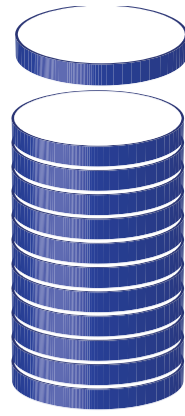


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ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY GRAPPLES WITH PARALLEL MARKET RATES: THE BLUE BOOK REPORT REVEALS

Car prices be 54% cheaper if dealers acquired 100% of the forex

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia's economic landscape has been facing a multitude of challenges in recent years, and one of the key issues highlighted in the latest edition of The Blue Book, an annual economic publication by First Consult, is the prevalence

and impact of parallel market rates. The report sheds light on how these rates have affected businesses and consumers, further complicating an already uncertain economic environment.

The Ethiopian economy, in its quest for transformation and growth, has experienced

various macroeconomic trends and shocks. However, the report emphasizes the importance of understanding how these developments are perceived and experienced by economic agents on the ground, such as businesses and

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New excise stamp directive implemented to enhance tax compliance

By Muluken Yewondwossen

A directive that requires excise tax collectors to stamp their merchandise is drafted by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Additionally, the directive enforces that importers or producers create a system that interfaces with the tax office.

The excise tax proclamation 1186/2020 is the basis for its drafting, according to the directive that was released for comment.

Article 29, sub-article 1A of the 2020 proclamation stated that the MoF may, by directive, specify the excisable goods to which excise stamps shall be affixed.

According to the draft directive, spirits, tobacco, bottled water, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beers, cigarettes, and cigarillos must all have the excise stamp applied.

It added that the ministry shall include other goods.

According to experts, the ministry made the decision to issue the directive because it believed that all relevant importers and manufacturers were not correctly complying with tax collection requirements. They informed Capital that "it is also part of the implementation of expanding the tax base."

The excise stamp shall be a paper stamp, digital stamp, or any mark that the Minister may approve for affixation or printing on excisable goods.

The draft directive stated that the Tax Authority shall specify the type, content, and the manner of affixing excise stamps.

According to the draft law, a manufacturer or importer of excisable goods shall apply to the Tax Authority for excise stamps in the prescribed form. "An application for excise stamps in accordance with sub-article 1 of this Article

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CRUSADING AGAINST EXPLOITATION: COMBATting DRUG TRAFFICKING

In the crusade against the pernicious network of drug trafficking, few voices resonate as profoundly as that of Father John Wotherspoon.

INTERVIEW **26**



INFLATION IS A CLASS WAR

Inflation fuels the unacceptable inequality present in our global system. It is important to acknowledge that true equality does not truly exist in the absolute sense, as everything and everyone is unique and constantly evolving over time. However, when discussing social inequality in our modern society, we are referring to the unjust disparities that arise from the deliberate manipulation of economic, financial, and judicial institutions.

The current inflationary regime is rightfully being questioned worldwide. We refer to it as criminal because it is intentionally orchestrated by those in power, with the state and its collaborators being the primary culprits. Allow me to provide an explanation. All nation-states operate on an annual budgeting model, where the government dictates the economic activities of the nation, either directly or indirectly. This even holds true in supposedly capitalist countries, such as the US. The market is significantly influenced by government decisions.

These government budgets are based on projected revenues, including taxes, fees, duties, and privatization proceeds. However, these projected revenues consistently fall short of the desired target. How does the government address this budgetary shortfall? Unfortunately, the answer lies in the irresponsible practice of printing money out of thin air. Meanwhile, the hardworking individuals who form the majority of society must earn every penny through their physical or mental labor. The government, on the other hand, takes advantage of its power and systematically erodes the value of currencies through this careless printing. This devaluation of labor in favor of unearned income and wealth is the root cause of the unacceptable inequality we witness worldwide. By the same token, the global financial system encourages a heavy reliance on bank credit in the private sector. But what exactly is bank credit? Truthfully, it is money created out of thin air that is then lent to corporations, consumers, and others in order to generate interest income for the banks. The amount of money actually lent far outweighs the deposits received from customers. This excessive lending to the connected and influential dilutes the hard-earned money of the public, as the ongoing creation of credit is far beyond what the real economy needs for productive circulation. These abundant bank credits only serve to facilitate harmful acts such as mal-investment, speculation, and corruption. The resulting inflation directly leads to unacceptable levels of inequality. Let's consider a concrete example: thirty years ago, one US dollar was equivalent to two Ethiopian Birr. Today, the largest denomination we have is the 200 birr note, which is only worth about 3.50 US dollars at the official bank rate. Simultaneously, the purchasing power of the US dollar itself has significantly decreased when compared to non-fiat stores of value like precious metals such as silver and gold. What does this mean? It means that the cost of living has become unbearable for those employed by the government (teachers, soldiers, nurses, etc.) or small traders and growers, while the well-connected cronies who have ties to banks and the government make ample money without having to exert any effort.

There are indications that global dominant interests may be willing to relinquish some privileges in order to save the existing global regime from collapse. For example, there is talk among influential members of the ruling community about creating accounts for each citizen with their respective central banks. This approach resembles what was once called "enlightened self-interest." It would enable the government to directly deposit or subsidize the income of the working poor or non-working poor, bypassing intermediaries such as commercial banks and utilizing digital currency. Additionally, bank credit might be significantly reduced for the connected class (the parasitic class and their corporations) to control inflation. Many global companies heavily rely on bank credit and the equity market, so if credit is taken away or they are delisted from the stock market, they would not survive. In truth, many companies are merely "unicorns" or zombie companies. The abundance of easy and free money has resulted in overproduction and oversupply of services worldwide. If trouble arises in sectors that primarily cater to the global elite, such as the luxury industry, there would not be much unrest on the streets. The travel industry, for instance, which includes air travel, hotels, and taxis, does not serve the majority of the world's population regularly. Therefore, it could be systemically restricted without generating much noise, as long as workers affected by job losses receive subsidies through schemes like the one mentioned above. Banks and bankers, like the travel industry, can also be undermined by regulatory legislation without significant societal inconvenience. The same applies to other sectors catering to the parasitic class. Keen observers recognize that the slogan "No Justice No Peace" resonates not only with the Black Lives Matter movement but also with a substantial portion of the working and non-working poor. This is why it has successfully mobilized a significant number of people in the United States. The world is visibly undergoing a transition, though it remains uncertain whether this transition will be chaotic or more subdued. Regardless, a shift away from fiat currencies will inevitably be imposed on the global regime and its beneficiaries due to ongoing and impending uprisings among the global population, unless new forms of equitable distribution (such as the aforementioned scheme) are promptly implemented. Let us hope that the late economist's prediction does not come true.



■ By Robert Bridge

COMMENT

Why Americans have little to smile about these days

Rising cost of living, disappointment with political leaders, and crushing loneliness are souring moods in the Land of the Free

From a sputtering economy and high inflation to a lack of trust in political leadership, Americans are expressing displeasure with many facets of their daily lives.

In the annual World Happiness Report, the United States plunged eight places to 23rd, a historic low for the land famous for its pearly white smiles. It's the first time since the report launched back in 2012 that the US did not feature among the world's 20 happiest countries.

So what's dragging Americans down? Perhaps the best place to start is with the economy, which has left many people in the dust as the rich just keep getting richer. Consumer prices for basic grocery items remain above what they were in January 2021, when President Joe Biden assumed office. Prices for chicken (+26%), bread (+30%), sugar (+44%), and butter (+27%) are enough to trigger many shoppers, while a simple trip to a restaurant has become a rare luxury for many financially strapped consumers. Meanwhile, rent costs have surged by 20% over the same period.

Amid this sticker shock at the checkout line, Americans have also expressed a heavy amount of skepticism with the political system. A comprehensive Pew Research Center survey reveals high levels of dissatisfaction with the three branches of government, the Democratic and Republican parties, as well as the candidates for office.

Among the findings, just 4% of US adults say the political system is working extremely or very well; another 23% report it is working somewhat well. About six in ten (63%) express not too much or no confidence at all in the future of the US political system.

A growing proportion of Americans are expressing contempt for both political parties. Nearly three in ten (28%) express unfavorable opinions of both parties, the highest share in three decades of polling. And a comparable share of respondents (25%) do not feel well-represented by either party.

While trust in government has remained near historic lows for much of the last two decades, today it stands among the lowest levels dating back nearly seven decades. And now, three years after the January 6 protests at the Capitol Building, more Americans believe their country is heading for a political smash-up.

According to a CBS/YouGov poll released in January, 49% of respondents expect some sort of violence in future political contests, like the upcoming showdown between Donald Trump and Joe Biden on November 4. Meanwhile, a full 70% agreed with the statement that American democracy is "threatened".

Not since the Civil War period have the American people witnessed such stark political divisions, and it seems to be just a matter of time before the Blue and Gray battle fatigues are back in style, albeit over entirely different issues.

The Democrats and Republicans are trapped inside of their own iron-clad echo chambers, where they are prevented from hearing their political opponents just across the aisle. This lack of a national dialogue, worsened by an overtly pro-liberal media, is what spawned the so-called insurrection on January 6, and could easily trigger a new bout of violence sometime down the road.

Feelings of loneliness is another thing dragging Americans down. In May 2023, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called loneliness a "public health epidemic." The latest Healthy Minds Monthly Poll from the American Psychiatric Association (APA) reveals that, early in 2024, 30% of adults said they have "experienced feelings of loneliness at least once a week over the past year, while 10% say they are lonely every day."

Somewhat surprisingly, younger people were more likely to experience these feelings, with 30% of Americans aged 18-34 reporting they are "lonely every day or several times a week, and single adults are nearly twice as likely as married adults to say they have been lonely on a weekly basis over the past year (39% vs. 22%)."

Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately one in ten Americans aged 12 and over takes antidepressant medication. More than 60% of Americans taking antidepressant medication have taken it for two years or longer, with 14% having taken the medication for ten years or more.

So what is it that has put the American people in a grand funk? Needless to say, runaway inflation has prompted a deep distrust of politicians and corporations, which, by the look of things, are only in business to fleece the powerless consumers.

This alienation from the powers-that-be, together with feelings of loneliness, triggered by a disconnected society that increasingly meets only online, has prompted a mental health emergency.

How can the American people begin to fix their broken society? It seems that the only answer is to begin breaking down the walls that separate the various segments of society so that a national conversation can truly begin.

So where are the world's happiest places to live? According to the World Happiness Report, the majority of the top ten happiest places are primarily northern countries that just happen to have the least amount of sunshine: Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Australia.

Robert Bridge is an American writer and journalist. He is the author of 'Midnight in the American Empire,' 'How Corporations and Their Political Servants are Destroying the American Dream.'

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Debt service set to surpass social spending

By Muluken Yewondwossen

Over the next five years, debt service will overtake financial spending on essential social sectors in Africa.

Africa is currently facing a financial crisis as a result of the continent's foreign debt growing by nearly four times during the previous 20 years.

The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development's (AFRODAD) policy analyst and advocacy officer for sovereign debt management, Shem Joshua, stated that if there is no way out, the continent's debt service payments will only increase over the next five years.

According to the UNCTAD analysis, he said, there would be more money spent on debt servicing between 2025 and 2030 than on funding initiatives to improve health, education, and other social sectors.

At last week's AFRODAD Media Initiative, he stated, "It has an impact when it compares with some of the development agenda that African economic considers as the expenditure for debt repayment increases and education expenditure reduces."

The question of whether countries are collecting money to pay off debt or to expand their economies is raised by the growing amount of debt to GDP.

He displayed the debt position of a few African nations, saying that between 2019 and 2023, the average debt to GDP ratios for Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco were 86, 198, 83, and 70%, respectively, and above 100% for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, and Mozambique.

Joshua claims that of Africa's USD 238 billion (dollars) in debt at the beginning of the 2000s, less than one-fifth was owing to private creditors.

Africa has a total debt of USD 1.13 trillion (trillion dollars) as of 2024, a 375 percent rise from 2000 to 2024. Private creditors account for the majority of Africa's debt. He went on to say, "Private creditors have become important financing sources for African countries in recent years as governments are able to circumvent loan conditions

associated with debt owed to bilateral and multilateral creditors."

The low interest rates that were prevalent at the time, which encouraged African countries to borrow, are reflected in the rapid increase in debt held by African governments between 2012 and 2019.

Subsequently, governments have to drastically reduce their spending, frequently despite declining tax collections.

Between 2000 and 2023, there was a significant increase in the continent's gross government debt relative to general government revenue.

This disparity has made it difficult for governments to determine how best to use revenue to pay down debt while also allowing for economic development.

He highlighted the financial bottleneck the continent faces by saying, "If eight or nine dollars of every ten dollars we collect in revenue go toward debt repayment, then can we develop our economy by the remaining one or two dollars?"

"Public borrowing is vital for bridging the financing gap in African economies, given that on average, domestic revenue is about 18 percent of GDP in Africa. However, for low-income countries, the average is about 12 percent of GDP.

The average domestic tax collection rate in African nations is between 10 and 15 percent, while 60–75 percent of the continent's economy now operates in the informal sector.

"We do not support raising taxes on citizens since very few people pay taxes, regardless of where we are in Africa. Since the majority of our economies are in the informal sector, we are looking to increase the tax base," he continued.

"What are some tools that the government is putting in place to make sure that we can service our development agenda without depending on developed economies?" he asks, emphasizing potential solutions to be considered when the development initiatives are completed.

"There's a problem when we cut back on health or education spending while raising the debt service," he continued.

Ramadan
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He brought up a UNCTAD analysis that predicted that between 2025 and 2030, more than half of Africa's economy will be used to provide for debt service compared to GDP, surpassing fundamental needs in the areas of health, education, and other social sectors.

The expert asserted, "Africa is in a debt crisis, and the worst scenario is that the developed economies will have to bring the solution to the continent."

He expressed disapproval of the fact that the majority of debt restructuring plans include conditions that might negatively impact a nation's economic stability.

Low-income nations were able to

temporarily suspend part of their debt payments under the COVID-19 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), but not all creditors were required to comply.

As a result, the G20 Common Framework was established to restructure the debt of these countries.

Only two nations and four countries, Ethiopia, Zambia, Ghana, and Chad, were involved in the debt restructuring. Although Zambia and Chad were able to come to an agreement, it took more than two years to see any tangible results due to the conditions, some of which would require austerity measures from the creditors.

ECX stalls mineral trading plans due to security concerns

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) has developed contracts for the trading of mineral products, aiming to diversify its offerings beyond the 22 agricultural products it currently handles. However, plans to introduce these minerals into the market have been stalled due to security concerns in the regions where these resources are found. Wondemagegnehu Negera, the CEO of ECX, announced that while the exchange was ready to trade in tantalum, opal, and

sapphire, security issues in key regions have prevented the commencement of these operations.

The ECX, which has been operational for 16 years, has been instrumental in centralizing the trade of agricultural commodities in Ethiopia, providing a unified platform for pricing and transactions. This year, the exchange planned to expand its portfolio by introducing three new mineral products as well as several agricultural items, including beer barley and, for the first time, salt through a modern marketing system.

Negera highlighted the potential of mineral trading in regions such as Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia but pointed out that the prevailing security situation has posed a significant barrier to harnessing these resources for foreign exchange earnings. The specifics of the researched areas and the prepared contracts for mineral product trading were not disclosed due to these challenges.

The CEO also touched on the future implementation of an online trading system, which would enable traders to conduct transactions remotely, further enhancing the exchange's accessibility

and efficiency.

In the first nine months of the 2023/24 fiscal year, the ECX reported trading 172 thousand metric tons of agricultural products, valued at 19.4 billion birr, with sesame and coffee making up the majority of the trade volume. Notably, the trading price of coffee has seen a 5 percent increase, while sesame prices surged by 45 percent compared to the previous year. Over the past 16 years, the ECX has facilitated transactions worth more than 386 billion birr, marking a significant impact on Ethiopia's commodity market.

National Bank of Ethiopia Results of Treasury Bills Auction						Auction No: 938 th /23 Held on November 15 th , 2023						Source: National Bank of Ethiopia					
	28 DAYS	91 DAYS	182 DAYS	364 DAYS	TOTAL		28 DAYS	91 DAYS	182 DAYS	364 DAYS	TOTAL		28 DAYS	91 DAYS	182 DAYS	364 DAYS	TOTAL
Maturity Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	45273	45336	45427	45609	0	Non Competitive Bids	0	0	0	2752.54	2752.54	Cut Off Price (Per Birr 100)	99.25	97.65	95.1	90.6	382.6
Amount Offered (ETB Millions)	7190.25	17010	26315	5432.54	55947.79	Cut Off Yield (Annual in %)	9.851	9.653	10.333	10.404	40.241	Weighted Average Price (Per Birr 100)	99.309	97.7	95.605	91.636	384.25
Bids Received (ETB Millions)	3860	6000	8790	8237.54	26887.54	Weighted Average Yield (Annual in %)	9.066	9.442	9.219	9.153	36.88						
Total Amount Accepted (ETB Millions)	3860	6000	8790	8237.54	26887.54												
Competitive Bids	3860	6000	8790	5485	24135												



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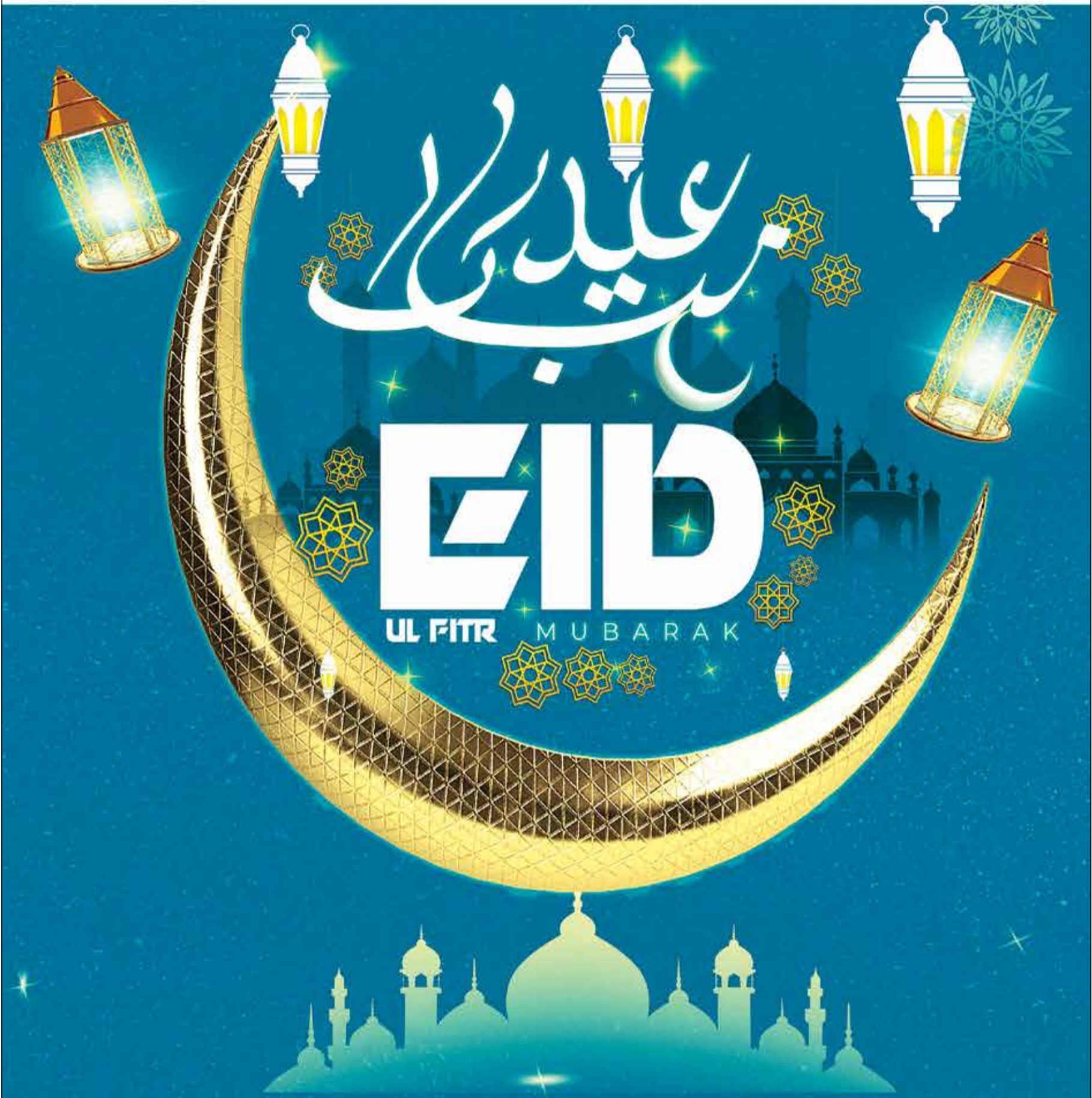
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Eid Mubarak to you and your family!
"Wishing you a joyous Eid filled with warmth, love,
and laughter. May this festive occasion bring you
abundant blessings and memorable moments



INSURANCE: GROSS WRITTEN PREMIUM IN MILLION ETB AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

Abay Insurance: 177.1 (47%)	Africa Insurance: 55.6 (167%)	Awash Insurance: 550 (55%)	Berhan Insurance: 78.3 (46.4%)	Bunna Insurance: 59.4 (32%)
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Revolutionary payment system overhaul propels progress towards a digital economy

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia is taking significant strides in transforming its payment landscape by integrating a comprehensive digital payment system. This strategic shift aims at fostering a more inclusive and efficient economic growth, marking a pivotal moment in the country's journey towards a digital economy.

Solomon Damtew, the Director of the Payment and Settlement Systems Directorate at the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), emphasized the critical nature of this transition. "The adoption of digital payment systems is not a luxury but a fundamental necessity," Solomon stated, underscoring the efforts to create a conducive environment for digital transactions across Ethiopia.

In a bid to standardize financial transactions, Ethiopia has introduced a QR Code Standard. This initiative addresses the previously fragmented QR Code payments, ensuring uniformity and interoperability

among different financial service providers. The standardized QR Code is designed to streamline and secure digital transactions, making it easier for businesses and consumers alike to embrace the digital payment landscape.

The National Bank of Ethiopia, in partnership with ETHSWITCH, the Better Than Cash Alliance, and Impact Capital for Development (UNCDF), is spearheading this transformation. A notable milestone in this journey is the two-day conference on Ethiopia's digital payment, held from April 5-6, 2024. The event marks the inauguration of the QR Code standard, a significant leap towards digitizing the payment sector.

This conference is a critical platform for stakeholders to converge and deliberate on the future of digital payments in Ethiopia. It reflects the collective commitment of the government, financial institutions, and development partners to achieve Ethiopia's digital transformation strategy by 2025.

EDR expands partnerships for enhanced logistics and investment in railway facilities

By Muluken Yewondwossen

The Ethio Djibouti Railway Standard Gauge Share Company (EDR) and the Djiboutian port operator Doraleh Container Terminal Management Company (SGTD) are in talks to invest in railway facilities. Additionally, EDR is planning to start working with a Chinese enterprise in Nagad and Dire Dawa.

Abdi Zenebe, the CEO of the joint venture between the governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti, stated that the railway firm is expanding its business and diversifying its operations by forming new partnerships with interested parties in the logistics industry.

According to him, negotiations are underway between the railway firm that links Djibouti with central Ethiopia and SGTD, a modern container port operator in Djibouti, for the port operator to participate in parts of EDR's operations.

Regarding EDR's operations, the Ethiopian side expects to support the flow of goods such as mining and agricultural products, and the ports in Djibouti are interested in increasing port efficiency, according to Abdi.

As they put it, "we are jointly working together and in the near future SGTD will have an investment in the logistics activity that we carry."

"It is a mirror image; we have partnered

with SGTD to improve the activity and involve the port operator in certain areas, so the efficiency at the railway has a direct impact on ports," he told Capital, adding, "They have specific experience handling port machinery."

Experts in every field, including cranes, are available at SGTD; for example, they are now inspecting Endode's EDR equipment. "They will assist us in increasing our productivity at Dire Dawa, Sebeta, and other stations. They are interested in investing in the logistics industry, therefore, we are searching for opportunities to work together on a joint venture," Abdi continued.

He said that talks are now taking place between the two sides to determine which sectors the port operator will invest in as a business partner at EDR.

The CEO remembered that end-to-end service as a last and first mile is soon to be introduced to increase the railway company's income and quality of service.

The CEO claims that the firm will have vehicles to carry out the plan, but until then, it will launch a leasing program.

"We are working on it because we have the ability and knowledge to operate as freight forwarders, which is unavoidable. In the upcoming years, we will diversify into several industries and will have around seven satellite firms," he said.

New excise stamp . . .

Continued from page 1

shall be submitted to the Tax Authority at least sixty days before the manufacture or importation of the excisable goods."

The directive stated that the ministry shall appoint a company to carry out the printing and supply of excise stamps, to develop and install the system, and to install any other related systems.

It added that the excise stamps shall be

affixed to manufactured goods at the production facility immediately after packaging and at the customs post or at a place determined by the Tax Authority within five days of the clearance for importation of the goods.

It added that the Tax Authority may allow excise stamps on imported excisable goods to be affixed at the production facility in the exporting country in accordance with

Ethiopian economy grapples . . .

Continued from page 1

consumers. This year's edition of The Blue Book focuses on the microeconomy, specifically exploring the challenges faced by 312 micro and small businesses in Addis Ababa, Adama, Hawassa, and Dire Dawa.

One of the significant findings of the report is the impact of parallel market rates on businesses operating in Ethiopia. Parallel market rates refer to the exchange rates for foreign currencies, such as the U.S. dollar, that are determined outside of the official banking system. These rates often deviate significantly from the official exchange rate set by the government, creating a complex economic environment.

The report reveals that businesses heavily reliant on imported inputs have been particularly affected by the scarcity and volatility of foreign currencies in the parallel market. The unavailability and supply challenges for key imported inputs have hindered their operations and performance, leading to cost increases and disruptions in production. The magnitude of these cost increases has been a significant concern for many businesses, forcing them to adopt coping strategies to navigate through these challenges.

Furthermore, the report highlights the impact of parallel market rates on inflationary pressures. The rising costs of inputs due to inflation have compelled businesses to make pricing adjustments, which, in turn, have affected consumer demand. This vicious cycle of inflation and pricing adjustments has had implications for the quality and quantity of products and services offered by businesses.

One of the key findings of the report is the adverse effect of parallel market rates on the automotive industry. Car dealers heavily rely on imported vehicles and parts, which require foreign currencies for procurement. However, due to the scarcity and volatility of foreign exchange in the parallel market, car dealers have been forced to acquire the necessary foreign currencies at exorbitant rates.

The report reveals that if car dealers had obtained 100% of the required foreign exchange through official channels, the domestic prices of cars could have been significantly lower. In fact, the prices could have been 54% cheaper, offering a much-needed relief to consumers who aspire to own a vehicle.

A portion of the business will be conducted under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, per the proposal. He declared, "At this time, we have already begun the PPP arrangement with the Chinese company, CCECC." To improve the shipping of fertilizer and oil, the Chinese company and EDR developed a bulk cargo containerization (BCC) hub at the Nagad Railway Station in Djibouti.

In the same vein, the company will invest in Dire Dawa to upgrade the coal and cement ship that will soon be active.

About two months ago, Sebeta Railway

The impact of parallel market rates on the automotive industry extends beyond inflated prices. The scarcity of foreign exchange has resulted in delays in the importation of vehicles and parts, leading to supply chain disruptions and a limited selection of vehicles available in the market. This has further fueled the price surge, as the demand outweighs the supply.

Car dealers and importers have been grappling with the challenges posed by parallel market rates, hindering their ability to offer affordable options to consumers. The report underscores the urgent need for policymakers and stakeholders to address the issue of foreign exchange availability and stability. Measures should be taken to enhance foreign exchange reserves and ensure a more efficient and accessible system for acquiring foreign currencies through official channels.

The Blue Book also explores into the issue of access to finance and liquidity in the context of parallel market rates. Businesses, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), have faced challenges in securing financing from banks and microfinance institutions. The scarcity of foreign currencies in the parallel market has created difficulties in accessing loans and credit, hindering business growth and expansion.

The findings of The Blue Book's report on parallel market rates underscore the need for policymakers and stakeholders to address the underlying causes and consequences of these rates. It calls for measures to enhance foreign exchange reserves, improve access to finance for businesses, and develop strategies to mitigate inflationary pressures.

The Ethiopian government, in collaboration with development partners, businesses, and individuals, should work towards stabilizing the exchange rate and ensuring a conducive business environment. Efforts to promote financial inclusion, enhance liquidity, and support the growth of MSMEs will be crucial in navigating the challenges posed by parallel market rates.

As Ethiopia continues its economic journey, the insights provided in The Blue Book serve as a valuable resource for understanding the complexities of the microeconomy and devising effective strategies to cope with change and uncertainty.

Station in Ethiopia opened for business, and more recently, Hol Hol Railway Station in the Djiboutian part, according to the CEO.

The business has already made it possible to deliver strategically important goods like fertilizer. Moving billets is now a component of the growth of the modern transportation infrastructure's freight activities.

According to the CEO, EDR will begin shipping commodities from the dry port in Dire Dawa and coal from Sebeta. "At the same time, clinker will be transported as part of business diversification," the CEO stated.

such conditions as the Tax Authority may specify.

According to the directive, a manufacturer or importer of excisable goods shall facilitate the installation of the system, like excise stamps authentication and validation equipment, devices for identification and association of each package with an individual excise stamp, production accounting equipment, and devices for the control, registration, recording, and transmission of data on quantities of excisable goods which have been stamped to the Tax Authority.

"All packages of duty-free or export excisable goods specified in the proclamation shall bear distinct markings to enable the goods to be trackable and traceable," the directive added for commodities that have duty-free incentives.

Article 39, sub-article 6 of the proclamation stated that any person who contravenes Article 29 of this Proclamation, which provides about excise stamps, commits an offense and is liable if convicted to imprisonment for a term of 3 to 5 years and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000.

ICO Indicator prices (US cents/lb) 04/04/24

I-CIP 204.71 -0.47%	Colombian Milds 228.67 -0.73%	Other Milds 226.67 -0.62%	Brazilian Naturals 206.7 1.08%	Robusta 182.19 -1.74%
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*1lb=0.45kg

ESX RAISES 1.51 BILLION BIRR CAPITAL

By our staff reporter

The Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) announced a remarkable

achievement, raising 1.51 billion Birr in capital, surpassing all expectations. This accomplishment highlights the high level of confidence exhibited by investors in both the exchange and Ethiopia's capital

markets, emphasizing their long-term prospects.

Tilahun Esmael, the Chief Executive Officer of ESX, expressed his excitement earlier today, revealing that the capital raised exceeded the initial target by an impressive 240 percent. The oversubscribed offering attracted participation from 48 investors across a range of sectors, comprising both domestic and foreign entities.

its subsidiaries, Ethio telecom, and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

Expressing delight at the overwhelming response, the CEO stated, "We are thrilled to have exceeded all our expectations in terms of capital and excited by the overwhelming confidence shown by investors in the long-term prospects of both ESX and Ethiopia's capital markets more broadly."

Innovative regulatory loopholes propel pioneering startup growth

By our staff reporter

In a groundbreaking move to spur the growth of startups, the government introduced a set of innovative incentives. Speaking at the Adwa Memorial on Thursday, April 4, Prime Minister Abiy highlighted the government's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to the development of startups.

fintech businesses and business process outsourcing (BPO) industries, such as call centers and coding, are experiencing rapid growth due to the rising costs in more established nations.

Highlighting the evolution of the startup ecosystem in Ethiopia, the Prime Minister noted a significant increase in the number of startups—from around 50 five years ago to over 900 today, spanning across various sectors. This remarkable growth underscores the vast potential within the Ethiopian startup landscape and the government's role in unlocking it.

The Ethiopian Securities Exchange initiated its capital-raising endeavors in November 2023. Meticulously orchestrated road-shows were conducted in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and London to garner interest and support. The CEO emphasized that the enthusiastic response received underscores the confidence and anticipation surrounding ESX's pivotal role in advancing Ethiopia's financial sector development and overall economic transformation.

In addition to the successful capital raise, Tilahun announced other significant milestones achieved by ESX. This includes the release of its draft Exchange Rulebook for public consultation and the completion of the technical evaluation to select its technology provider. These developments mark significant progress towards fully operationalizing ESX's trading activities.

Recognizing the unique needs of startups for experimentation and flexibility, the Prime Minister announced the government's decision to create regulatory "sandboxes." This concept allows startups to test and develop their ideas without the constraints of standard regulatory frameworks. "Companies with novel and creative ideas typically require more space for experimentation than is available under standard regulation and control systems," said Abiy, emphasizing the government's open stance towards new business ideas and its readiness to provide the necessary room for their growth until a comprehensive understanding and regulation system is in place.

In addition to regulatory flexibilities, Muferihat Kamil, the Minister of Labor and Skills, unveiled new programs aimed at easing the path for entrepreneurs. These include simplifications in business registration, office leases, and liquidation audits, alongside a single window solution for licensing. These measures are designed to streamline the operational hurdles that startups often face, making it easier to do business in Ethiopia.

The investor base is diverse and includes prominent foreign strategic investors such as FSD Africa, the Trade and Development Bank Group (TDB), and the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX). Additionally, 16 domestic commercial banks, 12 insurance companies, and 17 other domestic investors have joined the venture. Tilahun disclosed that the public sector holds a 25 percent share, with participation from Ethiopian Investment Holdings and

ESX has planned issuer and investor education programs in the coming months leading up to its official launch. As the first securities exchange in Ethiopia, ESX aims to drive economic growth, promote financial inclusion, and generate wealth for all Ethiopians. It will provide a platform for companies to raise capital, facilitate investment opportunities, and uphold transparency and corporate governance standards. The achievements of ESX signal a promising future for Ethiopia's capital markets and its overall economic landscape.

The initiative includes the formation of a national steering committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, dedicated to nurturing innovative ideas and supporting the sector through policy enhancements. This move signals the government's recognition of the changing business landscape in Ethiopia, where

The government's bold steps towards creating a nurturing environment for startups mark a pivotal chapter in Ethiopia's economic development. By recognizing the importance of innovation and providing a supportive framework for startups, Ethiopia is setting a precedent for how governments can actively contribute to the flourishing of the digital economy and innovation-driven entrepreneurship.

Doba-Bishan Tab: Water treatment facility ensures access to clean drinking water

By our staff reporter

In a significant stride towards addressing water management challenges, Ethiopia has welcomed the inauguration of the Doba-Bishan Tab, the country's first-ever water treatment facility. With an investment exceeding 55 million birr, encompassing land, building, machinery, and raw materials, the factory located in Mojo is poised to revolutionize waterborne disease prevention efforts.

in rural areas, particularly in African countries. The lack of infrastructure and the high costs associated with water treatment have contributed to a pressing security concern.

Previously, Bishan Gari relied on imported raw materials for production. However, with the establishment of their purification industries, the company has successfully transitioned to self-production, resulting in significant savings in time and costs.

Doba-Bishan Tab is a sister company of Bishan Gari's purification industries, which has been actively operating in Ethiopia since 2008. To commence production of their water treatment product, Doba Industry Trading plc, a subsidiary of Bishan Gari, invested over 5 million birr solely in raw materials and machinery.

Bishan Gari, renowned for its commitment to providing high-quality products, has expressed its dedication to making clean drinking water accessible to all those in need. The introduction of the Doba-Bishan Tab marks a milestone in Ethiopia's efforts to improve water management and safeguard public health.

The state-of-the-art facility boasts a production capacity of 40 thousand tabs per hour, with each tablet purifying 20 liters of water. This breakthrough development aims to combat the growing issue of water scarcity and inadequate treatment facilities

As the country takes strides towards a more sustainable future, the inauguration of the Doba-Bishan Tab serves as a testament to Ethiopia's determination to address pressing societal and environmental challenges.

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Freight Forwarders association appoints new leadership, outlines vision for industry advancement

By our staff reporter

The Ethiopian Freight Forwarders and Shipping Agents Association (EFFSAA) has unveiled its new leadership lineup, signaling a fresh direction for the influential logistics advocacy group for the coming years. In a significant reshuffle during its latest general assembly, the association saw the replacement of five out of its seven board members, including the departure of its past president, Elizabeth Getahun, who served her full term.

Dawit Woubishet, who has been the association's vice president for nearly three years, steps up as the new president of EFFSAA, a decision warmly received within the community. Bringing a wealth of experience from his tenure as a board member and CEO of Pave Logistics and Trading PLC, Anteneh Alemu will serve as the vice president, enhancing the leadership team's expertise.

Dawit, a seasoned veteran in the freight forwarding sector for nearly thirty years, also holds prominent roles on the international stage, including leadership positions within the FIATA Airfreight Institute and as an extended board member of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (IFFA). His broad involvement extends to various international and Ethiopian professional and social groups, particularly as head of the FIATA Consultative Council (IFCC), which collaborates closely with airline and forwarder representatives to advise the IATA.

His business, Tradepath International, has been pivotal in managing the ground transportation logistics for perishable goods, notably in the floral industry, and has represented around 13 airline companies. Additionally, his ventures into the global courier and e-commerce spheres through the Aramex franchise underscore his commitment to advancing Ethiopia's logistics sector.

During his term, Dawit aims to cultivate a cadre of competitive professionals within the logistics industry to meet global standards. He emphasizes the importance of continuous advocacy for enhanced logistics platforms, collaboration with the government on utilizing regional ports efficiently, and leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area to Ethiopia's benefit.

Moreover, Dawit highlighted EFFSAA's ambitious proposal to host the prestigious FIATA congress in 2027, a significant event that would bring together approximately 2,000 industry experts from around the globe and mark a notable achievement for Africa, having hosted it only twice in FIATA's century-long history.

The assembly also introduced new board members, including Mesfin Tefera of Abay Logistics Plc, Emebet Tafesse from Erkab Transit and Consultancy Services Plc, Tesfaye Gelan of TM Multimodal Logistics Plc, Goitom Asfaw from AGL Logistics Ethiopia, and Aklilu Sahlemariam of Cruise Logistics Plc, all set to contribute to the association's future successes.

Africa leads global passenger, air cargo demand

By our staff reporter

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released data for February 2024, revealing a robust surge in global passenger demand, with African airlines leading the growth trajectory.

In February 2024, total demand for air travel, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), soared by 21.5% compared to the same month in 2023. This substantial increase in demand was complemented by a 18.7% rise in total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), resulting in an improved load factor of 80.6%, an increase of 1.9 percentage points compared to February 2023.

On the international front, demand surged by 26.3% compared to February 2023, with capacity up by 25.5% year-on-year. The load factor for international flights improved to 79.3%, marking a 0.5 percentage point increase from February 2023.

Domestically, demand experienced a notable 15.0% increase compared to February 2023, with capacity up by 9.4% year-on-year. The load factor for domestic flights also saw a significant rise to 82.6%, marking a 4.0 percentage point increase compared to February 2023.

Commenting on the industry's performance, Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, expressed optimism about the prospects for the aviation sector in 2024. He highlighted the industry's resilience in the face of geopolitical and economic uncertainties, urging politicians to refrain from imposing new taxes that could destabilize the positive trajectory of the aviation sector.

Among all regions, African airlines demonstrated remarkable growth in international passenger demand, recording a 20.7% year-on-year increase in February 2024. Capacity for African airlines also experienced a significant uptick, rising by 22.1% year-on-year. Despite the impressive growth, the load factor for African airlines dipped slightly to 74.0%, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared to February 2023.

The data for February 2024, also highlights a remarkable period of sustained growth in the global air cargo markets, with Africa standing out as the leader in demand growth.

In February 2024, total demand for air cargo, measured in cargo tonne-kilometers (CTKs), surged by 11.9% compared to the same month in 2023, marking the third consecutive month of double-digit year-on-year growth. This rise was even more pronounced in international operations, which saw a 12.4% increase.

Capacity growth also kept pace, with available cargo tonne-kilometers (ACTKs) up by 13.4% over February 2023, and a significant 16.0% increase in international operations. This capacity expansion was largely attributed to the growth in international belly capacity, a result of the rising passenger market, which saw a 29.5% year-on-year increase and far exceeded the growth in international capacity on freighters.



Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, commented on the robust growth, "February's demand growth of 11.9% far outpaced the 0.9% expansion in cross-border trade. This strong start for 2024 could see demand surpass the exceptionally high levels of early 2022, showcasing air cargo's resilience amidst ongoing political and economic uncertainties."

The report highlighted several key factors contributing to this environment, including a slight increase in global cross-border trade by 0.9% in January and a rise in the manufacturing output Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) to 51.2 in February, indicating an expansion in manufacturing output.

Among all regions, African airlines experienced the most significant surge in demand, recording a 22.0% year-on-year growth in air cargo for February. This was the strongest performance globally, with intra-Africa trade lanes showing an astounding 42.3% growth compared to the previous year. Capacity for the region also increased by 28.2% year-on-year.

Comparatively, Asia-Pacific airlines witnessed an 11.9% growth, a slowdown from January's 24.3% increase, likely due to post-Lunar New Year adjustments. North American carriers reported the weakest growth at 4.2%, while European carriers saw a 14.6% increase, buoyed by strong intra-European trade. The Middle East and Latin American carriers also posted strong growth rates of 20.9% and 13.7% respectively.

The remarkable performance of African airlines in February 2024 underscores the continent's leading role in the global air cargo sector's growth, reflecting the robust demand for air freight and the dynamic expansion of intra-African trade. As the global economy navigates through uncertainties, the air cargo industry, especially in Africa, continues to demonstrate resilience and a significant potential for further growth.

Coffee and Tea Authority propels spice industry with new proclamation

By our staff reporter

The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA) has taken a significant step forward in bolstering the spice industry by issuing a new proclamation aimed at providing a robust legal framework. This move comes after extensive deliberations and preparations since 2021 to modernize and regulate the spice sector, which represents a vital component of Ethiopia's offerings to the global market.

Scheduled to come into effect this March, the directive addresses longstanding challenges in quality assurance, productivity, and market continuity within the spice industry. Ethiopia's diverse agroecology and favorable climatic conditions provide an ideal backdrop for spice cultivation, but persistent issues such as miscommunication between farmers and consumers, inadequate market linkages, post-production management deficiencies, and transportation challenges have hampered its full potential.

Recognizing the immense economic and security benefits that a thriving spice industry can offer, ECTA emphasizes the importance of ensuring the welfare of spice producers and stakeholders. The newly issued guidelines are designed to enhance export earnings by promoting competitive, high-quality spice products consistently available in the international market.

By establishing modern, transparent, and equitable marketing practices, the proclamation aims to elevate spice manufacturers, marketing actors, and the nation's prosperity to new heights. Under the directive, spices are defined as plant-derived products with distinct aromas, flavors, and properties, used widely in food, medicine, and various industrial applications.

Ethiopia currently exports 16 main types of spices, including ginger, turmeric, red pepper, and black fennel seed, highlighting the country's rich potential in the global spice trade. With the implementation of the new proclamation, stakeholders are optimistic about the industry's growth trajectory and its contribution to Ethiopia's economic development.

Huawei, AAU strengthen collaboration in talent development

By our staff reporter

Huawei and Addis Ababa University (AAU) joined forces to organize a job fair and solidify their partnership in talent and skill development, as announced in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the two entities. The event took place at the Addis Ababa Institute of Technology (AAiT) on April 5, 2024, and aimed to enhance internship and employment prospects for graduate students.

The CEO of Huawei Ethiopia, Liu Jifan, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration, highlighting the convergence of academia and industry in the field of technology. He emphasized Huawei's commitment to Ethiopia and its dedication to supporting young graduates through recruitment and internship opportunities. Liu also stated that Huawei is actively contributing to Ethiopia's digitalization goals outlined in the "Digital Ethiopia 2025" initiative by incorporating technologies such as 5G, mobile money, and broadband.

Dr. Bikila Teklu, the Chief Executive Director of AAiT, acknowledged the importance of strategic partnerships with industry leaders like Huawei in AAU's new strategic plan. Such collaborations provide students and faculty with industry exposure and capacity-building opportunities, ultimately producing graduates who meet the demands of the job market. Dr. Teklu highlighted the existing Huawei ICT practice center at AAU, which offers practical training in telecom infrastructure installation and configuration, benefiting both students and graduates.

The Ministry of Labor and Skills representative, Zerihun Alemayehu, emphasized the significance of the ICT sector in job creation and the digital transformation of Ethiopia. He praised the university-industry linkage as a crucial element in developing a skilled workforce. Zerihun commended the collaboration between Huawei and AAU for their efforts in job creation, talent identification, and skill development, and encouraged the expansion of such initiatives to other industries and institutions.

The job fair provided a platform for graduates to interact with hiring institutions and create favorable conditions for employment. Zerihun highlighted the challenges in the recruitment process and

emphasized the importance of endurance, problem-solving ability, innovation, and continuous learning. He appreciated the collaborative efforts of Huawei and AAU in addressing these challenges and creating opportunities for talent development.

In addition to the job fair, Huawei senior specialists shared their expertise with students, showcasing the company's technological breakthroughs, including cybersecurity advancements. Huawei Ethiopia is currently implementing various corporate social responsibility initiatives in partnership with the

Ministry of Education, including Seeds for the Future, Digi Truck Ethiopia, ICT competitions, and ICT Academies.

The collaboration between Huawei and AAU demonstrates the commitment of both organizations to nurturing talent and fostering innovation in Ethiopia's rapidly developing technology sector. By bridging the gap between academia and industry, they aim to equip graduates with the skills and experiences necessary to contribute to the country's digital transformation and economic growth.



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

Addis Ababa Chamber launches digital platform to aid international trade organizations

The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association, boasting around 17,000 members, has unveiled a digital platform aimed at providing crucial information to alleviate challenges faced by organizations involved in international trade. According to Shibeshi BeteMaryam, the Secretary General of the Addis Chamber, out of the Chamber's current membership, 10,178 are engaged in international trade, with 76 percent focused on exports and 22.6 percent on imports. Highlighting the lack of awareness among

Chamber members regarding import requirements from foreign markets, the Secretary General emphasized the resulting operational hurdles. This newly launched export portal is anticipated to tackle these issues by offering market insights, legal guidelines, and quality standards for businesses engaged in international trade. Developed as part of a collaborative effort with Sequa, a GIZ partner, the web-supported digital tool aims to bolster the capacity of trade associations and enhance access to information about products and services."

China-Africa economic bulletin highlights trends in trade, investment, and energy access

By our staff reporter

In the latest edition of the China-Africa Economic Bulletin, researchers from the Boston University Global Development Policy Center and the African Economic Research Consortium shed light on the evolving economic relationship between China and Africa. The bulletin, authored by Oyintarelado Moses, Dianah Ngui, Lucas Engel, and Abbi Kedir, provides valuable insights into key trends in trade, investment, and energy access.

The bulletin starts by examining the trends in China-Africa trade and energy access. It highlights the growing economic ties between the two regions, emphasizing the increasing volume of trade and the expanding energy cooperation. China

has become a significant trade partner for many African countries, with a focus on sectors such as infrastructure development, natural resources, and manufacturing. The bulletin also underscores the importance of energy access and transition support, as Africa seeks to meet its rising energy demands and move towards sustainable energy sources.

Another crucial aspect covered in the bulletin is China's overseas lending and development finance, as well as debt in Africa. The authors delve into the implications of Chinese loans and financial support for African countries, analyzing the opportunities and challenges they present. They emphasize the need for careful debt management and sustainable development practices to

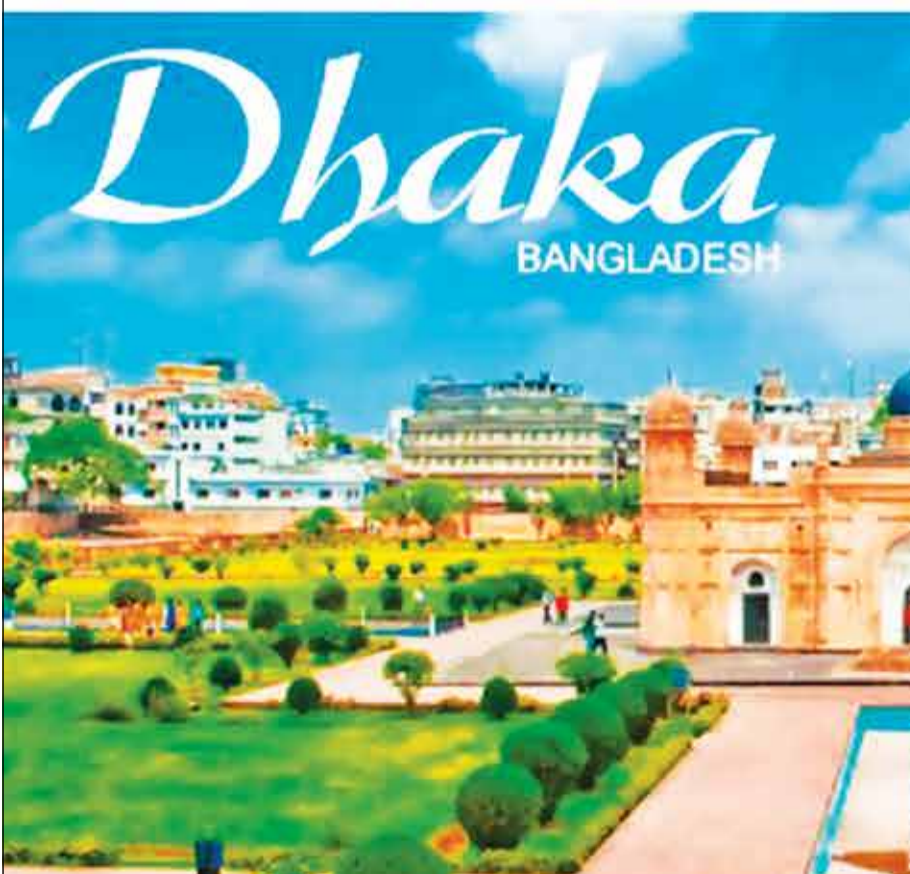
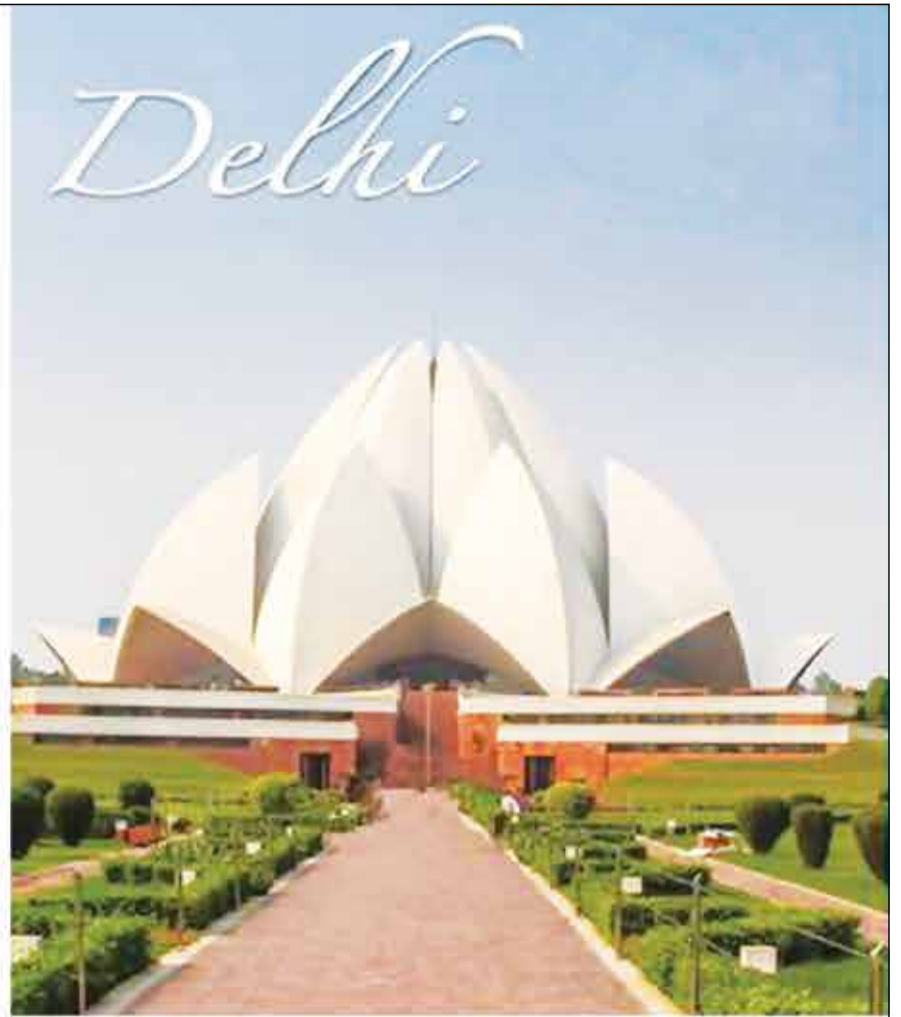
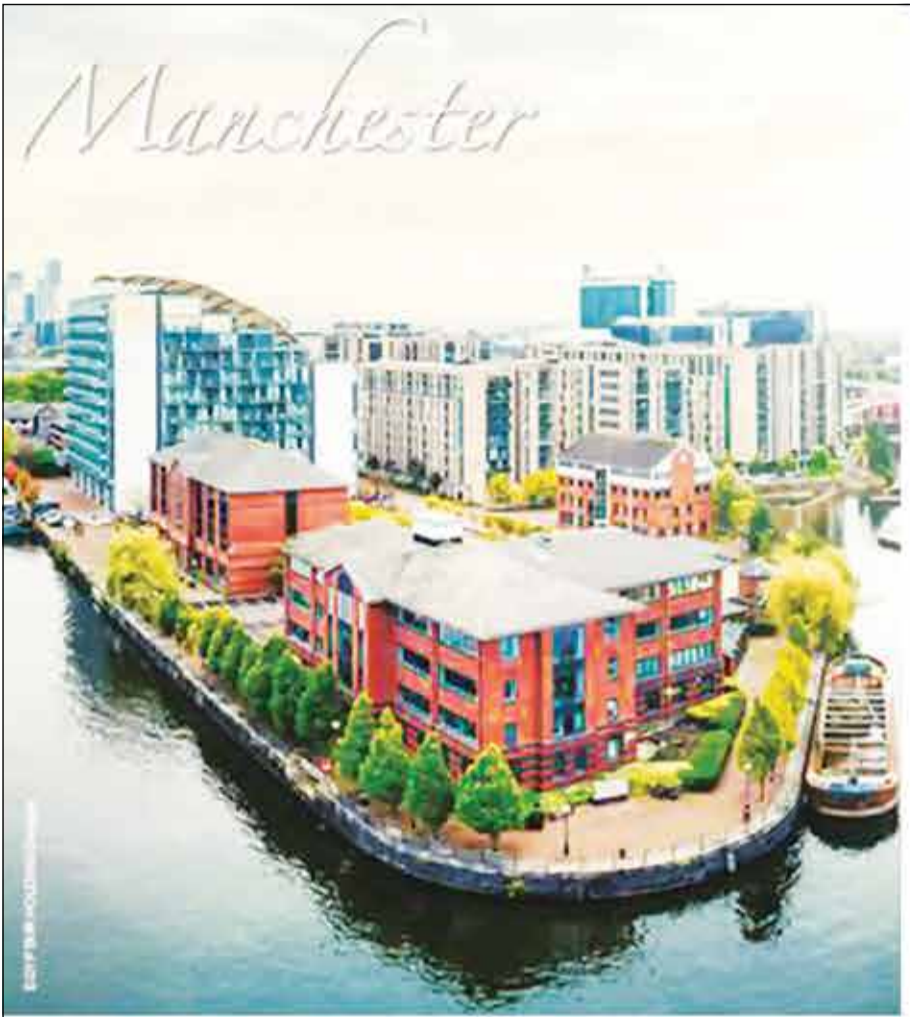
ensure long-term economic stability.

Furthermore, the bulletin explores China's foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa and its impact on energy access and transition. It examines the sectors attracting Chinese FDI, such as renewable energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing, and discusses the potential benefits and risks associated with these investments. The authors stress the importance of leveraging Chinese FDI to promote sustainable development and enhance energy access for African populations.

In conclusion, the bulletin offers a glimpse into the future prospects of China-Africa economic engagement for energy access and transition. It underscores the significance of continued collaboration between China and African

countries to address energy challenges, foster sustainable development, and achieve the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The authors highlight the need for balanced and mutually beneficial partnerships that prioritize long-term economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The China-Africa Economic Bulletin serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders interested in understanding and navigating the evolving dynamics of the China-Africa economic relationship. By shedding light on key trends and providing thoughtful analysis, it contributes to informed decision-making and the promotion of sustainable economic development in both regions.



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Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

Somalia Sends Away Ethiopian Ambassador over Port Deal – Officials

Somalia sent back the Ethiopian ambassador on Thursday, and closed two consulates in the semi autonomous region of Puntland and another in breakaway region Somaliland due to rising tensions over a port deal, two Somali officials said. Landlocked Ethiopia agreed to a memorandum of understanding on Jan. 1 to lease 20 km (12 miles) of coastline in Somaliland...Ethiopia said it wants to set up a naval base there and offered possible recognition of Somaliland in exchange - prompting a defiant response from Somalia and fears the deal could further destabilise the Horn of Africa. In February, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said his country would "defend itself" if Ethiopia goes ahead with the deal.

(Reuters)

On Ghana Trip, Ruto Makes Case for Raila's AU Bid

Kenya's President William Ruto on Wednesday secured support for Azimio la Umoja Coalition and veteran opposition leader Raila Odinga's bid for the chairmanship of the African Union Commission (AUC) from Ghana after President Nana Akufo-Addo pledged his support. It was the first such pitch by President Ruto in West Africa since they had some form of 'handshake' with his erstwhile

nemesis Odinga whom he has since publicly backed to seek the AU top seat...[In return], Ruto said Kenya will support Ghana's bid for the position of Secretary General of the Commonwealth for the period 2024-2029.

(The EastAfrican)

Senegal Swears In Africa's Youngest Elected Leader as President in a Dramatic Prison-to-Palace Rise

Senegal inaugurated Africa's youngest elected leader as president on Tuesday, as the 44-year-old and previously little-known Bassirou Diomaye Faye completed a dramatic ascent from prison to palace within weeks...This is the first elected office for Faye, a former tax inspector. His rise has reflected widespread frustration among Senegal's youth with the country's direction a common sentiment across Africa, which has the world's youngest population and a number of leaders widely accused of clinging to power for decades...Faye on Tuesday offered reassurance that change would not come at the expense of Senegal's reputation as a stable democracy in a troubled region.

(AP)

Hunger Stalks War-Ravaged Sudan

In Sudan's post-apocalyptic cities, in the desert battlegrounds of Darfur and even in

the war-ravaged farmlands of the south, families are beginning to starve...The United Nations' World Food Program says roots of the hunger problem are twofold: access and funding. Within Sudan, WFP trucks have been blocked, hijacked, attacked, looted and detained. Outside Sudan, makeshift camps are swollen with hungry and sick arrivals — but there's no money to feed them...All food distribution in Chad — home to 1.1 million refugees — will cease entirely within a week, said Cindy McCain, executive director of WFP...The last time that WFP, the only major supplier of food aid in the region, was able to distribute food in Darfur was December. The military shut routes into Darfur from Chad in February, although two convoys of aid were permitted to cross this week.

(The Washington Post)

Sudan Suspends Work of Al Arabiya, Al Hadath and Sky News Arabia Channels, State News Agency Says

Sudan on Tuesday suspended the work of Saudi state-owned broadcasters Al Arabiya, Al Hadath and UAE-owned Sky News Arabia channel "due to its lack of commitment to the required professionalism and transparency and failure to renew its licenses", Sudanese state news agency (SUNA) said. The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate condemned the decision by the information

ministry, saying it was a clear violation of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. "Closing satellite channels and restricting those working in the profession would silence the voice of the professional media, and would also open the door to the spread of rumors and hate speech," the syndicate said on Tuesday in a statement. The decision comes as a continuation of intimidation tactics imposed on journalists who have been working under extreme conditions since war broke out last April, the statement added.

(Reuters)

Term of the Day

FRINGE BENEFITS

» Definition

Fringe benefits are additions to compensation that companies give their employees. Some fringe benefits are provided to all employees, while others may be offered to executives only. Some benefits may include a company car, paid time off, or gym membership. Employers use fringe benefits to help them recruit, motivate, and retain high-quality talent.



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Title of the EOI: Technology upgrade in the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) Conference Room One (CR1) and Conference Room Two (CR2).

Date of this EOI: 29 March 2024

Closing Date for Receipt of EOI: 19 April 2024

EOI Number: EOIUNECA22522

E-mail Address: gebreegziabbers@un.org; mamod@un.org

Address EOI response by fax for the Attention of: Solomon Gebreegziabber

UNSPSC Code: 45110000, 43000000, 72151600

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), is seeking expressions of Interest (EOI) from qualified companies who can provide Technology Upgrades in the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) Conference Room One (CR1) and Conference Room Two (CR2). The tasks are to be implemented in two packages.

Package One (01): Bilders work and cabling project

It refers to the supply and installation of a complete power and data cabling distribution system (underfloor, in-wall, and in-ceiling) to all of the required positions in both Conference Rooms (CR1 and CR2) and adjacent secondary support rooms. This project also requires the supply and installation of all the power

and data cables with distribution, connections, and terminations throughout.

Package Two (02): Audio Equipment Supply and Installation (CR1 And CR2)

Package two describes works requiring the supply and installation of a complete Taiden conference management simultaneous interpretation system (CMSI- audio) with supporting CISCO hardware in conference rooms one and two. Please use the link for the details descriptions below.

Please note that the UNECA is precluded from entering into a contract with a firm that is not fully registered with UNGM. Firms interested in responding to this invitation but not currently fully registered as vendors with UNGM are encouraged to register before submission of the bid. Further details may be obtained by visiting <https://www.ungm.org/Vendor/Registration>.

Firms should submit their "expression of interest" electronically through the link before the deadline of 19 April 2024.

<https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org/Depts.ptd/files/pdf/eoi22522.pdf>

PLEASE NOTE: You should express your interest in this EOI electronically at: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/230260>

In case you have difficulties submitting your interest electronically, please contact gebreegziabbers@un.org and mamod@un.org directly for instructions.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Culture is strong in Ethiopia. For many years I have been invited to attend important occasions like weddings, the baptism of a new born baby and funerals as well. The way things are done during such gatherings are part of the Ethiopian culture and the people are proud of it. Some will come and talk to me and make me feel comfortable as foreigner among so many Ethiopians, demonstrating another important part of the culture: hospitality. And much of it is organised around colourful buffets, displaying all sorts of different national dishes. Somebody else will proudly show me how to cut the raw meat! It is all part of the culture or the way things are done here in Ethiopia. Some of it I appreciate, some of it I have difficulties relating to as I come from another culture, from a place where things are done differently. Where I come from, we don't eat raw meat, but we eat raw fish! Will you try some? When going abroad people tend to maintain some of their culture and identity. Over time, we can adjust to a new culture and change our ways of doing things. That is not easy, but it is possible. Culture dictates the way people relate to each other, how they perceive time and how they communicate with other people, in other words how they socially interact with each other.

Organizations and companies also have a culture, a way of how things are done. And the way things are done depends to a large extent on the people who are working together, what their backgrounds are and the way the business is managed. We will have a closer look at different corporate cultures and how they can be changed if so needed.

As in society, culture forms the corporate identity. It includes the values, direction and purpose of the company. Some companies have a strong culture, others less. There are two types of distinct human relations that form culture: Sociability and Solidarity. Sociability is the measure of sincere friendliness amongst a community and solidarity is the measure of the ability of a community to pursue shared objectives quickly and effectively.

How do relations in an organization now affect effectiveness of doing business? Well, it depends. Each may be appropriate for a certain environment or situation a business is in. The art is to recognise which is the dominant way people relate to each other in your company and to decide whether this is the right culture for your situation. If not, some measures may need to be taken to change the culture to become more effective.

Where there is a high level of sociability, we see people help each other, talking together, sharing, laughing and crying together, no matter what. A company with a high level of sociability is a place where workers enjoy their work, where the team spirit is high, where information is shared, where people are open to new



Organizations and companies also have a culture, a way of how things are done. And the way things are done depends to a large extent on the people who are working together, what their backgrounds are and the way the business is managed

ideas and allow each other to express themselves freely. People tend to work harder to help their colleagues. It is also a place where friendship allows for poor performance to be tolerated and where decisions depend on consensus, because friends do not like to criticise each other. In tackling problems, compromise is applied rather than the best solution.

In a company with a high level of solidarity, relationships are based on common tasks, mutual interests, or shared goals, that will benefit all. There is a high degree of strategic focus, with quick responses to competitive threats. Poor performance is not tolerated. Such companies can be very effective indeed. Workers are treated fairly and equally, holding all to the same standards. On the other hand, workers now tend to think more about their personal gains before taking on an assignment. They ask: "What is in it for me?"

I should like to suggest that you assess what the levels of solidarity and sociability are in your company.

After rating your company's levels of solidarity and sociability you will now be able to derive what your corporate culture is. Is it the right culture?

ton.haverkot@gmail.com



RESUME

Name: Million Dereje
Education: BA in Accounting and Management
Company name: M and E Accounting and Auditing PLC
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Founded in: 2022
What it does: Preparation of monthly and annual audits
Hq: Hawassa
Number of Employees: 3



STARTUP CAPITAL
50,000 Birr
CURRENT CAPITAL
250,000 birr

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the Business: To address the gap in high-quality accounting services
Biggest perk of ownership: The autonomy that comes with running your own business
Biggest strength: Dedication to work with a focus on future rewards
Biggest challenge: Initial capital
Plan: Aims to extend services nationwide
First career: Cashier

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: PM Abiy Ahmed
Most admired person: Dagmawi Asefa
Stress reducer: Finds solace in prayer
Favorite past time: Cherishes time spent with family
Favorite book: Dertogada
Favorite destination: Wishes to visit Canada
Favorite automobile: Suzuki

EXCHANGE RATE

April 5, 2024

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	56.6853	57.819
POUND STERLING	68.4693	69.8387
SWISS FRANC	59.6523	60.8453
SWIDISH KNORER	4.8394	4.9362
NORWEGIAN KRONE	4.7982	4.8942
DANISH KNORER	7.4642	7.6135
DJIBOUTI FRANC	0.3175	0.3239
INDIAN RUPEE	0.6797	0.6933
KENYAN SHILLING	0.4335	0.4422
JAPANESE YEN	0.338	0.3448
CANADIAN DOLLAR	37.9889	38.7487



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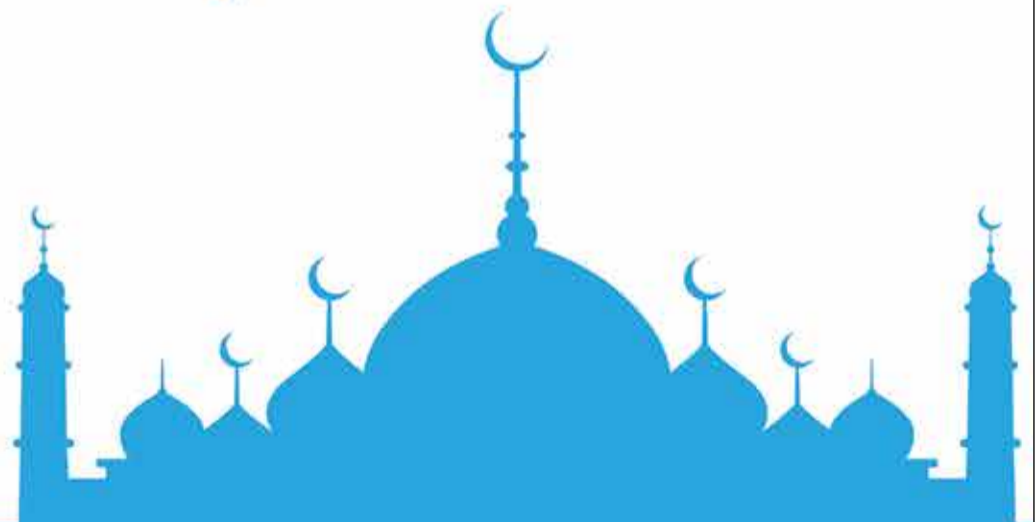


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THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

■ Alazar Kebede

It is true that any financial turmoil in China can create turbulence around the world and even hit New York. According to economic analysts, China could have avoided certain obvious mistakes which many saw coming. What the episode shows is how the relative weights are shifting in the world way beyond just trade.

The recent World Bank data reveals that China still accounts for less than 15% of global GDP, but its contribution to global growth last year was in the range of 40%. So when China's growth slackens, pretty much every one around the world feels it. Not surprisingly, therefore, people all over the world are concerned about China's prospects.

In a bid to build global-Asia connectivity, President Xi Jinping took an initiative of "One Belt, One Road". The initiative is of huge importance, not as an immediate plan, but as a long-term approach toward China's development. To begin with, George Yeo, the former Foreign Affairs Minister of Singapore stated that China has all excess capacity in steel, cement, factories producing rolling stock and so on which can be applied to great use linking China to its neighbors. This growing connectivity of China to its neighbors deep into Eurasia is a story of epic proportions.

Three years ago, China established a rail link to the Persian Gulf via Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. With the opening of Iran, the dynamics across a large part of Asia will change. Throughout history, Imperial China and Imperial Persia, two high civilizations, always had good relations maintaining peace in the region. China, ever a comprehensive, long-term planner, is proposing or already executing enormous railroad expansion to the Gulf of Thailand, to the Andaman Sea, to the Arabian Gulf, to the Black Sea, to the Baltic Sea and all the way to the North Sea.

Back in 2016 China and Russia agreed in principle to build a fast train connecting Moscow and Beijing probably through Kazakhstan. The distance between these two cities is 7,000 km, and the journey is supposed to take less than two days. But all these calculations about the economic feasibility change profoundly if, along the way, one builds a belt of cities. This is why the words "One Belt, One Road", announced by President Xi first in Astana in October 2013, and then in Jakarta in November 2013, are far more than a slogan.

According to George Yeo, they represent a strategic reorientation. "One Belt, One Road" goes way beyond being a plan on paper. It is intended to create a huge flow, a 21st century revival of the old overland and maritime silk roads, and at the end to find all of Eurasia crisscrossed by connections. Using a biological metaphor, the growth of these connections is like angiogenesis in the human body. First the vessels grow, then logistics companies provide the blood circulation and development of organs follows.

George Yeo stated that Eurasia is a large part of the world, and it will, in a few decades from now, be the principal driver of the global economy. China knows that to improve the productivity of its real economy, it must deepen and liberalize its capital markets. Despite the recent financial turmoil, this strategic intent to deepen capital markets will not be deflected. The Chinese are now attempting to create two separate oceans of renminbi, one within China, which is the much larger one, and another outside China of which London is determined to be a major financial center.

An important question here is why can't China allow the internationalization of other currencies like other major countries? To understand this we have to go back to the long history of China and the difficulty of governing a large part of the world's population. Professor Jay Ogilvy of Yale University explained that whoever governs China must always be able to exercise some control over its own internal destiny. In the second half of the 19th century, after the second opium war, western customs officers inspected any ship landing on the China coast. Professor Jay Ogilvy noted that by the late Qing dynasty, China had lost control of its monetary system and therefore an important part of its sovereignty. China will not allow this again.

What about fears that China will go into recession? According to Professor Jay Ogilvy, this is not likely. He explained that China's growth will slow down, maybe to 6%, or even 5.5%, but is now on a very high base of a GDP of about \$10 trillion. That the slowdown in China is causing alarm around the world is because of the lack of aggregate demand powering the global economy. Despite easy money in the last seven years, the global economy has still not performed well. Central bankers fear that if they withdraw the liquidity, asset markets will implode, bubbles will burst, and the real economy will spiral downwards.

Fareed Zakaria in his 2003 published book entitled "The Future of Freedom", stated that China is probably the only major country in the world today which is able to exercise a national will on a range of subjects. This is principally because the economy is still in a late adolescent phase and partly because the political culture over the centuries accepts centralized governance. For example, when President Xi promulgates "One Belt, One Road," the message percolates right down and funds are allocated. The countries involved know it is credible because it is backed by a strong national will.

There is much talk about the South China Sea becoming a flashpoint. It is true that the South China Sea is important, but it is not the most important issue. It is a trial of strength between the United States and China but one which both sides will be careful not to mismanage. The most important issue is still the global economy, because if we get that wrong, everything else is in danger.

“
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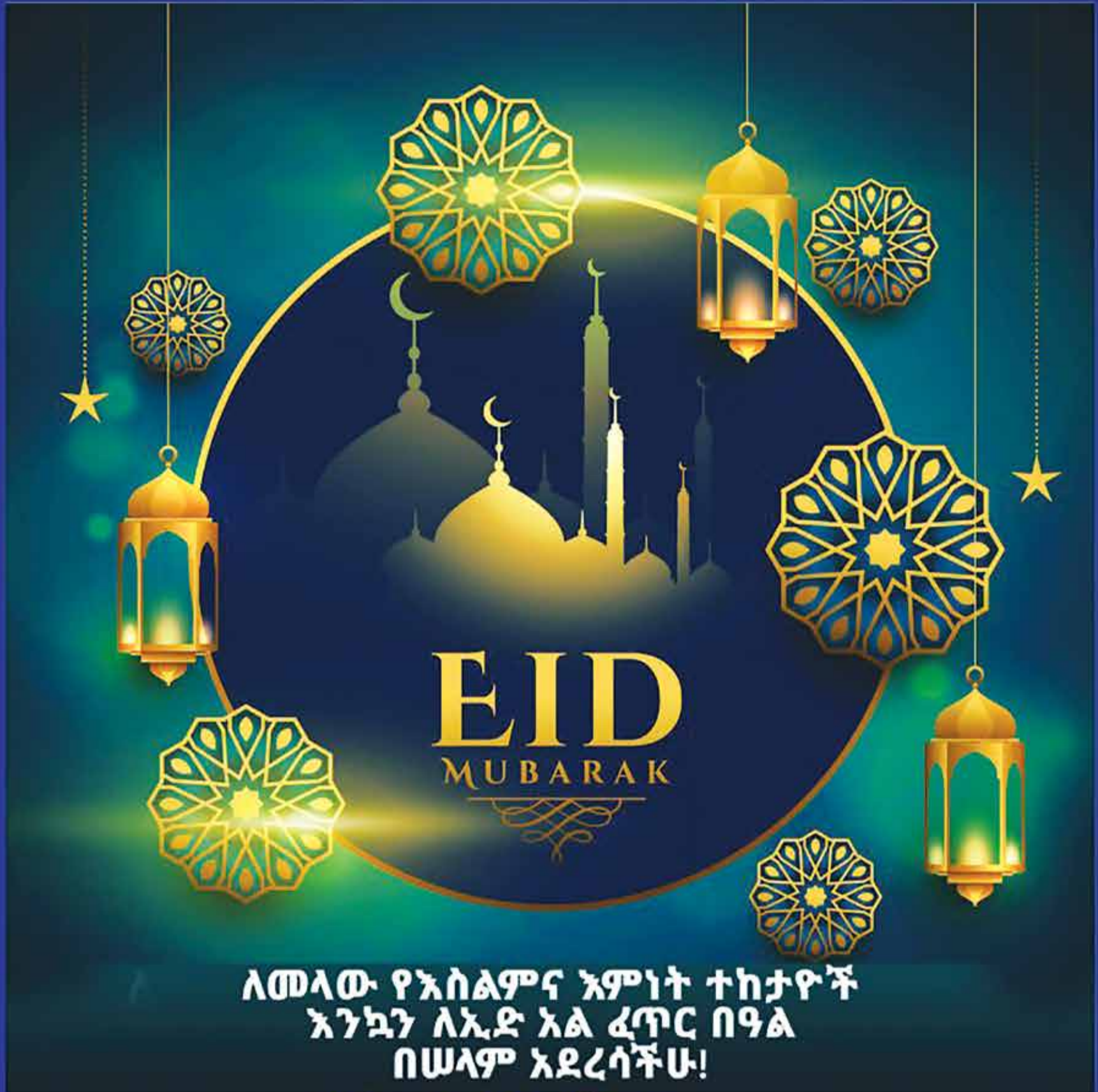
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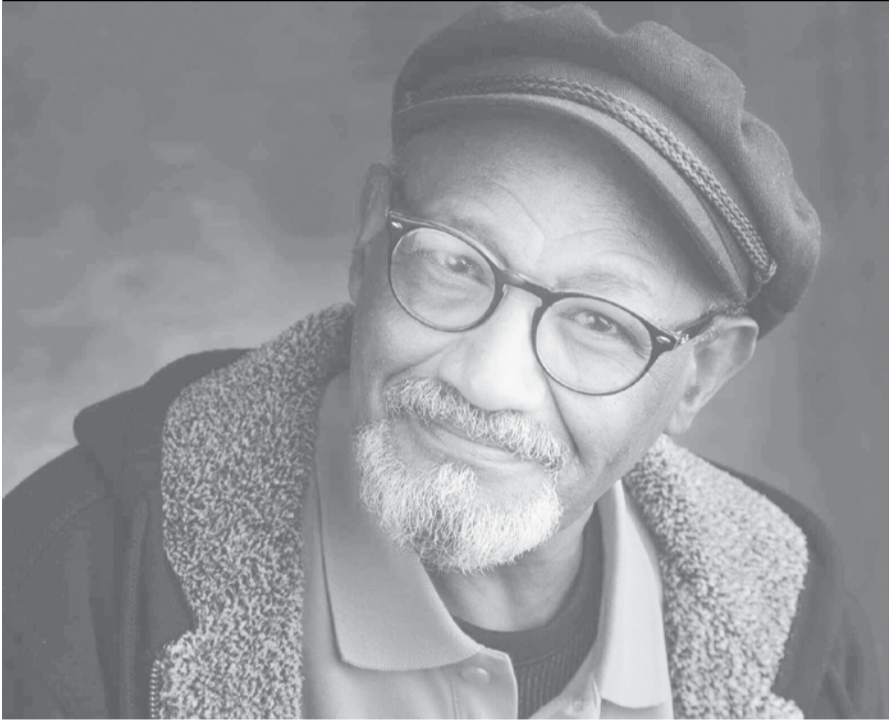
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TIBEBE TERFFA (1948-2024) - CELEBRATED ETHIOPIAN ARTIST AND SEEKER OF THE MYSTICAL



Tibebe Terffa, a renowned Ethiopian artist whose creative journey captivated audiences both in Ethiopia and abroad has died. Tibebe Terffa, born in the walled city of Harar in 1948, dedicated his life to the pursuit of artistic expression, leaving an indelible mark on the art world with his unique vision and profound spirituality.

Tibebe Terffa's artistic journey began at the University of Addis Ababa School of Fine Art and Design, where he studied painting and graduated in 1973. During his time at the university, Tibebe, along with his friends, formed the Sixteen Young Artist' Association, a collective aimed at staging exhibitions throughout the country, showcasing their creative talents. This early collaboration foreshadowed Tibebe's lifelong commitment to pushing artistic boundaries and exploring new horizons.

From 1973 to 1980, Tibebe served as an art instructor at the Medhane Alem Comprehensive High School in Harar, nurturing young talents and inspiring a new generation of artists. In 1981, he moved to Addis Ababa and worked as an Illustrator for Kuraz Publishing House until 1983, further honing his artistic skills and expanding his repertoire. Since 1984, Tibebe devoted himself to a career as a studio artist, creating awe-inspiring works of art from his residence in Addis Ababa.

Throughout his career, Tibebe Terffa held numerous solo exhibitions in Ethiopia, Germany (Berlin), Canada (Winnipeg, Toronto), USA (Washington), and Spain (Madrid). His art was a profound reflection of his spiritual exploration and his deep connection to his Ethiopian roots. Critics and admirers alike recognized the captivating qualities of his work, marveling at his ability to blend traditional Ethiopian influences with a boundless experimentation of form and color.

Ray Dirks, an artist, writer, and curator, described Tibebe as a man of great



integrity and a dear friend. He spoke of the mystical and spiritual quality that emanated from Tibebe's art, a quality that defied categorization within any specific religion. Tibebe's artistic evolution and willingness to embrace the mystery of the spiritual were evident in his paintings, which expressed a profound search for meaning and transcendence.

J.M.C. Price, in describing Tibebe's artistic process, spoke of the intense interaction between the artist and his canvas. Tibebe's brush moved with a liquid violence, creating bold strokes that evoked a sense of energy and dynamism. The canvas itself seemed to come alive under his touch, with colors charged with the magic of a sorcerer. Tibebe danced with his colors, coaxing life and consciousness from the canvas, a testament to his passion and artistic genius.

Tibebe Terffa's contributions to Ethiopian art and culture were widely recognized, and his impact extended beyond national borders. The US Embassy in Addis Ababa expressed deep sadness at his passing, acknowledging Tibebe's significant contributions to the fields of art, culture, and creativity. The embassy honored his work by including one of his art pieces in its collection, a testament to his lasting legacy.

In the wake of Tibebe Terffa's departure from this world, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched through his art. Tibebe leaves behind a rich artistic legacy that will continue to inspire and provoke contemplation, reminding us of the power of creativity to transcend boundaries and connect us to the profound mysteries of life itself.



SELAM ETHIOPIA ANNOUNCES CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SUMMIT: MUSIC & FILM EDITION 2024

Selam Ethiopia, the leading cultural organization in the country, has revealed its endorsement of the highly anticipated inaugural Culture and Creative Industries (CCI) Summit: Music & Film Edition 2024. This groundbreaking event, aimed at advancing Ethiopia's flourishing culture and creative sectors, is scheduled to take place on April 8th and 9th, 2024, at Addis Ababa University's main campus Ras Mekonnen Hall.

The CCI Summit extends an open invitation to industry professionals, investors, and policymakers, inviting them to be part of a transformative gathering that will explore investment prospects and drive progress in Ethiopia's music and film industries. With a focus on providing valuable insights and fostering innovation, the summit will feature engaging sessions tailored specifically to professionals in the music and film fields.

The two-day agenda promises a diverse range of topics and interactive discussions,

covering crucial aspects of the music and film sectors in Ethiopia. Attendees can expect comprehensive sessions, including a market analysis of the current state of the industry, insights into Ethiopia's streaming landscape, discussions on music and film education, as well as an exploration of the challenges and opportunities related to copyright.

The summit's first day, April 8th, will kick off with a session on market analysis research presented by Alehegn Moges from Math Consulting PLC, followed by a panel discussion on evolving trends in the music and film industry in Ethiopia, featuring prominent artist Tewodros Aklilu and filmmaker Henock Mebratu. The day will continue with sessions on music and film education in Ethiopia, music and film business essentials presented by John Henriksson from Selam, and a pitch and presentation by the Muzikawi team.

On April 9th, the second day of the summit, there will be a presentation on copyright in Ethiopia by Samuel Sangwa,

CISAC's Regional Director for Africa, accompanied by a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities for protecting intellectual property rights in Ethiopia. The day will also include sessions on the streaming landscape in Ethiopia, presented by filmmaker and songwriter Dawit Tesfaye, and a panel discussion on publishing, featuring industry experts. Additionally, there will be captivating pitch and presentation sessions by Dawit Tesfaye and artist Kalab Mulugeta.

Selam Ethiopia, an international organization independent of the government and business entities, is dedicated to fostering cultural transformation. Their comprehensive approach includes capacity building, events, production, forums, distribution, and research, with a particular focus on supporting women, youth, and people with disabilities. Their impactful initiatives span across Ethiopia, reaching both urban centers like Addis Ababa and remote regions.

ETHIOPIAN PAINTER TAKES HIS INSPIRATION FROM CHINESE CLASSIC I CHING

Standing in front of a canvas in an art gallery in the heart of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, 50-year-old artist Dawit Muluneh is fully absorbed in the painting of ancient Chinese characters. Surrounding him are pieces he has painted based on the I Ching, or the Book of Changes, a classic that has existed for more than 2,000 years and which remains a source of Chinese culture.

"I Ching means truth and is founded on the eight gifts of nature, namely heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain, and lake. In general, the I Ching explains the wisdom of nature," Muluneh told Xinhua at the Medemer Africa Art and Sculpture Space.

His collection of 64 paintings represent the 64 divinatory symbols in the book. They portray the day-today interaction between man and nature, and impart knowledge and feeling to visitors through descriptions in Chinese, English, and Amharic.

Although Muluneh does not speak Chinese, he became interested in the book a few years ago after his friend Gossa Oda, who owns the gallery, introduced him to The Complete I Ching, which explains the ancient Chinese classic in English.

"The paintings express delight, hindrance, relief, encountering, courage, childhood, and union," says Muluneh, who was inspired first and foremost by the characters qian and xian, which respectively translate as "humbleness" and "mutual influence".

Over the course of the year it took him to paint, Muluneh turned to the internet to research these characters and drew surprising similarities between ancient Ethiopian and Chinese civilizations, in terms of painting styles, landscapes, and people's attitudes toward nature.

"Both Ethiopia and China have a long history of working with clay and bamboo, traditional medicines, and musical instruments," he says, stressing that cultivating ancient knowledge will help both countries prosper in the right way.

In explaining the book, the artist says it not only speaks about the present and future potential but also gives instructions on what to do and what not to do to achieve good fortune and avoid misfortune, and that its guidance is based on the observation of natural laws by ancient philosophers.

Mentioning that Ethiopia and China have greatly contributed to current world civilization, Muluneh says the I Ching helps cultivate well-disciplined citizens and promotes a good way of life.

Launched in May 2023, the Medemer Africa Art and Sculpture Space is frequently visited by schoolchildren, artists, and members of the Chinese community in Addis Ababa.

"Visitors to our gallery space will be introduced to the basic concepts of the I Ching, and its complicated concepts are translated into both English and Amharic," says Oda.

He says that Muluneh's paintings are unique for their beauty, variation, and composition, and share aesthetic sensibilities and cultural correlations between Ethiopia and China.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius and his disciples are believed to have written an interpretation of the I Ching several hundred years after it first appeared and according to researchers, it would be difficult to understand the ancient classic without the philosopher's annotations and comments.

"After viewing the I Ching paintings, visitors will be able to learn about Chinese civilization and delve deeper into the book. By reading Confucius' commentaries, they will understand China's cultural and aesthetic influence, such as the virtues of duty and piety, on world civilization," Oda says. "The I Ching can help visitors understand their future potential as well as their present



circumstances, and each painting can be interpreted differently. Each is associated with a divinatory symbol, which indicates future potential or tendency."

Anis Gabi set to mesmerize audiences with highly anticipated second single 'KOOTTUMEE'

Renowned for his musical brilliance, Anis Gabi is poised to captivate audiences once again with the near release of his highly awaited second musical endeavor, titled 'KOOTTUMEE.' Hailed as a rising star in Ethiopia's music scene, Anis Gabi continues to illuminate the industry with his fascinating sound and profound storytelling.

Having garnered widespread acclaim and captured the hearts of listeners with his debut single "Haddha Milki," Anis Gabi's upcoming release has built up eager anticipation among fans and industry insiders alike. The talented musician is known for pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation, offering a unique musical experience that resonates deeply with listeners.

'KOOTTUMEE' promises to showcase Anis Gabi's remarkable vocal performance and musical innovation. Collaborating with notable musicians such as Jorga Mesfin and Yoosan Getahun, Anis blends traditional Ethiopian beats with the vibrant sound of Ethiopian Jazz, creating a mesmerizing fusion. The song itself is a delightful blend of chill and upbeat vibes, influenced by the Oromo groove, inviting listeners to dance and celebrate.

Anis Gabi's journey in music goes beyond artistic expression. He has displayed professional dedication and pursued musical education to become a true music professional. With a Bachelor's degree in piano performance, Anis's commitment to his craft is evident. He further shared his knowledge and passion for music by

teaching at a university for two years, nurturing the talent of future generations.

Anis Gabi's musical lineage is deeply rooted in Ethiopian music history. His father, Gabi Edao, is a cherished figure in the Oromo music scene, serving as a source of nostalgia and inspiration for many who grew up listening to his iconic melodies in the 90s. Anis carries on this rich legacy while adding his unique touch and perspective to the Oromo music landscape.

Anticipation among fans is at an all-time high as the awaited second musical masterpiece from Anis Gabi is set to be released on April 5. With its release, audiences can expect to be captivated and enthralled by his musical prowess, cementing his status as a trailblazer in the world of Oromo music.

H O T M U S I C T A B L E

HOTTEST ARTISTS

MARCH 28 - APRIL 3, 2024

HOTTEST TRACKS

RANK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Dawit Tsige	54	19	73
2	Michael Belayneh	57	10	67
3	Tewodros "Teddy Afro" Kassahun	54	2	56
4	Rahel Getu	26	21	47
4	Esubalew Yetayew (Yeshi)	27	20	47
5	Neway Debebe	39	7	46
5	Rophnan	35	11	46
5	Fikeraddis Nekatebeb	39	7	46
6	Veronica Adane	23	20	43
6	Gosaye Tesfaye	32	11	43
7	Abinet Agonafir	27	12	39
8	Dawit Mellese	36	1	37
8	Mastewal Eyayu	30	7	37
9	Hewan Gebrewold	18	18	36
10	Leul Sisay	26	8	34

RANK	TRACK	ARTIST	RADIO	TV	TOTAL PLAY
1	Demama	Dawit Tsige	20	5	25
2	Enaney	Veronica Adane	11	12	23
3	Eyut	Rahel Getu	14	7	21
4	Maleda	Eyob Belay	10	9	19
4	Qimemun	Nhatty Man	16	3	19
5	SHEGIYE	Rophnan	11	5	16
5	Koyen Kayen	Mikiyas Nigusie (Miki lala)	14	2	16
6	Kome Limerkish	Tilahun Gessese	7	7	14
6	Erefi	Bisrat Surafel	9	5	14
6	Bantelay	Hana Girma	11	3	14
7	Yene Amel	Leul Sisay	9	4	13
7	Yegle Nesh	Dawit Tsige	8	5	13
7	DEMO BE ABAY	Tewodros "Teddy Afro" Kassahun	13	0	13
7	Meta Meta	Teamir Gizaw	6	7	13
8	WOZE	Didi Gaga	3	9	12
8	Yekeresh Yimeslegnal	Abinet Agonafir	5	7	12
8	Twist Ena Fiker	Kassahun Eshetu Kasseye	8	4	12
8	Ethiopiaye	Rahel Getu	4	8	12
8	Gelagay	Yohana	8	4	12
9	Endet Serat	Giachew Teshome	5	6	11
9	Melke Beqagn	Leul Sisay	11	0	11
9	Addis Aydelem	Hewan Gebrewold	9	2	11
10	Sewedelat	Madingo Afework	9	1	10
10	Betam Enji Betam	Mesay Tefera	7	3	10
10	Ayenaleme	Asgenew Ashko Asge	3	7	10

THIS DATA IS GATHERED BY A 24/7 AUTOMATED RECORDING & ANALYZING ALL SYSTEM FROM 35 TV & RADIO STATIONS. THERE WERE MORETHAN 4,016 TOTAL MUSIC PLAYS ACROSS THE BROADCAST MEDIUM FOR THIS WEEK. BROUGHT TO YOU BY - OMNIMEDIA ETHIOPIA



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Derba Midroc wish you a

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CBE NOOR

Warmest wishes to all Muslims on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr



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I N T E R V I E W



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

CRUSADING AGAINST EXPLOITATION: COMBATTING DRUG TRAFFICKING

In the crusade against the pernicious network of drug trafficking, few voices resonate as profoundly as that of Father John Wotherspoon. Renowned for their tireless advocacy against the exploitation of vulnerable individuals coerced into becoming drug mules, particularly in the corridors leading to destinations like the bustling port city of Hong Kong, Father John emerges as a steadfast champion of justice and compassion. In this exclusive dialogue with [Capital newspaper], Father John offers insights into the pivotal moments of their journey, shedding light on the harrowing realities faced by those ensnared in the web of drug trafficking and the steadfast efforts undertaken to combat this pervasive menace.

As a prison chaplain entrenched in the dynamic milieu of Hong Kong for over four decades, Father John's narrative unfolds against a backdrop of unwavering commitment to the underprivileged and the incarcerated. Over the past fifteen years, their mission has been anchored in extending a lifeline to those charged with the transportation of drugs into Hong Kong – individuals thrust into the perilous role of drug mules, often lured by promises of prosperity and emancipation from destitution.

The stark reality emerges: a vast majority of these individuals, pawns in a nefarious game orchestrated by Nigerian drug syndicates, traverse the treacherous path to Hong Kong with scant awareness of the perils that await them. Upon apprehension, they find themselves abandoned, with scant support from their home nations, left to navigate the complexities of the legal system alone. In response, Father John extends a compassionate hand, offering

both emotional succor and practical assistance to alleviate their plight.

Yet, Father John's advocacy transcends geographical confines, encompassing a global odyssey to raise awareness among prospective victims and implore them to arm themselves with vital knowledge before succumbing to the allure of drug trafficking. Against the backdrop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's bustling capital and a favored transit point for drug mules, Father John recounts poignant tales of tragedy and resilience, underscoring the urgency of collaborative action to stem the tide of narcotics flowing through international airports.

This dialogue serves as a testament to Father John's unwavering dedication, offering a glimpse into the challenges, triumphs, and ongoing efforts to effect meaningful change in the landscape of drug trafficking. Through their organization, Voice for Prisoners, Father John seeks to catalyze transformative initiatives, partnering with governmental entities and civil society to fortify security protocols and combat the insidious forces perpetuating this cycle of exploitation. Join us as we delve into the heart of Father John's mission, a beacon of hope in the fight against drug trafficking's pervasive grip on vulnerable lives.

Father John WOTHERSPOON has spent much of his Oblate and priestly life as a missionary in Hong Kong, China. Originally from the Province of Australia, of which China is an Oblate Delegation, he went to Hong Kong as a teacher in a school run by the Oblates in 1985. Currently, he ministers as a prison chaplain.

“

I always come to help highlight the plight of drug mules. Often many of them use Bole International airport and Ethiopian airlines. Addis Ababa is often the preferred destination for drug mules with lux security and big convenience

”



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

Capital: You have become a noted activist against drug mules who are for the most part tricked into carrying them to countries such as Hong Kong. Share with me the highlights of your work?

Father John Wotherspoon: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and Capital newspaper. I am a prison Chaplain based in Hong Kong. I am Australian by birth but I have lived in Hong Kong for the last four decades. For the last 15 years, I have mostly been working with the underprivileged and those imprisoned charged with the transportation of drugs into Hong Kong. These are people widely known as drug mules.

As you may know, a vast majority of them are vulnerable people sent to Hong Kong by Nigerian drug lords with a promise to make easy money and escape from poverty. They have little exposure to the risk associated with being a drug mule unfortunately. Once caught, many of these people are on their own with little support from their home nations. In a nutshell, I help these people with emotional and financial support.

Nowadays, I travel around the world, to warn future victims to get vital information before they make such a life changing drastic decision. At minimum, such a person faces ten years of imprisonment when caught and most do get caught. Being in prisoned for such a long time, especially if you have a child to support at home is painful. Imagine a child growing up without a mother. Again, it's a heartbreaking and often desperate situation for many.

Capital: What brings you to Ethiopia this time?

Father John: I have made many trips to Ethiopia previously. I always come to help highlight the plight of drug mules. Often many of them use Bole International airport and Ethiopian airlines. Addis Ababa is often the preferred destination for drug mules with lux security and big convenience. Oftentimes, these vulnerable drug mules are asked to swallow the drugs and are required to not eat and drink much. By the time they arrive in Hong Kong, they are easy to spot.

On my last trip, I was here to support a Canadian widow who got involved in a virtual love affair that ended up costing her a lot. She was invited to come to Addis Ababa by a man who pretended to be something he was not. He sent her many photos to lure her; however when she arrived, he was never to be seen. Instead he asked her to come to Hong Kong to meet with him and asked her to carry luggage for him.

She was caught in Hong Kong and the luggage indeed had drugs in them. In all of these, he also pressured her to send him money and she lost to the tune of more than 100,000 USD. She faced the prospect of spending many years in prison.

I worked with a popular Canadian TV – CTV – and a local producer here in Addis that traced back her trip and told her story to a powerful Canadian audience. With good legal representation and a TV station willing to take up her cause and tell it, she was able to be freed. She is a lucky woman.

Continued to page 30



INNOVATION FUND

3RD CALL FOR PROJECTS

April 8-June 30, 2024

Stichting Wageningen Research (SWR) Ethiopia is an international NGO registered in Ethiopia since March 2021 with the FDRE Agency for Civil Society Organizations. The organization is established with the objectives of promoting a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems in Ethiopia. SWR Ethiopia currently implements four projects; Resilient Agriculture for Inclusive and Sustainable Ethiopian Food Systems (RAISE-FS), Ethiopia-Netherlands Seed Partnership (ENSP), REFOOTURE and OTIPAVA projects. Resilient Agriculture for Inclusive and Sustainable Food Systems is a project designed with the goal of creating evidence for practices that contribute to transformation of the food system by addressing leverage points in relation to productivity, enhanced value chain performance and improved human nutrition for improved food security while minimizing the impact on the environment and ensuring social inclusion. Among its interventions is, a component on promoting private sector driven innovation via a grant scheme called the "Innovation Fund" that offers funding.

<p>What is the Innovation Fund?</p>	<p>The creation of value is a defining characteristic of innovation. Producing the same product or offering the same service in another region in Ethiopia can be considered as innovation only if they can create measurable impact by contributing to food and nutritional security, reduce post-harvest loss, drive faster dissemination of proven sustainable agricultural production practices and innovative input supply system, create positive effect on women and youth empowerment, economic participation, and capacity development, tangibly support smallholder farmers and enhance export and import substitution. Bringing in an existing technology/product/service/practice to Ethiopia from another country is also an innovation (this would bring in some points during the evaluation) while offering a completely new product/service in Africa / world is an innovation (this would bring in the most points during the evaluation of the proposals). The objective of the Innovation Fund is to promote innovations in all agricultural subsectors/commodities (except dairy) in Ethiopia. The Innovation Fund will focus on innovations at all segments of the value chain (production, processing, and marketing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Innovation Fund is managed by the Resilient Agriculture for Inclusive and Sustainable Ethiopian Food Systems (RAISE-FS). RAISE-FS is implemented by Stichting Wageningen Research Ethiopia and funded by the Dutch Government.
<p>How is the Third Round of Call differing from the preceding two Calls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All Agricultural Subsector/commodities (except dairy) are eligible for the fund in this round of call while selected few subsectors/commodities were considered in the previous two Calls. The dairy subsector is not eligible for the RAISE-FS innovation fund because there is another Dutch NGO which is fully committed to dairy development ■ Relaxed requirements for project innovativeness: Projects that create measurable positive effect on food and nutrition security, post-harvest loss, export, import substitution, women and youth economic empowerment and smallholder farmers support can be considered for financing in this round of Call while only projects that offer new or improved products, services, technology, business models and/or service delivery models to Ethiopia were considered in the previous Calls.
<p>What has the Innovation Fund to offer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The maximum amount of grant for Type A project is €50,000 per project while for Type B project it is €25,000 (please refer to section 2 of the Fund Manual for type of project/range of grants). Fund disbursement will be carried out by means of flexible payment plan, based on decision by the Approval Committee and cash flow needs of the project. ■ Actively link applicant companies to other organizations (buyers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutions, etc.) ■ Inform applicant companies about latest technologies and developments via business platforms, personal meetings and Innovation Opportunity Reports
<p>What conditions do Innovation Fund projects have to fulfil?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The project can take place in the various agricultural subsectors/commodities (except dairy) by focusing on, at least, one of the following domains: export enhancement, import substitution, food system improvement, climate resilience, smallholder farmers support and/or youth and women economic empowerment. Please refer to the fund manual for projects that are worthy of better acceptance. ■ Projects should be implemented within one year.
<p>Who can submit projects to the Innovation Fund?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The applicant should be a registered company that is able to present a valid Ethiopian business license. ■ Partnerships of multiple companies, NGOs, research institutions, etc. are allowed to submit an application, as long as this partnership consists of at least one registered and licensed business entity. In this case, (one of) the registered and licensed entity will be the applicant for the grant, and will be end-responsible for project implementation. ■ Foreign companies without Ethiopian business license are only allowed to apply in partnership with a company that possesses an Ethiopian business license, which will be applicant and end-responsible for project implementation. ■ Applicants can't receive grant funding for more than one project at a time. ■ Partner companies, NGOs, research institutions, etc. can be involved in more than one project at a time. ■ Applicants who had applied for previous Calls by RAISE-FS Innovation Fund can reapply by rectifying the causes of rejection of their concept note/proposal. The reasons for rejection were pointed out in the rejection email by RAISE-FS.
<p>How much co-financing is expected from applicant companies or partnerships?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Applicants are required to make cash and in-kind contributions towards the project. For Type A project this contribution is equal to or larger than the grant amount (50% of the project cost). For Type B project, applicant's total contribution is equal to or more than 50% of the grant amount (25% of the total project cost). For Type A project, a minimum of 20% of own contribution should be in cash while for Type B project applicant's contribution can be fully in cash or in kind or in both cash and kind. ■ In-kind contributions should be directly associated with project requirements, such as agricultural inputs, machinery and tools, as well as (part of) salaries of staff that are involved in project implementation. The own contribution must come from other sources than grants, especially not from grant



<p>How does the Innovation Fund work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Innovation Fund application process is structured around Call for Projects. Underlying document is the third Call for Projects. Each Call for projects employs a two-stage submission process: • During the first stage a concept note will be submitted, including business license. Overall eligibility of the concept note will be checked against the minimum criteria as laid out in underlying Call for Projects and the Fund Manual. • Applicants that fulfil the minimum criteria will enter the second stage, and will be invited to submit a full proposal. Each proposal is evaluated on the basis of the minimum criteria and five Selection Criteria as laid out in underlying Call for Projects and the Fund Manual. • Technical and financial capacity of the applicant to implement the project might be assessed via a company visit during first stage and second stage assessment.
<p>What are the deadlines for underlying Call for Projects?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept notes can be submitted to RAISE-FS until June 30, 2024. Concept notes will be evaluated at the end of every month in which they have reached RAISE-FS and applicants will be contacted to submit project proposals if their concept notes are accepted by the Evaluation Committee. Selection process will be conducted on first -come, first -serve basis: Applications will be dealt with strictly in the order in which they arrive at RAISE-FS
<p>What are the Selection Criteria for assessing full proposals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical approach (20 pts): This is the degree to which the proposed project offers innovations to Ethiopia, is feasible for implementation in the Ethiopian context, is demand-driven, and provides input for easy and cost-effective replication at other locations. • Economic viability (20 pts): A cost-benefit analysis indicating a roadmap towards profitability in the short to medium term (1-3 years). • Implementation Capacity (20 pts): The extent to which the applicant and possible partners are capable of undertaking and accomplishing the project. • Value-for-money and additionality (20 pts): The relationship between the requested grant and significance/quality of project outcomes, including justification for the need of using public funds to co-finance the project • Impact (20 pts): The criterion assesses to what extent the proposed project is likely to have positive and sustainable impact on export, import substitution, food system improvement, direct and indirect employment opportunity, support to smallholder farmers, women and youth economic empowerment and climate adaptation. Please refer to the fund manual for detailed selection criteria
<p>How can you submit a concept note for underlying Call for Projects?</p>	<p>Please submit signed concept notes, including copy of business license (front & back pages), to innovationfund2022@gmail.com with Cc to helen.getaw.swr@gmail.com and info.SWREthiopia@gmail.com Concept notes that are received after June 30, 2024, will not be taken into consideration for underlying Call for Projects.</p>
<p>Where can you find the Fund Manual and concept note form?</p>	<p>Fund Manual and concept note form are available upon request by sending an email to innovationfund2022@gmail.com or can be downloaded from www.https://raise-fs.org.</p>
<p>Who is your contact person?</p>	<p>If you have any additional questions after reading Call for Projects and Fund Manual, please feel free to contact Mr Shitaye Adugna at innovationfund2022@gmail.com or on +251 118 360313/+251 985 202766.</p>



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Continued from page 27

Not all prisoners with similar stories are freed after serving a year or so of imprisonment.

Capital: What were some of the highlights of this trip this time?

Father John: I held a press conference that gave me a chance to speak to the Ethiopian media. We had an interesting conversation and I was able to put faces to such victims. I was also able to speak to authorities, including those of the United Nations, the European Union, the Nigerian embassy. We got to explore ways and ideas on how to stop drugs from passing through Bole airport frequently and easily.

I saw the beauty and some of the challenges of your capital city and held conversation with everyday people, inside the cafes, at my hotel and on the street. I can see why many people might find the reason to head to such foreign nations for easy money. But they should know the risk.

Capital: What are some of the ideas you are proposing?

Father John: There has to be a public education on it. Many things can be done: sniffer dogs can be used, equipment can be improved, transit passengers can be checked, corruption can be stopped, and more than one person can be assigned to monitor x-ray machines as an attempt to reduce any corruption. One radical solution would be for the government to give airport

security to a private company which would employ skilled workers from overseas to help train and supervise local staff as a way to complement their work.

We absolutely must ensure Bole international airport has the latest technologies and professional training to properly do their work. Also offer them the financial support that is needed and find the resources to help them do good work. One good question we should ask is about corruption, where airport officials might be compromised and be prey to someone paying them. We should not wait for more victims to be produced for any of us to act.

Capital: Tell me about your organization Voice for Prisoners?

Father John: Voice for Prisoners is a registered NGO based in Hong Kong. We basically try to stop drugs from heading to Hong Kong from places like Addis Ababa. We are a small organization with skeleton staff and volunteers but our ideas are big. I have been at it for a while now, but there is more to do. I will continue to do this job – travelling and speaking out - as long as the Good Lord gives me health and the means to do it.

Capital: What do you think the government should do more to stop drug mules?

Father John: To be clear, we want to partner with the government and compliment their work. We are just

offering vital and practical information to them and hoping they will tighten security at their airport. A good example where change has come is in Kenya and Tanzania where drugs coming from those nations have decreased in the last few years.

According to the ten people I know who were arrested in Hong Kong in 2023; nine of them said the drugs they carried were arranged by Nigerians in Addis. My hope is that these bad Nigerians can be stopped. I also would like to say these bad Nigerians are a minority and give the majority of good people from Nigeria a bad name.

I have nothing but respect and admiration for a vast majority of Nigerians. I am just talking about the very few who are involved in drugs. As a Champlain, I have helped many Nigerians over the years, even paying for the education of the children of those imprisoned in Hong Kong. But the bad ones really bring havoc to many people from around the world.

Capital: Any last words?

Father John: I estimate that Addis, Johannesburg and Sao Paulo are the three airports in the world most used by drug mules. The authorities in Ethiopia and South Africa and Brazil and Hong Kong need to work more closely together. I hope there will be a priority to stop drug mules from heading to Hong Kong and stop the criminals from exploiting more people.

“

I travel around the world, to warn future victims to get vital information before they make such a life changing drastic decision. At minimum, such a person faces ten years of imprisonment when caught and most do get caught



Society

The

PATHETIC STATE OF INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

By Samuel Estefanous

The recent bonanza at Universities across the Nation made possible by system weak links at CBE has made all of us ponder the bigger questions.

I am glad Ethiopian Higher Education Institutes Students Union had issued a statement decrying the misappropriation of public funds by some students of 'higher learning.' But where is the concerted voice of officials of higher education who had collectively failed the Nation?

I mean they have been incubating a bunch of low lives who are super ready to dip their filthy hands in to somebody else's pocket the minute opportunity strikes.

1. Spitting images of the Universities

Those students who had been busy withdrawing funds from CBE automatic tellers machines all night long on 15 March 2024 are living testaments of the pathetic state of higher learning in Ethiopia.

The government needs to retain the service of an international auditing firm to conduct both financial and performance audit of the Universities. Talk to anybody at the General Auditor's Office- year in and year out, they are kept busy auditing the ill managed, ill-gotten and misappropriated accounts of the universities.

Perhaps the overwhelming majority of the public might consider the case of former Bula Hora University President Chala Wata an isolated instance. It isn't. What made his case dramatic is the extent of criminal intent he had harbored as he had tried to "buy" his immunity by joining the ranks of the house of people's representatives.

He had hoped he wouldn't be caught in 'flagrante delicto', and he would be at total liberty to enjoy the fruits of his criminal endeavors taking cover behind parliamentary immunity.

Makes one wonder how many had.

In the event you didn't know, Walta & Fana TVs did their level best- under the circumstances- to unravel the extent of ignorance, unprofessionalism, despondence and illicit activities associated with the accounts of Universities- particularly the so called Second and Third Generation Ethnic Universities.

Honest to God, one doesn't incubate a snake egg and expect a pigeon chick to hatch. But that is exactly what we are doing. In all these, we need to take our hats off and flash our thumbs up to those students who are distinguishing themselves beyond measure overcoming not just the pressures of higher learning but the toxicity of the community of hoodlums.

2. 'They Drive Revos and live in Mansions across the Capital'

A couple of years ago we were lamenting the meager income of University professors when we were informed that a Ph.D. earns around fifteen thousand birr per month. However one of our companions grinned savagely and noted 'I don't know about your professors but I know University officials drive Revolution brand vehicles and live in mansions around Addis.' No one took him seriously-naturally- but guess what? The Revo part of the story happened to be true. That kinda gives you an idea.

I mean if the Nation's scare resources allocated to institutes of higher learning are expended on Revos, how could we expect research breakthroughs from the Universities except perhaps for breaking news of break-ins?

3. What is he good for? Absolutely nothing!

According to BBC Amharic the miscreant students who had misappropriated the funds actually characterize their criminal activity as 'a job done'-a typical criminal gang lingo doing bank hold ups.

Remember Edwin Starr's song- what is it good for? It was made famous by Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker in Rush Hour. All the time I was reading about the unfortunate heist, I was feeling sorry for the kids who are under the illusion that they had indeed pulled off a job.

The true fact of the matter is they had sealed their respective fates. The digital age might be an occasional blessing for the criminal mind but it is also a perpetual curse. The moment CBE releases their digital criminal footprint in to the webs and the cloud, their future is doomed. Ten years from now at a neat small town in the Mid-West or a dusty outpost in Nigeria, their names surface up when they apply for a job that requires a little bit of trustworthiness.

What are they good for now? Absolutely nothing! A future irredeemably lost for a paltry sum.

I am not even thinking about the probability of their serving terms at Federal correctional facilities. Any amateur can tell you that the case would be a piece of cake for any given juvenile prosecutor or a rookie investigating officer. It is the specter of a doomed future that bothers me on account of their respective families and friends.

These past four days I was travelling around towns in the Rift Valley all along Modjo- way down to Dilla. Federal Police officers were stationed at selected posts and were doing a thorough body frisking not to mention searching vehicles 'inside out'.

However, judging by what I had observed, if I were in their places I would rather send scouts to look for wide eyed, jumpy, restless youth fitted

in crispy brand new outfits surrounded by scantily dressed girls on some kind of binge drinking spree. They could have apprehended half those on the wanted list.

4. A Blessing in Disguise

Just like in the health sector, in the world of criminal science study prevention holds premium currency. That is why law enforcement agencies' performance is measured in terms of reduced rate of commission- not necessarily in the increased rate of conviction carried.

Thus, as the sole owner of CBE, the government might be able to recoup the public funds lost by way of doing hands on analysis of the symptom for the purpose of defining policy trends. You know as car manufacturers, insurance companies and other stake holders crash brand new cars to test safety.

Looks like though unwittingly, the CBE had activated a "Bait, Mask and Ruse" system to postulate criminal trends in terms of locality, age group, gender, educational background and social station. Most important of all, as this spectacular heist has laid bare the state of higher education learning in the country, the Federal government will be in a better position to review the true status and significance of the Universities.

This is a billion dollar venture by itself if the best could be made of it.

Take solace CBE, your money isn't lost in vain.

God Bless.

You can reach the writer via estefanoussamuel@yahoo.com



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The KiTes Nest is located off Gabon Road in the Bole area of Addis Ababa (commonly known as Meskel Flower Hotel area) and offers top end furnished apartments for rent.

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Eid Mubarak!

Siinqee Bank S.C extends its warm wishes to all cherished Muslim brothers and sisters as they joyfully celebrate the 1445th festival of Eid al-Fitr. May this occasion bring happiness, peace, and blessings to all followers of the religion.

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Spotlight

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African countries to dominate the world's top 10 growing economies, ECA report

African countries are predicted to dominate the world's top 10 highest growing economies in 2024, according to a report on Recent Economic and Social Developments in Africa by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The most notable growth drivers in Africa in 2024 will be Niger, Senegal, Ivory Coast, DRC and Rwanda.

Adam Elhiraika, Director, Macroeconomics and Governance Division at ECA said Africa was the fastest growing region after East and South Asia in the developing world in 2023, and Africa will continue this trend in 2024 and 2025.

The report says that Niger and Senegal are expected to experience significant economic growth due to the increase in hydrocarbon production and exports.

Growth in Niger will be fuelled by the revival of agricultural production - although it is vulnerable to unfavourable weather conditions - and a rise in crude oil production, which will have a beneficial impact on the transportation sector. However, recent military coups in, together with sanctions from regional blocs, have disrupted economic activity and incurred significant social costs.

Gebeya, Microsoft launch new Microsoft Talent Cloud Ecosystem for Africa

Gebeya Inc., has joined together with Microsoft to launch the Microsoft Talent Cloud powered by Gebeya. The gateway, which is now open for access, aims to empower 300,000 African tech talents over the next 3 years with Microsoft-focused cloud and AI skills, providing them with valuable learning resources and opportunities across Microsoft's ecosystem of more than 30,000 partners, and customers.

"With a burgeoning population of tech-savvy youth, Africa could become the next global hub of digital innovation. Tech communities are flourishing, driving progress across all aspects of society, and attracting investment. However, to ensure local talent continues to thrive, we must first address major stumbling blocks, including limited access to skilling and employment opportunities within global tech firms. Microsoft is proud to work alongside Gebeya to help address these challenges and create much-needed opportunities for Africa's young talent," commented Gerald Maithya, General Manager, Microsoft Africa Transformation Office. Since the announcement of the new partnership in December 2023, more than 10,000 developers from across the continent have signed up to the platform.

UNIDO, ITC to back COMESA efforts to unlock trade opportunities in the region

To bolster productive and trade capabilities within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and drive regional integration, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) are conducting a scoping mission from 2 to 6 April, to chart a course to implement a regional programme, called the Trade, Competitiveness and Market Access Programme (TCMAP).

The goal of the scoping mission is to identify and unlock the potential of value chains critical to the region's economic prosperity, aligned with the COMESA regional integration agenda and the African Continental Free Trade Continental Agreement (AfCFTA).

Consultations and technical workshops with key stakeholders, including representatives of the COMESA Secretariat, COMESA Business Council, COMESA Federation of Women in Business and the European Union are creating a shared understanding of the region's trade dynamics, needs and areas of interventions for the programme.

DESTRUCTION



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

TAKING THE BIKE AWAY



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

JEEP



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

USAID launches new empowered communities program

The United States launched a new program that will engage Ethiopian communities in health-related decision-making, to improve knowledge and understanding of their rights, available services, and fee structures, so that they can manage their own health. The \$35 million dollar project is designed to ensure that all community members, including the most marginalized, have access to Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent services by enhancing services in private and independent health facilities.

It will be implemented over four years and is called the USAID Empowered Communities Activity. It will work with the Ministry of Health to build the capacity of civil society organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and private sector actors for more transparent, responsive, and accountable health services.

The new activity was launched in Addis Ababa, and was attended by USAID/Ethiopia's Deputy Mission Director Tim Stein, Dr Ruth Nigatu, Chief of Staff to Minister of Health, Executive Vice President of Project Hope Chris Skopec, regional health bureaus, donor agencies, development partners, UN and civil society organizations, and academia and the private sector, among others.

Alibaba.com and ITC Expand Access to Global Markets for African MSMEs

International Trade Centre (ITC) and Alibaba.com have joined forces to introduce the "Global Digital Trade Accelerator for MSMEs in Developing Countries" initiative during the 2021 China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, China. This collaborative effort aims to bolster Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries, enabling them to elevate their international export competitiveness and drive sustainable development through the effective utilization of e-commerce platforms.

At the 2023 CIIE, ITC and Alibaba.com provided booth spaces for African companies to showcase their products to attract Chinese buyers. ITC and Alibaba.com also organized a signing ceremony at the African Pavilion during which the parties signed MOUs with 40 African companies with the aim of strengthening their capacity to use Alibaba.com's platform to explore business opportunities worldwide. By the end of March 2024, the first batch of 9 African companies have successfully joined Alibaba.com and started to sell globally, in collaboration with ITC's Partnership for enhancing export capacity of Africa to China (PEECAC) project.

Securing the Future of Millets

Agricultural leaders, policymakers, and high-level representatives from the global south gathered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 25-26 March 2024, to chart a course for collective action beyond the International Year of Millets 2023 (IYM2023).

Millets, hailed for their climate resilience and nutritional density, have garnered global recognition as a crucial component in the fight against food insecurity and environmental degradation, providing hope to the 2.1 billion people who live in the arid regions of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

High-level representatives from leading millet-producing countries in the global south including India, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Malawi, alongside prominent organizations such as the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), and the Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), came together to devise strategies for strengthened collaboration under a shared vision of resilience for the drylands.

Over 93,000 out-of-school children enrolled in education through community mobilization

Education Above All Foundation (EAA)'s Educate A Child program and imagine1day are pleased to announce the remarkable success of the Leaders, Educators, and Parents (LEAP) joint project in Ethiopia. Over the past three years, LEAP has revolutionized access to quality primary education and spurred a surge of positive change by enrolling over 93,000 out-of-school children (OOSC) in seven districts in the Oromia and Tigray regions of Ethiopia.

Driven by community mobilization, the LEAP project, stands out for its innovative strategies and holistic approaches, ensuring access to quality primary education for some of the most marginalized out-of-school children. Through the tireless efforts of influential community elders, religious leaders, Parent Teacher and Students Associations (PTS), and Women's Associations, LEAP has not only enrolled children but has instilled a sense of ownership and sustainability within the community.

One of the cornerstones of LEAP's success is rooted in embracing indigenous knowledge and local structures.

USAID helps safe and nutritious foods reach Ethiopians

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the successful conclusion of the Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing regional program, one of the projects under the U.S. government's Feed the Future initiative that addresses global hunger and food insecurity.

Over the past six years, the Alliance supported 52 companies to adopt improved food processing technologies and processes, maintain food safety measures and quality improvement, explore marketing and distribution channels, and improve their efficiency. It also guided food businesses towards new or improved product development, elevated their leadership and business management skills, and facilitated access to finance for businesses. These efforts created a more competitive food processing sector and improved the availability of nutritious and affordable foods for consumers including those at lower income levels.

The Alliance facilitated negotiations for food processing companies with smallholder farmers for raw material sourcing with private and institutional product buyers, including Ethiopian Airlines. Through these efforts, companies were able to source high quality agricultural inputs and smallholder farmers earned higher returns for their produce generating a combined sales of more than \$90 million from input and output sales.

AUC Chairperson, WB, AfDB Presidents latest global leaders to confirm attendance for Connected Africa Summit 2024

Africa Union Chairperson (AUC), Moussa Faki Mahamat, World Bank (WB) President, Ajay Banga and Africa Development Bank (AfDB) President, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina are the latest global leaders to confirmed attendance for the Connected Africa Summit 2024.

The Summit aims to scale investment in Africa's digital economy by bringing together thought leaders and policymakers to put in place the policies that will be needed to accelerate both infrastructure development and investment in the digital economy as envisioned in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The leaders, who will give key addresses at the summit, join a list of six ICT and Communication Ministers representing Sierra Leone, Zambia, Namibia, Somalia, Burundi, and Djibouti and fifteen ambassadors representing African, American, European, Asian, and the Middle East who have also confirmed.

The ministers are Salima Monorma Bah (Sierra Leone), Léocadie Ndacayisaba (Burundi), Felix Mutati (Zambia), Mudane Jaamac Xasan Khaliif (Somalia), Emma Theofelus (Namibia) and Radwan Abdillahi Bahdon (Djibouti). More Ministers are expected to attend.

THE GOOD OLD TAXI



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

WAITING HIS TURN TO FLY



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

PREPARING FOR A HOLIDAY



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

DESTRUCTION 101



PHOTO: Anteneh Akilu

Sahara Group installs wind turbines at Egbin Power to reduce carbon footprint

Leading energy and infrastructure conglomerate, Sahara Group has moved to prevent annual estimated emission of 35,793,360g of CO₂ through the installation of wind turbines at the Egbin Power Plc.

The wind turbines will power critical security and essential services architecture at the Power Plant as Sahara Group continues its quest to promote environmental sustainability in its businesses across upstream, midstream, downstream, power, technology, and infrastructure sectors globally.

Ejiro Gray, Director, Governance and Sustainability, Sahara Group, said the project aligns with Egbin's sustainability goals geared towards reducing the Plant's carbon footprint and contributing to a cleaner, greener future. "By harnessing wind energy instead of relying on conventional power sources, the project promises sustainable reduction in carbon emissions," she stated.

According to the US Department of Energy, wind energy produces approximately 11 grams of CO₂ per kilowatt-hour (g CO₂/kWh) of electricity generated. In contrast, traditional sources like coal emit about 980 g CO₂/kWh, while natural gas emits roughly 465 g CO₂/kWh.

"Using the operational potential of the 15 wind turbines installed at Egbin Power, we would reduce an estimated 35,793,360g of CO₂ annually," Gray noted.

Botswana should be praised for its conservation efforts, not chastised by Germany

Germany's proposed ban on the import of hunting trophies over poaching concerns has drawn the ire of Botswana's President, Mokgweetsi Masisi. Botswana is home to the world's largest elephant population, which has grown to more than 130 000.

Marauding elephant herds wreak havoc on local crops, properties and are endangering the lives of the country's citizens, and President Masisi says that hunting is one way to stem the destructive tide.

However, Germany's environment ministry has called for stricter rules on the import of hunting trophies, to which President Masisi vowed to send 20 000 elephants to Germany. Botswana has already given 8 000 elephants to Angola and has promised about 500 to Mozambique.

Prof Peet van der Merwe from the research unit for Tourism Research in Economics, Environs and Society (TREES) at the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa, says that the continent's conservation should be left in local hands.

Strathmore Business School, in partnership with Capital Business School, launch Programme for Management Development

On April 1st, 2024, the esteemed East Africa Business School, Strathmore Business School, in collaboration with Capital Business School, officially launched the Management Development Programme PMD-Ethiopia for two of Ethiopia's manufacturing giants, Unilever Ethiopia and Habesha Breweries S.C. PMD Ethiopia is an intensive holistic program meticulously crafted to equip middle-level managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize their professional and personal effectiveness. The program comprises three modules, one of which is conducted in South Africa, providing participants with the opportunity to step back from their fast-paced schedules and reflect on challenges and goals. Through sharing experiences with fellow managers, participants are inspired by new ideas and approaches to overcoming various challenges. The case based learning method focuses on real life business situations that sharpen their decision making skills. Innovative leadership approaches will enable them to make greater impact in their current role and prepare them to take on positions of greater responsibility.



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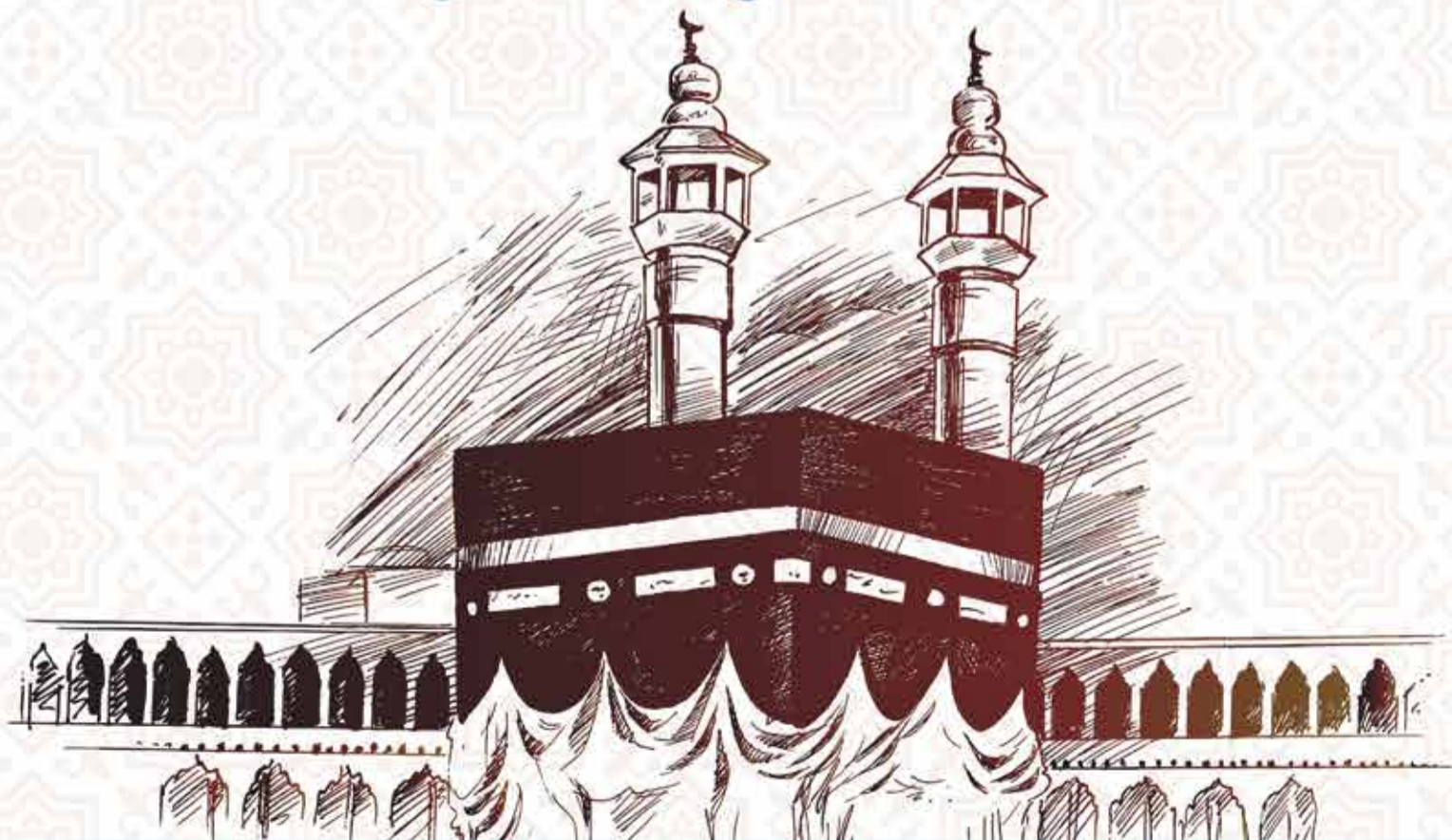
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▶ We welcome submittals regarding news/information pertinent to the CFTA and relegated issues.

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WHY AFRICA NEEDS TO EMBRACE THE AFCFTA

By Adesewa Olofinko

As an African Union media fellow, I recently visited the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) headquarters and received a clear message: it's time for Africa to trade within one unified market. I had the opportunity to sit down with the Chief of Staff of the AfCFTA, Silver Ojakol, the Chief Technical Advisor on the African Continental Free Trade Area, Prudence Sebahizi, and the Director of Information and Communications for the AU, Leslie Richer. During our conversation, I realised the immense potential of the AfCFTA initiative for the average Nigerian in Lagos, the Ovambo community in Namibia, or the Zayaness small business owner in Morocco.

Currently, Africa only trades about 20% of its goods and services internally. The AfCFTA aims to push this number to at least 50%. It would mean harnessing the power of our combined economies to create a continental market brimming with possibilities. Here are a few reasons every African should embrace the AfCFTA:

Jobs

Increased trade translates to a thriving business environment. More businesses mean more jobs, especially for Africa's growing young population. And this isn't just about big corporations; the African continental free trade area would empower small and medium-sized businesses that are in fact, the backbone of our economies.

End to Reliance on Others

Africa is the world's raw materials manager. We have everything on this continent — from shiny diamonds to enough farmland to feed a small planet (literally, 60% of arable land), yet we often rely on others to turn those resources into finished products. The AfCFTA is our chance to create our value chains, become self-sufficient, and less dependent on fluctuating global prices. We can even start exporting finished goods, like intricately carved furniture made from African wood like the Teak (Kiaat) in Angola, or the Iroko in Nigeria.

A United Front

Forget "Wakanda Forever" for a minute and let's make it "One African Market." As a united economic force, through the AfCFTA, Africa can negotiate better

trade deals, and stop getting the short end of the stick. This is like our powerful bargaining chip on the world stage. It's time to embrace the integration that AfCFTA brings.

Innovation

A stronger, more interconnected Africa fosters innovation and knowledge sharing where we can unleash the creative African spirit. Imagine a continent where our vibrant fashion scene isn't just a local phenomenon but a global trendsetter! The world needs a little more Ankara flair and Kente swagger on all the runways in the world, and the AfCFTA can pave the way for that to happen.

The AfCFTA is only as strong as its implementation. It's like a brand-new smartphone, even though it looks amazing, it won't work miracles if you leave it in the box. As Africans, it's time to hold our governments accountable. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) initiative doesn't stop at paperwork and policies; it means investing in Africa by Africa, growing our economies, speaking with one voice, creating an Africa without borders, and fostering economic integration plus increased cooperation on the continent.

As it stands, 54 out of the 55 AU member states that have signed the agreement, and 47 have ratified it. This not only shows the determination of our beloved

continent to unite and a collective desire to break free from the chains of fragmentation. Apart from government, as individuals, we need to be conscious of understanding where the products we consume come from. In your little corner, commit to supporting local and small businesses, and look out for the "Made in Africa" labels so we can get to the point where we consume what we produce and produce what we consume. The AfCFTA is our chance to rewrite Africa's economic future narrative. Intra-trade amongst African countries must now take centre stage. The goal is clear: we want to create a thriving, interconnected African economy that benefits all of its citizens.

the bank also encourages entrepreneurs to focus on product viability and have a clear expansion plan.

ZENITH BANK SPOTLIGHTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS

At the maiden edition of the Women in Business Dialogue series organised by the Business and Financial Times and held in Accra, the Sector Head, SME & Retail Banking at Zenith Bank, Gloria Cabutey-Adodoaji, urged businesswomen to leverage on the golden opportunities of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement to expand their reach and grow their businesses and also ensure their products meet export standards.

"With the arrangement, a free trade zone encompassing 54 nations with a combined GDP of US\$3.4trillion and a market of 1.3 billion people offers a superhighway for Ghanaian businesswomen to expand their reach," she said.

To leverage on the AfCFTA, however, she urged businesswomen to ensure their products meet export standards, form partnerships to reduce costs and seek guidance — all of which Zenith Bank ranks high in the industry for facilitating.

She further explained that while women take advantage of the AfCFTA and the many opportunities available to them, it was also important for women to be

technologically inclined to enable them reach a wider audience through online sales and marketing channels.

"As you leverage on the benefits of AfCFTA, it is imperative for businesswomen to also leverage on technology. Technology empowers women entrepreneurs by providing them with the tools needed to sell online, manage finances and keep track of business activities," she added.

Financial literacy

Mrs. Cabutey-Adodoaji again said it was also essential for women entrepreneurs to have proper bookkeeping practices and maintain separate business and personal transactions which, she said, was key to securing funding from banks.

"Businesses with viable products and strong revenue streams are more likely to get loans from banks. With proper bookkeeping practices, banks are more willing to offer various solutions to help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses," she said.

She highlighted Zenith Bank's business solutions that include discounted onboarding packages, training programmes and financial products tailored to the needs of SMEs, adding that

Support

Zenith Bank's SME account, she said, is a prime example of a product which offers support for women businesses. The account offers women entrepreneurs training, mentorship and resources to help them navigate the challenges of formalisation and growth.

Also, the Zenith SME Business Card, which is a must have for all women entrepreneurs, along with the SME account, equips women with tools that would enable them to manage finances, access working capital and earn rewards.

Additionally, she elaborated on the bank's Z-Woman service, which is a unique lifestyle service dedicated to increasing financial inclusion, improving entrepreneurial skills and enhancing the lifestyle of every woman. She stated that as a Z-Woman, women who own or lead businesses are provided with loans, overdrafts, working capital online and mobile banking applications, budgeting tools and workshops to build financial literacy.

Only recently, Zenith Bank entered into a strategic risk sharing partnership with the African Guarantee Fund to provide access to funding for micro, small and media enterprises (MSMEs) here in Ghana, with particular focus on women-owned/led businesses as well as green businesses.

With these initiatives, Zenith Bank continues to reaffirm its commitment to empowering women-owned and women-led businesses in Ghana for business growth success.

CFIAnow



PACCI is the lead business organization with members in over 50 countries of the continent representing the interests of businesses and industry associations of every size and sector. PACCI operates as Africa's voice of business, advocating for pro-business policies that create jobs, growth and prosperity.

Ruto advocates for enhanced trade between African countries

President says Africa is well poised to be a single market that is globally competitive

President William Ruto has reiterated the importance of intra-African trade in the continent.

In his keynote address, while visiting the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat in Accra, Ghana on Wednesday, he stated that the intra-African trade is currently at low levels compared to other regions.

"Intra-African trade is at an alarmingly low 15 per cent compared to the European Union's over 70 per cent or North American Free Trade Area's 59 per cent," Ruto stated.

The Head of State also highlighted the efforts being made to address this disparity, with regional economic blocs and initiatives like the AfCFTA playing crucial roles.

"The good news is that something is being done. Africa's regional economic

blocs are increasingly trading with and among themselves, with the East African Community leading the way," Ruto added.

The Head of State acknowledged that continentally, the African Union has set up AfCFTA as a flagship agency of AU's Agenda 2063, and whose mandate is to further trade integration in the continent and eliminate trade barriers.

Expressing his full support for the AfCFTA, President Ruto emphasized Kenya's readiness to integrate Africa's financial sector and expedite the operationalisation of policy and research development initiatives.

"Africa is well poised to be a single market that is globally competitive," he noted.

President Ruto was warmly welcomed by the AfCFTA Secretary General Wamkele Mene.

Secretary General Mene commended President Ruto for his exemplary leadership, particularly in advancing inclusivity and economic integration across Africa.

"President Ruto has demonstrated commendable leadership in ensuring progress on the continent, especially in matters about inclusivity in integrating our economies," he added.

Mene said that under Ruto's leadership, Kenya has become a very important destination for import and export.

As a result, the SG noted that AfCFTA shares Ruto's commitment to creating inclusive benefits of a national economy and to creating opportunities for SMEs and for the youth.

"This is why we are taking concrete steps to make sure that the Protocol on Digital

Trade and the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, are fully implemented resulting in an inclusive economy, inclusive trade, eliminating barriers to trade for young people in Africa as well as SMEs," Mene added.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is a game-changing initiative that creates a unified market for goods and services across the African continent.

It also aids in the movement of goods and services across the African continent without restrictions.

The AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area bringing together the 55 countries of the African Union (AU) and eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to create a single market for the continent.

This is President Ruto's first visit to Ghana since he took over the presidency in September 2022.

On Wednesday, Kenya and Ghana signed seven agreements aimed at enhancing bilateral ties between the two countries.

President Ruto said the MoUs, including some signed by business associations from Kenya and Ghana, are aimed at facilitating trade and investment between the two nations.

Other MoUs include cooperation in science and technology, tourism, education, governance and defence.

AfCFTA to mobilize \$10 billion to support SMEs

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat has announced its commitment to mobilize \$10 billion to bolster the development of small and medium-scale enterprises led by youth across Africa.

The AfCFTA revealed that it has already allocated \$150 million to support the burgeoning businesses of young entrepreneurs in Africa. Additionally, it aims to augment its funding resources through partnerships with institutions such as the United Bank of Africa and the Africa

Exim Bank.

Delivering his address at a ceremony to welcome the President of Kenya, H.E. Dr. William Ruto to the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Secretary General of AfCFTA Secretariat, Wamkele Mene emphasized the role of the secretariat in promoting youth-led businesses in Africa.

"We're signing an MOU with United Bank of Africa, where they are committed to disburse 7 billion dollars to SMEs that are led by young people. It has been reported

to us that already 150 million dollars under this fund has been disbursed. We will mobilize up to 10 billion dollars to ensure in the implementation of AfCFTA, young people are at the centre to benefit."

The President of Kenya, Dr. William Ruto expressed readiness to collaborate with President Akufo-Addo to ensure all financial establishments under the African Union are ratified to facilitate trade and investment opportunities between the two countries.

"I want to specifically underscore the importance of us working together and building synergies and creating institutions. I will be working with President Akufo-Addo to make sure that all financial institutions under the AU, from the fund to the bank, to the insurers are all ratified. So that we can build the necessary financial ecosystem to support trade, investments and businesses in our continent."

Ghana and Kenya consolidate bilateral trade relations under AfCFTA

Two of Africa's emerging economies – Ghana and Kenya – have taken giant steps to consolidate trade relations as they seek to lead Africa's economic renaissance.

The bilateral trade cooperation, initiated at the instance of Ghana's President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, is being worked out within the purview and objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

"What is being done in this room today is critical for our continent and the future prosperity of our people," the President said, as he was joined by visiting Kenyan President William Ruto to witness the signing of multiple pacts between the two countries, at a ceremony in Accra.

The Memoranda of Understanding were initiated by the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre and the Kenyan Investment Authority, Association of Ghana Industries and Kenya Association of Manufacturers.

The rest are the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Kenya

National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration.

President Nana Akufo-Addo said the business community had a responsibility to increase intra-African trade, leveraging the opportunities within AfCFTA, the continent's financial resources and technological advancement.

"Your ability to seize the opportunities that will determine whether or not we go forward, and that will determine whether or not the eradication of poverty in our generation is made possible in Africa," he emphasised.

The President assured that the leadership of the continent was focused on providing the requisite space and framework for African businesses to thrive.

"We want to see that growth, because it is that growth that holds the key to our future," he stated.

The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) trade data analysis indicates that, in 2022, Ghana made an export worth \$5.46 million to Kenya, with the main products covering coconut oil, cocoa powder,

mushroom spawn and other live plants.

During the last 26 years, the exports of Ghana to Kenya have increased at an annualised rate of 18.2 per cent, while the exports of Kenya to Ghana have increased at an annualised rate of 14.2 per cent.

In 2022, Kenya made an export worth of \$9.53 million to Ghana – the main products covering vegetable fibres, tea and aluminium plating, according to the OEC.

President Ruto, who is on a State visit to Ghana, welcomed the renewed partnership between the two countries, saying their respective roles in deepening democratic governance in the East African and West African blocs, respectively, provided a stable environment for shared economic growth.

Africa, he said, had many endowed resources at its disposal that could be harnessed for accelerated socio-economic growth.

The vibrant youth population, available land and natural resources put the continent in a strategic place to become an economic powerhouse, if the right policies were instituted, the Kenyan President stated.

Afreximbank
launches Policy
Research Working
Paper Series

African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has introduced the Afreximbank Policy Research Working Paper Series (APRWPS) and is inviting authors to submit manuscripts for publication.

The APRWPS will provide a platform for Afreximbank staff, academics, scholars, institutions and practitioners to share preliminary research findings on topics concerning African trade, trade finance and development. It will serve as a knowledge repository for stakeholders to exchange ideas and address knowledge gaps, thereby enhancing Afreximbank's visibility in research and knowledge generation and contribute to policy advisory, formulation, and implementation among member states.

This new series is designed to complement Afreximbank's existing research publications, including the Journal of African Trade, the Contemporary Issues in African Trade and Trade Finance, the African Trade Report and the Distinguished Lecture Series. The launch of this policy research series aligns with Afreximbank's goal of becoming a leading authority in African trade and trade finance.

Afreximbank Managing Director and Group Chief Economist, Dr. Yemi Kale, commented "the APRWPS aims to promote research and knowledge dissemination in development economics, trade, and trade finance relevant to Africa's development. It is an important vehicle to enhance the global image of Africa by contributing to global research and knowledge production."



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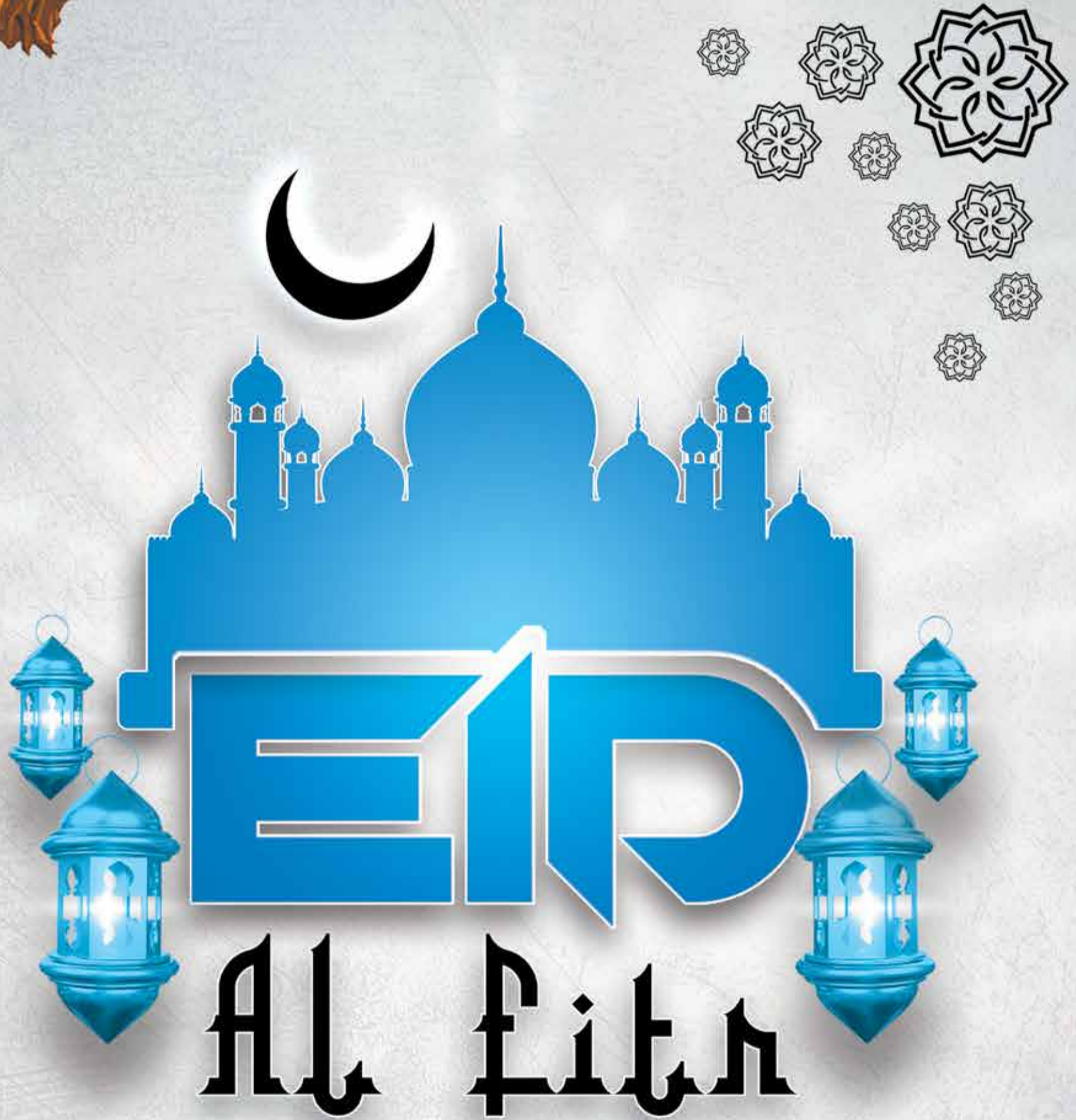
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Remaining still on a pedestal: Putting immovable property to question

By Eden Tafeseework

BACKGROUND

The Ethiopian legal principles are applicable to anyone irrespective of nationality. This is notwithstanding those legislations with provisions applicable to foreigners/non-Ethiopians. When it comes to the realm of property ownership however, the realm has remained closed to foreigners since the 1960s. This is because the country's 1960n Civil Code prohibited the right of foreigners to own immovable property in the country (Article 390 the civil code). This meant ownership of immovable property remained in the hands of Ethiopian Nationals for a long time.

In this regard, the applicable law stipulated that a foreigner who is in ownership of immovable property was required to seize its ownership of to an Ethiopian within 6months or face its seizure by the competent authority in question and be put to the market. Thus 20% the proceeds of the sale will be paid to the foreigner as a penalty and with the view to covering the expenses of Sale. On the other hand, when the property is acquired by succession, the amount to be deducted remains 10% (Article 390-393).

This provision has been amended in 2012 whereby a foreign investor is allowed to have the right to own a dwelling and other immovable property requisite for the sake of the investment (Article 24 of Investment Proclamation No. 760/ 2012). This remained the legal principle for a long time where foreign nationals didn't possess the investment in question as per

the amended investment law of 2012 the right to own immovable property unless that needed for the sake

On March 23, 2024, the Ethiopian Prime Minister disclosed intensions to pass legislation that allows foreigners to own property/real estate as part of plans to open up the country's economy and attract investors. He disclosed the plans in a meeting convened with investors working to bolster the economy in different spheres. He indicated that the government was finalizing a new law to permit foreigners to own real estate property, even though he did not give a timeline for introducing the legislation in parliament. He also added the government's intensions to amend existing restrictive laws with the view to opening up the retail sector, which is currently restricted to Ethiopians.

The Prime Minister's statements indicated that the existing laws forbid foreigners from owning houses or commercial buildings in the country which is a major hurdle/obstacle for drawing foreign investment to the Horn of Africa country which is working to recover from the drawbacks faced from the two-year conflict with TPLF and that in the Amhara region.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Even though the specific details of the planned scheme have not been disclosed (the pertaining laws to this end are yet to be formulated), no doubt it will boost employment opportunities. Although the responsible body will have to tailor the specifics, the interest of local employees needs to be guaranteed. This should

remain the basis for granting ownership rights to the owners of property. When put into effect, the proper application of labor law should grant the respective employees a better salary and other benefit packages as per the positions they are responsible for. This is an aspect that needs to be seen though carefully.

FOREIGN CURRENCY

Undisputedly, the country is facing foreign currency challenges. However, no progress has emerged in view of the setout plans to continue the negotiation with International Financial Institutions (IFIs); World Bank & International Monetary Fund.

Nonetheless, recent reports indicate that the meetings are planned to take place shortly. In this regard, if the planned investment deals are to be effective, the actual agreements need to be thoroughly implemented.

In this respect in February, WB reaffirmed its commitment to support Ethiopia's Efforts to ensure Energy Access with respect to the county's endeavors of ensuring universal energy access for its citizens. Moreover, Ethiopia has been in talks with the IMF to borrow around \$3.5 billion under its reform programme. In this respect, in December 2024, the Paris Club of developed creditors said Ethiopia's agreement with its bilateral creditors, with the exception of China, to suspend debt payments until 2025 could be voided if the country does not secure an IMF loan by March 31, 2024. When looking at these developments, the reality shows that time is ticking for the country to hasten the negotiations so as to ensure a

timely loan to stimulate its economy.

DRAWBACKS ON ECONOMY

All in all, the economy that is recovering from the drastic impacts of the drawn conflicts in the North, has a long way to go before it gets back to normalcy. If the planned privatization of ownership is to succeed, given the afore said considerations are thought out effectively, its positive effects on bettering the economy is not to be doubted. Even though this may be a novel thing in view of the country's preserved precedent of property ownership rights, the period is casting that the it needs to adopt to the realities on the global framework to make its progress enduring.

WAY FORWARD

Ethiopia is currently trying out a novel legal principle where foreign investors are to become owners of property in the country. This decision as recently communicated by the Prime Minister could be a way of attracting foreign investment to equip the ailing economy. The two-year conflict with TPLF had a drastic impact besides the loss of lives and destruction of property. No bound that the CoHA signed in November 3, 2022, has succeeded in silencing the guns. Nonetheless the negative effects on the economy are yet to be addressed. Because the country celebrated one year since the signing of the agreement, its important to sustain the peace dividend.

Considering this, a proper tailoring of agreements to be reached with foreign investors is of utmost importance. This means that the country's legal principles must be respected in tandem with the due recognition to be granted to the setout legal obligations the country abides by. The country should not forsake the rights of its population for the sake of acquiring needed capital.

You can reach the writer via edentafeseework@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Request for Proposal for Long Term Agreement for Security Guarding Services

LRPS-2022-9189115

UNICEF (Ethiopia) wishes to request eligible bidders to participate in a Request for proposal (LRPS) **FOR ESTABLISHING LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENTS for the provision Security Guarding Service in Addis Ababa and different Field Offices and Warehouses.**

Details of the requirements for this bid and eligibility criteria etc. can be found in the bid document.

Interested and eligible bidders can get the bid document with the below links: **2merkato.com https://tender.2merkato.com/tenders/660bc82fb9cef771053b64af**

Bids must be received by latest on **24th of April 2024 @ 10:00 am**-East African time.

Bids received after the stipulated date and time will be invalidated. Proposers can submit bids in person to UNECA compound or through UNICEF Ethiopia secured email address: **ETH-Supply Tender Box <eth-supplytenderbox@unicef.org>**. A bid conference will not for this bid.

Last date for accepting inquiries from the bidders is 17rd of April 2024 at 10:00 am.

UNICEF is part of the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM). Accordingly, all proposers are encouraged to become a UNICEF vendor by creating a vendor profile in the UNGM website: **www.ungm.org**

The tender is open only for local bidders. It is important that you read all the provisions of the Request for Proposal to ensure that you understand and comply with UNICEF's requirements.

Proposers are required to provide their financial proposal ONLY with the format provided with the bid document.

Note: that failure to submit compliant bids may result in invalidation of your proposal.

IMPORTANT:

For hard copy bid submissions the UNECA security rules requires 36 hours 'advance notice' to be given by visitor, therefore please notify the Supply Section by **email: supplyaddisababa@unicef.org** providing the full name of the person who will be submitting the bid and the proposed date of arrival. Please ensure that the person coming has a valid Identification card.

ADDRESS: UNICEF Ethiopia, UNECA Compound, Zambazi Building, 2nd floor Supply Section, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. OR Email - **eth-supplytenderbox@unicef.org** OR to UNICEF Field Offices in each region



THE WORLD BANK

BID FOR SALE OF USED VEHICLES

The World Bank Ethiopia Country Office would like to sale used vehicles on competitive bid on **AS-IS WHERE IS** basis. The World Bank does not give warranty and guaranty for any of its properties being disposed. Interested bidders are therefore invited to submit their bids according to the following bid instructions.

1. Prospective bidders can inspect the vehicles Monday- Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm at the World Bank compound from **April 08 to April 12, 2024.**
2. The last day for submission of bids is **April 18, 2024, 4:00pm.**
3. Bids should be submitted in writing in a form of letter with clear indication of the amount in ETB and signed with full name and address of the bidder including alternate telephone numbers.
4. Bids **must be** accompanied with bid bond of **5%** of the value of the bid amount only in **CPO** written to the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).**
5. Bid winners are required to pay the full amount of the winning price and collect the vehicle within two weeks after they are notified.
6. Bid bonds will be returned to unsuccessful bidders after the winner is identified and awarded.
7. Bid winners are responsible to settle any government taxes and duties as they may be applicable.
8. From and after the date of purchase all risk of loss relating to the purchased Physical Assets are with the purchaser and the WBG has no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regards to such assets.
9. World Bank reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

THE THRIVING HUMAN RIGHTS INDUSTRY IN ETHIOPIA

By Samuel Estefanous

I hate belittling the sanctity of Human Rights and its avowed defenders. Particularly those universally declared and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at the very inception and outset of its constitution and mission.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights goes in history as one of the few spectacular collective achievements of the human race and I am ever proud our own Country was one among the handful who had participated in the process and which had voted for its adoption.

You know, close to ten members of the UN didn't at the time. Amanuel Abraham's memoir gives one a good insight to appreciate the efforts of the Imperial government. At the time, Ethiopia was an absolute monarchy and the Declaration does pose an affront to the excesses of established autocracies. But the Emperor didn't want to be counted among countries like Saudi Arabia by joining the ranks of those opposing the adoption of the Rights in the aftermath of the horrors of WWII.

So let this not be taken as a piece lamely trying to disparage the importance of the Declaration or the subsequently adopted Bill of Rights. This isn't about the inherent validity of Human Rights; rather, it is a neutral reflection on the 'economics' and 'politics' of human right as practiced in developing countries.

1-Czars of Human Rights

I know folks in academia in the West refuse to take Graham Hancock seriously. Some even go so far as accusing him of dabbling in pseudoscience. His patent declaration that he was hooked on drugs and was pretty much 'stoned' for the good part of his adult life didn't help his reputation very much either.

For the good part he was whacked on

account of The Sign and Seal, I know here it is a mark of academic distinction and finesse to have read the book but it has been a subject of much ridicule in the West. But there is one book which enables Hancock to hold his head up and tower above the rest of Western experts of third world politics-Lords of Poverty.

Deservedly it was hailed as an explosive grounding breaking book that had sent shock waves across the "aid industry"- to borrow the words of one of the book reviewer whose piece was published on Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) journal. In the book, the prime beneficiaries of the Aid Industry are identified as local elites in the recipient countries, special interest groups in the donor countries and the aid bureaucracy in both realms. The losers are donor country tax payers, generous private donors and of course the poverty stricken third world ምንድን።

Hancock published his book around 1989-before the last leg of the third wave of democracy was ushered in. It was written in the wake of the mid 80s famine of biblical proportion that had visited up on the Horn people of East Africa.

Note that the publication of the book coincides with Huntington's third wave of democracies that had reached Sub-Saharan Africa following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Beginning from the early 1990s the aid industry was effectively being edged out by the Human Rights Industry. No country showcases the transition as Ethiopia does.

Thanks in large measure to Special Interest Group in the first world like the National Endowment for Democracy and Soros' Open Society foundation, the Industry has been making systematic and unprecedented headways deep in to our country and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. Incidentally,

many Ethiopians best minds are familiar with and are grateful beneficiaries of the largesse of both groups.

Soros is a Hungarian American. Being the ultimate Czar of Human Rights, he had establishing the Central European University in Budapest yet for some reason he ended up being the most hated person in all of Hungary and the government had no choice but to close the famed University and send him packing- makes one wonder why. But one can easily infer, in the hidden Charter of the foundation, there was something threatening the wellbeing of the Hungarian society in the long run.

2-Beneficiaries of the Noblesse Principle

In the rest of the World where do the best minds of a given society go after graduation? They join elite research or law firms, they clerk for Senators, they distinguish themselves in academia but Sub-Saharan elite best minds of the social studies stream clog the corridors of UN Agencies and the AU to thrive on the ruins of an unfortunate segment of the human race.

Who would blame them? I mean owing to the Noblesse principle they will have a guaranteed king's ransom for a salary. This way the West makes the crème de crème of third world best minds and intellectuals world class beggars at the very best good only to perfect the higher art of fund raising. Being an employee or ex-employee of one of the UN Agencies or anyone of the armies of international donors or Human Right bodies is undisputed badge of honor that distinguishes the bearer from the rest of the society.

3-'Water water, everywhere water but not a drop to drink'

In Ethiopia Human Rights organizations have multiplied to such extent that they have established a Consortium-a sort of

professional guild for human right Czars. However a designated government organ preferably ACSO (Authority for Civil Society Organization) should have its Statute revised and have the power and procedure to review exactly what these organizations have achieved in a given period.

I know the standard industry defensive term given as a reply to that- እዚህ ጎረቤታችን ከንደ- there are twice as many if not more; as a matter of fact we aren't getting a tenth of our fair share of the global human rights and aid fund.

እዚህ ጎረቤታችን ከንደ- has got us in to a lot of trouble already. Policy decisions are increasingly being made not so much on knowledgeable studies and bottom up interest and data analysis as on the results of the comparison 'with our neighbor Kenya with a third of our population'. The Third Generation Universities are veritable testimonies of this blunder. No wonder the government of Ethiopia has recently sworn off not to open any other University in the foreseeable future.

What I am trying to say is the rise in the number of human rights organization is supposed to be in some kind of "inverse correlation" with human right abuse. But facts on the ground and the variable indicators prove otherwise. On the contrary they are actually positively correlated.

To what extent has the concerted efforts of the organizations kept the abuses down? I mean the more Human Rights activists and organizations we have the more rampant the abuse becomes.

Yeah, it is true, now we have 'regular reports' of gruesome abuses being released...

God Bless

You can reach the writer via estefanoussamuel@yahoo.com



UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR Representation in Ethiopia Tel.: +251 11 6612822 P. O. Box 1076 Email: ETHADSMS@unhcr.org

TENDER NOTICE

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Representation Office in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, invites qualified and registered Contractors / Suppliers to participate in the following tender.

SN	TENDER SUBJECT	CLOSING DATE
1	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: No. RFP-HCR-AA-2024-001 FOR THE PROVISION OF THIRD-PARTY MONITORING AND POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING FOR UNHCR ETHIOPIA OPERATION.	22nd April 2024 at 23:59 Hrs
2	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: No. RFP-HCR-AA-2024-002 FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF MOBILE MONEY SERVICES PROVIDERS (MMSP) FOR DELIVERING CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS IN ETHIOPIA	22nd April 2024 at 23:59 Hrs.

Tender documents for **RFP-HCR-AA-2024-001** and **RFP-HCR-AA-2024-002** can be requested by sending an email to: ETHADSMS@unhcr.org specifying the tender reference number in the subject line.


Submissions of bids for the above tender is through <https://etenderbox.unhcr.org/> Tender documents can also be obtained from UNGM website i.e. <https://www.ungm.org/>

Working hours: Monday to Thursday from 09:00-12:00 and 14:00-16:00 Friday from 09:00-14:00

The tender submission should comply with requirements raised in the tender documents and must be type-written/computer-generated/PDF.

No submission after the above deadline (Tender closing date) shall be accepted.

**SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SERVICES
UNHCR ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**



INVITATION TO BID

SALE OF OBSOLETE FURNITURE AND STATIONERY MATERIALS

RE F. PRO32-3-551-PMU/ 24-4-1

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) invites interested bidders to participate in a closed bid exercise for the sale of obsolete furniture and stationery Materials.

The bid is to be sold "as is, where is" without recourse to warranties of any kind. Bid with some information will be available for physical inspection from **04 April 2024 – 23 April 2024** on UN working hours and days from Monday to Thursday morning time between **9:00 AM to 12:30 PM afternoon time 15:00 PM to 17:00 PM and on Friday 9:00 AM to 13:00 PM.**

For physical inspection purpose, please contact Inventory Control Unit of ECA in person or through telephone 0115-443115 extensions (33115).

Interested bidders may collect the bid document from the Procurement Unit, in **Room no. NG.45.03** of its Secretariat Building (Niger) in the ECA compound at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during working hours, starting from **04 April 2024 – 23 April 2024** on UN working hours and days from Monday to Thursday morning time between **9:00 AM to 12:30 PM afternoon time 15:00 PM to 17:00 PM and on Friday 9:00 AM to 13:00 PM.**

The closing date of the bid submission will be on **23 April 2024 at 16:00 PM**, and the opening will be on **25 April 2024 at 15:00PM**. No Proposal shall be received after this **deadline**.

Bidders should deposit **Birr 200** in United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) account No.1000090977858 and collect bid document from Supply Chain Management Section Procurement unit **4th floor Room No. NG.45.03**.

Bidders will be expected to submit a bid bond of **10% of the total bid amount** in the form of CPO as a guarantee to participate in closed bid exercise.

The 10% Bid bond will not be returned to the awarded bidder who failed to collect his/her award.

Submission of bid on the basis of other bid is strictly prohibited.

The Economic Commission for Africa reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received whenever such rejection is in the interest of the organization.



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Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CBE extends its warmest wishes on Sidama's 2024 New Year Festival



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THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM 13TH ANNIVERSARY

By Elias Abi chakra

On April the 2nd our country celebrated the 13th anniversary of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The euphoria the country experienced when Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (PMMZ) announced the commencement of this huge game changing project was saluted with great fervor and enthusiasm all over the country. Millions of Ethiopians of all walks of life, inside and outside the country, said "finally"! Yes indeed, at last our country took its destiny in its own hands and decided to exploit its national treasure coveted by many. For centuries our national Abbay/Blue Nile flew continuously and obstinately out of the country bringing bounty to a foreign country that never recognized our generous contribution and leaving the country where it took it sources destitute. Since Herodotus proclaimed that Egypt was the gift of the Nile, most people unfortunately forgot that behind the Nile River there was a network of rivers that contributed to the continuous flow. Sir Winston Churchill was one of the few politicians to say righteously that Egypt was the gift of the Nile but the Nile was the gift of Ethiopia. Ethiopia was never rewarded for its generosity, instead it inherited trouble instigated by the best beneficiary of the precious water of the Nile River (NR): Egypt. This downstream country made relentless efforts to destabilize our

country (creation of Eritrean Liberation Front, arming Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan against Ethiopia).

The start was positive with a close follow-up by the late PMMZ. Planned to be terminated 5 years after the beginning of the project, unfortunately it followed another course after the premature death of PMMZ. From that time on, problems started to emerge. It started with the METEC scandal, an army enterprise having no experience on dam building which lost precious time by squandering money and resources that delayed the progression of the project. Armed violence intensified in the area where the dam was located in Western Ethiopia near the border of Sudan. At last came the diplomatic pressure from the United Nations, the American Government, the European Union and last but not least, the Arab League. Notwithstanding all these bottlenecks, the GERD continued to grow continuously. Then one day on the 19th of July 2020, the government announced the first phase of the filling of the dam, then the next year the second filling followed, and the routine continued with the 3rd and 4th filling the following next two years. The unthinkable happened to the great joy of the Ethiopians all over the world who celebrated the event ostentatiously and loudly.

The attitude of the two downstream countries often added insult to injury by simply denying Ethiopia, the major contributor of the NR (86%), the

legitimate right to use its water. The two downstream countries stuck to the infamous and iniquitous Colonial Treaties which gave them the exclusive rights to use the waters without having the slightest care for upstream countries. They even threatened these countries with military bravado. Not content by receiving water freely inside their own territory, the condescending Egyptian rulers, with an unmatched attitude of presumptuousness, invented the concept of the variable geometry border with an extensible territorial limit which allows them to have a right of inspection throughout the perimeter of the Nile Basin. It was an unholy pretext to meddle in the internal affairs of upstream countries.

Most of the upstream countries, except Ethiopia, had suffered from colonial rule for decades. Two of the downstream rulers, lacking basic psychology and elementary decency, didn't bother to stir painful memories as long as they satisfied their selfish needs. Desperate Egypt didn't hesitate to take the GERD issue to the USA when Mr. Trump was president, which was the same person who refused to recognize the dangerous impact of Climate change. The climate issue is going to impact negatively Egypt which is on the frontline of countries suffering from water scarcity due to the rise of global temperature. Paradoxically, Egypt never proposed compensation to Ethiopia in case this major water contributor of the NR didn't

use the waters of the Abbay/Blue Nile. Worse, the last downstream country didn't contribute a single Egyptian pound to help Ethiopia rehabilitate the Abbay/Blue Nile River Basin which suffered for decades from deforestation and soil degradation.

All the negative descriptions of the Abbay/Blue Nile with popular songs that described it as a traitor are becoming history. The hope of millions of Ethiopians depend on the GERD. The much needed power will bring great hope for Ethiopia where nearly half of its population hasn't electricity. An unexpected coincidence brought the actual Prime Minister, Dr Abiy Ahmed, to power on exactly the same day seven years later after the GERD was officially launched on April the 2nd 2018. The project, that was dragging, got a new dynamic start with the arrival of the actual Prime Minister. Even confronted with a bloody civil war in the North of the country, the construction of the dam was not delayed or stopped a single day.

Now the GERD has reached its final stage with a foreseeable future of the end of the project most probably at the end of this year or next year. Finally the Abbay/Blue Nile will eventually no longer carry tree trunks indefinitely because it will lay them at the GERD site in Guba. Neighboring countries are waiting with impatience the delivery of power from the GERD. The delivery of power to these countries is going to be the first step of regional economic integration, one of the best occasion to promote peace in the troubled Horn of Africa. Happy birthday and long life to the GERD!

You can reach the writer via elias.abichakra@yahoo.com



Save the Children

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PREQUALIFICATION OF STATIONARY AND TONER ITEMS SUPPLIERS

Tender Reference # - SCI-ET-2024-004

SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (SCI, Ethiopia) the world's leading independent non-profit organization for children intends to **prequalify suppliers and establish framework agreement with out price** for two year with possible extension for the supply of stationary and toner supplier in different lots. Save the children want to have potential suppliers to deliver stationary and toner supplies for beneficiaries and office use in a continuous manner. And hereby invites potential suppliers to submit a sealed tender in accordance to the Service Details, Instruction to Bidders, and General Terms and Conditions of Purchase as described in bid document.

Tender document

- Potential bidders may obtain the tender documents against payment of a non-refundable amount of ETB 100 from SCI offices in Addis Ababa Country office starting from April 09, 2024 up to April 26, 2024 during working hours.

Save the children Ethiopia Country Office, close to Meskel

Square, near the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Tenders submitted must be accompanied with:

- Renewed Valid Business License
- Company profile listing the bidders' address, branches, structure, resources,...and other document as specified on the bid document.
- Declaration of acceptance to SCI's statement of requirement, terms/conditions, and policies and etc

Tenders must be submitted in **sealed envelopes, technical original & copy**, bearing an official company seal, and clearly marked by the **"bidders' name, address, and the tender reference number and title as stated above**. The tender must be submitted in the bid box prepared for the purpose at SCI offices in Addis Ababa Country office on **April 29, 2024 on or before 2:00 PM**.

Save the Children Procurement Committee will open tender responses on **April 29, 2024 at 03:00PM**.

SCI reserves the right to accept or reject this bid, in partial, or in its entirety.

Drought, floods show urgency of improved water security in Africa

By Tshidi Ramogase

Africa's vulnerability to climate change was once again demonstrated in late 2023, when torrential rains swept across much of East Africa, bringing devastating floods just six months after a record-breaking five-season drought in the region.

Vast areas of farmland in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia were inundated, washing away homes and destroying thousands of hectares of crops.

These events highlight the urgency of improved water security and climate resilience on the continent.

Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) partners with governments, the private sector, NGOs and communities to promote water security. Water is a priority for Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) because it is essential to life, our beverages and the communities we serve.

The Coca-Cola Company's 2030 Water Security Strategy is focused on accelerating the actions needed to increase water security where we operate, source ingredients and touch people's lives.

We invest in water initiatives that benefit nature and communities. This includes projects that provide benefits to local watersheds that supply water for drinking, agriculture and manufacturing, restore and conserve habitats for plants and animals and offer opportunities for local economic development.

As part of this work, we collaborate with partners to understand the inextricable link between water, climate, agriculture and biodiversity.

In addition, many of our water replenishment projects have additional co-benefits such as helping improve soil health, sequester carbon, conserve water, restore degraded lands, contribute to biodiversity and help mitigate climate change.

Our work is organized to address water security inside our operations, in our watersheds and in our communities. Also, we continue to replenish the water we use in our finished beverages to nature and communities.

Inside our operations, the Coca-Cola system is committed to regenerative water use. This means using less water as well as re-using and treating wastewater.

For example, in Kenya we opened a new wastewater treatment plant at our Equator Bottlers plant in Kisumu, which will promote more sustainable water use and help reduce the factory's environmental impact. The new plant will enable us to treat and recycle wastewater generated from the production facility, which will be used for non-potable purposes such as irrigation and cleaning.

Our subsidiary, Coca-Cola Beverages Botswana, signed an agreement last year with the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources to donate water from its newly installed water treatment plant for agricultural irrigation at the campus. The new

state-of-the-art water treatment plant has made the company fully effluent compliant by ensuring that clean water is returned to the environment.

We also aim to improve the health of watersheds identified as most critical for our operations and agricultural supply chain by supporting nature-based solutions, investing in landscape solutions and helping farmers to use less water.

CCBA in Kenya has been actively engaged over the past three years in reforesting 90 hectares of critical forests that play a significant role in Nairobi's water catchment areas in collaboration with implementing partner, Nature Kenya.

When it comes to communities, we aim to help provide access to safe water,

sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and advocate for good water governance.

Our South African bottler, Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA), supported good water governance in Grabouw in the Western Cape, where the municipality was losing a significant amount of its potable water due to leaks and failing infrastructure. Through this partnership, we trained young community members in plumbing to support the rehabilitation of water infrastructure, including fixing leaks in informal areas.

In response to a looming Day Zero in parts of the Eastern Cape province in South Africa, CCBSA deployed off-grid, solar-powered groundwater harvesting and treatment projects called Cokevilles in the region. A

total of nine systems, or water tanks, have been deployed in Gqeberha and similar Cokeville projects have been installed in other peri-urban and rural communities in Limpopo, Gauteng, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

We do business the right way as a trusted partner for sustainable growth by managing packaging waste, water stewardship, and economic inclusion, particularly for women and youth. We are committed to making a positive impact on people's lives and communities for a better shared future in Africa.

Tshidi Ramogase is Coca-Cola Beverages Africa's Chief Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability Officer

IN AFRICA, WE FINALLY HAVE MOMENTUM AGAINST TB. LET'S NOT SQUANDER IT

By Morounfolu (Folu) Olugbosi

It is interesting to see, from my vantage point in South Africa, the reaction to the slight rise in tuberculosis (TB) cases in the U.S. Overall, TB in the U.S. has declined steadily since the early 1950s. But in the past few years, TB incidence has started to slowly increase. While the percentages seem steep, the overall increase is less than 1,300 new cases.

In contrast, TB has long been a crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. Seventeen of the globe's highest TB burden countries are located in the region. But for several years now, the World Health Organization's (WHO) annual TB report shows progress in Africa: incidence is slowly declining, and more infections are being diagnosed and treated. And, as a result, deaths from TB in our region declined almost every year this decade.

This is a stunning set of statistics. Sub-Saharan Africa is making important inroads despite a tremendous burden, while the U.S. shows how turning away from public health allows diseases like TB to chip away at everyone's prosperity.

The stage is set for African governments to have a remarkable impact. A concerted investment can make a tremendous difference on the continent. Consider the state of the disease in three of the most populous African countries, in light of the U.S. numbers, and how they are increasing their efforts:

- ▶ In Kenya, TB incidence has declined over the past 14 years and deaths are now one-third of what they were in 2010. The government announced in January plans to increase treatment

coverage and multi-drug resistance TB detection services.

- ▶ In Nigeria, since 2018, TB incidence has held steady while TB deaths have declined 38%. The government has intensified efforts to find and treat individual cases before they can spread—26% more cases were reported in 2023 than in 2022.

- ▶ In South Africa, TB incidence has steadily declined since 2010, and TB deaths have slowly declined as well after steep drops in 2012 and 2013. The government funds almost 75% of its TB services and is launching an HIV and TB dashboard to better track the country's health statistics.

A number of innovations in TB research and development have helped improve outcomes. A treatment for the highly drug-resistant forms of the disease, developed by TB Alliance, was recommended by the WHO at the end of 2022 and is now available to low- and middle-income countries through the UN's Global Drug Facility. More than 70 countries are in various stages of adopting and implementing the treatment.

In fact, the monies saved from deploying the new treatment regimen for drug-resistant TB can be channeled back into TB prevention, detection, and treatment services. Projections indicate that this regimen, which is more cost effective and shorter, would save US\$740 million globally every year if all eligible patients received it.

Other promising new TB treatments, diagnostics, and vaccines are on the horizon. The impact of safe, shorter, effective, and cheaper tools to control

TB is anticipated to be significant.

Much more is needed though. At a key United Nations High-Level Meeting this past September, member states agreed to spend US\$5 billion every year on TB research and development, yet they spent only 20% of that amount in 2022. They also agreed to spend US\$22 billion annually by 2027 on TB diagnostic, treatment, and prevention services—but total spending only reached US\$5.8 billion last year.

WHO has estimated that more than two-thirds of the TB patients and their households in Sub-Saharan Africa face catastrophic financial costs. These costs do not just stem from the direct cost of medical care and the cost of getting to and from treatment. TB saps the ability of patients to work, and the time spent taking care of patients detracts from time that could have been spent earning an income. As a result, TB strikes at the financial resilience of families, forcing almost half of all patients in one survey to either borrow money or sell household property to meet costs.

We cannot have solid economic growth if TB is eating away at both the health and livelihoods of our families. Instead, if governments focus on ending TB and invest in this goal, we can lift more people up and out of poverty while improving the health of our region.

TB must be a priority. It is past time to end the TB crisis, and it is now possible. But all governments need to step up and make this a reality.

Dr Morounfolu (Folu) Olugbosi is Senior Director, Clinical Development, at TB Alliance



እናት ባንክ ከአሪፍ ፔይ ቴክኖሎጂስ ጋር የመግባቢያ ስምምነት ተፈራርመ።

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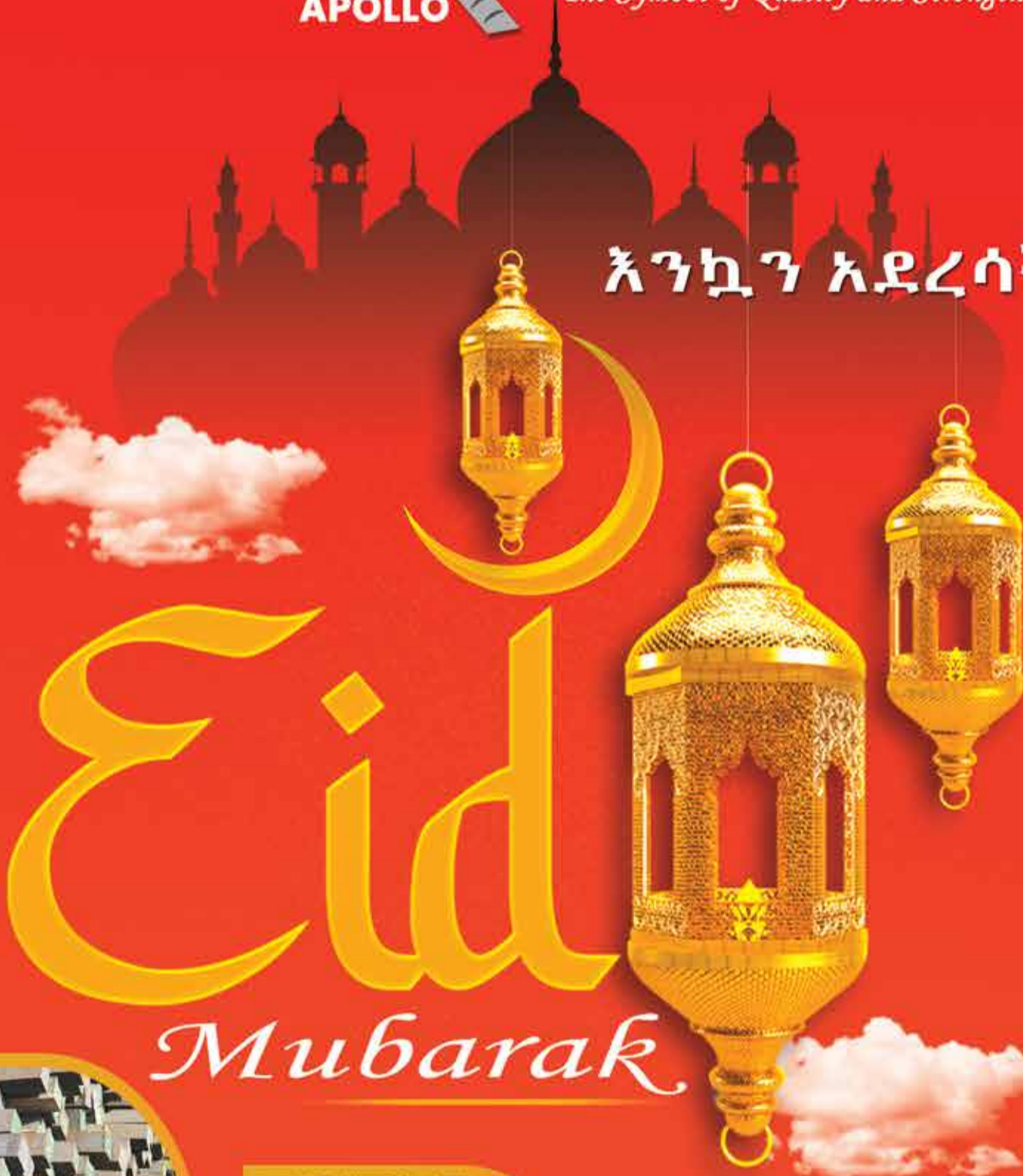
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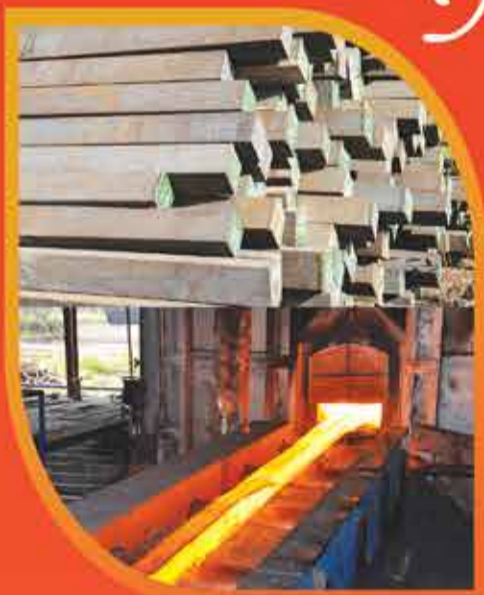
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እንኳን አደረሰቶሁ!



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HAITI AS A PARABLE TO THE WORLD

■ By Lenrod Nzulu Baraka

As the numerous layers of the Haitian saga are peeled away, what is emerging is a drama that potentially will sweep the globe in the near future. When the backs of the masses are forced against the proverbial wall, the masses will resort to the only source of power available to them, namely the power of violence. Jimmy Cherizier has become public enemy number one in Haiti and the international community precisely because he is giving voice to the plight of the suffering masses in Haiti who are no longer willing to play the age-old political games that allow a tiny fraction of Haiti's population to live in opulence while the masses eke out a hellish existence.

Former president and current Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump struck a nerve when he labelled mainstream media outlets as purveyors of

fake news. The ongoing horror story in Gaza reveals just how on-point Donald Trump was in his castigation of the main stream media networks as sources of fake news. The silencing of Mehdi Hassan and other journalists who were brave enough to push back against the Israeli propaganda being spewed out by the mainstream news outlets eloquently demonstrates how unreliable mainstream news actually is.

Jimmy Cherizier who is repeatedly referred to as 'Barbeque' in the main stream media, gained the moniker of Barbeque in his formative days growing up in Haiti. The nickname seemed to have originated from his mother's trade of selling fried chicken in the Port of Prince. Mainstream media and others however float the narrative that the name could also be connected to unproven allegations of arson and immolations attributed to Cherizier. It should be very

obvious that the mainstream media is in full demonization mode as Cherizier and his supporters are made to look like the devil or worse.

Listening to Cherizier however is the quickest way to dispel and demolish the demonization propaganda of the mainstream media. Anyone pushing the narrative that Jimmy Cherizier is the Devil, is simultaneously rehabilitating the persona of the Devil and transforming the Devil into a praise-worthy humanist. Cherizier, who sees himself as an embodiment of the great Haitian ancestor Jean-Jacque Dessalines, is adamant that his revolution is designed to bring down the reign of the bloodsucking oligarchs who are responsible for the squalor and misery that is pervasive among the poor masses of Haiti.

Leaders in the US, the EU, the African Union, and the Caribbean should be paying careful attention to what is going

on in Haiti. The poor masses in Haiti may not have jobs and sufficient food to feed themselves and their families, but mysteriously, they are armed to the teeth with high powered weapons and they are adequately supplied with ammunition. As the armed groups in Haiti coalesce under a central command, it will become increasingly more difficult to impose an external solution on the armed Haitian masses.

The coalition of armed groups in Haiti is undoubtedly the strongest power broker in Haiti. An armed populace with an agenda that does not align with the agenda of the ruling class is a nightmare scenario for global leadership. Whereas, peaceful protest by the masses can topple regimes, armed resistance by the masses can change the world. Haiti may therefore prove to be the first shot fired in a new revolution that will usher in a great global economic reset.

Central to Cherizier's rhetoric is the demand for a general redistribution of wealth. In true Robin Hood style, Cherizier advocates taking from the wealthy -by force if necessary- so that the poor can live in dignity. The Catholic Church in its preferential option for the poor has gone so far as to state that the poor can take from the rich what they need to survive. The backs of the Haitian masses have been driven to the wall and the world is about to witness how far poor people with guns will go to get their slice of the national pie.

Haiti may very well be on the cusp of a second revolution that could act as a catalyst for similar revolutions globally. A small minority enjoying most of the resources of the world is not a sustainable model. Eventually, the masses will realize that politics and elections are just games played by the elite to perpetuate their disproportionate control of the world's resources. Since governments are institutions of the elite, it is inevitable that the masses will have to wage war with governments and their security agencies to affect significant wealth redistribution.

Sidelining the armed groups in Haiti has already doomed the provisional council to failure because the armed groups will view the provisional council as an imposed solution on Haiti by the same people who are responsible for the misery in Haiti. The United States of Amnesia would do well to remember that it was rag tag armed mob of American patriots who coalesced under the leadership of George Washington to give the world the American Revolution and the American nation.

CARICOM leaders should persist in their efforts to bring a resolution to the crisis in Haiti. However, CARICOM leaders should not be afraid to remind Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and newly appointed US ambassador to Haiti Dennis Hankins about the revolutionary past of the US. CARICOM leaders agreeing with American foreign policy goals in their entirety will only place CARICOM in the crosshairs of the armed groups in Haiti. Bringing Cherizier and others of his ilk to the negotiating table is the right thing to do if a long-lasting nonviolent solution is to be found that will get Haiti beyond its current impasse.

EMPERORS OF MOLE HILLS

■ By Lenrod Nzulu Baraka

African and Caribbean political leaders seem to have a proclivity for pursuing small, parochial, myopic, self-serving agendas that only benefit themselves and their cronies while simultaneously robbing future generations of Africans and Caribbean islanders of a comfortable existence. Many, after looting the national treasury, retire to some safe haven to enjoy their ill-gotten gains while their nations wallow in misery and debt.

It cannot be argued that Africa and the Caribbean has not been blessed with some notable men and women who have swam against the tide of mediocrity and have implemented some much-needed reforms that have advance the economic cause of the masses. Names like Kwame Nkrumah, Thomas Sankara, Patrice Lumumba, Robert Mugabe, Muammar Gaddafi, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nelson and Winnie Mandela, Eric Williams, Toussaint Louverture, Errol Barrow, and Mia Motley fall into this category.

Regrettably many of the political contemporaries of these notable African and Caribbean statesmen and women were not captivated by the vision of progress that inspired the great ones who emerged among us. The pettiness of power politics inherited from our colonial past very often led to the cannibalization of the visionary leaders who were given to the Caribbean and Africa as a mercy by the ancestors and the great spirits.

President Nkrumah of Ghana was overthrown and sent into exile in neighboring Guinea. Toussaint Louverture was betrayed, kidnapped, and transported to France where he died cold and alone in a French dungeon. Thomas Sankara, Patrice Lumumba, Muammar Gaddafi were assassinated with the connivance of Caucasian imperialist nations. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nelson and Winnie Mandela, Eric Williams, Errol Barrow and Mia Motley were all chewed up by a hypercritical, power obsessed opposition that only served to hijack and derail the visionary agenda of these gifted leaders.

Currently, there is a paucity of genuine visionary statesmanship in African and Caribbean politics. Contemporary African

and Caribbean politicians often say many of the right things but only as a way of being voted into office. Once they achieve their political ambition and don the mantle of political power, most incumbent politicians simply conform to the status quo and start building their own little financial empires. It is not uncommon to hear of African and Caribbean politicians who achieve multimillionaire status by the time they leave office.

While our leaders are gorging themselves with the fat of the land, many African and Caribbean nations are languishing in a state of abject poverty and squalor. Africa, notwithstanding the boast of being one of the mineral richest land masses on the globe, trails many lesser endowed regions of the world in gross domestic product, quality of life, length of life, income of its citizens, technological application, and infrastructure. While many of our leaders are enjoying the luxuries of life, the masses of people under their political jurisdiction are literally catching hell.

President Nkrumah wisely warned the leaders of his day that the trapping of power needed to be surrendered in the interest of creating an African state that would be strong enough to challenge the US, Europe, and Asia. President Nkrumah understood that the proliferation of independent but weak African states was a recipe for the disaster of neo-colonization. President Nkrumah asked Africans leaders to choose between being princes on a mountain or emperors of molehills.

Sadly, the majority of African leaders chose the latter course of action and scurried back to their molehills to enjoy the trapping of power while their pusillanimous, anemic nations eked out a disheveled existence. The Caribbean, much to its credit, did try to create a West Indies Federation. The lure of the trappings of power coupled with competing insular nationalism however proved to be way more powerful than the Pan-Caribbean ideal resulting in the collapse of the West Indies Federation in 1962.

The refusal of African and Caribbean leaders to relinquish the scepter of national power in the interest of creating

a viable African and Caribbean state has birthed what can only be described as a legacy of lunacy. Small European nations like Italy and France organize summits in which they extend invitations to all fifty-four African heads of states. African leaders are packed on board buses like school children and driven to these summits.

Presidents and prime ministers of mole hill nations in Africa and the Caribbean find it tough sailing in their negotiations with more powerful nations. African and Caribbean leaders are often forced into accepting less than ideal conditionalities as pre-requisites for deals that often are more beneficial to the powerful nations. The size of some Caribbean states also neutralizes any attempt by their leaders to gain concessions in the international market place.

Demographically, the future of the world is African and Asian. It makes sense for the African continent to develop close ties with China. Hopefully, African leaders will use Chinese financing and technology to created better infrastructural linkages across the continent. An Intercontinental railway service would be a great boon for tourism on the African continent. Each region in Africa should also be exploring ways to strengthen the military capacity of the entire continent.

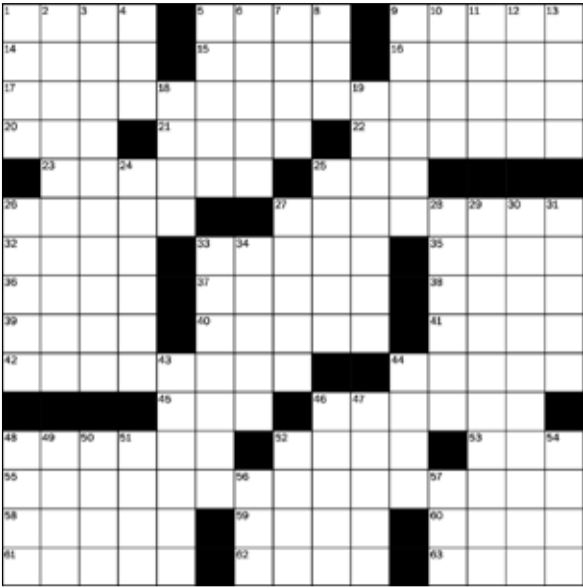
Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso are well positioned to set a new trend in political union on the African continent. It will be interesting to see how far the military rulers of these three African states are willing to push the federation concept. The collapsing of borders and a political union in the Sahel region would be a useful experiment to test how viable smaller federation of states would work on the African continent. If the gods favor the bold at heart, then now may be the opportune time for small, weak, molehill nations in Africa and the Caribbean to do the needful and be sublimated into a grander political and economic entity.

Lenrod Nzulu Baraka is the founder of Afro-Caribbean Spiritual Teaching Center and the author of The Rebirth of Black Civilization: Making Africa and the Caribbean Great Again.

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Entertainment

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Squad whose Double-A affiliate is the Rumble Ponies
- 5 Like black vinegar
- 9 Bit of shut eye?
- 14 Rink leap
- 15 ___-free
- 16 Shoyu dish
- 17 "Don't move"
- 20 Part that has a radius but no diameter
- 21 Item that may wind up in a backyard
- 22 Program-terminating command
- 23 Feature
- 25 Seattle hrs.
- 26 Political network
- 27 Media company that claims to be the largest producer of Spanishlanguage content
- 32 Hiding place
- 33 Chorizo, por ejemplo

DOWN

- 35 Agnes, in Spain
- 36 Italian bread
- 37 Deal-maker
- 38 "This can't be happening!"
- 39 Ingredient in some exfoliators
- 40 Tree huggers?
- 41 Deal that generates interest
- 42 Investor's concern
- 44 Photo finish
- 45 Boo
- 46 "I want no part of this!"
- 48 Pastry choice
- 52 Fisher of "Shameless"
- 53 TripTik org.
- 55 Sighed line
- 58 Poet on some 36-Across coins
- 59 57-Down, for one
- 60 Treat for one's dogs?
- 61 Symptoms
- 62 Casino figures
- 63 Side by side?

DOWN

- 1 Atole ingredient
- 2 Trattoria request
- 3 Rah-rah feeling
- 4 Cute
- 5 Not permanent
- 6 Not permanent
- 7 Infinitive of suis, sommes, etc.
- 8 Go green, say
- 9 "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" novelist
- 10 Talk up
- 11 Vellani of "ülte Marvels"
- 12 Successor to Claudius
- 13 Was certain of
- 18 "It's that's enough"
- 19 "We totally should!"
- 24 Send-up
- 25 Rasta pasta pasta
- 26 Washed up
- 27 Influencer's concern
- 28 Trio in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto


No. 3


- 29 Facing trouble
- 30 One who may face an up-Hill climb
- 31 In lockstep
- 33 Writing on the wall?
- 34 Able to do splits, say
- 43 Birds that often nest with spoonbills
- 44 "Holy ___!"
- 46 Blown away
- 47 Picks up
- 48 Gate stats
- 49 Masala ___
- 50 "Constant Craving" singer
- 51 Routing abbr.
- 52 Not just want
- 54 Continent with nine island nations
- 56 "True Detective" network
- 57 Dogfish Head's Notorious H.O.P., for one


Solution: see below





WEEKLY HOROSCOPES


Aries
 Delays and setbacks may ease at last. A decision could mean a green light for a project you've started. The focus is on developing supportive contacts. You're likely to find a niche that brings hope for a better future. Collaborate with others to bring ideas together in new and more effective ways. Trust your intuition when you need to know what to do next. A new chapter begins now. You are feeling a deep restlessness that is associated with your need to start something new.


Cancer
 The Universe supports expanding your horizons and networking to improve whatever condition in which you find yourself. People and organizations you see every day can be especially helpful now. It's possible you're still coping with a major disappointment. This could begin to make you feel trapped and helpless. Take charge of your life by improving your attitude. This will empower you in even the most difficult situation.


Libra
 Bad advice can bring a sudden reversal of fortune. Things move in a different direction than you anticipate. It's very important not to take setbacks personally. Some people may have to quit or be laid off. Sometimes change comes from the disloyalty or greed of someone you trusted. View any setback as an opportunity to move in a new and better direction. Cut your losses and come to terms with unavoidable limitations.


Capricorn
 Mysteries could be floating around the workplace. Someone may accidentally or intentionally deceive you. Someone you work with isn't telling you the whole truth about a situation. Women will be very influential now. If you're unhappy in your job, anticipate a turn for the better. Doors will open. New opportunities could come out of nowhere. Reach out if you're looking for something new. Do whatever YOU want to do.


Taurus
 You'll make important connections now. Good news about work and finances is on the way. This is a lucky period for seeking a new or better position. The changes you've been waiting for are in sight. You may see increased demand for your product or service. The cosmos could put you in line for a promotion or introducing innovative ideas. Logic and reason aren't as important as developing pleasant relationships.


Leo
 This could be a time when you'd be better off trying to herd cats. The Universe can scatter the energies of the people you work with. There could be sudden changes of plan or people may simply prove unreliable. A major change is in the works for you. Surprising events could sweep your life clean of what is no longer necessary. This can be difficult to live through, but the ultimate outcome will be improved conditions.


Scorpio
 For some, the news isn't great. A work slowdown or layoff might be in the works. Don't be surprised if you're passed over for a promotion or raise that you deserve. Is your current job or career where you want to spend your working life? The cosmos will bring you a wave of fortunate energy. Things will begin to settle down soon. Sticking to traditional methods will actually prove to be most effective.

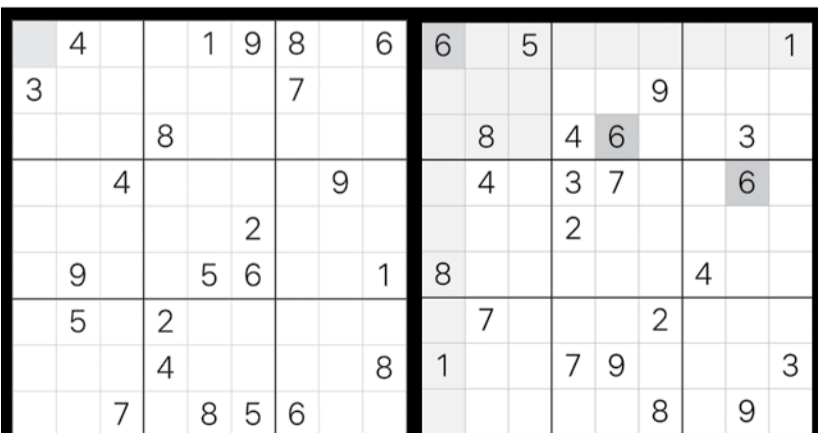
Aquarius
 This is a powerful time to release the past and start fresh. Finish outstanding assignments and take responsibility for your life. Avoid placing blame or judging others. You'll begin to discover that true happiness lies within you. Honestly review your past actions and how you may have misused your opportunities. The Universe brings an opportunity to find something new or resolve an old disappointment.

Gemini
 Other people could be especially irritating or unreliable now. You or your boss may be a control freak. This could be stressful for everyone. Being flexible and allowing everyone to have their say will bring the best results. It may require an extra push to get everything done. This isn't the time to break the rules. Resolve to do the best you can and reserve harsh judgments for another time. You don't want to get weighed down.

Virgo
 This is a powerful time for networking and all sorts of group plans and projects. The cosmos can scatter your energies. Do your best to focus on one task at a time. Your boss or a co-worker could be especially irritating. Do your best to listen as well as talk. Not everyone is as progressive as you. Patience is necessary. New opportunities are just around the corner. You will be able to gather resources and information.

Sagittarius
 Someone you thought you could count on may let you down or be particularly difficult. Open yourself to new possibilities. This is especially good advice if you feel worried or haven't been sleeping well. Don't let others' fears or challenges influence your attitude. Face your fears in order to discover what is real and what is causing you unnecessary stress. You're only going through a phase. You should take this time to dream.

Pisces
 You work life may not be all you wish it to be. This will change soon and things will improve. In the meantime, you must do the best you can with what's in front of you. Whatever you've been working on may be put to the test now. What is no longer working should be set aside. The cosmos opens the door for powerful, positive changes. It's an ideal time to apply for a new job. Don't be afraid to do so.



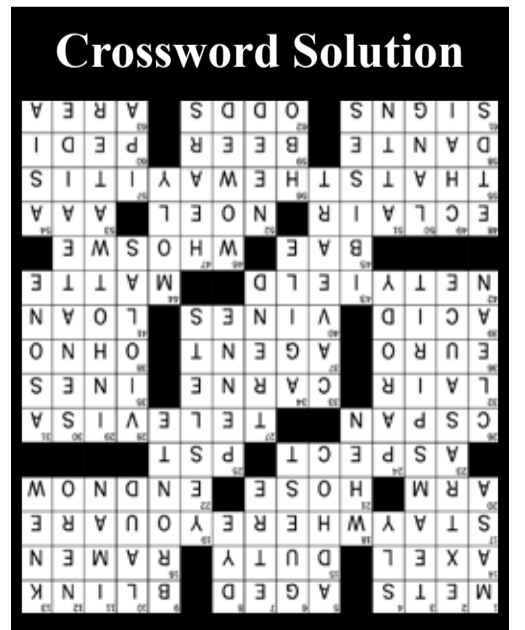
Sudoku

The game is easy, the rules are simple. All you have to do is make sure you fill every 3x3 box every row and every column, without repetition, using the number 1-9.

Word search

M	I	C	R	O	W	A	V	E	F	E	L	K	I	
R	U	R	E	L	I	O	R	B	P	U	M	P	E	
V	R	E	H	S	A	W	H	S	I	D	E	A	P	
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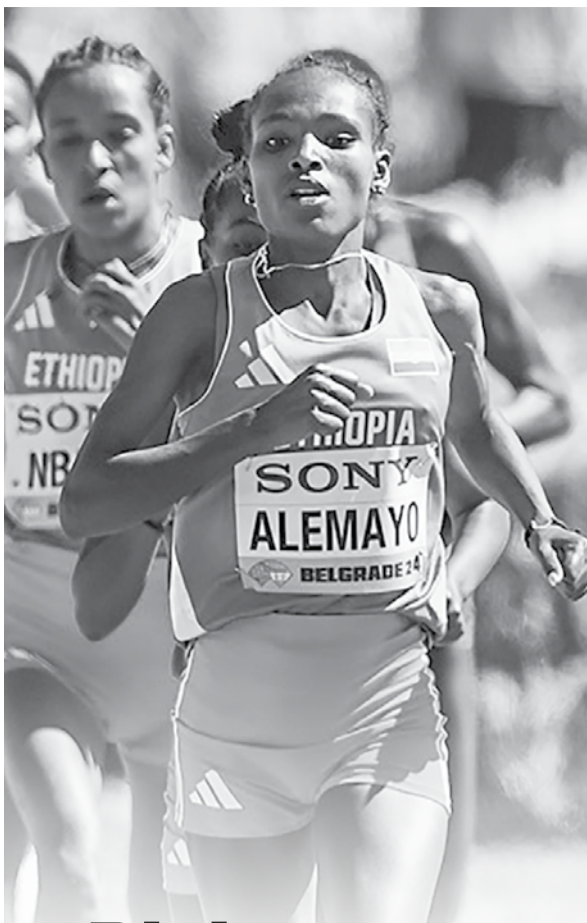
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Rising star Marta Alemayo led Ethiopian Medal sweep

Little known Ethiopian Marta Alemayo upset the pre-race favorites to emerge victorious in the U20 women's race at the World Athletics Cross Country Championships Belgrade 24. The 15-year-old, who finished fourth at the Ethiopian trials, punched her hand in the air when crossing the finish line in 19:28 in a humid 24°C Friendship Park.

The teenager led an Ethiopian medal sweep, with Asayech Ayichew and Robe Dida finishing second and third in 19:32 and 19:38 respectively. After winning the three medals, Ethiopia successfully defended the individual title and also got the team title for the fifth consecutive edition since 2015.

Marta Alemayo

Marta credited her victory and the Ethiopian performance to proper training. From the outset, Alemayo and her compatriots made their intention clear, running from the front alongside the Kenyan and Ugandan athletes.

It was the Japanese Narumi Okumoto who set the tempo and led after the first few minutes, blowing the field open with a 50m advantage, but it was short-lived as Kenya's Deborah Chemutai closed up the gap with the rest of the pack joining her.

The Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes continued to exchange the lead, maintaining a moderate pace through the first lap, with Uganda right behind.

On the third lap, it was down to all six Ethiopian athletes running from the front. Alemayo covered the distance in 6:34.

As the race wound up, Marta, Ayichew and Dida commanded the race along with Kenya's Sheila Jebet and Cherotich. With 800m to go, it was down to Alemayo and Ayichew.

Marta was too strong – she surged away and went on to cut the tape. Ayichew was close behind her for silver and Dida passed Jebet with 50m to go to get bronze.

“Yes, I was expecting to do well, and I am not surprised with the win,” said Alemayo. “The win is not important only in itself, but it will also help set up the rest of my career.”

“We were well prepared for this race. We have great coaches, who give us a lot of support.”

The results again reflect East African dominance, with no other athlete outside of Kenya or Ethiopia having won the U20 women's world cross country title for 29 years.

Capital SPORT

By Michael Samson
michael@capitalethiopia.com

ETHIOPIAN STAR TADU NARE absent from Spar Grand Prix opener in Cape Town

For once, there turned out to be no Tadu Nare to chase when the elite runners tackle a Spar Grand Prix race as this year's edition of the popular women's 10km event took off in Cape Town last Sunday.

The Ethiopian starlet who turns out in the green colors of Nedbank Running Club has so dominated the series in the last three years that the question ahead of each race has not been who would win but rather who will finish second behind Nare.

A champion of the Grand Prix in the previous three years, Nare – alongside her compatriot Selam Gebre who usually takes the runner-up position – sat out last weekend's race due to competition somewhere else.

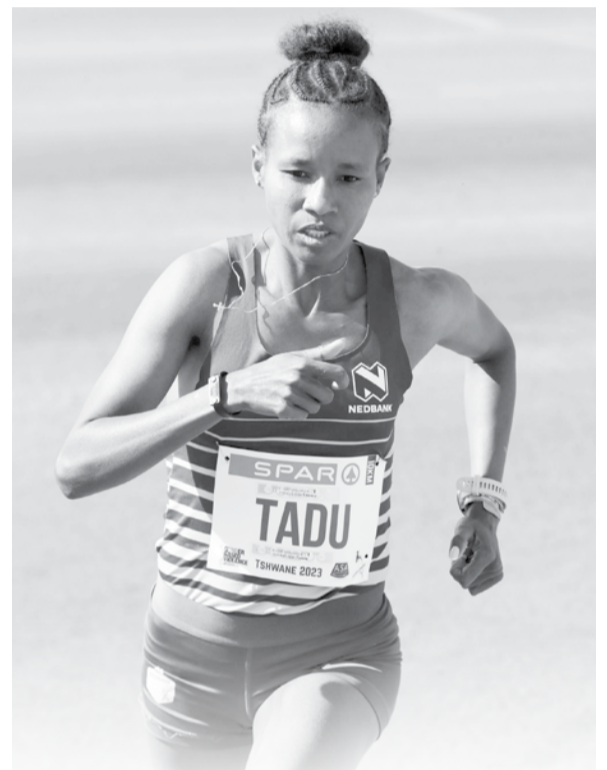
While it opens up the door for South African runners such former Grand Prix champion Glenrose Xaba and her teammate Cacisile Sosibo to shine, the Boxer Athletic Club duo will not have it so easy.

Nedbank manager Nick Bester has discovered other Ethiopians who are likely to be just as competitive as Nare and Gebre.

“We are building a new Nedbank Ethiopian team,” said Bester. “We have entered two juniors, Diniya Kedir Abaraya and Getenesh Agafaw, and will use the Spar races to develop them into world-class athletes like Tadu and Salem.”

With personal bests of 32:03 and 32:46 set in Durban and Tshwane respectively last year, Abaraya and Agafawa are evidently talented and Bester's statement that they are ‘developing’ them sounds somewhat wrong given the times they are running already.

Xaba though is a seasoned campaigner of the Spar



Grand Prix as she has proven in the previous years by challenging Nare and Gebre, albeit mostly in vain. The last South African to win the Grand Prix, the lass from Mpumalanga continues to prove herself as the country's best 10km female runner and did this a fortnight ago when she won the ASA national 10km Championships in Johannesburg in a good time of 33 minutes.

MUJIB KASIM:

The mid-season transfer window biggest fish



The mid season players' transfer window opened following the end of the first round, premier league clubs are getting busy signing new players. Under achievers Baherdar Ketema and Ethiopia Medin are the two clubs that are aggressively participating in the mid season transfer market that is unusually quite these days.

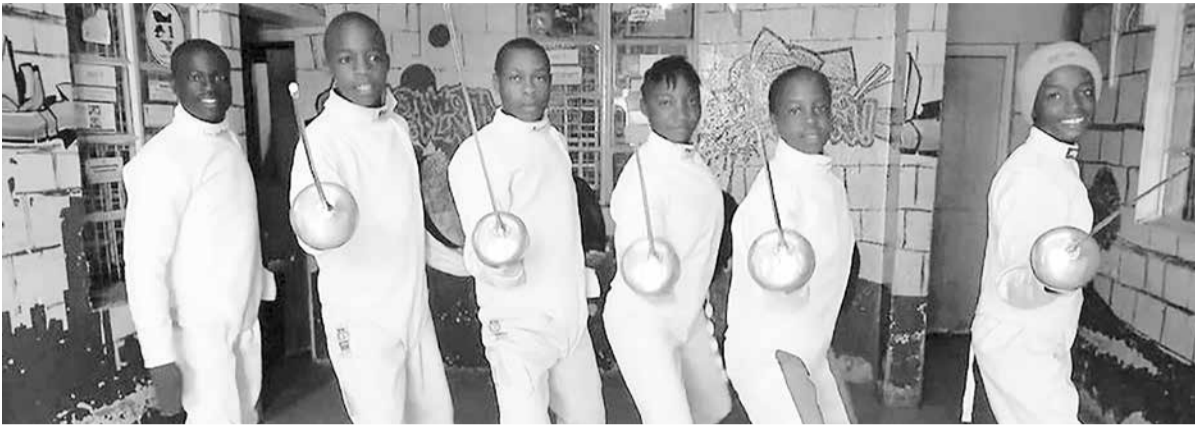
Hawassa Ketema's Mujib Kasim turned out the biggest fish so far in the transfer market. Rumored to be one of the most expensive footballer when he joined Hawassa Ketema for eight million Birr two years deal, Mujib walked out of the club in mutual agreement having six months contract remaining.

Unofficial sources close to Baherdar disclosed that the striker who bought out his remaining contract with Hawassa signed a five million birr 18 months contract. Mujib is expected to bring back alive the club's dream of winning the league title for the first time. A proven attacking midfielder even to the national side, Mujib has already opened his account on his debut match against Ethiopia Bunna.

Under pressure from the club's supporters for failing to deliver what he promised at the start of the season, Head Coach Degarege Yigzaw also added to his squad two other players. The former Batu Town winger who scored four goals in his half season stay has now signed an 18 month contract while the wing back Wondosen Belete put his signature until the end of the current season.

Sword fighting offers hope for youth in Nairobi's poorest areas

Fencing offers a ray of hope to young people living in Nairobi's poorest neighbourhoods



Despite a lack of equipment, the sword fighting sport is growing in popularity in Kenya.

They cut a striking group as they wander through Huruma in their pristine white outfits.

These young people are heading for their favourite hang-out spot: the Tsavora Fencing club at the local community centre.

The street becomes their arena as they parry and riposte in front of passers-by.

This is not just a hobby for them: it's a force for good in their lives.

Fencing has helped carve a path away from crime, drugs and other social pressures.

"I used to be a gangster," says Mburu Wanyoike, who is now a coach for Kenya's National Fencing team.

"I was in crime and crime makes you feel isolated. It actually puts you in a place where you are isolated, making you feel depressed, having stress and I chose fencing as a way for me to escape out of the hood and escape that lifestyle."

His journey from delinquency to fencing coach and senior athlete in Kenya's national team has been transformative.

Inspired by the personal tragedy of the death of two friends, Wanyoike pursued training and education in South Africa, ultimately founding Tsavora Fencing in 2021.

Tsavora Fencing has made significant strides.

The team has produced 15 talented fencers who have earned spots in the national squad, with plans to represent Kenya in the African Olympic Qualifiers in Algeria this year.

However, challenges persist, particularly regarding the affordability of fencing equipment.

"Sometimes it is tough when it comes to competing with well-equipped international countries that are well organized, so what we do is just to move on with enthusiasm and obsession. The fact that we don't have the equipment, the limited ones we have, we use them. We don't complain that we do not have equipment, we just use what we got and put in the obsession and the enthusiasm and the passion combined, that's what we do, we fence," says Wanyoike.

Tsavora Fencing Mtaani, an initiative under Tsavora Fencing, offers mentorship and training in fencing to the

youth of these impoverished neighbourhoods, shielding them from the dangers of their environment.

With 45 members, most of whom are students, the team serves as a beacon of hope in the community.

Participants are required to become disciplined and put on integrity.

"Initially I had bad company at home but now that I am in fencing, it has kept me busy and now it is a better option for me because I feel happy doing it," says Jemimah Njeri, a 17-year-old member of Tsavora Fencing.

"I cannot imagine myself without this sport because it has kept me very busy. In my area many girls have become teenage mothers and that is not a wonderful life," adds 16-year-old Allen Grace.

Steve Okalo, Secretary General of the Kenya Fencing Federation, acknowledges the uphill battle the sport faces in gaining popularity but remains optimistic about its future.

"Fencing is not a popular sport like football or athletics, but we are trying our best to see how it is going because when we started, I started with about four people and now I'm seeing that I have good fencers," Okalo remarks.

As Tsavora Fencing continues to thrive, fuelled by the determination of its members and the support of the community, it stands as a testament to the transformative power of sport in, even the most challenging environments.

Appointment of new Cameroon boss surprises country's FA



The Cameroonian Football Federation has expressed its "great astonishment" after the country's sports ministry appointed Marc Brys as the new head coach of the Indomitable Lions.

The 61-year-old Belgian, who was most recently at OH Leuven, has been chosen to replace former Liverpool and West Ham defender Rigobert Song.

However, Fecafoot appeared to be unaware the appointment was coming, saying the decision was "taken unilaterally".

"The Cameroonian Football Federation learned, at the same time as all Cameroonians, of the appointment to positions of responsibility within the national senior men's football selection," a statement on social media said.

The governing body added that it "intends to shed light on this regrettable situation" and "communicate without delay" on "the reaction it intends to have".

Former Barcelona, Inter Milan and Chelsea striker Samuel Eto'o has been president of Fecafoot since December 2021.

He is currently being investigated by the Confederation of African Football for alleged improper conduct.

The sports ministry said Brys would be assisted by Joachim Mununga and Giannis Xilouris but did not disclose the length of their contracts.

Former Cameroon striker Francois Omam-Biyik, who featured at three World Cups, was among the extended technical, medical and administrative staff appointed.

Song was named Cameroon boss in 2022 on the orders of the country's President, Paul Biya, but his deal finished at the end of February.

He led the Indomitable Lions to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, where they beat five-time champions Brazil but went out at the group stage.

Earlier this year, the Central Africans were knocked out in the last 16 of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations by eventual finalists Nigeria.

South African footballer shot dead in car hijacking

South African footballer Luke Fleurs has been shot dead in a car hijacking, police say.

The shooting took place at a petrol station on Wednesday night in the Johannesburg suburb of Florida.

The 24-year-old Kaizer Chiefs star was waiting to be attended to when he was approached by unknown gunmen, who ordered him to get out of the vehicle.

One of the suspects is reported to have fled the scene with Fleurs' car after the shooting.

"The suspects pointed [at] him with a firearm and took him out of his vehicle, then shot him once on the upper body," Gauteng police spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Mavela Masondo told local media.

Kaizer Chiefs, one of the most popular clubs in the country and 12-time league champions, described his death as "tragic".

The club said police were handling the matter and further details would be communicated in due course.

Sports Minister Zizi Kodwa said he was "saddened that yet another life has been cut short due to violent crime".

Defender Fleurs joined Kaizer Chiefs last year, having previously played for SuperSport United.

The former Under-23 international represented South Africa at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

He had not yet played for the senior national team but was reported to be nearing his debut.

On their website, Kaizer Chiefs describe Fleurs as a "classy defender" with "great technical abilities".

He began his career in 2013 in the Ubuntu Cape Town Academy, according to local media.

The Premier Soccer League said a moment of silence will be observed at all top-flight and second-tier games this weekend in memory of Fleurs.

"We woke up to the heart-breaking and devastating news of the passing of this young life," South African Football Association president Danny Jordaan said in a statement.

"This is such a huge loss for his family, friends, his teammates and football in general."

Football fans have taken to social media to mourn him. "The football family has lost a bright flame," soccer



presenter Carol Tshabalala posted on social media platform X.

South Africa is grappling with increasing gun violence, with several mass shootings reported in recent years. The country has one of the world's highest murder rates, according to police data.



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