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Ethiopia to record 8.4% economic growth in this FY

• Gov't to collect 1.5 trillion Birr revenues

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA –The government is intensifying efforts to achieve 8.4% economic growth during this Ethiopian fiscal year, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said.

Responding to questions raised by MPs during the 4th term and the 3rd regular session of the House of People's Representatives, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said that the government foresees 8.4 percent GDP growth this year, given the achievements recorded during the past three months.

The agriculture sector alone is anticipated to grow by 6.1 percent, the Premier stated, adding that 1.4 billion quintals of crop product will be harvested from 30 million hectares of cultivated land.

Meanwhile, Abiy expressed that his government is working to

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Livestock expo drives future-forward innovation in food security

BY ASHENAFI ANMUIT

ADDIS ABABA –The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has highlighted the crucial role of the animal husbandry expo and congress in bolstering animal production across key livestock sectors, contributing to food security, nutrition, and economic resilience.

MoA State Minister Fikru Regassa (PhD) noted this while officially opening the 13th Ethio Poultry Expo (ETHIOPEX), the 9th

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Ethiopia stands firm for peaceful Red Sea access: Premier

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA-Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) reaffirmed Ethiopia's commitment to regional peace and dismissed allegations of territorial violation, underscoring the nation's legitimate pursuit of access to the sea.

During the 6th round of the 4th term and the 3rd ordinary session of the House of People's Representatives yesterday, Premier Abiy addressed concerns over Ethiopia's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland. He clarified that the MoU, which grants Ethiopia limited coastal access for 50 years, has been misinterpreted as a territorial threat.

"The MoU is a mutually beneficial agreement, not an act of aggression," he emphasized, adding that Ethiopia's goal is peaceful cooperation, not conflict.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the seashore from Massawa to Somalia spans over 5,000 kilometers, yet it is underutilized for regional development. Meanwhile, foreign powers profit greatly from these



Photo: Ashenafi Gudeta

coastal areas.

He, moreover, underscored that the importance of access to the resource-rich Red Sea, noting its potential to yield mutual benefits for all involved nations, particularly for Ethiopia, home to a population of 120 million.

While some nations have supported Ethiopia's right to sea access, others have resisted. Abiy clarified that Ethiopia harbors no military ambitions. "We seek peaceful sea access and aim to foster sustainable peace with Somalia, Eritrea, Kenya, and neighboring nations," he

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Ethiopia gears up to host World without Hunger Conference

•Aiming for breakthroughs in agribusiness, food security

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA – Ethiopia has finalized preparations to host the 2024 *World without Hunger Conference*, organized by the Ethiopian government, UNIDO, and the African Union, with technical support from FAO.

The conference, set for November 5-7, will bring together over 1,500 participants in Addis Ababa to address the global challenges of poverty and hunger by advancing sustainable investment in agribusiness.

During a media briefing yesterday, Industry Minister Melaku Alebel highlighted the global hunger crisis, noting that over 733 million

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African Spirituality and Latin American Magical Realism

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Digital transformation: Pathway to digital economy, economic transformation

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Ethiopia shines at international stage represented by innovative minds

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia's participation in the global Huawei ICT competition finals has improved its international reputation, Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) expressed.

Huawei Ethiopia has launched the 2024/2025 ICT competition and rewarded the 2023/2024 ICT competitors yesterday.

During the event, MinT's Minister Advisor Simenew Keskis (PhD) said that Ethiopia's participation in the global finals that held in Shenzhen, China, has elevated its international reputation in nurturing talent, innovation, represented by young minds embody the spirit of innovation.

The innovation track empowers students and educators to collaborate and push boundaries of creativity, bridging the gap between academia and industry. The Ministry is dedicated to supporting such initiatives and fostering a thriving innovation ecosystem, he indicated.

Deputy CEO of Huawei Ethiopia, Liymin Ye on his part said that the competition is a platform designed to empower young minds, providing them with opportunities to enhance their ICT knowledge and skills.

Lymin added that the exceptional group that went on to the global finals in Shenzhen,



China, secured third place among international competitors. The competition offers hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies, enhancing technical skills and preparing students for the dynamic job market. It also encourages critical thinking and innovation, helping students develop a problem-solving mindset.

The Huawei ICT Competition equips Ethiopian young minds with technical skills, critical thinking, teamwork, problem-solving, and innovation, which will propel future leaders and innovators in the rapidly evolving technological landscape, he stated.

Over 2500 university students from Ethiopia

participated, with 120 qualifying for the national finals. Nine students represented the nation at the regional final in Tunisia, achieving a remarkable third prize, Lymin said.

Addis Ababa University President, Dereje Engida (PhD) said that in that rapidly evolving digital landscape, partnerships between universities and industry are indispensable. They bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, equipping students and instructors alike with the critical skills needed to thrive in a technology-driven world.

Mainstream animal welfare vital for nation's multifaceted fruition: Association

BY ASHENAFI ANIMUT

ADDIS ABABA - The Ethiopian Veterinary Association (EVA) has advocated for strengthening the development of animal welfare for a bearable environmental ecosystem and national economic growth.

Association President Bojia Duguma (DVM) told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that animal welfare and veterinary public health became Ethiopia's priority, which in turn, ensuring a resilient food system, maintaining ecological balance and economic growth.

He also noted that apart from animal productivity, it remains an essential mechanism to address environmentally induced challenges and ensure societal growth and boost trade facilitation.

"In the contemporary world, animal welfare is manifesting in different shapes. And, the introduction of animal welfare science is also an integral part of sustainable development, social behavioral change," Bojia reiterated.

According to him, about 80% of the rural community's socioeconomic activities and productivity is mainly dependent on animals



Bojia Duguma (DVM)

and it is a means of transport especially in rural areas.

He further remarked that animal welfare, which is increasingly demanding as an integral part of one health, one planet and one welfare paradigm, needs to be an integral part of livestock development and human wellbeing and sustainable growth.

The association, with about 4,000 veterinary professionals is widely engaged in research, service and advocacy, and national veterinary education in various institutions across the country. Similarly, it has been working with animal welfare working groups, research centers and non-

governmental organizations to promote the sector over the past years, the President said.

Citing developed countries' experiences on animal caring, Bojia emphasized animal's sanctuary reflects the societal images and the overall development. "It is also crucial to give equal consideration for climate and environmental related issues in line with global health security."

Urging veterinary experts and working groups to discharge their prior role in the sector, he advocated for strengthening vibrant organizational cooperation and stakeholder's active participation for the betterment of the wildlife ecosystem to eliminate zoonotic diseases.

Moreover, the absence of a veterinary sanctuary and legal frameworks in the country has been impacting experts to advance professionalism in the area and firmly employ quality and demand-driven researches, service delivery and teaching processes effectively, he underscored.

More importantly, the animal's right legislation and regulation, which is on the pipeline to endorsement, would be a great opportunity to magnify interventions to safeguard animal's welfare meaningfully and unlock the prevailing challenges in the sector.

CICAMCF advances chemical industry with quality focus, collaboration

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA--The Chemical Industry Corporation's Awash Melkassa Chemical Factory (CICAMCF) announced its commitment to meeting domestic chemical industry demands through a research-based, quality-focused approach.

The factory hosted a half-day workshop yesterday, engaging stakeholders to showcase its progress and emphasize joint efforts in bridging gaps within Ethiopia's chemical sector.

In his opening address, Chemical and Construction Inputs Research and Development Center Manager Habtamu Aragie highlighted numerous ongoing activities aimed at fulfilling local demand in the chemical industry. The Manufacturing Industry Development Institute Deputy Director General Hadigu Haikirose (PhD) added that as Ethiopia undertakes reforms to achieve comprehensive growth, the chemical industry plays a crucial role in the country's development aspirations.

Hadigu detailed the factory's production of sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄), aluminum sulfate (Al₂(SO₄)₃), and hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), emphasizing the global reliance on the chemical industry, which supplies 95% of worldwide demand. With the global population projected to reach 10 billion by 2060, demand for chemical products is expected to soar, reinforcing the sector's importance.

CICAMCF's contributions as an import substitute are pivotal, providing inputs for 14 different industries while supporting Ethiopia's goals of import substitution, foreign currency conservation, and export growth. "Expanding production, fostering innovation, boosting exports, and ensuring sustainable manufacturing are priority areas for realizing Ethiopia's vision for the chemical industry," Hadigu stated.

CICAMCF's Manager Ahmed Motuma noted that despite challenges from unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic, the factory has maintained chemical production for over two decades. CICAMCF currently conducts biannual surveys and annual workshops to address gaps, enhance quality, and meet client demands. While the factory has the capacity to meet domestic demand and even extend to neighboring markets, limited promotional outreach remains a barrier.

The workshop gathered manufacturers, government officials, and industry experts to discuss opportunities, challenges, and collaborative strategies for advancing Ethiopia's chemical industry, underscoring the sector's potential to drive economic progress.

News

College strengthens training programs with global collaborations

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA – Entoto Polytechnic College is enhancing its educational offerings through international partnerships, equipping students with practical skills that meet both local job market demands and global standards, according to College Dean Teshome Feyissa.

The college has established strong collaborations with institutions in Germany and France to foster academic exchange, professional development, and cultural understanding. One of the key partnerships is with Leipzig University in Germany, focusing on academic exchanges, research collaborations, and student mobility programs. “These initiatives prepare students for the global job market while enriching the educational experiences for both institutions,” Teshome noted.

Through this collaboration, students and faculty participate in exchange programs, share teaching methods, and engage in joint research projects that address common challenges in technology and education. Regular workshops and seminars are organized to promote knowledge transfer and elevate the learning environment.

Entoto Polytechnic’s partnership with a fine arts school in France provides specialized training in photography and videography. The college is also planning to establish a Chinese language teaching and testing center, further diversifying its educational offerings.

“Our focus is on equipping students with practical skills to meet the local market’s needs and contribute to Ethiopia’s development,” Teshome explained. The college offers programs across various fields, including fine arts, engineering, information technology, music, and business, while also connecting graduates with industry opportunities.

With nearly a century of experience in training professionals, the college boasts fully equipped workshop facilities that significantly impact Ethiopia’s economic development. Additionally, it collaborates with other polytechnic institutions across the nation to create attractive working environments for students and faculty.

As part of its involvement in Addis Ababa’s ongoing development efforts, the college has contributed to the city’s corridor development project by providing roadside artwork and support for urban beautification initiatives.



Livestock expo...

Africa Livestock Exhibition and Congress (ALEC), and the 4th Apiculture and Aquaculture Ethiopia Trade Show at the Millennium Hall yesterday. This year’s theme, “Livestock Now and the Future: Current Opportunities and Challenges and the Way Forward,” aligns with Ethiopia’s “YelematTurufat” initiative, aimed at boosting milk yields and enhancing agricultural productivity.

Fikru highlighted the importance of engaging stakeholders, private sectors, and development actors to meet the rising demand for animal-based foods, noting that livestock and fish production are central to Ethiopia’s economy. “Ethiopia remains committed to advancing the livestock and aquaculture sectors, which directly support our national mission to increase food production and create lasting value for rural communities,” he stated.

The state minister further emphasized a holistic approach, advocating for shared responsibility in areas such as input supply, technology for modern farming practices, storage, cold-chain facilities, and market development to enhance the value of livestock products.

Ethiopian Livestock Development Institute Director-General AsratTera (PhD) added

that the event showcases state-of-the-art technologies, inputs, and solutions to boost livestock production by promoting investment, facilitating market linkages, and strengthening business-to-business relationships. “Ethiopia has vast livestock diversity and potential, yet several constraints-such as limited genetics, feed systems, health services, and market access-hinder sector growth,” he noted, highlighting the institute’s commitment to environmentally sustainable breeding and market competitiveness.

Prana Events Managing Director Nebeyu Lemma praised the event’s impact on subsectors like poultry, dairy, meat, fish, and honey. He indicated that the expo fosters market cooperation, technology transfer, and professional growth within the livestock, poultry, aquaculture, and apiculture sectors. “These gatherings serve as a major platform for industry experts to exchange ideas, overcome common challenges, and establish partnerships that will drive future productivity,” he added.

The event stands as a vital networking hub for animal husbandry professionals, propelling Ethiopia’s livestock sector forward while reinforcing its contributions to national food security and economic resilience.



Ethiopia gears up...

people-one in every 11 globally and one in five in Africa-still suffer from hunger, despite the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-2) aiming to eradicate hunger by 2030.

He underscored that recent drops in public, domestic, and foreign direct investments have stalled progress toward sustainable development and failed to adequately address these pressing challenges.

“Sustainable investment in agribusiness and food systems must be at the heart of government actions if we are to achieve the SDG goal of a world without hunger,” Melaku noted. The conference will serve as a critical platform to renew commitments and address vital topics such as agribusiness policy, infrastructure for agriculture, digital innovation, climate resilience, and fair trade practices. The minister indicated that the recent setbacks in fighting hunger are linked to economic slowdowns, climate change impacts, and ongoing conflicts.

UNIDO’s Director of Agribusiness and Infrastructure, Dejene Tezera, echoed these concerns, stating that hunger will persist beyond 2030 without urgent action. “Investing in agro-industrialization is essential for sustainable agricultural practices and resilient food systems,” he remarked. The conference will also host forums focused on mobilizing investments to ensure food security and sustainable development.

The *World Without Hunger Conference* will bring together heads of state, UN agencies, policymakers, international financial institutions, private sector representatives, and leading scientists to share insights and drive actionable solutions toward eradicating hunger.

Ethiopia has made significant strides in eradicating hunger and improving food security through various initiatives, garnering recognition from international partners.

Ethiopia to record...

collect some 1.5 trillion Birr revenues this fiscal year. Hence, over the past three months, the central bank’s reserve had hit 161%growth while private banks’ reserve rose by 29%.

According to the Premier,Ethiopia has earned a 3.4 billion USD remittance revenue which has a 24% increment.

Likewise, some 1.5 billion USD has been secured from export, and this revenue is expected to grow to more than 5 billion USD at the end of this fiscal year, he stated, mentioning that import has also reduced by 1.4%.

Due to the macroeconomic reforms, Abiy noted that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) registered a 6.4% growth which could be attributable to the national efforts to create a favorable investment environment through promoting the country’s renewable energy resources, abundant land, and skilled workforces.

The country didn’t receive any commercial

loan over the past six years, the Prime Minister stated, appreciating the economic development without accepting commercial loan. Currently, Ethiopia’s debt is about 13% of its GDP and the government is endeavoring to reduce it to 10%.

This fiscal year, the industry sector is projected to grow by 12.8% as the production capacity reached 67%. Efforts have been made to revitalize industrial sector, with progress in addressing key challenges, particularly in energy supply, Abiy noted.

On the other hand, Abiy said that Ethiopia is constructing Africa’s largest airport, which is set to handle 100-130 million passengers annually. The national airline has also ordered 124 aircrafts to expand its fleets as Africa’s largest operator and a key aviation hub.

Abiy also told MPs that his government has facilitated 100,000 overseas jobs to citizens with a plan to create similar opportunities to 700,000 citizens this fiscal year.

Ethiopia stands...

stated, while warning that meddling in Ethiopia’s internal affairs would not be tolerated.

Regarding the Abbay Dam, the Premier reiterated that the dam benefits downstream nations, including Sudan and Egypt. “The dam secures water during drought seasons,

improving conditions for our neighbors,” he noted.

Abiy asserted that Ethiopia’s quest for peaceful access to the Red Sea remains central to its foreign policy, confident that it will eventually be realized, if not by this generation, then by the future.

Opinion

Being conference city for building national image

BY MENGESHA AMARE

A close to hundred-thirty-year-old city, New Flower, (*Addis Ababa*) in local language *Amharic*, has been undertaking a range of activities to provide itself with a majestic look and reputation and grace as its name bespeaks. Of the multitude of steps taken that help contribute to the effort to make the city standardized, a number of conferences, meetings, forums, summits have been recurrently and widely held across the capital.

Hence, it is better to ask what significance does 'being a conference city' have and how is it quite important to build image and help grow economy? The response could definitely be 'yes it does have,' and being a conference city has all the time helped the economy grow well and wholeheartedly build capital as well as national image. Undeniably, being a conference city can be important for a number of reasons, too as hosting a number of conferences can generate local income and boost economic activity, and help drive long-term financial development, progress and change in all aspects at the end of the day.

As far as attracting talent is concerned, having an opportunity to host a multitude of conferences can be a way to attract global expertise and encourage it to relocate to the community. Besides, a city image in particular and a national image building effort has been bearing fruits. True, conferences can help enhance a city's exposure to various global events and its reputation can be well built. Expanding hospitality via showing the entrenched norms, cultures, traditions and other important social values have also been well nurtured and introduced the city and the nation to the rest of the world through the guests, who have cordially been hosted.

Yes, the expansion of the conference has contributed a lot to building capital as well as national image, creating job opportunities, economic development, and tourism promotion. Furthermore, conferences can attract business tourists, who can generate local income and increase a range of economic activities. In fact, as experiences would have it, over half of the revenues to a community from conventions, conferences and summits come from areas beyond visitor services.

Since the number of tourists continues to grow and their inflow has demanded a lot of infrastructure, making all the necessary requirements needs to be made prioritized. In so doing, high-grade visitors and tourists can be attracted to help the capital have optimum benefit with minimal demerits. This is where meetings, conventions and exhibitions, collectively known as the meetings industry, may offer the best option for the capital looking to optimize the revenue while at the same

time looking to its broader economic and social policy aspirations for the betterment of inhabitants. What is practically being done in Ethiopia, especially in the capital, is a case in point in this regard.

There are of course a number of good reasons why being conference city is worth pursuing as a priority for the capital. Numerous guests, be they are from abroad or locally initiated to visit the capital, have spent hours, days, weeks, even months thereby optimizing economic returns.

A range of visitors and/or tourists be they are business or professional people or average visitors, are on expenses and contributing to the economic spectrum when they stay in the city. When it comes to convention-related revenues, it is not just about the hospitality sector as many claim. As practically witnessed instead, the majority of the revenues to a community arise from things like staging, organization, and technology and event organization areas far beyond what would traditionally be thought of as visitor services.

When it comes to community benefits as a whole too, the best of all is why visitors or summit attendants are partaking in order to share and enhance experiences and expertise, which generally rubs off on the local community, leaving a legacy of knowledge and creative experience that both reflects well on the capital and advances the contacts and knowledge of the local business, academic and professional communities.

Unequivocally, many people would like their capital to be appealing and luring for dwellers and visitors as well and sustainably keeping its reputation. That is why myriads of organizations, companies, public offices and other concerned have organized events that would potentially bring together national academic sects, continental think tanks and global expertise for thorough deliberations on social, economic, political or other related aspects to meet aspirations for future economic, social and even political progress.

Yes, major events being hold in Addis Ababa attract global attention whether within a specialized audience or when the world as a whole is watching what is going on. This raises capital's profile and prestige, particularly when the achievements of a hosted group relate to the policy objectives of the government.

Many visitors of course tend to wait for many days spending foreign currencies at hotels, reports, guest houses and other possible places. This in turn helps the capital swell economic muscle apart from enabling the capital to contribute a lot to the effort geared towards building image.

Meetings, conventions and conferences, on the other hand, have much more flexibility and often seek out off seasons

specifically to get better deals on accommodation and to avoid the chaos of peak periods. In the end, this is just what most hospitality suppliers need in order to sustain them through the more challenging times until the next peak arrives.

Across the globe, many savvy cities are realizing that a major conference can be one of the best available tools for attracting and accessing the global expertise that represent the future of key sectors, and an opportunity to encourage them to promote the livelihoods of the community. Addis Ababa is following suit as this approach can be one of the most effective avenues for reinforcing other economic development initiatives and reinvigorating image building tasks.

Unequivocally, Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and the diplomatic centre of Africa, embodies a close to 130 year of development history that contributes to its current socio-spatial features. Its status as a primate city located at the heart of the nation has made the capital a melting pot of people with diverse background and geographic origins.

Most of Addis Ababa's development challenges can be attributed to its unplanned origin and growth, infeasible development strategies, lack of implementation capacity, and widespread poverty that has resulted in chronic problems in almost every aspect of the urban life. The reaction of the incumbent to these challenges is expressed in its growth and transformation program that embrace the urban development agenda, which is predominantly being widely undertaken across the capital under the umbrella initiative called 'corridor Project.'

The historical, demographic, socioeconomic and spatial aspects of Addis Ababa have to be kept intact of course, and as the higher the intensity of conferences and summits held in the capital the greater the opportunity it would have to garner a benefit with a view to intensifying various socio-economic developments.

When it comes to securing the most benefit out of any given category of visitor, making the capital much more catchy has to come to the forefront. Undeniably, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has been a conference city for many years, hosting a variety of regional, continental and international events and grad conferences, accommodating a number of guests coming to it for working or a mere visiting target.

To make all this real, the capital has to have state-of-the-art technologies, multi-purpose venues, well standardized hotels, quality guest houses and the like. It is much more common these days to hear visitors, tourists and other local or foreign guests in the capital, Addis Ababa, in particular and across the nation in general saying they have felt at home following the very friendliness, politeness, approachability,

and accommodating and trustworthy nature of the indigenous citizens along with the sumptuous climate condition.

Far beyond that, the sense of ease tourists feel when walking twenty-four hours on the streets of Addis without any fear for their personal wellbeing is another factor that adds to the city's aura of feeling at home. Here, conference tourism plays pivotal role in image building beyond generating huge direct and indirect income. Therefore, utilizing this powerful tool for socio-economic prosperity is in the hands of Ethiopia and Ethiopians.

No doubt, Addis Ababa is always in the eyes of a number of international event organizers. Successful hosting of prior international conferences is the prime reason for that. The nation's diplomatic ties and credibility in hosting international conferences effectively has received worldwide credit, too.

Ethiopia has still huge potential to generate considerable income from conference tourism though it has not yet fully utilized it. For the purpose of securing the benefit it deserves out of the conference tourism, the capital should own internationally standardized conference centers, which are expected to attract global conferences and grand summits. True, the capital has to capitalize on the way how attracting conferences can be confidently availing with a view to maximizing the positive impacts, both short-term and long-term, of events.

Generally, as the conferences and summits being held in the capital have demanded high standard of venues, Addis Ababa is expected to construct and promote the existing ones to make it a conference city, because whenever the city fulfills all the requirements, being a conference city for it would be as easy as locating places found in it.

To maximize tourist activity during and after conferences, destinations should facilitate and encourage conference attendees to visit local businesses, support and engage with associations and conference organizers to provide networking opportunities, remembering that the more local businesses that attendees visit and the more contacts that are made create a higher intention to revisit as a tourist.

Besides, conferences are of paramount importance in promoting many legacies and outcomes. Even one conference will have positive legacy outcomes in due course of showing and or attracting many more participants. Addis Ababa has thus to be in a position to build its image and that of the nation entirely via maximizing positive impacts of building image.

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

Editorial

Opinion

Ethiopia's position to secure access in Red Sea is unshakable!

Appearing before lawmakers yesterday, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed once again declared Ethiopia's unshakable position to secure access to the Red Sea peacefully and diplomatically.

"Our stand towards having sea outlet in the Red Sea is unshakable," Abiy told the parliament while addressing regional and diplomacy affairs.

The prime minister also described his country's desire for direct and peaceful access to the Red Sea as rooted not only in economic pragmatism but also in its historical ties to the coastline.

The Premier also vowed to pursue strong diplomacy to maintain peace and stability in the region. "Ethiopia will not shy and falter to express its clear interest in accessing the Red Sea. And, Ethiopia does not initiate any war and go to conflict with no country."

"There are accusations that Ethiopia is violating Somalia's sovereignty. Our demand is about fostering shared development. No country can plunder Ethiopia's resources forcefully. We are not mercenaries and we will not serve as agents of other entities, Abiy told the lawmakers. We have big and enough manpower, bravery and all the means to repel any external forces."

True to the prime minister's words, Ethiopia has been unflattering in maintaining a peaceful path to resolve any disagreement and ensure stability in the region.

Ethiopia's diplomatic approach in the Horn of Africa has been centered on fostering cooperation, stability, and sustainable resource management among its neighbors.

The country's unwavering ambition to secure access to the Red Sea highlights its strategic aspirations and the need for regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa. Following the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Somaliland, Ethiopia has consistently advocated for a peaceful and cooperative approach to gaining Red Sea access, emphasizing that such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial to neighboring countries.

As the premier indicated, Ethiopia has been a good neighbor to Somalia paying even the ultimate price for the latter's peace and stability. This position continues to this very day. Ethiopia has supported stabilization efforts, focusing on security cooperation to counter threats from al-Shabaab and other groups that destabilize the region. Although relations are complex, Ethiopia has maintained an active diplomatic presence in Somalia, seeking stability along its borders.

This approach aligns with Ethiopia's broader policy of regional integration and collective security. Rather than forceful acquisition or confrontation, Ethiopia has advocated for multilateral discussions and frameworks that respect the sovereignty of all involved nations, recognizing that prosperity in the Horn of Africa hinges on collaboration rather than conflict. This stance reflects a mature perspective, prioritizing long-term stability over short-term geopolitical gains.

Ethiopia's commitment to dialogue and regional cooperation reflects its understanding that peace and development are mutually reinforcing. Despite ongoing challenges, Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts illustrate a broader goal of regional integration, with the belief that cooperation on issues like energy, trade, and water can promote long-term stability in both the Nile Basin and the Horn of Africa.

This peaceful pursuit of Red Sea access illustrates the country's dedication to development and regional harmony. By seeking a collaborative solution, Ethiopia not only reaffirms its sovereignty but also positions itself as a leader in advocating for sustainable and cooperative solutions in Africa. It is a vision that deserves the support and engagement of regional neighbors and global partners alike.

Liberation fronts of the 60 should stop and think twice

BY SOLOMON DIBABA

The word liberation has been conceptually adulterated over the last 50 years of the country's history. Ethiopia, while being an independent country for thousands of years, has been flooded with political groupings and armed groups which were formed on ethnic lines based on basic historical grievances and maladministration of the previous regimes in Ethiopia.

The politics of early 60s is once more haunting modern so called liberation movement and armed groups in Ethiopia in the wrong time and space, it is true that at the advent of the 1960s when many African countries have been under colonial subjugation, they have rightly established liberation movements to cement common forum for political freedom. However, it is interesting and quite incredible to observe that Ethiopian Governments have registered so many political organizations that the government called parties while they are actually not. They are and were fronts that were wrongly registered as parties while they are fronts that were fighting to liberate their own ethnic groups, the irony is from whom would they liberate any people or ethnic group. That is why the world liberation in the Ethiopian context is an empty buzz word devoid of sense and sensibility.

Some of the liberation movements in the country are as old as 60 years and there is no liberation in sight. This has resulted from the facts that either the strategies for the "struggle" are not clearly articulated and defined even among the fighters or there are no strategies or programs that are meant to show the pathways of their struggle.

Liberation movements and armed groups in Ethiopia have often not been successful due to a combination of structural, social, and geopolitical factors.

Ethiopia's ethnic diversity has often meant that liberation movements represent specific ethnic or regional interests rather than a unified national agenda. This has led to fragmentation and challenges in forming cohesive, inclusive platforms that resonate broadly across the country. Ethnic-based agendas may gain traction locally but struggle to build broader alliances and legitimacy at a national level has been impossible. The Ethiopian government has typically maintained strong military and political responses to armed resistance, deploying considerable resources to curb these movements to ensure the rule of law and stability. Through extensive counterinsurgency measures, the government has managed to limit the influence and operational capacity of many groups, particularly through controlling territory and disrupting logistics.

Unlike some liberation movements in other countries, Ethiopian armed groups wish to foster relations with countries at the neighborhood who wish to use them or their own agenda of destabilizing the country. The Ethiopian government's strategic relationships with regional and global partners have helped it gain support against these movements, making it challenging for armed groups to secure consistent funding, arms, or safe havens in neighboring countries.

Many of these groups have faced internal divisions and power struggle, weakening their organizational structure and limiting their ability to coordinate effectively.

The TPLF is a case at hand. Armed groups in Amhara are divided on zonal bases and seem to compete on the financial resources they receive from their supporters abroad. In Oromia, the

groups are divided on zones of influence and seem to lose ground at the present. Leadership struggles, ideological splits, and infighting have been common, often resulting in fragmentation into smaller, less influential factions. These divisions reduce their negotiating power and impact on both political and military fronts. Despite government efforts for peaceful negotiations, the armed groups have failed to come up with any meaningful response.

Some groups that attempt to transition from armed struggle to political engagement often struggle with integration into the formal political landscape. Many face obstacles in gaining legitimacy, securing widespread public support, or engaging effectively in governance. Inadequate resources and limited capacity to adapt to nonviolent political frameworks further undermine their chances for success.

On the other hand, most of the armed groups in Ethiopia operate on donations from the diaspora which is quite irregular and mismanaged by the leaders of these groups. They try to fulfill their logistics needs and food through lootings and confiscation of public and private properties they come across. This puts into question the issue of the sustainability and clarity of the objectives for which they struggle and the strategic pathways they intend to pursue.

In addition, as they are organizationally fragmented and disorganized, they fall prey to the interests of groups that finance them from abroad making them disunited for unspecified period of time.

For instance in the Amhara region they use a catchword "we will enter Arat Kilo" with no specific strategy of political nature but only through guns. This makes their strategy not only futile but unlikely. Thus they remain destructive, parasitic and devoid of any reasonable political strategy, the armed groups in Oromia have no specific political ideology of their own but are merely interested in power sharing without even organizing themselves into a party through official registration. This has put the group in a state of limbo followed by huge number of deserters.

Some think that the current political imbroglio and unpredictable crisis would give the armed groups a breathing space as the government would concentrate on national security but this seems to be utterly groundless.

At this point in time, the fragmentary nature of the armed groups in Amhara and Oromia in particular have disabled them from coming up with a political agenda behind which their supporter can rally. They have some level of propaganda network but no solid political objective or strategy that could fit into some level of negotiations.

Even after the relative peace and stability that had prevailed in Tigray after the Pretoria Agreement, there is a bleak political situation in the region which if not properly handled could lead to some kind of civil war.

Armed groups in Ethiopia are often rooted in economically marginalized areas, where grievances may be widespread but resources for sustained operations are limited. Recruitment, logistics, and sustaining member support are challenging when local economies are weak, reducing the groups' longevity and reach.

Additionally, many such movements struggle to offer a compelling economic alternative to existing governance, limiting popular support over time.

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



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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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The Ethiopian Herald

Business & Economy

Ethiopia has kicked off national revival

BY BACHAZEWIDIE and ADDISALEM MULAT

Ethiopia has gone through reforms in all sectors for the past six years. The reform system served to relax the nation's political, economic and social spheres and now is the time to commence revival as a state, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) said yesterday while attending the 3rd regular meeting of 4th year of the 6th House Of People's Representative (HPR) and responding to the questions raised by members of the parliament.

National revival, as to the Prime Minister, is emerging with sustainable idea, transforming the idea into practice and obtaining the outcome. The economic reform recently began is among the driving forces that effectuate the national revival initiative.

Contrary to many doomsayers' wish to see a failed state and their evil intent, the country is beginning a time of revival, the Premier stressed.

Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 8.1% last year. Many are amazed by this success and asked if the country was drilling petroleum as such success is not common for countries that have no oil. This year, Ethiopia's economy is set to register 8.4% GDP. Though last year's performance was the biggest in Africa, it is not sufficient for Ethiopia compared with its potential and its national ambition.

The country has registered remarkable progress in all economic sectors. "We are in the first phase of the year where we will complete reforms in different sectors and start working on the revival. Therefore, in the present fiscal year, we will see a drastic change in all sectors. We have to move forward to tomorrow leaving the past behind," the Premier said.

Benchmarking the past year's success, the agriculture sector is expected to grow by 6.1%; cultivating 30 million hectares of land and harvesting 1.4 billion quintals of crops. The growth in agriculture seems small in figure but as the sector's base expands, the total growth in number seems minimal. The targeted growth expected to be registered this fiscal year is from different subsectors of agriculture like grains, cotton, and horticulture among others.

The country expects 6.6% growth from crops alone. Wheat, for instance, will be cultivated on 8.4 million hectares to harvest 30,000 tons or 300 million quintals by producing nearly 40 quintals per hectare, as to him.

'Yelemat Turufat', that engages majority of the people has become a sector with promising growth in a short period of time which is expected to grow by 5.4% this fiscal year. This sector includes animals' Hybridization and nurturing millions of chickens. The capacity to produce 12 billion liters of milk, 8 billion chicken eggs and 218 thousand tons of meat and 297 thousand tons of honey is created.

Coffee and tea sector is also among those shown drastic progress since last year.



Compared to the past years, 1 million quintals has been recorded in coffee. By now, Ethiopia is third coffee producer next to Brazil and Vietnam. Extensive work is underway to make Ethiopia the 2nd coffee producer in the world.

Alike coffee, tea needs process before export and effort is being exerted to engage private investors to the sector. Though it is not enough for the highland country conducive for tea cultivation, 20 investors have made agreement with government to enter tea processing. The government's ambition is to make Ethiopia among the prominent countries in tea production, the Prime Minister said.

As part of agriculture sub sectors, oil seeds production is given special attention by the reformist government. The nation's growth is inevitable with the expansion of the agriculture sector and marketing value added products.

As to the Prime Minister, agricultural inputs provision is essential to attain the outcome sought. To this end, extensive work is underway in provision of fertilizer conducive for the soil type and best seeds in all kinds of crops.

"Great job is ahead of us in providing machineries and expanding irrigation in order to upgrade quality product via increasing productivity in a limited space," he explained.

The Prime Minister further explained that in the past years, a lot of work has been done to stimulate the industrial sector by the Ethiopian Manufacturing Movement. Especially, a better work has been done in solving the problems that were arising with the power supply. Currently, the production capacity of industries has been reached 67%. It is expected that the industrial sector will grow by 12.8% in the budget year.

In this regard, 'Ethiopia Tamirt' or 'Made in Ethiopia' initiative has played pivotal role. The movement brought satisfying outcome. A great lesson is gained on how to achieve better. Effective utilization of industrial parks has taken the lion's share for the booming of manufacturing sector. Local investors have occupied 50% of the industrial parks. Import substitution has

emerged notably. In relation to defense force, for instance, many types of equipment are manufactured locally.

Among the three economic sectors, service sector is expected to grow by 7.1% this fiscal year. Air transport service is recording dramatic change in this regard. Movement has been started to build the biggest airport in Africa. This new airport will also accommodate 100 to 130 million passengers per year. "At present, we have decided to buy 124 new airplanes. This will make Ethiopian Airlines not only the largest airline, but also the largest airport owner in Africa," the premier said.

For landlocked countries like Ethiopia, expanding air transport is essential. Therefore, accelerating the number of aircrafts and constructing large airports are rewarding.

The nation's effort in macro-economic reform, according to the prime minister, is remarkable. Previously, the economic system was much closed. This has been making Ethiopia not to use as much as it should in foreign trade. From now on, the macro-economic development will lay the foundation for Ethiopia.

Following the reform of the macro-economy, the government revenue has increased significantly. 180 billion Birr has been collected in the last three months. This is a better growth compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year. In the first three months of the past fiscal year, the revenue collected was only 109 billion Birr. But when compared to its Gross Domestic Product, Ethiopia is still a low income country. This should improve further, he said.

As a result of the macro-economic reform, in the past three months, a USD 1.5 billion revenue has been received from expenditure trade. "If we continue with this performance, at the end of the fiscal year, revenue of more than USD 5 Billion will be received. This is an increase of 1 billion Dollar compared to the previous year," he said.

Especially, the macro economic-reform has brought a big difference in the gold production. In the last three months, 500

million Dollar has been earned from gold trade. This shows how much gold production was exposed to illegal trade previously. In coffee production, 2 billion Dollar is expected in the budget year.

Foreign direct investment has increased by 6.4% of the macro economy. The works that have been done especially by creating an environment conducive for investment are creating a great potential to attract investment. Ethiopia's land and renewable clean energy and man power have made it the best option for investment. The macro-economy has also opened a way to utilize this investment potential.

Regarding the flow of foreign resources, over the past three months, 3.4 billion Dollar has come from foreign countries to Ethiopia in different ways. Compared to the same period of last year, there is a huge increase. In the first three months of the last fiscal year, the amount of money that came from foreign to Ethiopia was 400 million Dollar. In total, 27 billion Dollar is expected to come to Ethiopia during the reform year.

In terms of burden of debt, the government has not taken any commercial loan in the past six years. Ethiopia's debt burden has been reduced from 30.6% to 13.7% in comparison to the GDP. In the coming years, it will be done to reduce this figure below 10%. In the past six years, 13 billion Dollar debt has been paid. This is not a cure, but it helps to pass on wages to the next generation than debt, the premier underlined.

He further said that the reform of the macro-economy has saved Commercial Bank of Ethiopia from collapsing. The commercial bank has gotten 900 billion Dollar extended bond. The success of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia is motivating all the local banks. Currently, the banks' deposits have reached 3.5 trillion Birr. The number of banks has reached 32; 50 million customers in Ethiopia have mobile phones. Banks have just taken advantage of it.

"We can overcome the cost of living sustainably by increasing productivity. Upgrading the business system is also of great importance," the Prime Minister said.

The government has allocated 300 to 400 billion Birr subsidy to prevent the cost of living burden on the poor citizens. Sharing of meal, school feeding and Sunday markets are part of the government's effort to help the poor. Nationwide, 249 thousand disadvantaged citizens have been provided with housing. This is a work done by the government by coordinating investors. The inflation rate has been reduced to 17% now; bringing this down to single digits is a priority of the government.

It is planned to create employment opportunities for 4.3 million citizens in the budget year. Out of this, it is planned to create overseas work compatibility for about 700 thousand people who have been trained in the last three months. Remote jobs including coding and data analysis has also been created for 26 thousand citizens, Prime Minister Abiy said.

Art & Culture

African Spirituality and Latin American Magical Realism

BY MULUGETA GUDETA

Traditional African religions are still widespread in all African countries despite the spread of established religions like Islam and Christianity. People in rural Africa in particular are still practicing all sorts of traditional spirituality that continues to play a decisive role in their day to day their attitudes towards life and death. Traditional spirituality continues to shape their world views and their attitudes towards life and death and other existential concerns. In African countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt and others, traditional belief systems continue to hold sway on the imaginations and daily lives of millions of Africans despite advancing modernization.

African traditional religious beliefs or faith systems not only continue to coexist with established religions but also to shape their cultures, literatures and other areas of life. Most of ancient African literatures consist of oral literature that is to say fairy tales and the tradition of oral tales that were told in the evenings. they were fireside accounts of either the chronicles of imaginary characters or adventures of well known village figures, heroes or secular characters whose imaginary lives had left indelible marks on the folk imaginations. Pagan beliefs loomed large in ancient or traditional African faith systems.

According to Microsoft Encarta dictionary meaning, pagan means The Latin word pagus, from which pagan is derived, originally meant "something stuck in the ground as a landmark." It was extended metaphorically to "rural district, village," and the noun paganus was derived from it, denoting "country dweller, villager." This shifted in meaning, first to "civilian," and then (based on the early Christian notion that all members of the Church were "soldiers" of Jesus Christ) to "heathen."

As Chinua Achebe argues in his classic "Things Fall Apart", the advent of European Christian religion to Africa through the missionaries that preceded the colonialists, has led to a kind "culture shock" or belief shock. The Nigerian novelists is documenting the consequences of this process on African lives as the two trends fought for supremacy or domination. To many critics, the central character of the novel, Okonkwo, the tragic hero of "Things Fall Apart" who commits suicide by hanging epitomizes both the defeat of the African spirit or the heroism of Africans in the face of aggressive colonialism. According to some observers, "Okonkwo is the protagonist who is a tragic hero. It is through his successes and failures that propels the plot as white missionaries seek to change the culture he has spent his lifetime gaining social stature; he cannot experience the same success in the white man's world, so his has no choice but to fight it."

From the above, we can assert that "Things Fall Apart" is the first notable African literature that highlighted what happened when European modern religion came into contact with traditional cultural belief of the



average African villager and his traditional belief system based on ancestral values.

The first authentically African work of literature that has brought African spiritualism or based on the adventures of imaginary spirits came from no other than Ben Okri, a prominent modern African writer in his classic, "The Famished Road". This work of fiction can be considered the first work whose leading character or hero is a spirit boy who straddles both the real and the invisible world of spirits.

The Famished Road is a novel about, an African child called Azaro who is known as an abiku or a spirit child from the ghetto of an unknown African city. He is constantly harassed by his sibling spirits from another world who want him to leave this mortal life and return to the world of spirits by sending many emissaries to bring him back.

According to a literary critic who wrote about the significance of Ben Okri's novel,

The subject matter of "The Famished Road" is When I think of the time The Famished Road came out, Ben Okri's novel, that was a big book out of Africa. I'm sure other people who were already in the world of African literature would have different viewpoints but, for me, that was my first book. It opened my mind up to what was possible with African literature in the mainstream, and I think that's probably why I picked it as one of the best books.

Yes, The Famished Road won the Booker Prize in 1991, probably the most prestigious prize for a novel in the English language. Tell me more about it.

It was the beginning of African literature getting a space in Western literary culture and it was very impactful on me because it told stories that I hadn't come across before. It's the story of a spirit child, and Africa has a strong spiritual tradition. In fact, our whole culture is based on a lot of spiritual practice.

It's not necessarily Christianity, but it's a part of our life, of our connection to our ancestral roots. It goes with the stories that we tell. The folk tales we grow up listening to, and stories about our own relatives and family, defy our understanding of reality. The things that happened, the things we do, why we follow certain traditions: a lot is based in our spiritual beliefs."

The late Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a Columbian or Latin American novelist who invented the literary technique known as "magical realism". If there is any resemblance between Ben Okri's and Garcia Marquez's works, it is there defiance of realism and resort to narratives that shocked readers as implausible at first but acceptable later on. Ben Okri's main character Azaro, is a creature both real and fantastic because he lives in two worlds, the real and the invisible. Ben Okri seems to have used Azaro, as the characters that reflects the dreams, struggles and aspirations of the real people in the fictional Nigerian city where politics has a brutal presence.

The leading character in "One Hundred Years of Solitude", Colonel Buendia is a hero of Columbia's political and military struggles from the founding of the first village called Macondo and the story of its rise and fall in the next one hundred years based on the accounts of the lives of one dynastic family. In Garcia Marquez's novel, the fantastic style is used to exaggerate and give more force to the stories of the inhabitants of Macondo whose lives look like visions from a sweet as well as brutal dreams.

The common thread that relates the Ben Okri's and Marquez's novels is found less in their narratives and more in their styles of narration. To make a long story short, both authors use supernatural events to highlight these themes. Both Azaro in "The Famished Road" and Colonel Buendia in "One

Hundred Years of Solitude" are the fantastic characters of two fantastic stories.

Let us take Ben Okri's novel "The Famished Road" and Garcia Marquez's "One Hundred Years of Solitude". The first has won the Booker Prize or the most precious literary award for fiction in English by a Commonwealth writer while the second is the winning novel for the Nobel Prize in 1982 literature from Latin America. Both are works from third world countries, i.e. from Nigeria and Columbia respectfully. This is not a comparative review of the two major works but a comparative analysis of the literary devices the authors used in their works, both of the devices being based on the traditions of their respective countries.

The Columbian writer has proved more influential more enduring and more prominent than his African counterpart in the sense that his novel has won the coveted the Nobel Prize, its influence has proved enduring. Magical realism has almost become a literary school of thought as many writers used this style in their works and achieved prominence.

Among them is the Indian born British author Salman, Rushdie who adopted magical realism techniques in his bid to portray Indian and British societies in some of his most prominent work like "The Satanic Verses". Yet, Rushdie never won the Nobel Prize, maybe because he did not invent anything new while Garcia Marquez has clearly invented magical realism as a new narrative technique widely used in the literary world. Ben Okri is still a "younger" writer and may have the chance to win the Nobel Prize if he comes up with something breathtaking and extraordinary in his next novel. Unfortunately authors like Garcia Marquez increasingly look inimitable because style alone is not the soul of a book unless it is accompanied with a truly an epic story.

Science & Technology

Digital transformation: Pathway to digital economy, economic transformation

BY DARGIE KAHSAY

A recent study report released a week ago conducted by GSMA, an international independent institution jointly with Ethio Telecom, revealed that Ethiopia is on the right path to becoming a digital leader in East Africa. With the current journey of the digital sector development and its contribution to the national economy, the report projected that the digital economy is due to contribute over 1.3 trillion Birr to the country's GDP by 2028.

In addition, the report projected that with the continued advancements in the telecom industry and internet access, the digital sector will contribute to creating over one million new jobs and generate 57 billion Birr in tax revenues by 2028. As of 2023, the telecom sector has already contributed 700 billion Birr to GDP, the report reiterated mentioned the development of mobile internet connections surged by 65%, with 4G network coverage expanding eightfold during the past five years.

The GSMA report titled "Driving Digital Transformation of the Economy in Ethiopia: Opportunities, Policy Reforms and the Role of Mobile" stated that digitalization of the economy is a key driver of economic growth and government revenue. Similarly, the digital sector supports socio-economic development and offers a path towards shared prosperity. The report argued that Ethiopia can achieve sustainable economic growth and structural change by leveraging digital opportunities. Adopting and expanding digital technologies across the public and private sectors, according to the report, can positively impact economic growth.

GSMA (Global System for Mobile Communications), is a global organization unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop, and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change

According to the report, thanks to the Home-Grown Economic Reform (HGER) that gives due attention to technological developments including digital transformation and the strategic investments by Ethio Telecom and Safaricom Ethiopia in the telecom industry have significantly expanded mobile network coverage and access to the internet which helped to accelerate digital growth in Ethiopia over the past five years. The expansion of advanced 4G networks across the country and the launching of 5G network services in Addis Ababa and four regional cities have facilitated digitalization rapidly during the past five years.

During the launching ceremony of the report, Ethio Telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamiru stated that the development of the telecommunications sector is accelerating Ethiopia's economic growth by accelerating digitalization. As to her, the digital sector has contributed a crucial role in economic development during the past six years. "Telecom investments are catalyzing



growth across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and public services, contributing to Ethiopia's steady economic rise," the CEO stated.

Frehiwot stated that the GSMA assessment report on Ethiopia's digital transformation journey and the current status of the telecom industry was conducted during the past four months to pinpoint Ethiopia's current status in the sector based on international standards. And, she stated that the report applauds Ethiopia's telecom sector development during the past six years which contributed a crucial role in stimulating digitalization and economic development.

"The report assesses both the development of the telecom industry, including adjacent industries, and the role of the telecom development for economic development in Ethiopia," Frehiwot stated adding the telecom industry is contributing a crucial role for economic development. Mentioning the report, she stated that the digital sector has an 8% contribution to the country's GDP.

Ethio Telecom CEO, Frehiwot stated that due to the continuous interventions and strategic initiatives, national internet penetration shows a significant development during the past six years. Among the changes registered in the sector is digital finance. As to her, following the launching of Telle Birr three years ago, today Ethio Telecom has around 50 million mobile money (Tele Birr) subscribers which helps the finance sector be more inclusive and accessible adding the application transacted over three trillion birr.

As to Frehiwot, the telecom infrastructure and services are expanding. Hence, to realize digital transformation, it needs to invest in awareness parallel to the expansion of services to make digitalization a societal culture. "In 2018, Ethiopia had around 37 million mobile users today, it exceeds 80 million. Interims of Internet users, in 2018, the total Internet users was around 17 million which currently reached more than 45 million and smartphone penetration was limited to 13 million in 2018 which currently exceeded 34 million," Firehiwot stated indicating the rapid development of the telecom and adjacent sectors during

The digital sector has contributed a crucial role in economic development during the past six years. "Telecom investments are catalyzing growth across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and public services, contributing to Ethiopia's steady economic rise,"

the past six years. This indicated that, she stated, there is a significant improvement in all aspects, in telecom expansion, internet penetration, and advanced technologies including cloud technology that helps to facilitate digital transformation.

GSMA's Senior Director of Public Policy for Sub-Saharan Africa Caroline Mbugua stated that Ethiopia has achieved an impressive 10% average GDP growth over the decade to 2019, adding 50 million Ethiopians are expected to be connected to mobile internet by 2028. As to the Senior Director, increased connectivity will drive growth across sectors, mentioned 140 billion Birr to agriculture and 114 billion Birr to manufacturing by 2028.

According to the study, Ethiopia's digital strategy and telecommunication reforms create pathways for economic transformation and the objectives contained in the Homegrown Economic Reform Agenda. Developing the role of digital technologies in the economy can diversify economic activities and make economic development more inclusive and equitable

distribution of benefits.

After assessing the current status of the telecom and digital industry in Ethiopia, the GSMA outlined several policy recommendations to maximize Ethiopia's digital potential. Underscoring Ethiopia's digital transformation as an economic driver and a pathway to greater social inclusion and sustainable development, GSMA suggested some policy reforms to accelerate digitalization and the contribution of the digital sector to the nation's economy.

Accordingly, recognizing the positive outcomes of the policy reforms in the telecom industry, GSMA recommends full implementation of the telecom reforms agenda and adoption of digital technologies to realize digital transformation. Similarly, it recommends focusing on industry sustainability and investments in the telecommunications sector targeting new network infrastructure.

The third GSMA recommendation focuses on reforming the sector-specific taxation on mobile services and devices and implementing affordable and predictable license, spectrum, and regulatory fees to encourage investments in the sector. It also recommends strengthening the efforts in promoting mobile money and payments so as to sustainably develop the rapid rise in mobile money adoption registered in recent years. Similarly, it recommends promoting demand-side policies to expand the adoption and usage of mobile internet and mobile money.

The report stated that, in the five years since the launch of Digital Ethiopia 2025 and the start of the telecommunications reforms in Ethiopia, the number of people covered by 3G networks has increased by 50%, while coverage of 4G networks has increased by 8 times. The study also identifies further opportunities and quantifies the economic value of adopting digital technologies across Ethiopia's economy. The study determines how the growing opportunities can be unlocked through policy reforms, particularly focusing on the key role that the mobile telecommunications sector and mobile money services play in supporting the process of digitalization.

Society

Reaffirmed commitment to accelerate Ethiopia's progress, dev't

BY MENGETEAB TESHOME

Yesterday 31st, October 2024, the House of People's Representatives (HoPR) held its 6th round of the 4th year term, 3rd regular session, in the presence of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD).

At the session, members of the House of People's Representatives forwarded a number of quires to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Among the range of pressing national issues raised by Parliamentarians to the Premier, the country's economic progress and the ever-increasing cost of living, peace and security challenges, law enforcement activities, and corridor development activities, were some.

The Premier responded to the questions raised and clarified the overall activities of the country.

While responding to a question regarding the cost of living, the Premier said that inflation is challenging many countries across the world. Ethiopia's case is not special in this regard. However, the government has taken many measures to reduce the rate of inflation, even though complex problems at the international level are still making it a challenge.

Mentioning that the government has been working committedly and persistently to bring inflation down to a single digit. Abiy said that the major viable solution for Ethiopia to reduce the rate is to increase production and productivity. In this regard, the government has taken several measures. In turn, it was made possible to register remarkable achievements in the agricultural sector, including wheat. He also said that modernizing the business system also has greater importance in reducing inflation.

Currently, it is possible to lower the inflation rate to 17 percent; and more efforts will be exerted to reduce it meaningfully, the Premier confirmed.

The Premier also mentioned the activities carried out to support the disadvantaged section of the society. He said that the government allocated over 91 billion birr for salary increments and it will be implemented starting this month (Tikemt). The increment will be applicable at the federal level.

"What is more, by joining hands with local investors, in the past few years, we have constructed and transferred 249 thousand houses to low-income residents at the national level."

Equally, the government has allocated a subsidy budget of 300 to 400 billion birr to lessen the burden of the most underprivileged section of society, so that the cost of living does not put more pressure on them.

School feeding and meal sharing programs as well as Sunday markets are part of the government's efforts that were designed to address the challenges of the less fortunate, he remarked.



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

In relation to job creation, the Premier said that at the current Ethiopian budget year, a plan is set to create job opportunities for 4.3 million people, of which 700 thousand are overseas. Several works are being carried out to make it a reality.

According to the Premier, during the last three months of the fiscal year, more than 100 thousand citizens have benefitted from employment opportunities created in foreign countries. "We have started sending citizens to Europe for employment in addition to Asian countries. What is more, including coding and data analysis, online job opportunities were created for over 26 thousand citizens.

The issue of peace and security was the other area that the Premier briefed parliamentarians.

We prioritize peace more than anyone else. Peace is more viable than force option. We need peace more than anyone else. We don't want war because we know it in practice and not in rumors and because it took the lives of many and cost us a lot. We prefer to resolve any disagreements amicably. Nobody can achieve its purpose by force and hatred; rather by peace talk. There is a need for real change in this country, and peace is needed for this to happen. We have started peace talks with forces operating in Amhara and Oromia regions. Those armed who come holding firearms cannot build the nation's economy," he stressed.

In Ethiopia's development process, if one region does not develop, Ethiopia will not develop or transform. In Amhara State remarkable works have been done in the industry and road sectors, he said adding that, "if there is a problem that we have made unintentionally while we were working and developing, we will fix it.

As to him, we should think carefully and radically as thoughtless struggle does not bear fruits.

Mentioning that the outcome of the peace

option is higher and preferable than the power option, the Premier said "All of you should understand that peace is an issue that we want it more, as peace is very important to bring about a tangible change in this country."

Concerning poverty, Abiy said: "We embrace and support the poor; but we avenge poverty." According to him, we have to see the poor and poverty separately. If poverty and the poor are mixed, we cannot ensure prosperity. We should abhor poverty and avenge it. Prosperity loves the poor, sympathizes with the poor, but detests poverty. So we have to differentiate poverty and the poor. However, some people mix the two and say "why the already dilapidated houses are broken down?"

"What challenges us more is not transforming the Ethiopian economy, but the people who cannot understand that the Ethiopian economy is changing," he added.

Prime Minister Abiy also revealed the success story registered in various sectors during the national reform years.

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to ensure high-quality service delivery, security, and the development of tourism offerings that reflect the capital's rich history. He set an ambitious goal for 8.4 percent GDP growth and urged a shift from outdated mindsets to a more visionary approach.

"Completing the reforms that were being carried out in various sectors, we have reached the first chapter of the era that we commence the national revival. Thus, this Ethiopian year will be a year that we will register tangible outcomes. To this end, detaching ourselves from yesterday's thinking, we have to transcend together to see the better tomorrow."

Highlighting recent successes in the tourism sector, Abiy credited government initiatives, including "Dine for Ethiopia" and corridor developments, for fostering a thriving environment. "It is time that we reap the benefits of activities previously undertaken," he affirmed.

Over the past three months, the country has hosted 20 international conferences—an impressive increase compared to the previous year. This surge in conference tourism is seen as a vital component of the overall tourism strategy, with plans to continue this trend moving forward, he pointed out.

Abiy highlighted ongoing efforts to combat illegal markets, currency smuggling, and exploitative diplomatic practices, making it clear that illegal extraction of resources would not be tolerated. He indicated that reforms to trade facilitation policies would be implemented to ensure diplomatic missions align with national interests.

Addressing the issue of Franco Valuta, Abiy suggested that it has strayed from its intended purpose, contributing to capital flight from Ethiopia. "Franco Valuta has lost its purpose. This must change," he noted.

The government has allocated a subsidy budget of 300 to 400 billion birr to lessen the burden of the most underprivileged section of society, so that the cost of living does not put more pressure on them

Addis Ababa: ...

The Addis Ababa City Cabinet Affairs Head Tilahun Worku stressed that Addis Ababa's role as a hub for international diplomacy requires leveraging the "latecomer advantage" by implementing inclusive development. He reported that 50,000 jobs were created, Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) were stimulated, and working cultures within communities were improved during the project's first phase.

However, challenges such as construction input shortages, skill gaps, unseasonal rainfall, and resident awareness issues affected progress. Addressing these setbacks, Tilahun stressed the importance of continued public engagement to ensure residents are actively involved in the next phases.

The project also sets the stage for new developments, including the construction of an international convention center and enhanced conference tourism.

Participants raised concerns about

infrastructure, social welfare, sustainable settlements, and the need for fair compensation. They urged leadership to streamline pro-poor initiatives, conduct research-based development, and address bureaucratic delays affecting the project's progress.

The city administration reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring inclusive, research-driven development to make Addis Ababa a model of sustainable growth and livability for all its citizens.

What is more, the Addis Ababa corridor development has spurred economic growth and investment in the city, attracting new businesses and creating employment opportunities for local residents. As the city continues to evolve, these corridors will play a crucial role in shaping its future development and enhancing the quality of life for its inhabitants.

In addition to improving transportation infrastructure, the Addis Ababa corridor

development projects have also focused on enhancing urban planning and design. By creating pedestrian-friendly walkways, green spaces, bike lanes, and mixed-use developments along the corridors, the city is fostering a more sustainable and livable environment for its residents.

Furthermore, these corridor developments have integrated smart technologies and innovative urban design concepts to create a more resilient and environmentally friendly city.

The experts also accentuate that the corridor development is a comprehensive urban planning project aimed at improving the connectivity and accessibility of different parts of the city. This development initiative focuses on creating well-designed corridors that integrate various modes of transportation, such as buses, light rail, and pedestrian pathways.

By investing in efficient transportation systems, sustainable urban planning,

and innovative design concepts, the city's corridor development serves as a testament to the effectiveness of these strategies in improving the overall quality of life in urban areas. Addis Ababa is positioning itself as a leading city in Africa and a model for sustainable urban development. With continued investment and community engagement, the city is on track to realize its vision of a modern and vibrant metropolis.

In sum, the visible change that the corridor development brought in Addis Ababa could become a role model to other urban areas in the country and beyond. Several cities also launched similar corridor development project. The Addis Ababa city's ongoing corridors development will play a crucial role in making the city more livable, sustainable, and attractive to residents and visitors alike. The projects are witnessing a tangible change in transforming the cityscape of Ethiopia's capital and shaping its future growth and development.

A food security statistics project is enhancing food security data across Africa

ADDIS ABABA (ECA)- Reliable food security statistics are essential for informed decisions on food access, quality, and affordability.

Recognizing this, a regional collaboration between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Statistics Norway, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), has supported eight African nations in strengthening their food and nutritional security through enhanced capacity building in processing and analysis of from Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys (HCES) data.

The project, launched in 2020, focuses on enhancing the capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to produce food security statistics through HCES. Training workshops have equipped NSO staff to collect, process, and analyze data effectively.

The project also helped to develop new guidelines for processing food consumption data from HCES which the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed in March. The project is further developing e-learning materials to support these standards.

Hilde Orderud, Senior Adviser at Statistics Norway, said this data would inform both national and regional policy planning.

"Food security is high on the global agenda and has been so for a while. This is among other reasons, related to climate change," said Ms. Orderud during a side event on "Food Statistics and Analysis from Household Expenditure and Consumption Surveys", during the 2024 Statistics Commission.

"NSOs will be able to produce new statistics with already collected data which is very cost-effective and the data is processed once which is more efficient and also improves quality," she said, commenting on the importance of the project.

Although approaches to Food Security consist of tackling four key pillars: availability, access, utilization, and stability. This project mainly focuses on the issue of access.

Commenting on the interconnectedness, Astrid Mathiassen from Statistics Norway explained that "access" involves economic and knowledge-based means of obtaining food, while "utilization" relates to how households make use of available food and their ability to absorb necessary nutrients.

In Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the project has built NSO capacities, created food security fact sheets, and established reliable poverty and food security data.

Owen Siyoto, Food Security Statistics Program Coordinator at COMESA, noted that these statistics guide policies, enhance regional integration, and foster resilience to supply shocks.

"The project's contribution to this is that more statistics will be produced from household surveys to be used for better policies and implementation of actionable policies and effective projects," Mr. Siyoto said, adding that, "Nutritional statistics reveal demand patterns, guiding investments in crops and sectors that address regional dietary needs."

In Zimbabwe, the project has modernized data collection methods by transitioning from the diary method to a seven-day recall approach, reducing participant burden and costs. This shift, paired with increased capacity in data analysis, will enable Zimbabwe to integrate food security metrics into its standard statistical production.

Somalia also benefited from strengthened NSO skills in data collection and analysis, allowing for more accurate tracking of food security trends.

Source: UNECA

Morocco sets ambitions sky high to double aerospace jobs by 2030

RABAT- Yesterday in Marrakech, Industry and Trade Minister Ryad Mezzour announced Morocco's visionary goal to double employment in its aerospace sector by 2030.

At the opening of the 7th Marrakech Air Show (MAS 2024), Minister Mezzour underlined Morocco's political stability, strong infrastructure, strategic location, skilled workforce, and favorable business climate as essential factors positioning the country as a reliable aerospace partner and regional hub.

Over recent years, Morocco's growing production capabilities have attracted top international partners, enabling domestic manufacturing of any aircraft component. The ultimate ambition, he noted, is to achieve full aircraft assembly within Morocco. "Morocco possesses solid expertise and recognized know-how to meet this challenge," Mezzour said.

Khalid Safir, Director-General of Morocco's CDG, noted the Marrakech Air Show's role in showcasing Morocco's ambitions in aerospace and defense, reflecting the nation's commitment to this strategic industry.

Safir described Morocco's aerospace sector as a "true success story," with over 20,000 jobs created and an integration rate exceeding 40%, making it a central force in the national economy. He mentioned that CDG, through its subsidiary MEDZ, has supported the development of innovative ecosystems and quality infrastructure, with MEDZ establishing 16 industrial zones across Morocco.

Royal Air Maroc (RAM) CEO Abdelhamid Addou also spoke on Morocco's aerospace sector growth over the past two decades. RAM, active in this

field since the 1960s, recently signed a 14-year plan to expand its fleet fourfold to 200 aircraft, increase annual passenger numbers fivefold to 35 million, and grow revenue from \$2 billion to \$9 billion.

Also at the 2024 Marrakech Air Show, Abdeltif Loudyi, Morocco's Delegate Minister for National Defense, welcomed Czech Defense Minister Jana Cernochova and Azerbaijan's Defense Minister General Zakir Hasnov for a series of discussions.

The meetings culminated in the signing of two cooperation agreements, which focus on military and technical collaboration in areas such as training, joint exercises, defense industry development, technical support, expertise exchange, military healthcare, and cybersecurity.

MAS 2024, organized by Morocco's Ministry of Industry and Trade, the National Defense Administration, and CDG subsidiary MEDZ, reflects Morocco's growing role in the global aerospace sector, with the UAE serving as this year's guest of honor.

Running through November 2, the event spans a 12,500-square-meter exhibition space, hosting over 200 exhibitors and 75 official delegations from around the world. It includes aerial displays, dynamic exhibits, and high-level conferences addressing emerging trends and future challenges in aerospace.

In July, Morocco's aerospace sector reported a revenue of MAD 10.68 billion (\$1 billion) for the first five months of the year, marking a 17.6% increase from the same period last year. According to data from the Moroccan Exchange Office, this growth was largely driven by rising sales in the assembly segment.

Source: Morocco World News



This is Ethiopia

Addis Ababa: Transforming urban life via corridor dev't

BY TEWODROS KASSA

Addis Ababa, the vibrant Ethiopian and African capital, has been undergoing a remarkable transformation in recent years. The development of key corridors in different parts of the city is changing the landscape of the city. These corridors are bringing about tangible improvements in infrastructure, transportation, and the overall quality of life for residents.

The Addis Ababa Corridor Development project was introduced by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) last year. Since the commencement of the project, the city has gained momentum through the provision of new green areas and recreation centers that will have a significant role in boosting the influx of tourists.

Residents of the city also give thumbs up to the project as it plays a positive role in improving connectivity, reducing traffic congestion, and enhancing the overall urban experience for residents and visitors alike. These corridors serve as vital arteries that connect different parts of the city, creating a



more efficient and sustainable transportation network.

Accordingly, the development of these corridors has had a profound impact on the cityscape, transforming once congested and chaotic areas into vibrant and accessible spaces. With improved public transportation options, residents now have greater mobility and can easily access key amenities such as

schools, hospitals, and shopping centers.

During a wide-ranging discussion carried out with city administrators, residents, religious institutions, and other stakeholders, Addis Ababa Mayor Adanech Abebie said that the propelling of community concerns in the corridor development projects is crucial for the timely and impactful execution of the corridor project.

The dialogue was held with pertinent stakeholders seeking to assess the progress of ongoing development projects and chart a path forward. The Mayor underscored that the redevelopment efforts have made the capital more livable and dignified for all residents, not just the wealthy. "Our priority is to ensure the city lives up to its name by addressing the needs of every citizen," she stated.

The Mayor also pledged to incorporate participants' feedback, describing stakeholders' engagement as an essential platform for inclusive insights and valuable contributions. She applauded residents for their role in the project's progress, which aligns with plans to nurture responsible generations and combat poverty.

According to the mayor, the city administration aims to improve socioeconomic development while creating a city that guarantees a dignified life for all. In the first phase of redevelopment, 8.7 billion Birr was disbursed to compensate private homeowners to relocate from the actual corridor project sites.

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