact on Nile waters and the geopolitical landscape of the Horn of Africa. As Ethiopia expands its military footprint and ambitions in the Red Sea, Egypt seeks to safeguard its interests by strengthening alliances with the Somalia government, making it imperative to monitor the evolving dynamics between the three nations.

The unexpected, yet, the growing relationship between Egypt and Somalia hints at the possibility of a proxy conflict emerging in the region. Analysts have voiced that Egypt's military deployment to Somalia is reflective of a larger strategy to curtail Ethiopian ambitions in the Horn of Africa, especially with Ethiopia's aspirations for both regional influence and maritime access.

Ethiopia, a landlocked nation, has sought to elevate its geopolitical standing through access to the sea. The Memorandum of Understanding signed with Somaliland is part of this enduring quest, signaling Ethiopia's willingness to engage in agreements to secure its economic needs, Ethiopian officials argued. A direct route to

the Red Sea would provide Ethiopia not only commercial advantages but also a strategic foothold in regional maritime politics. The urgency for maritime access is underscored by the projections of Ethiopia's population reaching over 120 million, amplifying the necessity for expanding trade opportunities.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing a significant flux of geopolitical developments, particularly concerning the interplay between Somalia and Egypt. The current situation is mainly compounded by Egypt's military involvement in Somalia and the rising influence of Al-Shabaab, in the region, has led to a complex web of tensions that needs a comprehensive understanding.

Amidst these geopolitical tensions, the resurgence of Al-Shabaab looms as a significant threat. The group has perpetrated numerous attacks against Somalia and foreign military forces, complicating the security situation.

The inability of Somalia to effectively combat Al-Shabaab poses a direct risk not only to its national security but also to the broader region. The ongoing struggles for power among the Somali federal government, the regional autonomy of Somaliland, and external influences from Egypt create a fertile ground for the resurgence of insurgent activities as factions vie for power, dominance, and legitimacy.

Different foreign Media reported that the recent attacks in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, suspected to be carried out by the al-Shabaab group, have escalated in September 2024. One of the most recent incidents involved twin bomb explosions that killed at least six people and injured several others. One explosion took place near Somalia's National Theater, close to the president's office. Although Al-Shabaab has not officially claimed responsibility, they are notorious for frequent bombings targeting civilians, government officials, and security forces in Mogadishu and other regions of Somalia.

Al-Shabaab continues to destabilize the region by employing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and launching assaults, particularly at government targets and crowded areas. These attacks aim to undermine the Somali government and security efforts. The group, which controls significant parts of rural southern and central Somalia, poses a severe threat to peace and security in the country, even as Somalia increases its counterterrorism efforts in collaboration with international forces.

However, Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia is not a recent phenomenon; it has a complex history stemming from territorial disputes and security concerns. Historically, the two nations have been interlinked through shared ethnic populations and conflicting political interests.

Ethiopia has played a vital role in Somalia politics, especially since the disintegration of the Somalia State in the early 1990s. The Ethiopian military intervened multiple times, ostensibly to combat threats from extremist factions that had arisen in the chaos. The most notable instance was Ethiopia's military intervention in 2006 during the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts, which reignited armed conflicts and led to a more fractured political environment in Somalia.

Amid these tensions, Ethiopia's long-standing contributions to peacekeeping missions in Somalia are at risk of being overshadowed. Subsequently, through recognizing the shared challenges posed by Al-Shabaab and the potential for economic collaboration, Ethiopia and Somalia can move toward a more stable future, one where mutual interests set the stage for cooperative security and development.

All things considered, the rising tide of tensions in the Horn of Africa, fueled by military ambitions, historical grievances, and the influence of terrorist groups, necessitates urgent attention. Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions cannot be overlooked amid this crisis.

As Egypt embraces military engagement in Somalia, the fabric of regional relations is continually tested. For the sake of security and prosperity, strategic diplomacy must guide the way forward. A nuanced understanding of these dynamics is vital not just for the involved parties but for the broader international community that seeks stability in a historically volatile region. Fostering dialogue and cooperation rooted in historical realities and present-day challenges is essential in the quest for peace, security, and resilience in the Horn of Africa.

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

Business & Economy

Remarkable macroeconomic reform outcomes amid snags

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The recently launched macroeconomic reform in Ethiopia has been bearing fruits as it has been instrumental in enhancing budget management efficiency and reducing public debt vulnerabilities. Ethiopia's development financing options will expand via creating a favorable environment to meet its national development financing needs domestically.

Cognizant of this fact, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Worku Tellila, an economist graduated from Addis Ababa University, to solicit a piece of information about the recently launched macroeconomic reform merits and shortcomings witnessed in due course of implementing it.

He said, "It is far from clear where the current push to enhance security and economic resilience through economic sanctuary measures and it would be very trying to use it as the basis for a new macroeconomic framework as the reform would have some sorts of repercussions on the high cost of living, for the time being. Policymakers have to well realize that the adjustment process would require modifications in economic structure that would allow changes in market forces to be better understood by economic agents and the entire society who are directly facing the merits and/or demerits attracted by the reform."

As to him, the strong interest in structural reform therefore reflected, to a considerable extent, and reliance on market forces was seen as the central principle in the economic organization of the country.

The increase in aggregate demand is explained by the fall in the real interest rate, which increases interest-sensitive spending which then has feedback effects on total spending.

The macroeconomic effects of structural reforms that affect markets for goods and services can be examined under two minds. In the first place, in some cases they can alter the effective supply of labor and hence of potential output by encouraging reallocation of resources toward more productive uses. Next, they generally affect parameters in trade relationships, since opportunities for trade are changed.

Unlike macroeconomic policies, structural reform measures are geared towards changing the underlying microeconomic equilibrium of the economy. As such, they require the reallocation of resources among sectors. This process may not be smooth, however, and will usually involve adjustment costs for both labor and capital. On the positive side, structural policies may produce dynamic gains to the economy. For example, increased competition in an industry could raise the long-run rate of technological change, thereby inducing a higher rate of productivity growth over the long run. Similarly, on the economy-wide level, the recent approach on endogenous growth implies that static gains could translate into higher overall growth rates owing to external economies of scale.

A rationale that is often used to justify



Ethiopia's Transition to A Market-led Economy

government intervention is a wish to modify the distribution of income that would result from unfettered functioning of markets. The purpose of this reform would be taken as a viable weapon to support economic reforms that will enable Ethiopia to become a middle-income country within the shortest time possible by maximizing the amount of finance available for development and strengthening capacity in key areas of the economy.

Ethiopia, as a landlocked country of more than 120 million inhabitants in the Horn of Africa, has experienced high levels of economic growth in the past years with an average annual growth rate of 10.8%, twice the average in sub-Saharan Africa.

Through this ambitious reform policy, Ethiopia aims at transforming its economy through market-driven initiatives, while taking advantage of its historical structure and advantages.

This support focuses on strategic dynamics such as the development of Public Private Partnerships and the reform of public enterprises, while helping the transversal implementation of the reforms with different administrative organizations and agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, The Capital Markets Authority or the Industrial Parks Development Commission.

The initiative has given particular attention to coordination among partners, stakeholders, government and non-government organizations with a view to fueling the progress of economic growth and production and productivity augmentation thereby pushing the macroeconomic reform into fruition.

As to Worku, the implemented macroeconomic reforms will lead to, among others, increased private investment and progressive liberalization of the sectors of the economy like energy, logistics and telecommunications, emergence sustainable change, particularly in better governance, transparency and accountability of public enterprises, in particular by supporting

the structuring of sector offices which have predominantly engaged economic trajectories, investment, manufacturing other related sectors contributing a lot to economic reforms, for example in the field of private sector development or industrial policy.

Ethiopia's recent macroeconomic reforms, supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, could have profound implications for the country in particular and the region in general. The key reforms include the use of a floating exchange rate system and of interest rates as a policy tool. It is well recognized that the country recently announced its entrance into full-fledged macroeconomic policy implementation.

Worku further elucidated that in Macro-economic Reform Program Policy, legal reform processes have brought new hope for the economy to transition to a more stable macroeconomic environment particularly if managed and scrupulously followed up.

Following the political change of 2018, the government has been making reforms for the past six years to solve accrued economic structural challenges of the past, and the one which was very recently introduced, would be of paramount importance in further reinvigorating the mission of homegrown economy across the nation.

Debt burden, inflation, unemployment, slow economic structural change, low sector productivity, low performance of development projects and waste of resources are some of the accrued economic structural challenges that need to be well combated to make a difference in all aspects, he added.

Despite the remaining works, efforts to correct macroeconomic imbalances, alleviate debt burden, increase domestic production capacity, expand sources of economic growth, create job opportunities and fix structural bottlenecks have proved successful.

"Over the past years, there have been significant development cooperation

and financing efforts and negotiations for the implementation of our Home-Grown Economic Reform program. These negotiations have been conducted with adequate knowledge and wisdom for outcomes that protect Ethiopia's national interests and improve the lives and livelihoods of our citizens," he said.

Hence, the macroeconomic reform endeavor which is within the framework of the Home-Grown Economic Reform program and Mid-term Investment and Development Plan (MDIP) is supported by international critical development partners.

Yes, Worku said correcting foreign exchange distortions and solving the structural balance of payments deficit problems, reducing inflation by modernizing the monetary policy framework, and strengthening the inclusiveness, competitiveness, and soundness of the financial sector are among the key goals of the Macro-economic Reform Program in the country.

The reform will open up the closed Ethiopian economy and enable the country to benefit from the global market, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), he stated.

The reform is mainly based on the principles of the comprehensive development concepts that are being implemented following the national reform. True, the Ethiopian economy for the private sector was one of the decisions the government passed on the morrow of the national reform.

Noting that activities have been carried out in opening up the economy for the private sector participation, especially during the first Homegrown Economic Reform, he said adding that the macroeconomic reform is not a new invention.

He said, "As learned from the premier, the first Homegrown Economic Reform has registered a lot of achievements by withstanding challenges. Besides, as Ethiopia's economy that has remained closed among the countries that have large economies in Africa, it has been impossible to sustain the economy following such an obstructed fashion. Hence, the economy should be opened up in order to benefit from the AfCFTA. To do this, the reform will be instrumental in realizing such a rewarding quarry."

In a nutshell, it is quite important to well comprehend that the reform would be instrumental in helping the nation achieve the goal of economic growth, higher level of GDP and higher level of employment and social security. It would pronounce the forces which determine economic growth of a country and portray the avenue how to reach the highest state of economic growth and sustain it.

The performance of Ethiopian economy has brought reform to the forefront of communication on development economics and sustainable reforms. The main point is since the reform on overall growth has not been that much significant as it was expected under market friendly environment, all the procedures and implementation means have to be streamlined and coordinated to make it a success.

Planet Earth

Ethiopia working to scale up harnessing of the untapped gold mining potential

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia gradually recognized the potential of mining resources as a pivotal driver of economic growth and development. The country has huge potential of natural resources, is estimated to be unaware of approximately 70% of its mineral wealth. This significant lack of awareness stems primarily from inadequate exploration and research methodologies, compounded by a lack of technological support. As a result, the country has only managed to identify between 30% and 40% of its total mineral resources. This underutilization of mineral assets not only hinders economic growth but also prevents Ethiopia from fully leveraging its resources for sustainable development.

Elias Kasahun, a mining lecturer at Addis Ababa University of Science and Technology, emphasized that Ethiopia's mineral resources are scattered across the country. The geographical dispersion complicates further investigations and limits the effectiveness of exploration efforts.

He said that the challenges are further exacerbated by ongoing conflicts in regions rich in minerals, such as Tigray, Welega and Guji. Elias notes that these areas could potentially yield substantial mineral resources if not for the prevailing unrest that disrupts mining activities and deters investment.

For instance, he mentioned that the Midrock gold production company, located in the Guji zone, has faced operational challenges due to these conflicts. Currently, the company produces around 3.5 tons of gold per year, significantly down from its previous output of eight tons, he said. Such fluctuations in production highlight the direct impact of socio-political stability on the mining sector's viability, he added.

The lecture pointed out that illegal mining practices pose a serious threat to the sector's overall health. In regions like Benishangul and Gambella, where numerous gold deposits exist, illegal operations are reportedly held by individuals, bypassing regulatory frameworks. This not only harms legitimate miners but also results in the production of subpar mineral products. The lack of regulation and oversight diminishes the quality of resources extracted and poses environmental risks, he noted.

Ethiopia is unique in that it permits traditional methods of mineral extraction, a practice that, while culturally significant, impedes the sustainable and efficient use of its mineral resources. Elias argues that this approach needs reassessment to enhance resource management and maximize the potential economic benefits.

He further stated that Ethiopia has yet to utilize even 3% of its mineral wealth. Identifying locations with mineral deposits is a monumental task in itself; further



By investing in modern exploration technologies, addressing illegal mining practices, and fostering a more conducive environment for investment, Ethiopia can unlock the full potential of its mineral resources

complicating efforts to harness these resources used full utilization.

In recent years, the Ethiopian government has made concerted efforts to harness these resources fully, aiming to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on agriculture. This strategic shift not only promises to bolster national revenue but also to create jobs and enhance infrastructure. As Ethiopia seeks to position itself as a key player in the global mining landscape, the full utilization of its mineral wealth becomes essential for sustainable development and the improvement of living standards for its population.

However, recent policy reforms in Ethiopia aim to address these challenges. Elias the recently implemented monetary policy is designed to facilitate better utilization of mineral resources and combat illegality in the sector. The Expert suggested that increased government attention and detailed studies are essential for revitalizing the mining industry.

State Minister of Mines, Million Mathewos, asserted that the Ethiopian government has prioritized the mining sector over the past five years. The government recognizes mining as one of the five pillars of the economy, aiming to harness its full potential.

Million mentioned that Ethiopia has not reaped the benefits it should from the mining sector, largely due to a history of neglect. In the last fiscal year, Ethiopia managed to recover 900 kg of gold. However, following recent macroeconomic reforms, the country has seen a significant increase, with over 2,700 kg of gold extracted in just August and September, state minister noted. This burgeoning output signifies the sector's potential as a major foreign exchange earner, second only to agriculture, he added.

To further enhance foreign exchange earnings, three gold production facilities are currently under construction. Million said that the country do ahead that these projects will be operational within a year and a half, with the potential to produce over ten tons of gold annually. This increase in production is expected to improve both the quantity and quality of mineral products

available for export, he added.

The State Minister has indicated that the new gold mining projects are strategically located in Benishangul, Gambella, and Tigray. Notably, the project in the Kormuk district of Benishangul is projected to yield up to nine tons of gold per year. Additionally, the existing gold mining operations in Guji are being expanded to increase output.

Beyond gold, there are plans for the sustainable production of potash ore in the Afar region, diversifying Ethiopia's mineral extraction portfolio. Million highlighted that the fiscal year 2016 E.C. the country gained 420 million USD from mineral exports, with an ambitious goal of reaching 800 million USD in the current year, he revealed.

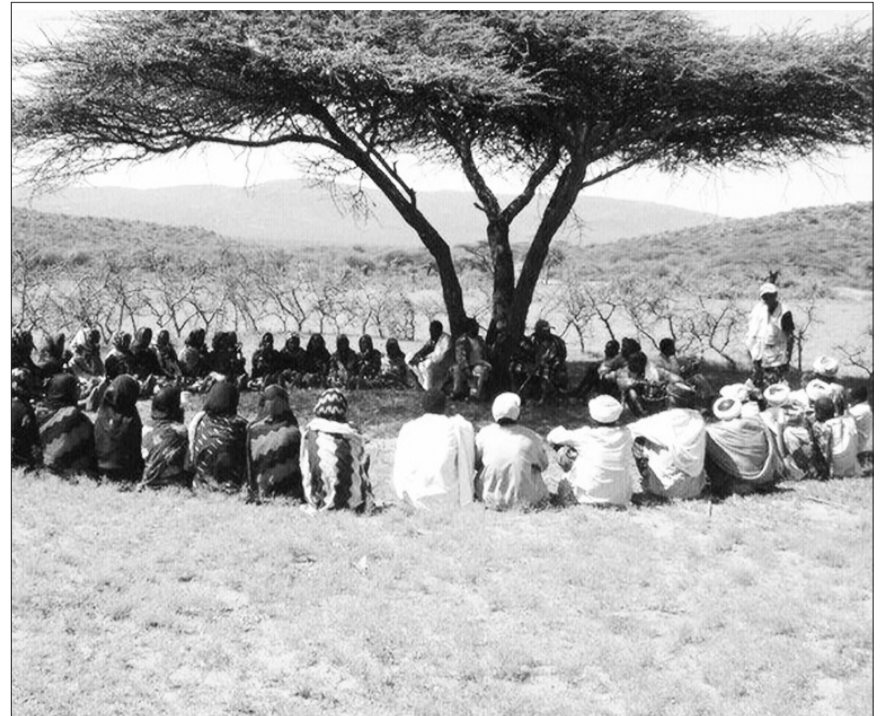
The country has established an open system for both local and foreign investors to engage with the mining sector. This edge aims to attract foreign capital, fostering a more robust and sustainable mining industry. By replacing imported products, producing goods for local industries, and creating job opportunities for citizens, the mining sector is positioned to play a crucial role in Ethiopia's economic transformation.

Ethiopia stands at a crossroads regarding its mineral resources. While the country is endowed with vast mineral wealth, it faces significant challenges in exploration, regulation, and sustainable management.

Moreover, the government creates awareness for the society to address the challenge of the sector and maintains the environmental impacts. Also the government is must be open for private company to enhancing the utilization of the minerals resource in the country.

By investing in modern exploration technologies, addressing illegal mining practices, and fostering a more conducive environment for investment, Ethiopia can unlock the full potential of its mineral resources. The government's recent initiatives and reforms are promising steps toward a more prosperous future, but sustained commitment and strategic planning will be essential to realize the vision of a thriving mining sector that benefits all Ethiopians.

Art & Culture



Great values of the Oromo Gada system

BY NAOL GIRMA

Ethiopia, with its unique new year, is celebrating several holydays and cultural festivals colorfully. The New Year itself, with the Enqutatash magnificence, the Demera and Meskel (the finding of the true cross) were celebrated in the past few weeks. Now is the Irreechaa, nextandof September 2024 to be celebrated in Horra Finfine, Addis Ababa and Horra Arsedi, Bishoftu town of Oromia State.

The Irreechaa is one of the institutional values of the Gada system celebrated by the Oromo people since time immemorial. The Ethiopian Herald has been publishing several pieces of information about Irreechaa this week, and the Art and Culture column would like to hint at the Oromo people's very deep-rooted Gada system in this piece.

The Gada system is a traditional democratic constitutional system practiced by the Oromo people for thousands of years. From the beginning, the Oromo people have been guided by divine principles, says Dr. Fre Jaleta from the Addis Ababa University.

Due to population growth and strange violent behaviors in societies, the rule of nature began to be violated. According to Fre, it was mandatory to create a constitution and establish the Gada system.

The basic standards on which the Gada system was rooted are universalism, eternity, and inclusiveness. "Some say the Gada system, like the other draconian laws, gives no place for women. Meanwhile, it is the most exemplary constitutional system that gives women the strongest power. In the parliament, women have 22 seats while men take 23. In modern constitutions, the numbers that matter are the seats that the party representatives or the parties gain in the parliament regardless of gender. But in the Gada system, women are equally represented."

In order to further elaborate that the Gada system gives women priority Fre says that during war, if the women go with Sinke and say "No more," it will stop automatically. If a man tries to abuse a pregnant woman or a female with a baby,

The basic standards on which the Gada system was rooted are universalism, eternity, and inclusiveness

he will be punished in front of women. If a husband and wife set out for a long journey, there is no way that he would let her walk on foot. She will ride a horse or mule. There were women Aba Gadas in the history of the Oromo traditional political system.

The Gada system has a lot to contribute for modern world democracy and researchers like Dr. Fre are still digging into what were hidden between societies for centuries. It is one of the oldest democratic systems, which is considered as an evolved democratic constitutional system, he says. Even though some outsider scholars say it is an unwritten system, it was and is written in essence. Children were raised learning and practicing it. "Some say Africans never had philosophies. But when you study the Gada system deeply, the reality is quite different. Children grow up learning it. It is written in their essence. And most of all, it is a partisan system bound with traditional but universal laws and orders", says Fre.

According to him the system has its distinctions and similarities with modern democracy. What makes it different is its traditional approaches. For instance, if a man abuses women in any circumstances, he will get forty lashes.

Meanwhile, most of its values would go with what is called modern democracy. The Gada system gives priority to women and nature. Why do women and nature take the most crucial place in the system? They are the very makers of mankind and they both are everything, according to Fre. There was a recent experience that Fre remembers. The Korke is one of the most precious and indigenous wild animals in Ethiopia. However, in western Arisi the existence of this animal was under threat, or it was facing extinction due to illegal hunting. Thus, the society with the Gada parliament set meetings and decided that if someone killed one Korke, he would be fined with forty heifers as punishment.

He also notes that the first thing that links the Gada with the modern democratic system is its similarity and versatility with the American constitution, Adds fre. It gives four years of preparatory time for its Aba Gadas and four years of active power. It depends on the free will of the mass

public and gives priority to the handicap, impoverished and others in need.

"It only grows up because it is established by the freewill of the people. If the Aba Gada has to leave the office after serving his time, it won't take seconds. There is no such thing of changing the constitution. Military Coup-deta or extending a period of power with force is unthinkable. It is inclusive. It is not arbitrary", says Fre.

To practice the Gada system, there are five stages that the children have to go through. Children between the ages of 8-16, for they are not matured for heavy responsibilities, they will learn how to swim, ride horses, throw spears and they go herding goats. From ages 16-24 are called the Folle. Folle is a social army. Their dress and hair style is different. This member of the society goes straight to military training. The third stage of the Gada practical training is public speech and learning the ways of transferring power. They will also learn how to resolve crises.

After eight years they will be party candidates. They will practically learn the ways of a partisan system.

In order to come to power in the Gada system there are several criteria one must qualify. It starts with his personal behaviors. His decency and modesty take a significant place in the evaluations. His capability of managing his family is also one of the major criteria. It will be checked that if that candidate has enough wealth or whatever it takes to manage his family for eight years. His house is expected to be open for gusts twenty four hours with abundant food and drink to host the guests.

Does he have universal view? Or is he versatile? These are crucial requirements in the criteria. They are necessary because a person who is coming to leadership is expected to have universal views and has to be flexible. Fre says "A leader, who has narrow mind, has no place by the people of the Oromo. If he only favours his own people or the Oromo, he is not a leader. The people of Oromo through their Gada system have lived embracing brotherhood and sharing its positions or wealth with other ethnicities, according to Fre.

Society

Irreechaa signifies Oromo people values of peace and unity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Every year, as the rainy season comes to an end and the sun starts warming the earth, Ethiopians mark several street festivals. Among these street festivals marked in September and October, (the month of Meskerem), the *Irreechaa* Festival, the Thanksgiving festival of the Oromo people is one.

This annual festival is marked warmly and colorfully among the people of Oromo gathering around the river banks and the shores of lakes or trees to offer thanks to (Waaqa), the Creator for all His bounty; and pray for peace and a bright year.

And today, hundreds of thousands of Oromo people adorned with their colorful traditional clothes and holding green grass and Adey Abeba, a flowering plant native to Ethiopia that symbolizes the end of the rainy season and the start of the bright season, are celebrating *Irreechaa* at Addis Ababa, Hora Finfine. They are paying tribute to the Creator and praying for the year to be filled with love, peace, and prosperity.

As part of this year's *Irreechaa* celebration, the 6th *Irreechaa* Peace Forum was also carried out at Adwa Victory Memorial Museum, in the capital Addis Ababa, under the theme "*Irreechaa* for the Renaissance of our culture".

In his remark, Oromia State President Shimelsi Abdisa said that *Irreechaa* is a festival in which people give thanks to the Creator; and an event where all people participate without discrimination as well as the unity of people further strengthened.

Irreechaa is a celebration of gratitude, peace, forgiveness, solidarity, and brotherhood as well as cultural values. He also expressed his gratitude to the Abbaa Gedaas, and Haadha Siinqees who have kept the *Irreechaa* festival and the festival goes beyond the Oromo people and to become a celebration of all Ethiopians.

Mentioning that efforts are being made to preserve the traditional values of the State and pass them on to future generations, he said that the Geda system is being included in the education system of the State to help create a generation that respects the culture. Similarly, many schools were built by volunteers to use culture for development activities.

He also pointed out that traditional court services are widely exercised in the State and the people's culture of supporting each other is getting stronger.

In her social media page, Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abiebie also said that *Irreechaa* has now become a tourism attraction and a source of income for the city and country, going beyond its cultural significance.

"As our country, Ethiopia is a diverse country with multiple public cultural, and religious values, these festivals play an important role in strengthening unity, love, and cooperation among people. As a result, *Irreechaa* is being celebrated as a festival of peace, reconciliation, unity, togetherness, and brotherhood.

Stating that *Irreechaa* is one of the pillars of the Geda System, it is a symbol of gratitude, peace, and brotherhood, where the Oromo people renew their relationship with the



creator, nature, and all people since ancient times. In *Irreechaa*, those people who are apart get together, and those who have differences and aggression will be reconciled, the Mayor added.

Even though the Hora Finfine *Irreechaa* Festival had been suspended for many years, it has returned to its old place of celebration and started to be celebrated by all the people with a spirit of brotherhood. This year marks the 6th anniversary of *Irreechaa* since it started to be celebrated at Hora Finfine.

"These days, *Irreechaa*, beyond its traditional event, has become a tourism attraction and a source of income for our city and country, Mayor Adanech reiterated.

The Mayor also extended her congratulatory message on the 2017 E.C. *Irreechaa* Festival. "Addis Ababa, the home of all Ethiopians, is welcoming local and foreign guests coming to our city to attend the celebration. Dear residents of Addis Ababa City, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you on behalf of the City Administration for the hospitality you are doing to welcome guests," she remarked.

Oromia State Sport and Culture Bureau Head Jemila Sinbiru said that *Irreechaa* is the symbol of unity and peace because it brings people of different backgrounds- ethnicity, culture, norms language, and religion- together.

"Efforts are underway to register *Irreechaa* at UNESCO, we would like to invite everyone to join us in making it," she underlined.

At the opening of the forum, various artworks that depict the culture of *Irreechaa* were staged.

Including Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abebe, House of People's Representatives Deputy Speaker, Lomi Bedo, Oromia State President Shimelsi Abdisa, and Addis Ababa City Council Speaker, Buzena Alkedir, the forum was attended by various high-level government officials, diplomats, religious fathers, Abbaa Gedaas, Haadha Siinqees and residents of the city.

In an exclusive interview with Prof. Tesema

Ta'a a seasoned History Instructor at Addis Ababa University said that celebrating *Irreechaa* as per its values helps to ensure and foster values and peace.

Irreechaa Festival is a wonderful cultural festival in which a huge number of people come together. It has deep historical roots and intertwines with the cultural and spiritual identity of the Oromo people. Understanding its origins provides insight into its significance and the values it embodies. According to him, the origin of the celebration of *Irreechaa* is not yet clearly known, but it is regarded as one significant stage that unites the people.

He underlined through the *Irreechaa* celebration, the Oromo people cement ethical moral values like preserving the peace and unity of the society. The venue plays an important role in handing over century-old values to posterity. *Irreechaa* holds profound significance as a symbol of peace and unity. Rooted in a rich cultural heritage through its rituals, communal gatherings, and expressions of gratitude, *Irreechaa* fosters a spirit of harmony and collective identity among the Oromo people.

This event not only honors the connection between the Oromo people and their land; but also serves as a vital platform for instilling important values in future generations as well as how the people co-exist in harmony with other ethnic groups.

According to him, *Irreechaa* plays a crucial role in preserving the Oromo cultural identity. Through songs, dances, and rituals, participants celebrate their history and traditions, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among the youth.

The festival brings together people from various backgrounds, promoting unity and solidarity. This collective celebration reinforces the values of cooperation, mutual respect, and understanding, which are essential in a diverse society.

Elders share stories and teachings during *Irreechaa*, instilling moral and ethical values in younger generations. This transmission of

knowledge is vital for maintaining cultural continuity and ensuring that future generations uphold these values.

He further noted that it is an instrumental in resolving conflicts. *Irreechaa* serves as a peaceful gathering where grievances can be discussed and resolved. The emphasis on dialogue and reconciliation during the festival helps to build bridges between communities and mitigate conflicts.

The festival is a reminder of resilience and hope. It encourages participants to focus on positive futures, fostering an environment where peace can flourish. This message is particularly important in regions facing social or political tensions.

The continued celebration of *Irreechaa* will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in passing down essential values to posterity and nurturing a peaceful society. *Irreechaa* is a vibrant and deeply meaningful festival celebrated by the Oromo people, marking a time of thanksgiving and reflection. Traditionally held at the end of the rainy season, *Irreechaa* symbolizes gratitude to the Creator for the blessings of nature, including the land, water, and harvest. Beyond its sociocultural significance, the celebration serves as a profound expression of Oromo identity, culture, and unity.

Irreechaa embodies the values of community, resilience, and hope, fostering a sense of belonging among participants. It is a time for communal gatherings, where individuals come together to honor their heritage, share stories, and engage in traditional songs and dances. The festival also promotes peace and reconciliation, providing an opportunity for dialogue and healing within communities.

In an ever-changing world, the celebration of *Irreechaa* plays a crucial role in preserving cultural traditions and instilling pride in the younger generation. As the Oromo people gather to celebrate this rich heritage, they reaffirm their connection to the past while looking forward to a harmonious future.

Tomorrow, Sunday, October 6, *Irreechaa* will be celebrated warmly at Hora Arsed, Bishoftu.

Law & Politics

Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia: Historical ties, modern ambitions

BY BILAL DERSO

Historical foundations and evolving bonds

The relationship between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia is multifaceted, characterized by deep historical roots and expanding economic ties. While diplomatic relations officially began in the mid-20th century, the partnership has evolved significantly, with the historical connection remaining a cornerstone of their bilateral relationship. The two countries share not only a history but also a vision for a prosperous future, recognizing their mutual benefits in various sectors.

This bond is rooted in shared values and experiences. Ethiopia's unique status as one of the few African nations that was never colonized has allowed it to maintain sovereignty and cultural heritage, fostering a strong sense of national pride. This resonates with Saudi Arabia's own identity rooted in Islamic tradition and Arab heritage, creating a solid foundation for diplomatic relations and enabling meaningful dialogue on various issues.

Commitment to regional stability

A key aspect of the Ethiopia-Saudi relationship is their shared commitment to regional stability, particularly in the Horn of Africa, which has faced political instability, armed conflicts, and humanitarian crises. Both nations recognize the importance of peace and security in this geopolitically sensitive area, leading them to collaborate on addressing these pressing challenges.

Saudi Arabia's strategic position in the Middle East, combined with Ethiopia's leadership in East Africa, has made their collaboration essential for navigating the complexities of regional politics. They have worked together to combat terrorism, promote dialogue among conflicting parties, and provide humanitarian assistance, demonstrating a commitment to both national interests and the stability of the Horn of Africa.

Milestone event in Ethiopia-Saudi relations

On September 23, 2024, a significant event marked another milestone in the Ethiopia-Saudi relationship, featuring remarks by Ambassador Negus Kebede, the Director General of Middle East, Asian, and Pacific Affairs at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He emphasized the long-standing friendship between the two nations and reflected on Ethiopia's historical role during the early days of Islam, providing refuge to the followers of Prophet Muhammad. This solidarity is symbolized by the Nejjashi Mosque, a place of historical and religious significance that stands as a reminder of the ties between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia.

Economic collaboration and mutual benefits

Ambassador Negus highlighted the foundation of mutual respect that has allowed the relationship to flourish over time. The

which both countries recognize as shared interests.

Shared initiatives for sustainable development

Ambassador Negus drew attention to Saudi Arabia's Middle East Green Initiative and Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, which aim to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. These initiatives represent potential collaboration areas where Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia can tackle pressing environmental challenges together.

The Green Legacy Initiative seeks to combat deforestation and promote biodiversity through large-scale tree planting, while Saudi Arabia's initiative aims to reduce carbon emissions and increase green spaces in the region. Both initiatives offer opportunities for collaborative projects that can have a lasting positive impact on the environment and communities they serve.

Strengthening diplomatic connections

High-level diplomatic exchanges play a crucial role in deepening ties between the two nations. The 6th Joint Ministerial Commission held in Riyadh in May 2024 exemplified this strengthening relationship, bringing together officials from both countries to discuss various aspects of bilateral cooperation.

The outcomes of such meetings have far-reaching implications. Alongside labor agreements, they have facilitated greater people-to-people connections, with many Ethiopians living and working in Saudi Arabia, contributing to the Kingdom's economy and fostering cultural exchanges. As Ambassador Negus noted, these personal connections are essential for building a deeper, more enduring partnership.

BRICS membership and global collaboration

Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia's recent inclusion in the BRICS group of emerging economies presents an opportunity to collaborate more closely in driving global economic recovery and addressing challenges facing developing nations. Their membership provides a platform for enhancing dialogue on economic development, trade, and investment, enabling them to advocate for shared interests globally.

Ethiopia has expressed gratitude for Saudi Arabia's support in advocating for Africa's inclusion in the G20, reflecting the Kingdom's commitment to promoting the interests of African nations. This cooperation underscores the importance of solidarity among developing countries striving for equitable representation in global decision-making.

Commitment to future cooperation

In concluding remarks, Ambassador Negus reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to further enhancing its relationship with Saudi Arabia, focusing on peace, prosperity, and collaboration. He expressed optimism that the growing economies of both countries offer significant opportunities for future cooperation, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, and

technology. These areas of collaboration promise to benefit both Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia and contribute to broader development goals.

Saudi Arabia's National Day and Vision 2030

On Saudi Arabia's 94th National Day, Ambassador Fahd O. Alhumaydani echoed Ambassador Negus's sentiments, praising the success of the 6th Saudi-Ethiopian Joint Ministerial Commission. He highlighted the visit of a high-ranking Saudi business delegation to Ethiopia in June 2024, which included over 75 representatives from major companies, signaling Saudi Arabia's strong interest in expanding economic cooperation.

Ambassador Alhumaydani expressed optimism about the future of Saudi-Ethiopian relations, particularly with plans to increase direct flights between the two countries. Currently, Ethiopian Airlines, Saudi Airlines, and Flynas operate 50 direct flights per week between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia, and this number is expected to grow, facilitating greater trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges.

Saudi Arabia's achievements under Vision 2030

Ambassador Alhumaydani also reflected on Saudi Arabia's remarkable achievements under Vision 2030, the Kingdom's ambitious development plan aimed at transforming its economy and society. He emphasized the growing ties between Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, viewing Vision 2030 as a framework for collaboration. This vision encompasses various sectors, including tourism, technology, and renewable energy, providing a roadmap for future joint initiatives.

The ambassador highlighted the success of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, noting the Kingdom had surpassed its 2030 target by welcoming 109 million visitors in 2023. This achievement underscores Saudi Arabia's growing global prominence and potential as a leading destination for tourism and investment. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's selection to host Expo 2030 and its bid to organize the FIFA World Cup in 2034 further illustrate its ambitions.

Navigating challenges for a bright future

In conclusion, while Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia have made significant strides in strengthening their bilateral relationship, challenges remain. The geopolitical landscape in the Horn of Africa is complex, requiring careful navigation of potential impediments to their partnership. However, the growing economies of both countries present substantial opportunities for further cooperation across various sectors.

As both nations continue to develop, the future of their relationship looks bright, with the potential for deeper cooperation and mutual benefit. By leveraging their historical ties, shared values, and commitment to collaboration, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia can forge a path toward a prosperous future that benefits their citizens and contributes to regional stability.

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

What's Going On?

What's going on? What really is going on? Humanity seems to have hit such a low bar that shouts, (some almost on the edges of screams!) for more wars, more killings, more mayhem, and more destruction are engulfing this world to the point of pushing calls for peace and rational discussions to the remotest corners? Of course the fact is that when we are talking about the armed conflicts in many parts of the world and the full blown wars where thousands are being killed and maimed one fact that has come ever cellarer is that there are powerful forces which do everything to keep the bombs falling, the missiles flying and the big guns roaring. Previously talk of the military-industrial complex sounded so vague to many few took it nothing more than just another conspiracy theory originating mainly from the Western world. For those who are willing to look deeper into things these days those narratives of war profiteers make much sense.

I mean there are armed conflicts which are raging for reasons only those directly involved know while the rest of humanity is kept in the dark. Why are opposing sides of some conflicts resisting calls for ceasefires either for humanitarian purposes or to give peace talks a chance? Isn't peace the ultimate wish of humanity? Isn't peace the one thing humanity agrees on universally? The question as to why many politicians, especially in the supposedly civilized western nations calling for more armed conflicts while they should have been the bastions of the peace calls the world needs so much?

Armed conflicts which could have been tamed quite easily seem to be getting worse by the day

not probably because of policies and goals of the warring sides but because behind the scenes the war profiteers are day and night to make sure the guns don't fall silent. Isn't it horrible to realize that armed conflicts have in a way become about the profit/loss accounting books? It isn't for nothing that we these days frequently hear about more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction, missiles flying in speeds which break the sound barriers many times over, war planes which for all practical purposes could be invisible, tanks and armored vehicles which sound like the sci-fi story days are over.

But in all this the main question as to the human cost these so-called sophisticated weapons bring about seems to be pushed ever deeper out of sight. In fact from war reports we these days hear it seems that we have entered the 'take no prisoner' era for real. It is about how many combatants from the other side have been killed thanks to the 'wonderful weapons which do the job with more 'accuracy' than thought possible in the past.

Once again there is no denying the uncomfortable that it is hate for one side or the other that drives the opinions of most of us and not rational reasoning. More and more narratives from a sizable section of the media and politicians are becoming hostile while they should have been playing the roles of peace seekers. And sadly enough these narratives sway public opinions in all the wrong ways.

Recently I came across a couple of long lost friends and we were discussing what was happening on those places and I've to say we're not in clear waters. Listening to what they

have to say to what is happening in the Middle East and in Ukraine/Russia conflict I could sense of the one-sided narratives and so-called commentaries that were shaping their opinions. Their opinions about of the various sides are shaped by certain mainstream media news organizations and sadly they talk as there was not the other side. The horror of such attitudes is that when we write off the other side we forget that we are talking about people. Death anywhere should be condemned. In the wars going on in the Middle East and Europe and in armed conflicts all over the place thousands of innocents are losing their lives. Even in reporting the destruction of so many lives the bias of media outlets is and the arrogance of politicians is shocking. Do those people enjoy their own highly biased and hate-filled narratives while it couldn't be lost on them those narratives do nothing towards lessening the suffering of people?

When you collect yourself taming all those emotional genes and started seeing things for what they are and not for what others say they are things are scary. Things that we think are far and beyond our horizons are no more as distant as we think they are. Yes, in some ways the world has shrunk so tightly anything that happens in the extreme corners could impact us wherever we are. That could be one reason for us to keep track of what's happening especially in the conflict spots. As things become clearer and you start discovering what actually lies behind the curtains you'd be pardoned to lose hope that it would be a downhill slide from here on for humanity. Yes, that's not a nice state of mind. But with so much narratives of hate and virtual villainy you are left with very little

space to maneuver. It could be as bad as that! "How can people who are supposed to be well-informed and in perfect control of their mental faculties think of such evil things?" Isn't that the million-birr question? Clearer view of things saves you from being pulled into the abyss of fake and terminally prejudiced narratives the likes of which many are being sucked into.

It's should have been a question of priorities; wouldn't you say? And at this juncture in time the primary priority should be the saving and preservation of innocent human life in these armed conflicts. Is that what we are doing presently? No, not at all. Sadly, humans are more and more becoming collateral damage and referred to in numerical terms. Just numbers! When you hear reports about fifty-seven people losing their lives in a certain unfortunate event you don't feel you are being told about flesh and bone beings, beings that are members of your species. In an equally unsettling fact when you listen to the broadcasts of the so-called mainstream media what you understand is that they have their way of classifying people as if some are more 'human beings' than others! People in certain parts of the world are not worth being mentioned as 'complete' (whatever that means) human beings while those in other corners aren't being seen as being on the same par. I tell you, when you take the time to look into things deeper and try to dissect what is also implied it's disgusting.

Anyway the only way to have a better understanding of what's going on is to take time to look into things deeper and with more awareness.

"Carry Your Own Burden!"

HIM: - It took you almost a full month to wash me a Happy New Year!

Me:- But, but...

HIM: - But what?

Me:- But how can I wish you a Happy New Year when You are the one who makes it happy for us! It would be disrespecting You.

HIM: - There you go again! I should have known what's coming.

Me:- Sorry, if I said anything wrong.

HIM: - You know what I couldn't understand about you people after all this time? Still you throw everything my way as if I have nothing else to do except look after you like all of you were toddlers who have yet to learn to stand up straight.

Me:- But what's wrong with us pleading with you to make a new year a happy one for us? There is nothing more than happiness we need at present.

HIM: - Don't you think that before you start pleading with me to do something you yourself should have made you should tell me about the causes of your unhappiness?

Me:- But you know more than us about that! You have been watching over us and we believe that since You know everything to know about us you could easily make us happier than we ever were.

HIM: - Who said I know everything about you? That's where you people get everything wrong.

HIM: - But, but...

HIM: - But I am the only one supposed to know these things; that's what you're trying to tell me.

Me:- Yes, no worldly mortal could know everything

about us. That is given only to You and You only.

HIM: - If that is your way of complimenting me, thanks! By the way I think I too have to compliment you. The fact you're coming to you repeatedly indicates to Me that you people haven't yet entirely given up on me.

Whatever troubles we face, whatever suffering we endure there is no way we'll give up on you. And I believe me I'm talking to almost all my country people with the exceptions of some who even in the first place never knew what Your world means.

Me:- I'm flattered. Even your choice of words have become more convincing. Anyway, you see that's where you people are wrong. You think I should know everything. Of course, I know everything there is to know of you are asking Me about much of the world. But I have to say with you it's different.

Me:- Why is it different? I'm not trying to challenge you which would be the last thing I'd do, if I ever lose my mind! But I've to ask this, we aren't created any differently from the rest of humanity, are we?

HIM: - Wait! Wait a minute here; why do I feel you people are probably talking behind My back accusing Me of having created you differently from others? Are you?

Me:- No! We aren't talking about anything like that! How can we talk about such things! It means you've the lowest of attitudes towards us.

HIM: - I'll ignore the last part and tell you how. You people have become a suspicious lot. You might know it because since you're always in that state of mind you don't take it any differently you're your other natural habits say like eating and drinking. But the fact is that you are suspicious of

everything and everybody. If you ever ask why your country is still struggling to make it up the ladder to the height it should be I'll tell you it is because you're so suspicious of each other you have failed in creating that, what's it you call it, camaraderie. Tell you what and I wouldn't wonder if you one day, for lack of any more person to point you finger at, you'd start suspecting yourself. I hope you wouldn't suspect of losing My mind for saying that?

Me:- No! No!

HIM: - By the way today one thing I've observed about you is that you are becoming quite a good talker.

Me:- Thanks; hearing that from You lifts my spirits.

HIM: - That's good. But I'd have a couple of things to add; but I'm afraid of bringing down your lifted spirits and I better leave it at that.

Me:- Please tell me what; otherwise I'd be...

HIM: - Suspicious!

Me:- No I wasn't saying that.

HIM: - Any way being a good talker doesn't mean being right or bring genuine. For all I see you people a down there have a lot of good, even very good talkers for all the wrong things. Wouldn't you agree?

Me:- I agree. I agree a thousand times. I know many such people who are leading especially the younger people

HIM: - I have to say that you're making Me a little more happier.

Me:- Really!

HIM: - Yes really; I see that you must have started

looking at things rationally and I tell you that's what you and your nation need; looking at things rationally. Ok, getting back to what you said about me making things happier for you. Why should I do that?

Me:- Sorry but I can't believe you're saying that!

HIM: - Why not! I'm not breaking any contract here; I'm not going against any of my words; or to use a word that should be more common with you people, I'm not betraying any trust.

Me:- But we have left it to you to save us from all our troubles...

HIM: -... and make you happy.

Me:- ... and make us happy.

HIM: - Let Me put you in another way. You share one wall with a neighbor. And because he is not a nice fellow he damages his side and asks you to rebuild it. You would do it, wouldn't you?

Me:- No! There's no way I should be mending something he himself destroyed!

HIM: - And he should carry his own burden.

Me:- Yes! Yes! That's a wonderful way of putting it. Let him carry his own burden.

HIM: - Then, that's what I, too, am saying.

Me:- I don't understand.

HIM: - Since there is no way I'll be mending something you yourself damaged I'm telling you to carry your own burden! The New Year would get worse only of you make it worse. So it's up to you to make it happy by not making it any worse than it might be. Bye!

Me:- Thanks!

In Pictures

These youths, both boys and girls, dressed traditional Oromo clothes were pictured during the sixth Irreechaa Conference in Addis Ababa. They are singing traditional Oromo songs that preach peace, love, harmony and togetherness based on the values of Irreechaa.



Thanksgiving ceremony during Irreechaa festival

Irreechaa, the native thanksgiving festival is celebrated every year at the bank of a river, especially in the case of Irreechaa Melka. The reason is to thank the Waaqa or Waqayo for the smooth transition from the rainy season to the sunny and bright season.

The thanksgiving celebration of Irreechaa is led by the Abba Gadas, elected elders of Oromo people based on Gada, the traditional administrative system of the Oromo people. The Abba Gadas led the ceremony of thanksgiving at the bank of the river and the millions gathered to attend the festival followed the ceremony handing grasses on their hands and touch the water so as to thank the Waqayo.

Irreechaa, a spring...

second time. Men, women and even children are attired in their traditional white cultural dresses which depicts that Irreechaa is a celebration of peace. Led by the Abba Gadas and the Abba Melakas Oromos carry bunches of fresh green grass and majestically march to the riverside or lake accompanied with traditional songs, dances and ululations which clearly depicts thanksgiving to the.

Irreechaa is a platform of peace, love and unity where prayers and thanks are offered to Waaqa. Irreechaa is not a forum of political agenda promotion and a place of violence but the incident of the 2016 Irreechaa celebrations is a tragic reminder of a shameful mix-up of thanksgiving with politics.

The Oromo celebrate Irreechaa not only to thank Waaqa (God) but also to welcome the new season of plentiful harvests after the dark and rainy winter season.

In thanksgiving-Irreechaa, the Qaalluus (spiritual leaders) and the Abbaa Malkaas (lineal chiefs of the areas) are at the top hierarchies. The Qaalluus give religious instructions and directives of the where-about and the time of the implementation of the rituals.

Furthermore, in the Irreechaa ritual ceremony, the Abbaa Malkaas and Abbaa Gadaas have vital roles. They lead the participating communities who follow them

carrying bunch of green straw and daisies in their hands praising, blessing and praying to Waaqa in their songs. They order the participants what to say in the praise and prayer.

Ornamented with white sparkling cotton costumes and turbans the men hold spears and a special stick that was designated by the Gada system.

During the Irreechaa ceremony, Women sing 'Maariyoo... Maareyoo... meaning your mercy on us and are decorated with Caaccuu (beads of different colors), traditional costumes and Siiqqee (stick traditionally handled by oromo women). The men also hold a traditional stick called haroresa as they chant the Irreechaa song with women.

After soaking the fresh lavish grass and the flower into the lake water and splashing the participants, the Abbaa Malkaa, Abbaa Gaddaas and Qaalluus bless the participants and make speeches on rules and regulations newly declared at the Gada handing over ceremony or assist to recall the preexisting laws.

At the end of the Irreechaa Malkaa celebration, all participants sing together "Irreechoo yaa Irreechaa Malkaa Roobaa fi Nagaa....." to mean Thanksgiving at the river for rain and peace. All singing this go back to their villages.

Moreover, the Oromo People celebrate this event to mark the end of rainy season, known as Ganna, which was established by Oromo forefathers, in the time of Gadaa Melbaa in Oromia. The Day of Gadaa Melbaa - was established on the Sunday of last week of September or the Sunday of the 1st week of October according to the Gadaa lunar calendar has been designated as National Thanksgiving Day by modern-day Oromo People.

Irreechaa Tullu is the thanksgiving ceremony that is performed at the top of mountains or hills during dry season, bona in Afaan Oromo. It is performed at the beginning of the spring season usually in March.

Despite the explanations provided, some may still think that Irreechaa is one version of idol worship but the practice on the ground does not show any level of worship let alone idol worship. Irreechaa in a nutshell is one way of cultural thanksgiving event that could be separately registered as another Ethiopian Intangible World Heritage.

This year Irreechaa is celebrated under the mixture of greater national successes and challenges from within and without. The year is crowned with the nearly completed GERD, promising GDP growth, massive successes in National GREEN Legacy Initiative, and the construction of a number of eco-tourism resorts across the country,

corridor development in Addis Ababa and regional towns and Ethiopia's membership in BRICS.

Regrettably, some countries in the neighborhood who are not in tune with Ethiopia's quest for peace, access to ports and socio-economic development of the country are trying to team up against Ethiopia to push the nation into the most undesirable war the results of which they cannot predict. Ethiopia is striving to consolidate the struggle against terrorism which is the most dangerous threat to the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea peaceful trade but these countries are trying to orchestrate a proxy war from which their own people would never benefit.

As repeatedly stressed by the authorities of the country, Ethiopia stands for sustained peace and development and the nation hopes peace could be restored through constructive disengagement and negotiations in good faith.

As a celebration of peace and good will among peoples, the Irreechaa festival is expected to be an occasion for peace, mutual support, understanding and forgiveness among the peoples of Ethiopia. No country or people could benefit from destabilization and disruption of peace and Irreechaa must not be used for political propaganda and disruptive agitation which would take us nowhere.

Irrecha: Oromo people indigenous thanksgiving festival celebrated colorfully

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

Irrecha, the Oromo people traditional

thanksgiving festival is an annual thanksgiving day offered to Waka, the Creator. It preaches peace, love, unity

and harmony among peoples and with nature. This year's Irreca festival is being celebrated. The Hora Finfine part of Irrecha

was celebrated yesterday in Addis Ababa and the Hora Arsede is celebrated today, in Bishoftu town.

Addis Ababa organizes sixth Irrecha conference

The sixth Irrecha Conference, a national pannel discussion aiming at discovering the traditional values and principles of Irrecha festival was organized in Addis Ababa on Friday. The Irrecha conference was started six years ago during the Irrecha week so as to discuss the values and beliefs of Irrecha festivity. The conference was organized at Adwa Victory Memorial.

The six Irrecha conference was attended by Abba Gadas, Hade Sinqes, senior government officials, community leaders, youths and women.



Beautiful Oromo girls celebrating Irrecha

Irrecha is not only a thanksgiving day, it becomes among the facinating street carnivals of Ethiopia. Millions from different walks of life are gathered at the festival mainly wearing traditional Oromo nation clothes. Children, youths, women and the elderly attended the festival.

The festival shows the beautify and facinating cultural dresses and traditional practices of the Oromo people. As a result, in addition to the thanksgiving nature of the festival, Irrecha is becoming a facinating festival due to the fecision design dresses, the traditional beautification materials being used by the youth generation and the eye-catching traditional dances and other facinating activities.