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SCHOOL OF AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE TRAINING

Ethiopian

Ethiopian University reshaping Africa's aviation industry

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Photo: Dunge Abera

President hails ERCS's 90-year humanitarian service

BY ESSEYE MENGISTE

ADDIS ABABA— President Taye Atske-Selassie, also the Patron of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), praised the organization's outstanding 90-year legacy of delivering critical assistance during both man-made and natural disasters, including

conflicts, droughts, landslides, and other crises.

His remarks came during the opening of the ERCS's 20th National General Assembly held yesterday. President Taye urged the society to continue enhancing its humanitarian services, prepare for future challenges, and uphold its commitment to

providing timely and effective support to those in need across the country.

The Patron also emphasized the ERCS's key role in assisting Sudanese refugees fleeing civil war, noting that this not only reflects the organization's national responsibility but also reinforces its

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Jafar Bedru

Ankara Declaration milestone for regional stability: IFA

BY HAILE DEMEKE

ADDIS ABABA- The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) has highlighted the importance of the December 11 Ankara Declaration as a pivotal step in reaffirming sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity, while fostering peace and stability in the Horn of Africa (HoA).

IFA Executive Director Jafar Bedru noted that the peace accord reached between

See Ankara Declaration... page 4

Corridor project transforms metropolis' economy, livelihoods: Mayor

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—Addis Ababa's ongoing corridor development is driving a powerful synergy between the public and private sectors, fueling economic growth, boosting development, and enhancing the sustainability of livelihoods, according to the Mayor.

During a site visit to three key corridor development projects, Mayor Adanech Abiebie, accompanied by senior government officials, updated journalists on the progress of the initiative. She highlighted that the corridor development is playing a pivotal role in fostering a 24-hour working culture in the city, improving business efficiency, and contributing to safer, more peaceful nights, with expanded public and private transport services.

The Mayor stated that the project's main objectives are to improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, enhance cleanliness, and create a more conducive environment for economic activities. She added that it will promote market growth, facilitate easier movement of people, and ultimately make the city more competitive, aligning it with global standards.



Photo: Berihun Tadele

As the first phase of the corridor development nears completion, business activity in the affected areas is flourishing, and the city is becoming increasingly attractive to investors. The project is also focused on transforming Addis Ababa into a vibrant diplomatic and investment hub, with key improvements such as underground construction and the renovation of historical sites.

Among the key renovations are the historic monuments in Piassa and Arat Kilo, including the Emperor Menelik II statue, Abune Petros statue, Cinema Empire, Cinema Ethiopia, and the Hager Fikir Theatre. These landmarks are being modernized with stone cladding while preserving their original identities, ensuring

See Corridor project ... page 4

Board envisions auditing institute to improve economic performance

BY YESUF ENDRIS

ADDIS ABABA—The establishment of an Accounting and Auditing Institute will significantly improve Ethiopia's economic performance, the Accounting and Auditing Board of Ethiopia announced.

According to the Board, the establishment of the institute comes at a time of high demand, with a growing need for auditing experts.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), the Board's General Director Fikadu Agonafir said that the country currently has only about 550 certified accountants and auditors, a critically low figure unable to meet the existing demand.

"The institute will play a critical role in increasing the number of certified auditors so as to supporting the national economy," he stated.

Fikadu also highlighted the importance of the institute in addressing the needs of investors entering Ethiopia's capital market.

"Investors require comprehensive business information, and a higher number of professional auditors and accountants are essential, particularly as the capital market begins operation," he said.

The anticipated entry of foreign banks into Ethiopia's financial sector further indicates the need for professional accountants and auditors. "The shortage of professionals could result in significant financial losses for the country," he warned.

The newly established institute aims to provide training for accountants and auditors aligned with international standards, while



Fikadu Agonafir

also incorporating national tax and trade laws into its curriculum.

Additionally, the institute plans to establish formal linkages with higher education institutions. Fikadu noted that auditors and accountants have historically sought certification from foreign institutions, suffering high costs. The new institute is expected to address this issue by offering affordable, locally-based certification programs.

A draft proclamation to guide the institute's operations has been submitted to the House of Peoples' Representatives. The amendment is expected to be finalized soon. "This is a critical step in enhancing the quality and accessibility of training for accountants and auditors in Ethiopia," the General Director said.

Ethiopia's civil aviation role model for Africa: Experts

BY BETELHEM BEDLU

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia's Civil Aviation Authority stands as an exemplary model for many African countries, laying the groundwork for effective air transport services, according to experts in the sector.

In an interview with local media, Uganda's Civil Aviation Authority Deputy Director, Olive Lumoniya, highlighted Ethiopia's leading role in the African aviation sector and its sustained prominence in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

She noted that Ethiopia is among the 52 countries that took the initiative to establish the international civil aviation industry, playing a pivotal role in the signing of the Chicago Agreement. Its contribution extends to ensuring the security of the air transport sector and laying a strong foundation for other nations.

"There is much we can learn from Ethiopia. The strength of Ethiopian Civil Aviation is evident in the safety and security of its airline services. Achieving such success requires implementing a unique working system," she remarked.

Lumoniya also pointed out Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to the aviation sector, emphasizing that the government's focus has positively impacted the achievements in the industry. She further mentioned Ethiopia's 80 years of experience as a benchmark for other countries with only a decade of aviation

history, underscoring its resilience in overcoming challenges.

Moreover, she stressed the significant role of civil aviation and Ethiopian Airlines in the nation's social and economic growth, urging continued modernization to maintain its strength and competitive edge.

Ethiopia's Civil Aviation Authority Deputy Director, Mengistu Nigussie, noted that Ethiopia's aviation history dates back to 1903, with the establishment of the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority in 1944 and Ethiopian Airlines the following year. Today, the airline stands as Africa's leading carrier and a strong competitor globally.

Mengistu added that the adherence to international aviation regulations ensures Ethiopia's position as an outstanding airline in Africa. He also mentioned that Ethiopia's responsibility for controlling Djibouti's air traffic contributes significantly to peaceful air navigation in the region.

Former Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority Director General, Wossenyeleh Hunegnaw (Col.), emphasized that both the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority and Ethiopian Airlines serve as models for African countries. Their regulatory capacity is highly competitive not just within Africa but also globally.

Ethiopia continues to undertake various activities to secure its airspace, marking a significant milestone in the sector's advancement.

Bahir Dar's corridor dev't nears to completion

BY MESERET BEHAILU

ADDIS ABABA—Bahir Dar City has announced the development of a 22.5-kilometer corridor project, with three kilometers nearing completion.

City's Urban and Infrastructure General Manager and Deputy Mayor Teshager Adamu told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the three kilometers of the project have been under construction for the past three months and are

now in their final stages.

The corridor features a three-meter-wide bicycle lane on both sides, five to eight kilometers of pedestrian pathways, 3 to 4.5 meters of greenery, designated areas for bicycle and bus parking, fast-food delivery spaces, public amusement spots, and fountains.

"The first three kilometers of the corridor development have already created over 750 jobs, and we are committed to finalizing the

remaining sections of the project," Teshager stated.

The next phase will include developing an additional five kilometers, while the remaining sections will depend on financial resources. Teshager highlighted that essential infrastructure, including electricity, water, and telecom lines, has been successfully installed with future needs in mind. Furthermore, the project includes fence design, building color coordination, and

enhanced lighting for both buildings and streets. Residents are actively contributing to the corridor's development, which aims to create a more attractive and tourist-friendly city.

The project, initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), seeks to create a conducive environment for residents, ensure socioeconomic benefits, and establish splendid cities and towns for future generations, while also attracting tourists.

Federation capacitating athletes to participate in African, world competitions

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA—Ethiopia is undertaking the necessary preparations to participate in all African games as well as the world taekwondo events by recruiting competent athletes, Ethiopian World Taekwondo Federation expressed.

The Federation announced that it is recruiting and capacitating talented athletes to realize the strong representation of the nation in local and international competitions, compatible with Ethiopia's dedication to achieve excellence in taekwondo sport.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, Ethiopian World Taekwondo Federation CEO and Technic Committee President, Hailu Gudeta stated that the federation is relentlessly working to capacitate

talented athletes in all states to improve the country's representation and participation in taekwondo sport in local and global tournaments.

He said to achieve this, the Federation is supporting all states to recruit and train athletes thereby preparing competent taekwondo competitors that the country proud of.

The efficient implementation of such capacity building and support would result in participating and winning international taekwondo contests similar to what the nation achieve in short and long distance running, he suggested.

The country that had been only represented by a single taekwondo athlete in Olympic sport competition, he said. As a result, some taekwondo athletes are now emerging in Ethiopia's sport sector.



Hailu Gudeta

"We are expanding the national competition through participating athletes from all states to create conducive environment to meet the standard and then help them involve

in the world taekwondo Championship competitions next time."

Competent Ethiopian athletes will first participate in all African games then advanced into international taekwondo competitions. Accordingly, Hailu mentioned that some athletes are getting training in various states, including Addis Ababa, to qualify and join the national team.

"We are closely working with South Korean Embassy in Addis and they are sponsoring referees and providing technical, material, and other supports," he said.

He further noted that the government should give due attention for taekwondo, football, athletics and other sports through identifying, encouraging and investing to achieve the required results and build the good image of the country, Hailu noted.

Editorial

Iconic Addis ready to welcome African leaders!

Addis Ababa, the historical and diplomatic heart of Africa, has rolled up its sleeves to once again take center stage as it hosts the 38th Ordinary Session of the African Heads of State and Government. As the city prepares to welcome the continent's leaders, it is not only the agendas raised at the session that attract the attention of delegations, journalists, and other participants, but also the remarkable transformation of the city that touches almost its every nook and cranny is also a profound aspect.

Addis today matches historical contribution to Africa in all respects. The city that delivers the unity of Africans 60 years ago has seen a rapid transformation in the past few years. It has been undergoing significant redevelopment, aimed at elevating the city's infrastructure and services to meet the demands of the increasingly dynamic needs of its residents and visitors alike. Hotels and other essential services have been enhanced, offering state-of-the-art amenities that cater to the needs of both heads of state and delegations. The city now boasts a skyline dotted with modern hotels, conference centers, and world-class restaurants, providing a comfortable and conducive environment for the critical discussions that will take place during the summit.

The diplomatic city that is known for its warm welcoming residents has gone through massive redevelopment works over the last few years. The infrastructural development that includes features that boost touristic services takes center stage in the endeavors of the city's transformation.

No doubt, Addis symbolizes the hopes and aspirations of Africans. Africans need to provide better living standards to their people. And the continent's youths representing nearly 70 percent of the population are the engine of development. What matters most is a high-level commitment. The diplomatic capital of Africa, Addis, proved true that Africa's renaissance is possible. The pressing problems befalling Africa from climate change, economic hurdles, and security challenges to unwarranted external interference can best be tackled by working with an elevated commitment. Innovation, leadership and synergy are the complete recipe to achieve rapid and quality development to the people of Africa.

This year's summit is also unique in that the next chairperson of the African Union Commission will be elected. Candidates have already started debating for the chairmanship. On the evening of December 13, 2024 in a televised debate the three candidates present what they could do to their beloved continent if they get the chance to be elected.

The candidates, former Prime Minister of Kenya Raila Odinga, Djibouti Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Yusuf and former Madagascar Foreign Minister Richard Randriamandrato engaged in the debating – of course the crux of the matter in their debating transforming Africa.

With fresh looking Addis and the state-of-the-art services provided to the delegation, the AU Summit will inevitably deliberate on most pressing challenge of Africa to extricate its peoples from poverty.

In conclusion, as Addis Ababa prepares to host the 38th Ordinary Session of the African Heads of State and Government, it stands not only as a venue for critical discussions but also as a testament to Africa's potential for transformation and unity. The city's remarkable redevelopment reflects a commitment to enhancing the living standards of its residents and providing an exceptional experience for its visitors. The summit presents a pivotal opportunity for leaders to address pressing challenges and harness collective efforts toward a brighter future.



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Opinion

COMESA's Yellow Card: A solution for trade efficiency

BY GIRMACHEW GASHAW

In this era of globalization, where no country operates independently, intensifying bilateral and multilateral political and socioeconomic cooperation is more of a necessity. In order to facilitate peaceful cross-border vehicle mobility and expedite trade connectivity among countries, following a systematic approach is of paramount importance in resolving vehicle accidents.

The Yellow Card Scheme, established through a Protocol signed by heads of state and government in 1986, aims to provide compensation for damage or injury resulting from interstate traffic accidents. It offers guarantees similar to those mandated by the laws of participating member states, ensuring coverage for property damage, bodily injuries, medical expenses, and legal liabilities in the event of a road traffic accident in a foreign member country.

Prior to the introduction of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Yellow Card insurance scheme, which provides regional motor vehicle insurance for third-party liability coverage and compensation for medical expenses in the event of a road traffic accident, resolving vehicle accidents and their resulting damages was challenging. With the implementation of this insurance scheme, COMESA can easily provide compensation for those affected by vehicle accidents, allowing the vehicles to return to their country of origin.

Since the Yellow Card insurance scheme is applicable in all COMESA member countries and beyond, vehicle drivers are expected to hold and show the Yellow Card before crossing the border of a country where an accident occurred. This allows vehicles to transport goods across borders with only the Yellow Card as proof of insurance coverage. In other words, the Yellow Card can serve as proof of insurance.

Vehicle owners are required to appear in person at local insurance companies to buy premiums based on the vehicle they have for a given accident or damage caused by their drivers. Accordingly, commercial vehicles receive insurance coverage. This system operates under the insurance law and liability of the land.

Local insurance companies are mandated to provide insurance coverage for accidents within their localities by themselves, but when an accident occurs beyond borders, they provide coverage as per the information they receive from COMESA Yellow Card scheme offices. In short, the task of COMESA office is facilitating conditions.

To contribute to the Yellow Card insurance scheme, local insurance companies collect premiums from customers crossing borders and advise them to obtain the Yellow Card, which they can obtain from COMESA offices for their liability coverage in case of accidents. If the premiums collected from vehicle owners may not be enough to cover the liability of a given accident, the insurance company can cover it together with its reinsuring company.

The Yellow Card system facilitates easy movement of vehicles across borders, accelerating trade and social interactions within COMESA member countries. This system has

streamlined the process for vehicles involved in accidents, ensuring prompt compensation and allowing them to return to their country of origin.

The Yellow Card Scheme operates in 13 COMESA and non-COMESA member states, with over 250 insurance companies issuing Yellow Card covers. In the 2021-2022 periods, the scheme processed over 720 claims, including one of the largest claims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo totaling \$400,000. The scheme has issued over 256,000 cards, generating premium income exceeding \$14.7 million, according to COMESA.

Yellow Card trucks are commonly used in the region, with over 1000 passing through Ethiopia and Djibouti daily. The scheme covers emergency medical expenses and third-party property damage where available in member nations.

A reinsurance pool with assets exceeding \$15 million provides reinsurance coverage and clearing house services to member insurance companies. Non-COMESA drivers from countries like Mozambique or South Africa can obtain Yellow Card coverage through business agreements.

The COMESA Yellow Card Scheme has been digitalized since November 2018. The Digital Yellow Card (YC) system includes a mobile app and a helpdesk system: Digital Yellow Card Mobile App, which provides access to emergency medical coverage and real-time information for motorists, law enforcement, and other stakeholders, and Digital Yellow Card Helpdesk System, which allows users to submit queries and requests via email, phone, or in person.

Since December 2020, the Digital Yellow Card platform has been used to issue Yellow Cards, improving claims operations and overall scheme effectiveness. The RI Pool, established in 1998, offers reinsurance coverage for claims above \$15,000 and clearing of claims settlement transactions for InterBureaux claims.

Despite high demand from non-COMESA/SADC countries, the Yellow Card scheme faces challenges due to disparate third-party insurance systems in the region. Issues such as delays in claims processing, forgery of Yellow Cards, low liability limits, and inconveniences to vehicles involved in accidents persist. On the other hand, COMESA Yellow Card offices should further be strengthened with a view to providing efficient services.

To address these challenges, the Yellow Card scheme must focus on full automation of claim operations, combat forgery, increase liability limits, and improve communication with key stakeholders like traffic police and border authorities. The premium payment asked by some insurance companies is still minimal, which needs improvement as it eases the burden of reinsuring companies. On the other hand, the structural arrangement of COMESA's country offices should be improved to further strengthen the service they provide.

Implementing digital mechanisms such as a mobile application, which is in process, as well as the Electronic Yellow Card and other systems are critical in terms of improving this insurance scheme, which will have a greater contribution to realizing Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want.

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

News

Ethiopian University reshaping Africa's aviation industry

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADDIS ABABA - As a key player in Africa's aviation sector, the Ethiopian Aviation University expressed commitment to transform the industry through its top-tier education programs.

Approached by *The Ethiopian Herald*, the Ethiopian Aviation University Acting President Kassie Yimam said that the university has been working on developing Africa's aviation industry via the provision of unique aviation education in many fields.

Ethiopia has training schools that offer quality training similar to what is given in the Middle East, Europe and America. However, Kassie said that the university is unique for its full training facilities, materials, workshops and laboratories, among others.

"This is the reason why students select the Ethiopian Aviation University to receive professional aviation training." Currently, it is offering training to students who came from the four corners of the world having a passion to become pilots, flight attendants, maintenance specialists, customer service agents, and commercial professionals, he stated.



For example, he said that the university has recently received 300 students from Gabon and currently, it is offering training for more than 2000 students. So far, it has graduated over 20,000 competent Ethiopians and other nationals of aviation professionals.

In addition to providing various trainings, it has been also offering university programs in the aviation sector in bachelor's and master's degree programs, Kassie added.

In doing so, the university has supported not

only the Ethiopian Airlines Group but also other partners through offering professional trainings, he noted.

To fulfill the ever growing human capital demand of the Ethiopian and other countries, it has been widely offering aviation profession trainings. As a result, the university has been greatly contributing to the growth of the aviation industry, according to the Acting President.

The preparations have been finalized to start

offering master's degrees of Master of Data Science and MBA in Aviation Management training this fiscal year, he said, adding that Data Science focuses on predictive airplane health management systems. It would contribute to preserving the health of airplanes via data science analysis.

Furthermore, offering the MBA training courses would incorporate the Ethiopian Airlines' experience to fellow managerial and operations, he noted.

Corridor project...

their legacy for future generations.

Mayor Adanech added that once the corridor development is completed, it will enhance the beauty of the area, boost residents' daily income, and transform the lives of those in surrounding communities. Notable projects, such as the Adwa

Memorial Museum, are also part of this large-scale transformation.

In areas like Arat Kilo and Piassa, private businesses are thriving in a peaceful environment, contributing to local economic growth.

The first phase of the corridor development includes car parking spaces, business shops, rest areas, and terminals for buses, taxis, and tourists, along with plazas and major road junctions connecting key areas of the city. This phase covers routes from 4 Kilo to Churchill Road and from 6 Kilo to

Itegue Taitu Hotel, with large parking lots and terminals for buses, taxis, and tourists.

Phase two of the development is already underway, covering a larger area of the city and set to bring further improvements to Addis Ababa's infrastructure and economy, according to Mayor Adanech.

President hails...

international reputation and strengthens the people-to-people ties between Ethiopia and Sudan.

However, President Taye condemned the ongoing attacks targeting the ERCS, stressing that its staff and volunteers are increasingly being exposed to danger in conflict zones, facing physical and mental harm, and even the loss of life.

President of the ERCS, Abera Tola, reaffirmed the organization's unwavering dedication to responding to both man-made and natural disasters over the past 90 years. He highlighted the ERCS's adherence to the core principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with a current membership of 6 million and a network of 47,000 volunteers across the country.

Abera also showcased the ERCS's impressive financial growth, revealing that its annual income has soared from 750 million Birr to 3.5 billion Birr over the past four years. During this time, the ERCS has provided emergency response, disaster risk reduction, and rehabilitation services to 16 million people. The government has further acknowledged the ERCS's significant contributions by increasing



President Taye Atske-Selassie

its annual support from 5 million Birr to 10 million Birr.

The ERCS holds its general assembly every two years, and this year's meeting focuses on evaluating the organization's achievements over the past three years while setting priorities for the future.

ERCS, one of the 192 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world, was founded on July 8th, 1935, by government Decree, following the second Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

Ankara Declaration...

Ethiopia and Somalia carries immense significance for both nations and the volatile HoA region. He emphasized that the agreement amplifies peace and stability, enabling mutual benefits for the countries involved.

Reflecting on the longstanding ties between Ethiopia and Somalia, Jafar described the declaration as a testament to the commitment of these neighboring countries to regional peace and stability, as well as to combating common adversaries. The accord also reinforces Ethiopia's peaceful pursuit of access to the sea, a strategic goal that aligns with its development aspirations.

African Affairs Researcher at IFA, Befikadu Bogale, added that Ethiopia's diplomatic approach to securing sea access adheres to international law, reflecting the nation's commitment to a give-and-take diplomacy that ensures a win-win outcome for all parties involved. He stressed that as the HoA increasingly attracts global interest, countries in the region must collaborate to decide their future and counter divisive forces.

Similarly, Ethiopian President Taye Atske-Selassie emphasized on social media that the Ankara Declaration represents a significant step toward stronger regional cooperation between Ethiopia, Somalia, and the wider HoA.

The agreement, brokered through Turkish

mediation in Ankara, marks a breakthrough in resolving misunderstandings between Ethiopia and Somalia. The declaration underscores both nations' commitment to strengthening ties and fostering regional collaboration.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) highlighted Ethiopia's steadfast dedication to regional integration over the past six years. "Ethiopia's aspiration for secure and reliable access to the sea is a peaceful venture that benefits all our neighbors. Peace and growth are shared dividends premised on mutual development," Abiy stated.

The Premier also underscored the historical and cultural bonds between Ethiopia and Somalia. "As neighbors, Ethiopia and Somalia have shared a relationship bound by blood for centuries. Beyond common ancestry, language, and culture, the bond is strengthened by the sacrifices made by thousands of Ethiopian soldiers who defended Somalia from terrorist threats," he said.

The Ankara Declaration not only affirms Ethiopia's rights to access the sea through peaceful means but also serves as a critical milestone in driving regional development and addressing shared challenges. It sets a strong foundation for collaboration among HoA nations, enabling them to shape their collective destiny in an increasingly interconnected world.

Opinion

We ought to Capitalize the significance of National Dialogue

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

Experts simply put dialogue as it is the search of truth through two way communication. Commissioner Yonas Adaye (PhD) explained the idea of national dialogue more widely like, "It is the process of enabling and empowering the people to construct their present and future" He added that in national dialogue, the basic principle is each and every one's say is important in the process. Related to this, the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) proclamation No. 1265/2021 defined national dialogue as "A process of dialogue that is made on agendas that are going to be collected and identified by the commissioners based on the principles set by the council of the commissioners at federal and regional level"

Thus, dialogue is about the coming together of the people for discussion who had various attitudes and perspectives on controversial issues for reaching at mutual consensus. Therefore, if dialogue is the coming together of people to discuss their issues, is it time for Ethiopians to carryout it at this very time?

As it has been practically seen in the history of countries and nations in the continent and in the world, national dialogue is made following a sort of conflict or political unrest. Thus, in order to settle these threats and safeguard possible messes, countries call their people to come to the table and talk their mind for negotiation and compromise. Since this concept is too new to Ethiopian people, The Ethiopian Herald approached Mulugeta Ayele (PhD), an instructor and Researcher in the Department of Peace and Security at Addis Ababa University for detailed explanation.

Mulugeta's response to Herald's question on relevance of dialogue in Ethiopia at this time was that there have been political issues that have never been settled for many years in the process of the country's social construction. Since basic questions and grievances that a given society has been raising for years were muted and got worsen in time, elites and activists have taken that space and elevated it to reach at its today's margin in the country.

Mulugeta recalled that Ethiopian history and socialization is basically constructed abusively and exploitatively. To exemplify this, he stated historical melodies, music, folktales, proverbs, educational curriculums and the like. These aspects did mainly preach social division and resentment. He added that Ethiopia had been feeble in working and capitalizing on the sense of nationality. The people have never been emphasizing and celebrating the communal histories and deeds for years. This gradually broke social cohesion and pushed the nation to develop exasperation between them. Thus, to bring these muddles to their end, these societies should start dialogue freely for solution.

The scholar had a say on the present status

of the society. He said, in the history of Ethiopia there have been three major groups that faced the ruling system. On one hand, there were groups that really worried for the unity and development of the nation. The other groups were fighting the government saying 'land to tailor', and the others were associations. These associations were not contagious. They disagree on many issues like language, political philosophy and the like.

Since the previous regimes, the society was raising basic questions related to identity, equality of nations and nationalities and many related issues. Though these questions little by little were solved by those regimes, the culture of degrading the deeds when that regime left the seat had caused the generation to cumulate all the negatives and get offensive on these issues later. These issues together with the present political exposure and globalization had aggravated the issue and left the nation to its present social connection needs to be more consolidated. He underlined that these issues need to be solved to continue as a nation and transform the country to the higher level it deserves. Thus, as the time demands it and is a best way for solving these challenges, dialogue is in headway in the country.

While approached by The Ethiopian Herald exclusively, Yonas Adaye (PhD), one of the eleven commissioners said, "There have been, if not crises at least, political development questions and aspects which were not properly answered or addressed as other nations did in their political system." National dialogue is carried out when there is an existential threat such as nations to break up, societies distrusted each other, and social crises, then one might go for national dialogue.

Since national dialogue is the move towards identifying the truth and the factors, the country needs to bring the citizens sit together, discuss and reach a consensus on national issues. For that response the country had independently organized a national dialogue commission that is responsible for bringing the people together via representatives to discuss their issues around a table for communal view as a nation. Dialogue is about identifying the causes of violence or under developments from the grassroots, top to dawn or horizontally. Yonas said that Ethiopian national dialogue is initiated by these social and political crises.

Reasoning out the essence of conducting national dialogue in Ethiopia, the commissioner raised some points precisely. The first one, as to him, is misunderstanding among the people on some issues such as the flag, state structure, and the constitution among others. These issues are very important for the nation that seeks national consensus. When such issues arise, the people get triangulated into many different attitudes and come up with various justifications. Thus, to stand as one nation,

Dialogue is about the coming together of the people for discussion who had various attitudes and perspectives on controversial issues for reaching at mutual consensus

these views and justifications need to be discussed peacefully, debated and reached at courteous points around the table. That is achievable when it is run by an independent institution.

The second reason that Yonas mentioned is lack of trust among some sections of the people towards the governments in power though elected. They feel suspect on the way the leaders exercise their power. Based on their experience in relation to previous practices, wrongly articulated narratives and own interests, they easily lose confidence on the efficacy of the government in power. To build a trustworthy system that links the society with the ruling party, people need to come to the table to exhibit their idea and discuss openly. The national dialogue commission is needed here to facilitate the situation and improve the interaction.

The third point the commissioner mentioned is people usually feel biased on issues that are related to accessibilities of various services, living standards, identity, cultural and political representations both at the federal and regional level. Upon coming across such feelings, some groups prefer armed struggle than giving chance to civilized political dialogue.

Round table discussion and exhibiting persuasive reasons to come to a consensus is the sign of civilized society. But this has not happened in Ethiopia yet. Therefore, to bring such approaches into light, the best strategy to be adopted among the society is conducting dialogue and nurturing the culture of dialogue what the commission is striving to achieve.

Hence, the national dialogue is quite essential to understand the culture and move on changing the predisposed culture and let

dialogue as the best and peaceful option for expressing any form of feelings and attitudes on any issue happened among the people.

Since the concept of national dialogue in Ethiopia is the new idea, though there have been longlasted habit of settling disagreement among communities, optimistic view of the people and institutions highly matters to the efficacy of the commission. From the very beginning of its establishment, the commission could win trust of the people as it is their own belonging. Thus, as it has happened with the willingness of the people, positive thinking is the core issue in due process. This positive attitude and hope toward the commission would be helpful to conduct successful dialogue and reach at a national consensus shortly.

The commissioner finally reminded responsible bodies that they should take the lion's share for the success of the commission. The first one is media. He said that the intensions of the needed messages can greatly be communicated to the public through media. Though media has been working more on the meaning and necessity of national dialogue at the national level so far, there is still a long way to go. Every medium should take this issue as an agenda in its coverage.

The second responsible body relays on regional administrators. Since the issue of the dialogue is very basic for nation building, regions are responsible for the security, mobilization, accommodation and initiation of their people on participating in the dialogue.

Mulugeta finally recommended that the people should first be cognizant of the real history of the country. "We need to take care of the narrations that are simply transcended from generations; we need to be logical and evidence based." Since consensus is relevant for the nation, people should strive to capitalize on the common historical issues and focus on good sides of the other people instead of being fault finders.

As a nation, the country should cooperatively run to respect individual and group rights together. There should be an inclusive governmental system that entertains the multiplicity of the people. No matter how, conflicts and disputes are inevitable. When these happened, the people should deal with the issues peacefully and in a civilized manner that is the dialogue.

In this regard, the elite should take the lion's share. Mulugeta underlined that all the citizens including the armed sections should come to a round table and raise their issues for dialogue. "To be competent in the exceedingly boosting world in economy and civilization, we need to solve out our national problem through dialogue," he stressed.

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

Business & Economy

Role of agricultural sector for economic growth, industrial expansion

BY MENGESHA AMARE

Agricultural transformation is a backbone of the economic transformation

It is well recognized that agriculture, the mainstay of Ethiopian economy of course, is a key contributor to economic growth in several ways as it is useful in bolstering employment, income generation, food security, industrial development, export growth, among others.

Taking this essence in mind, The *Ethiopian Herald* had a stay with Hundaol Mekonnen, an agro economist graduated from Dilla University, to seek a professional point of view regarding the firm association among agriculture sector and economic growth as well as industrial expansion.

He said, “As far as employment is concerned, a strong agricultural sector can lead to employment growth in other sectors. Since it is well recognized that countries with strong agriculture have higher per capita incomes, Ethiopia needs to well embark on the agriculture sector to benefit the same. As agriculture is critical for ensuring food security and improving nutrition, it has to be given due emphasis, too.”

He said that many countries that have achieved high-income status started with agriculture and went through an economic transformation. For example, economic growth in GDP can be instrumental in coming up with agricultural transformation in our country.

He said, “One of the central goals of every developing country like Ethiopia is to reach high-income status. Agriculture plays a critical role in transforming economies to reach the goal, along with achieving other essential development goals like ensuring food security and improving nutrition. Therefore, in order to end hunger and under nutrition while accelerating economic growth, agricultural transformation must be made a reality thereby helping the nation move steps forward in all aspects.”

Economic transformation—also called structural transformation—means a country’s shift in the relative contribution of its technology and sectors to its overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—From traditional technology to modern technology and from agriculture to industry and manufacturing, and then to a high-income service economy. For this process to be successful, the agricultural sector must be modernized, he underlined.

He said, “Agricultural modernization prepares conditions for industrialization by boosting labor productivity, increasing agricultural surplus to accumulate capital, and increasing foreign exchange via expanding exports and initiations of import substitution. Modernization also helps achieve humanitarian goals by raising incomes and productivity of poor farmers, lowering food prices, and improving nutrition.”

As to him, increased agricultural productivity and income increases consumers’ ability to purchase manufactured goods and invest in the modernization of agriculture. As agriculture becomes more productive, excess labor moves from rural farm jobs to urban manufacturing jobs.



Agricultural transformation is a backbone of the economic transformation

There are two key areas to make agricultural transformation a reality. One, it is critical to make modern technologies available. While modern agricultural technologies can come from private and public sectors, national governments need to play a big role in investing in agricultural research and development. This is due to the difficulty for a private enterprise to fully capture the benefits of developing such technologies.

Two, agricultural transformation can be fostered by adoption of modern technologies, as farmers may not use such technologies even if they are available. Many technologies such as high-yielding seeds require stringent conditions for water, inputs, and knowhow. Therefore, the government must prepare conditions including irrigation and improved market infrastructure for farmers to access these inputs and sell their agricultural produce. The government will also need to build human capital to ensure a skilled labor force to master new technology, handle logistics and boost each node of the value chain.

“Economic development is a process of structural transformation, and agriculture is the essential engine to jumpstart the process. Defeating poverty, ending hunger and under nutrition as well as ensuring food security are also important goals of agricultural modernization and for economic transformation. Crop production is also a key component of economic development, especially in rural areas, and can help to reduce poverty,” he added.

Agriculture can be a driver of sustainable economic and social development. Furthermore, the share of agriculture in GDP is rising over time although there are a number of ups and downs that need to be well dealt with. This may be because as agriculture becomes more successful, its importance in the overall economy decreases, he underlined.

The major ways that crop production can contribute to economic development via modernization—the agricultural and food sectors need to be modernized to meet the growing demand for food. As far as productivity is concerned, improving output is important, and public and private investment in agriculture is important, but has not been given due emphasis.

Agriculture is a source of both labor and capital for non-agricultural production. Improving the production capacity of agriculture in developing countries through productivity increases is an important policy goal where agriculture represents an important sector in the economy, he added.

Undeniably, the agricultural sector provides livelihood directly and indirectly to a significant portion of the population of Ethiopia he added, especially in rural areas, where poverty is more pronounced. Thus, a growing agricultural sector contributes to both overall growth and poverty alleviation.

Within the context of growth in food and agriculture in Ethiopia, emphasis is placed on productivity and public investments also promote technology adoption, stimulate complementary on-farm investment and input use and are needed for marketing the agricultural goods produced, as to Hundaol.

Agricultural economics, or agro-economics, is important because it helps people understand how to produce and distribute food in an efficient way and decision-making of farmers, agricultural economics research can help us understand how farmers make decisions about adopting new technologies, and how to design crop insurance policies.

Besides, understanding the role of agriculture in economic development has come to the front line as the sector can help understand how a country’s economic development is affected by the role of agriculture in its economy, he said.

According to Hundaol, agricultural economics can also help understand how to bridge the gap between market-oriented development and development goals like poverty reduction and climate change adaptation.

In the case of nonfood agriculture, competition from industrial substitutes grows as investment and innovation lower the price of industrial goods and services relative to agricultural raw materials.

Hundaol said Population growth, the effects of which are often exacerbated by a highly unequal income distribution, has sharply reduced both the per capita benefits of increased food production and the associated increases in per capita income. This paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty has long plagued popular

understanding of the role of agriculture in economic development. On the one hand, it has led to a sense of hopelessness about the world’s malnourished; on the other, to technological overconfidence. Over anxiety about food crises has alternated with taking agriculture for granted.

As far as agricultural expansion is concerned, it is the process of converting non-agricultural land to agricultural land, such as turning forests into crops or grasslands into pastures. Furthermore, trade liberalization has also increased global agricultural trade and expanded opportunities for exporters of agricultural products.

True, improvements in agricultural technology can free up labor from agriculture, which can be crucial for industrialization. Besides, industrial expansion can be used to monitor livestock welfare in real-time, which can lead to higher yields and healthier livestock. Balance between agriculture and industry—if agriculture expands without a parallel expansion in industry, transportation, and other parts of the economy, the increased agricultural output could pile up or drive prices down.

In a nutshell, agriculture is a key component of economic growth and development, and can contribute to economic growth in a number of ways via, for instance, job creation—agriculture can create jobs and income, and integrate the unemployed, young people, and poverty groups into the economy; and food security—agriculture is essential for food security and nutrition. Plus to that agriculture can provide a surplus that can be used to fund industrial development, such as building roads and purchasing industrial equipment.

Agriculture can be a sustainable part of economic development if it is ecologically sustainable and socially equitable. The sector and industrial expansion are closely linked in economic development, and there are many factors to consider when analyzing the relationship between the two sectors: Agricultural productivity and industrialization.

All things considered, improving agricultural productivity can be a catalyst for industrialization, and sustainable industrialization can accelerate economic growth and social development by reallocating resources from labor-intensive to capital- and technology-intensive activities.

Planet Earth

The future of wildlife conservation in Gambella National Park

BY EPHREM ANDARGACHEW

Gambella National Park, Ethiopia's largest national park is located near the border with South Sudan. Established in 2003, the park covers approximately 5,061 square kilometers and is known for its diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, savannahs, and woods.

The park is home to a wide range of animals, including large mammals like elephants, buffaloes, and various antelope species, making it rich in biodiversity. It is also a haven for birdwatchers due to its variety of bird species. In addition to its wetland ecosystem, the park is recognized for key wetland areas that support wildlife and local populations, providing habitats for a variety of aquatic animals critical to the region's ecology.

Many tourists are drawn to the park to experience the local lifestyle. The Gambella region is inhabited by different ethnic groups, such as the Anuak and Nuer people, each with its unique customs and cultural heritage, making the park an integral part of the surrounding landscape and culture.

Despite its potential, the park faces conservation challenges like habitat deterioration, poaching, and agricultural pressures. Conservation efforts are necessary to preserve its unique biodiversity.

While tourism in Gambella National Park is not as developed as in other Ethiopian parks, it has great potential due to its diverse fauna and scenic landscapes. Protecting the park and promoting sustainable tourism can benefit both conservation efforts and local communities.

However, a variety of challenges have hampered its tourism potential. Therefore, it is important to address these challenges in order to fully realize the park's potential as a tourist destination.

In order to address the challenges, the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, Gambella Peoples' Regional State, and African Parks have entered into a Collaborative Management Partnership. This landmark agreement aims to preserve the park's biodiversity, promote sustainable development, and address climate change and environmental degradation.

The Gambella People's Regional State Chief Administrator, Alemitu Umod, stated, "This collaboration is a historic step in protecting one of Ethiopia's most priceless natural resources." She stressed that in addition to creating much-needed jobs and promoting socioeconomic development in the area, the agreement will safeguard the park's ecology.

Gambella National Park is well known for its abundant biodiversity, which includes vital ecosystems and endangered species. It



is home to recognizable animals and covers enormous wetlands, grasslands, and forests. Therefore, protecting the park is essential to preserving Ethiopia's natural heritage and reducing the effects of climate change, she said.

Alemitu Umod believes that the state's vast natural potential has been underutilized owing to a variety of challenges. Hence, she welcomed the collaboration arrangement as a golden chance for cooperatively conserving parks and helping the local community.

However, the conflicts in the area and the migration from South Sudan pose challenges to wildlife conservation. To address these issues, the Gambella State government is working closely with stakeholders on both sides. She also expressed her trust that African Parks, an international conservation organization with extensive experience in managing protected areas, brings technical expertise and funding to the park.

African Parks Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Peter Fearnhead, stated, "We are truly excited to embark on this journey with our Ethiopian partners." He continued, "This agreement marks a new chapter in Gambella National Park's sustainable management, protecting it for future generations while empowering local communities."

Furthermore, the partnership is critical for advancing the state's ecosystem and establishing a comprehensive and integrated management system. He assured African Park's commitment to providing essential support for Gambella National Park's development.

Fearnhead also praised Ethiopia's continuous efforts in tourism development, animal conservation, and forestry projects. He stated that the deal would play an important role in providing socioeconomic benefits for communities on both sides of the border.

Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority Director General, Kumara Wakjira, shared a



More importantly, he said, the deal is in line with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Green Legacy Initiative in Ethiopia. By improving the park's infrastructure and visibility, the agreement seeks to increase ecotourism in addition to conservation. It is anticipated that this will draw tourists from both local and foreign countries, bringing in money and supporting ecotourism for the advancement of the country.

"The agreement is vital in addressing gaps in wildlife management, conservation skills, and knowledge, particularly through African Parks' expertise," he added. He also stated that the government is collaborating closely with private sector partners, local communities, and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable development, wildlife conservation, and environmental preservation goals.

Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism Minister, Selamawit Kassa, noted, "By investing in our natural heritage, we are also investing in our future."

She added that the agreement aims to ensure sustainable wildlife conservation and create a conducive environment for joint efforts in ecological preservation. Hence, it is important to put a collaborative effort to sustain environmentally friendly and sustainable development for Gambella National Park.

The Minister added that the collaboration is important for protecting forests, wildlife, and ecosystems as well as for fostering an environment that would benefit future generations. She also praised Ethiopia's continued efforts, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), to ensure food security, boost tourism, and combat climate change.

"The corridor development will soon be implemented to transform Gambella, generate jobs, and attract more tourists to the area," Selamawit said. She also noted the importance of the agreement for the Gambella communities and neighboring South Sudan.

Indeed, Gambella National Park is a significant natural and cultural legacy of Ethiopia. It benefits the country's natural heritage and provides chances for conservation and responsible tourism. As a result, all stakeholders must step up their efforts to close gaps and improve animal protection in Gambella National Park and its adjacent areas.

Protecting the park and promoting sustainable tourism can benefit both conservation efforts and local communities

similar sentiment. He said, "This is not just about protecting a remarkable ecosystem but about unlocking its full potential to benefit communities and support national development goals."

Art & Culture

Cultural values, festivals for social cohesion

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

I was born and raised in a small town, speaking Amharic as my mother tongue. I learned how to behave and act from my parents and the people around me. The way we lived was very close-knit, and I felt responsible for everyone around me. I knew how to behave like a decent girl, as well as when to have fun and when to mourn. Raised by my grandmother and great-grandmother, I was a quiet girl until high school, where I was free to dance and sing culturally in my village. Since I didn't know anyone outside my area, I was sure everyone acted the same way.

This generation may be fascinated when they read this, but I lived in a small town without electricity for TV or radio in our home. We communicated culturally and lived simply. However, one day something unexpected happened. A newbie arrived, dressed differently with a unique hairstyle and a larger stick than usual. He wore a cloth on his head and didn't speak Amharic; he was from another area with a different culture. He came to ask my grandma something, and even though she didn't speak his language, she invited him in and asked me to wash his leg, as I usually did.

I was nervous, but as my grandma and the newcomer communicated through signs and some words in his language, I watched his mouth intently, as if the words were magically forming on his tongue. He had dinner with us and afterwards, he stood and gestured with his hands in the air, murmuring endlessly. I believe he was thanking and blessing God and us for the hospitality we showed him. From that moment on, I learned that Ethiopia is a land of multilingualism and rich cultural values.

Ethiopia is a country that embraces over 80 nations, nationalities, and peoples with magnificent cultural values and varied styles of demonstrations. Currently, the people of this nation are connecting more effectively than ever before on various issues and communal interests. The annual celebration that brings cultural values and identities together is the most vibrant event that attracts many people to share their values with others. The Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Day, celebrated annually on December 08, has been the best platform for allowing diverse cultures to be displayed and learned with the intention of unity and cooperation.

This day is designated for the demonstration of all nations, nationalities, and people's culture and identity equally and freely. Celebrated with different themes and mottos since the ratification of the constitution in 1867 EC, this year's 19th day was celebrated on December 08, 2024, with the theme of "National Consensus for Multinational Unity" in Arba Mich, the city of the Southern Ethiopian Region.

The theme of bringing together these nations is meant to foster national consensus and integrity for broader solidarity and unity as one nation. In the event, people from each nation, nationality, and people were represented with their cultural dress, dances, melodies, language, behavior, and



The annual celebration that brings cultural values and identities together is the most vibrant event that attracts many people to share their values with others

acts. This platform allows those unfamiliar with these beautiful cultures to access different cultural values and identities in one setting.

Social anthropologist Dr. Rajandra Govender was debating on SABC TV show. He said, "Culture day is celebrated when diverse communities pause to reflect on the rich cultural diversity in a given context."

This means that when a day is dedicated to letting these nations portray their cultural values, it is an opportunity to celebrate the cultural wealth of a nation.

In this regard, *The Ethiopian Herald* had a discussion with three participants who attended this year's annual Day of Nations, Nationalities, and People's Day. They were W/ro Fasika, W/ro Kelem, and W/ro Zinet, representing the Agew, Argoba, and Raya peoples from the Amhara region. These women showcased their cultural dress, hairstyles, ornaments, language, and identity.

This writer met with them after the celebration. Fasika described the day as, "I was fascinated by the beautiful gathering of cultures. It was a pleasure to meet various cultural values and spend a memorable day with them." The other two women shared similar sentiments with shining faces and joyful emotions.

The Ethiopian Herald asked them about the significance of the event from their perspective. Zimzem responded, "I feel pride and unity. Everyone at the program was excited and welcoming. This made me appreciate my identity and have confidence in my people. We were diverse in color but united in the feeling that we are all Ethiopians." Kelem was amazed by the cultural display in the city, as it was her first time witnessing such a large-scale event. She said, "Everyone at the event was beautiful, welcoming, and optimistic. I learned about humanity through the diverse cultural representations."

Rajandra, in this context, believed that such a day plays a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity, social cohesion, reconciliation, peace, and economic development. When Ethiopians come together with their cultural identities, taking the time to learn about each other's cultures, costumes, cuisines, and norms, these days provide an opportunity for the nation to move towards a more cohesive

society.

People may disregard or dislike the values of a particular nation due to a lack of exposure to them in practical form. Experts argue that no culture is 'worthless' in any nation; each cultural asset holds beauty, value, and reflects the true identity and historical background of that nation. Therefore, such days are valuable in allowing people to learn about and appreciate each other.

One might view Ethiopia's multilingualism and diverse reality as a challenge to national unity. However, scholars believe that if each nation maintains its culture in isolation, it will struggle to work together as a cohesive society. It is essential for every Ethiopian to learn about national symbols, the national anthem, and stand together on communal issues to promote solidarity and unity.

Sociologists suggest that institutions play a crucial role in building social consensus and unity. Communities and institutions, through policies and laws, can help eliminate antisocial behaviors. Schools and universities can also contribute significantly. Encouraging people to wear cultural costumes, share cuisine, and engage in cultural exchanges can promote unity by respecting each other's values and identities.

In a nutshell, the cultures and values of every nation should be celebrated through various institutions. Some African countries, like South Africa, have independent institutions that focus on cultural exhibitions. Communicating people's backgrounds and ways of living effectively is crucial for fostering understanding and acceptance among societies.

This is vital for bringing people together and resolving controversial issues with a sense of solidarity and unity, which is the theme of this year's National Day. Let's create more opportunities for sharing the cultures of different nations to enhance social connections, which are the foundation for sustainable development.

Society

Efforts of cultivate sustainable peace in Ethiopia

BY TEWODROS KASSA

In recent years, Ethiopia has made significant efforts toward cultivating sustainable peace within the country. These efforts have been crucial in fostering unity, reconciliation, and development across various regions. One of the key peace building initiatives in Ethiopia is the promotion of dialogue and conflict resolution from the national to the community level.

Therefore, efforts are being made to address historical injustices and traumas, bringing together individuals and communities to acknowledge past grievances and move toward forgiveness and healing.

To realize these efforts, one of the essential initiatives is the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC), which was established some years before. Currently, the Commission is making successive strides to bring about a tangible dialogue among every stakeholder. The Commission has been set up to provide a platform for victims and other stakeholders to share their stories and seek reconciliation. By confronting the past and working towards forgiveness, The Commission is paving the way that leads for a more peaceful and harmonious future.

It is obvious that local peace committees (*Ye Hager Shimagile*) have been contributing significantly to address conflicts and grievances before they escalate, helping to foster understanding and peaceful coexistence among diverse ethnic groups in the countryside.

Additionally, the Ethiopian government has been working to promote inclusivity and diversity in decision-making processes. By ensuring that all voices are heard and represented, the government is creating a more equitable and just society where all individuals feel valued and included. Accordingly, ENDC is striving to create conducive conditions for national consensus by identifying the root causes of deep division and discord among the Ethiopian society through research, and public dialogues, conducting national dialogue and presenting recommendations to the concerned bodies as well as designing the implementations monitoring system thereof.

Recently, the Commission announced that preparations are finalized to commence agenda identification process in Adama City, Oromia State.

As part of this, the Commission held agenda identification consultative meeting with stakeholders and information dissemination campaign through various platforms.

The forum is said vital to enhance the



awareness of participants regarding the significance of the dialogue, the activities being carried out so far in terms of identifying and organizing agendas that have greater regional and national importance and enhance participation.

At the forum, government officials, political party leaders, influential individuals, civic associations and from three government institutions took part.

Accordingly, participants received a detailed explanation about the nature, importance, and process of the national dialogue.

Speaking on the occasion, Commission's Chief Coordinator of Agenda Gathering Forum in Oromia State, Bizuneh Assefa urged participants of the forum to seize the opportunity properly and present their agendas and citizens participate at the dialogue process actively.

Regarding the technical aspects of the agenda, stakeholders raised questions, and these were addressed in detail during the session, the Commission reported.

Similarly, scholars from Adama Science and Technology University also confirmed that they have made the necessary arrangements to coordinate the agenda identification forum in the Oromia State.

Recently, a new peace building project was launched aimed at rebuilding trust and promote dialogue in Tigray, Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions. The project is supported by World Vision Ethiopia in partnership with the European Union (EU).

Accordingly, this two-million Euro project aimed at rebuilding trust and promoting dialogue in the three Ethiopian regions.

The 18-month project is also anticipated to promote dialogue in these communities and establish sustainable conflict prevention mechanisms across 12 targeted districts in the regions.

The peace building project is expected to directly benefit over 35,000 people, including 30,000 people impacted by conflict, 1,200 youth peace builders and 1,200 faith leaders, according to World Vision Ethiopia.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, State Minister of Peace Kayredin Tezera said the main objective of the project is supporting Ethiopia's culture of resolving conflicts through dialogue.

The State Minister commended the role of World Vision Ethiopia for its continued support and he reaffirmed the government's readiness to continue working in close collaboration for the realization of the new project.

National Director of World Vision Ethiopia, Karmen Till underscored the new peace building project aims to create greater impact by empowering communities, particularly youth to lead peace building efforts.

"By strengthening dialogue and inclusive peace structures, we can contribute to lasting stability that aligns with government initiatives."

This specific project is crucial in contributing to the wider peace agenda of Ethiopia, she said, adding peace is the number one agenda around the world

and in Ethiopia.

Similarly, EU Deputy Head of Delegation, David Krivanek said launching this project is a crucial step towards addressing one of the most pressing challenges as the need for enduring peace through trust, mutual understanding and dialogue is essential.

Noting that the project funded by the European Union and implemented by World Vision embodied a shared vision for peace building, he said through collaborative efforts capacity building, and dialogue promotion, we aim to make a significant contribution in three key areas.

The project also aims to de-escalate tensions, build trust, and foster social cohesion among conflict-affected communities in 12 districts across Tigray, Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions, it was indicated.

The representatives of Tigray, Benishangul Gumuz and Amhara regional states for their parts expressed their readiness to collaborate with pertinent stakeholders for the implementation of the project as peace is the foundation of everything.

The project is also said it will be enhancing the capacity of local governments to effectively manage conflicts and provide youth with constructive avenues to actively engage in peace building efforts, it was indicated.

Moreover, economic development plays a crucial role in sustaining peace in Ethiopia. By investing in infrastructure, education, and job creation, the government is undertaking enormous efforts towards addressing root causes of conflict such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Thus, creating job opportunities for numerous youths and women enables solve their grievances and contribute their part in the peace building process.

In sum, Ethiopia is also working closely with international partners and organizations to promote peace and stability within the region. By collaborating with neighboring countries and international actors, Ethiopia is seeking to address cross-border conflicts and promote regional cooperation. The efforts to cultivate sustainable peace in Ethiopia are multifaceted and require a comprehensive approach. By promoting dialogue, reconciliation, economic development, and international partnerships, Ethiopia is making significant strides towards creating a more peaceful and prosperous society for all its citizens. With continued commitment and collaboration, sustainable peace in Ethiopia can be achieved, paving the way for a brighter future for the country and its people.

Law & Politics

An important step towards the path of tranquility

BY EYUEL KIFLU

Ethiopia is actively working towards establishing a path of tranquility through its Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process. This initiative is an essential part of the federal government's commitment to sustainable peace, as it seeks to engage armed groups across various regions of the country.

A significant milestone in this effort is the ongoing DDR program in the Tigray region, where former combatants are being moved to rehabilitation camps. This program aims not only to disarm former fighters but also to reintegrate them into society, fostering a sense of community and stability.

Recently, the Oromia Regional Government made headlines by successfully negotiating with former leaders of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). Jaal Segni Negasa, a prominent figure within the OLA, accepted the government's invitation to participate in the peace process. This pivotal agreement, signed in Addis Ababa, underscores the mutual recognition of the importance of peace by both the government and the militant groups.

The agreement has prompted the OLA to begin relocating its members to designated camps, a development that has been widely documented on various social media platforms. These videos not only showcase the OLA's commitment to the peace process but also reflect a broader sentiment among many Ethiopians who yearn for stability and prosperity. The Ministry of Peace has hailed this accord as a critical step toward achieving lasting peace in Ethiopia.

In his media address Jaal Segni emphasized the urgent need to alleviate the prolonged suffering experienced by communities across Oromia. He stated, "In our efforts to end this suffering, we have embraced peace."

Jaal Segni underscored the tremendous toll that the ongoing conflict has taken on the Oromo people, particularly those residing in rural areas. "The rural communities have borne the brunt of this struggle, often caught in the crossfire of internal conflicts within the OLA and military operations by the government," he explained. He noted that many in these communities are unaware of the deeper issues at play and have suffered immensely as a result.

He further articulated that the conflicts within the OLA have strayed from the cultural values and traditions of the Oromo people, leading to profound distress among rural populations. "Our choice to pursue peace is not merely a strategic decision; it is a heartfelt commitment to ending the suffering of our people and fostering lasting national harmony," Jaal Segni remarked. He also made a poignant appeal to remaining OLA members facing challenging circumstances, urging them to join the peace process for the greater good.



This commitment to harmony follows a significant agreement that has enabled leaders of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) to visit various development projects in major cities, including Addis Ababa, Shashamane, Bishoftu, and Adama.

Hailu Adugna, the Head of the Oromia Regional State Communication Bureau, echoed these sentiments, calling on all armed groups to embrace peace, much like the OLA has done. He asserted that political differences cannot be resolved through violence, stating, "It is essential for all factions to recognize that we can achieve peace through dialogue rather than the barrel of a gun."

Hailu clarified that this call for peace extends beyond the OLA and is directed at all armed forces throughout the country. He emphasized that a third party is unnecessary for achieving a peace agreement; instead, he believes that solutions can be found through direct conversation, drawing on indigenous knowledge and traditional values.

He elaborated on the government's ongoing peace efforts, expressing optimism that the political and ideological differences within the country can be resolved peacefully. "The conflict in Oromia has wreaked havoc over the years, and the Oromo people have consistently advocated for a resolution through dialogue," he noted.

Hailu highlighted the importance of traditional customs in the peace process, stating, "The people have called for reconciliation in line with their traditions. The OLA's recent commitment to peace

The value of peace cannot be overstated; it is the foundation upon which a thriving society is built

reflects the urgent need to listen to the voices of the people."

Following the peace agreement, he revealed that members of the OLA are now entering camps across Oromia, supported by both the government and the community. "The government has a responsibility to provide training and support for those entering the camps, facilitating their rehabilitation and reintegration into society," Hailu affirmed.

In conclusion, he declared that the real winners of this agreement are the people of Oromia. "Their voices have been heard, their desires acknowledged, and their aspirations reflected in this peace process," he said, signaling hope for a brighter, more unified future for all communities in the region.

As Ethiopia navigates this critical juncture, the commitment to the DDR process signals a hopeful chapter in the country's journey towards lasting peace. The government's proactive approach and the willingness of armed groups to engage in dialogue demonstrate a collective understanding of the value of harmony and reconciliation in a nation historically marked by conflict.

In a world often torn apart by conflict, the need for peace resonates deeply. Rain or shine, it is crucial for armed groups to lay down their weapons and embrace a path toward reconciliation. This shift is not only vital for the welfare of ordinary citizens many of whom remain unaware of the ongoing strife but also essential for the broader development of the nation. The value of peace cannot be overstated; it is the foundation upon which a thriving society is built.

The armed forces operating in various regions of the country must recognize the immense stress that communities experience due to violence and instability. Acknowledging this reality is the first step toward fostering a more harmonious environment. Instead of resorting to the barrel of a gun, these factions should prioritize dialogue and understanding.

Engaging in discussions and negotiations can pave the way for lasting solutions and mutual respect. By accepting the government's invitation to the peace table, armed groups have the opportunity to contribute positively to society and shape a future that is free from fear and conflict.

BY EPHREM ENDALE

Between you & me

Scary Kitchen! --You must be Kidding!

It is the little things that give you the biggest headaches, don't you think? You think changing light bulbs is easy! "You just pull a chair get up on it; unscrew the damaged bulb and screw in the new one. Finished!" Well, that's what you think. Believe me even changing the light bulbs, something you would have thought any child can do a child could do would be a daunting task if it's a first time for you. There should be a 'first time' for everything!!"

Fixing things isn't as easy or a simple as we would want them to be. There is an Amharic pun which says, "Kebero besew ejj yamer; siyezut yadenager." It is something about drums being delightful when someone plays them but confusing when we try to do so. It is probably the same with watching others fixing the smaller things and thinking "I could do that! And I always thought it could be difficult." It is! I tell you most of the time it is really difficult. Somehow the smaller and simple looking things give us the fiercest headaches. "All you need is to hold the screwdriver correct and screw. Voila! Your damaged chair is fixed! That's all there is to it!"

Don't you wonder about the lengths we go trying to make things much simpler than they actually are when others are doing them? It just doesn't make sense. And this comes not only from those who make very minimal use of their thinking apparatus but others you would have expected would measure twice and thrice before cutting once. That is the rather disheartening part of such stories. Many of us, unless we have gone through our fair share

of false starts and learned from repeated trial and error could find it even hard to change a light bulb, something we probably thought is so simple a task even a child would do it given a chair tall enough. There was a friend who now has been across the oceans for a little more than a decade who finds it hard to change light bulbs. I'm not kidding! He never tried and failed because he has concluded the task wasn't for him. I wonder if he finally has learned his lesson over there.

We are in times when it is not easy to look for some helping hand for everything good or bad. I can tell you that still to this day many Ethiopian men don't know the inside of the kitchen though it can't be denied there have been significant changes over the years. Of course the traditional kitchen with all the smoke and other in convinces is not a place anyone would want to be in. To a certain extent it might be understandable. In those days a man in the kitchen would have been the 'Breaking Story' for the whole town. Growing up everyone had their mothers to feed them even into their adult years. Then there might be the better half or in the absence of a spouse a domestic helper. So men could argue there was no reason for them to invade the kitchen!

Well that is then and now is now. Many outstanding factors in our daily lives demand men actually look after themselves. Even in the presence of the spouse she might be all day at the office and expecting her to dive into the kitchen after work might be inconsiderate of hubbies. Those who can afford might employ domestic helpers. Well, one very

difficult thing about the times we're in is that it is not at all easy finding domestic helpers due to their fast rising monthly pay and also trustworthiness which are both crucial issues. A twenty-thousand-birr-a-month person might have to set a quarter of that for the domestic helper's salary! That coming on top of all the house rent, monthly groceries, transportation, phone bills and the like you can imagine the financial straightjacket one finds oneself in. So, a fellow who can't even fry a couple of eggs properly and couldn't also afford a domestic helper can blame no one but himself.

Speaking of domestic helpers a fellow we know was looking for a domestic helper a few months back. He was willing to pay a sum he would have never dreamt he would... a whooping five thousand! Anyway he was told a trustworthy helper with all the culinary skills and the discipline has been located. So one Sunday they bring her to his house and he liked what he saw. She was probably in her late twenties or early thirties tidy and everything about her was likeable. After some all the preliminaries about all of which they agreed she had one question to wrap it all up. "Isn't there a washing machine in the house?" What! A washing machine? The fellow was so startled he was all eyes. It was one question he thought he would never ever confront. He was financially clawing through life by the tips of his fingers and she asks if there was a washing machine! "No, I don't have a washing machine." That does it. The deal was off right there. Things could be that bad. I have heard of domestic helpers demanding

fifty-five, and sixty-five-inch flat screen TV sets to be in the living rooms! Tough! Very tough times!

The guy we talked about is mulling the idea of bringing a domestic helper from the countryside with the help of relatives over there. He says while they might not live up to all his expectations he would have no worry of losing things in the hose. Even in the event of finding domestic helpers the issue of the issue trustworthiness is a very crucial one. And there is the vile intentions and actions of those notorious and hardly accountable brokers in the middle. Even the very broker who brought you the domestic helper wouldn't wait for more than a couple of months before trying to whisk her away to another employer with the promise of higher salary. It is that bad. And the domestic helpers trying to make life for themselves aren't blamed if they are tempted to pack up and go which they do more than a few times.

You, the innocent employer asks,

"Did I hurt you in any way? Is there anything you're not satisfied about?"

She would tell you it was nothing about you and it was that some relative in the countryside was critically ill and she has to rush. Such reasons are difficult to counter because the humane element. You ask her when she would be back, she says she might stay ether for long and that does it for you.

So guys throw the neckties shorts and what have into the cosset and into the kitchen! Is the kitchen that scary!

Hoaxes, Swindlers!--Not very Nice Times!

I don't know where the hell they get the courage to tell youth most bizarre stories with blinking an eyelid. You, the listener, has no way of knowing of they were telling you the truth or just playing hide and seek. But they know it. They know it when they tell you that it was something that wouldn't happen any time soon.

I see a social media post of this shoe shop which seems to have in its stock quite interesting designs and for very reasonable prices too. Seeing all the brands they flash on the screen you would think it just be quite a big store with all the signs of people who really know the ins and outs of modern business practices. So I can tell you this was a chance you wouldn't want to miss giving the shock you almost always get when they tell you in some shop the price of the a pair of shoes you set your eyes upon was, breath in, sixteen thousand birr! No there is no proofreading mistake here. It was only recently we heard of a sixteen thousand pair of shoes in a shop that was anything but impressive. In fact some of us have practically stopped entering shops which practically look like they were some VIP stuff.

So it's no wonder that you are drawn to any advert or article about low-priced and also well designed shoes. "Wonderful! That was the very story I was looking for!" I and a friend decided to go check for ourselves. Maybe, if we are tempted enough at the real sight we might even buy a pair or two. The

building the shop was said to be located wasn't hard to find; finding the actual shop however was in all the odd ways a little harder. It was supposed to be on the very first floor. Well we were on the first floor! And the first floor doesn't seem to have more than four or five shops which do justice to your sights. 'Unimpressive' would be an understatement.

So that large, spacious shoe shop we saw in that social media posting was nowhere to be seen. However tucked under the stairs winding upwards was this cubicle-like shop with a few shoes displayed in no particular arrangement. Through the glass partition we could see a very young girl practically plastering herself into a corner. We decided to go in. There were maybe thirty or forty pairs of shoes and that was all! What about what looked hundreds in the social media video! We asked the young girl if it was that very shop and she said it was. It is astounding. Where in the world do this people get the courage to make such misleading claims and on the social media of all places. I mean wouldn't you worry that once your reputation, if there was any, would be smeared and there was they could do to prevent it. I these days once reputations are smeared, once names are dragged through the dust little if anything could be done to fix the dents and slashes.

Despite all talks of bad behavior and sly people taking others into unexpected

problems it still seems that we're very easily fooled and wake up only once some damage is done. The trend of claiming to do what we actually don't and can't do, or provide services that don't happen in reality is not limited to the smaller shops and similar entities. Even in the most unique of places, places which you would equate with excellence and platinum-level performance the unexpected hits you without you even suspecting it.

For its all positive sides which you admire and make use of the social media could also be a den of the unbecoming, unholy, uncivilized and unsocial places. Yes it depends on how each and every uses the platform. Maybe that is one place where you certainly reap what you sow. We have seen people we know being easily isled and taken for the ride by fictitious claims and promises.

The problems appear in all forms. You have seen the advert of some recreation place where they claim of customer treatment nothing below five-star level though they aren't officially designated as five-star. "Aha!" you say. Five-star treatment for three-star prices is the most wonderful that could happen to anyone in these in times of tighter budgets and thinner wallets. So one early evening you make your way to the place for a couple of hours of real recreation and serenity, which you need and highly deserve. Well when you make your way in the place indeed has that ambience and sense of soothing you don't

find in many places. Well, it is going to be a wonderful early evening will all the cells and nerves replenished for the tasks of the rest of the week.

You order some dish you always wanted to taste and haven't yet done so. Friends have told you once you taste the dish you'd be in it for life! Very tempting, especially it coming from friends who have no reason to feed you any info they don't believe in and haven't proven for themselves. When the dish comes it seems to be a sort of rewriting moment. It wasn't as appetizing as it appeared in that social media multi-color video.

We hear about all kinds of hoaxes and outright criminal behavior on the social media by those who are out there to do anything and everything to satisfy their own needs and fantasies. Many of the foreign travel, the 10,000 birr a day paying vacancies and such adverts and messages are pure deceptions meant to prey of the insecurity of the weak and those for whom life has become a sort of a living hell. People who find themselves in such situations would grab at anything, and everything they would think would pull them out of the depths.

The sad facts is that somehow the swindlers and the dyed-in-the-wool criminals of our world seem to be enjoying their day in the sun on the vast and no-bounds expanse of the social media in this practically messed up world of ours.

PM Abiy visited, inaugurated development projects

BY DARGIE KAHSAY



PM Abiy inaugurates the first phase of Hawassa City Corridor Project

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) visited and inaugurated the first phase of the Hawassa City Project. This project showcases the ongoing urban development initiatives that were started in Addis Ababa. PM Abiy mentioned that the Hawassa corridor project has unique features, including wider walkways, dedicated bike paths, and the use of locally manufactured smart lighting, highlighting innovation and sustainability.



The youths of Hawassa City residents participated in various recreational activities and sports during the inauguration of the corridor project. Prime Minister Abiy called on the community to increase their participation for the successful completion of these transformative projects.



PM Abiy inaugurated YMG Gold Mining in Shakiso

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD), along with First Lady Zinash Tayachew and Oromia Regional State President Shimelis Abdisa, inaugurated the YMG Gold Mining in the Shakiso area of the Guji Zone in Oromia State. During his visit to Guji, PM Abiy also observed the activities of Midroc Gold there.

During the inauguration, the premier stated that the gold mining industry stands as a significant driver of growth for the fastest-growing economy of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has immense potential in the gold mining industry for both local and international investments.

PM Abiy visited Kerchanshe Trading's newly developed coffee plantation

During his visit to Guji, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, along with his government delegation, visited Kerchanshe Trading's newly developed coffee plantation in Gelana Woreda, West Guji. The new coffee plantation covers 750 hectares of previously uncultivated land, which has now been transformed into productive farmland.

The plot on which Kerchanshe Trading is farming yields an impressive 60 quintals of coffee per hectare using mechanized harvesting. During the visit, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and First Lady Zinash Tayachew planted coffee seedlings.



PM Abiy met with Guji Elders

During his tour of Guji, PM Abiy and his government delegation were warmly welcomed by the residents of the Shakiso area of Guji Zone. During this visit, the Prime Minister met with the elders and Abba Gadas of the Guji people.

