Ethio telecom increases forex earnings by three-fold

BY BILAL DERSO

WOLAIITA SODO- The state-owned operator Ethio telecom said that it has managed to increase monthly foreign currency earnings from five million USD in June 2018 to 18 million USD in March 2021 due to sectorial reform.

The above was disclosed when the telecom service provider launched 4G LTE service in its South South West Region in towns namely Wolaita Sodo, Arba Minch, Hosana, Wolkite, Butajira and Jinka yesterday.

In her remark at the launching ceremony held in Wolaita Sodo town of SNNPS, Ethio telecom CEO Frehiwot Tamru stated that the company’s engagement to expand telecom penetration and enhance customers experience constitute major factors for the upsurge in forex earnings. Whilst the operator has significantly reduced the tariff for voice, SMS and data services, it has also launched various telecom products and services.

Nothing that 4G LTE service has been expanded to areas with high mobile data.

See Ethio telecom ... Page 3

Ministry backs hotel industries to endure dark time

BY TAMERU REGASA

ADDIS ABABA- Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced that it has been working to facilitate 600 million Birr credit for hotel industries to help them address the impact of COVID-19.

Public Relation Director with the Ministry, Alemayehu Getachew told Ethiopian Press Agency that the ministry in collaboration with public financial institutions has been working to...

See Ministry ... Page 3
City vaccinates over 82,000 against COVID-19

BY GETAHUN LEGESSE

ADDIS ABABA - Over 82,000 vulnerable health workers and other segments of the society have been vaccinated against COVID-19, Addis Ababa City Health Bureau announced.

The Bureau’s Mothers and Children Services Director Bethlehem Taye told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the first round vaccination has been offered to about 27,000 health workers and 50,000 patients with multiple chronic diseases.

Bethlehem said that taking COVID-19 vaccination by itself is not good enough, the community should avoid negligence and apply all the necessary precautionary measures against the pandemic.

“ It is true that the Ministry of Health has been carrying out nationwide vaccination campaigns but, it could not reach out to all citizens due to the imbalance between demand and supply.”

National COVID-19 Vaccination Task Force Director Meseret Zelalem (Ph.D), on her part said that the Ministry of Health has shared the total of 2.2 million COVID-19 vaccines among all states and city administrations of the country.

Meseret added that the ministry has planned to vaccinate 3 percent of the total population of the country though shortage of the vaccination has exhibited since the amount received is less than expected.

She noted that the demand for the vaccination has exceeded the supply as only a total of 2.2 million COVAX vaccines received nationally and shared among over 110 million people of the country.

The campaign has given priority for health workers, elders rehab centers, and supporting staff as they are potentially vulnerable to the virus, as to her.

Realizing the rise need, the ministry has been successful in securing about 350,000 additional COVAX vaccines from the Chinese government.

The pandemic is highly communicable as about 150,000 people of the city have contracted the virus, of which over 2,000 have passed away as the virus is now spreading at an alarming rate, she added.

The vaccinated citizens need to wear mask, sanitize hands properly, and keep distance as the death toll is hiking over time, it was learnt.

Sector Offices stretch helping hands to mental disorder center

BY MISGANAW ASNAKE

ADDIS ABABA - Addis Ababa City Sector Offices have provided Gergesionan Association for Supporting People with Mental Disorder with a range of assistance.

Association founder and General Manager Melese Ayele briefed local media yesterday that the center has been treating people with mental disorder for the last fifteen years, and continues soliciting fund to sustainably rehabilitate them. It is now treating 450 mentally disorder individuals indiscriminately, of which 200 have been entirely recovered from their illness and 15 of them interestingly become staff members serving there at present as they could hardly have option to leave Gergesionan.

“The center is getting support from various institutions as different sector offices and the community has voluntarily supported it many times. The current support is unique since it is gained at this critical time while we have been devoid of various materials. All stallholders and the entire community have to stretch helping hands to the needy,” he said.

Addis Ababa Management Institute Head Hargama Hamanno on his part said that the center has encountered a land problem, but the problem will be shortly solved through closely discussing the issue with officials of other sectors.

Addis Ababa City Sector Offices handed over the equipment like blanket, mattress, bed sheet and other necessary materials amounting to half a million, he added.
Containing illicit food, drug trafficking calls for combined effort: Authority

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

ADISABABA - Combating the growing trafficking of illicit food and drugs should be the concern of all communities and institutions, said Ethiopian Food and Drug Authority (EFEDA).

Discussing the issue with various stakeholders, EFDA Director General Heran Gerba said that the authority has been performing various activities especially public campaigns to raise the awareness of the community about the safety of food and drugs. As there are growing trends of illegal food and drug trafficking across the country, raising awareness of the community is instrumental in containing the ever rising situation.

There is a wide range of illicit drug and food trafficking and unlawfully providing them for sale across the country. Preventing the act should be the agenda of all communities and institutions as it causes health problems and affects nation’s economy.

The Authority has launched a mobile application called “I-VERIFY” that proves the legality of drugs. It is working to further promote to enable the community to address to play their respective role in reducing illegal drug trafficking. Moreover, efforts have contributed a lot to strengthening the responsibility of every citizen and stakeholders.

Financial scarcity, lack information from community, low level of commitment of stakeholders and loosened emphasis, among others have been attributable to the unproductive activities carried out so far.

Improving the licensing procedure, registration system and strengthening monitoring and evaluation system from suppliers to the ports, inspection, warehouses, pharmaceuticals and drug stores is the very way out from the vicious circles along that line, she said.

Ministry backs...

The Ministry of Agriculture has been disbursement credits for the industries via Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the stakeholders for the realization of South South cooperation. The mechanism of disbursement credits stating that the ministry has been undertaking awareness creation activities on how to implement the protocol and carrying out supervision measures to ensure the implementation of the protocols.

Ethio telecom...

“AI has come up with remarkable changes in the field over the past eight months of its establishment and contributed a lot to national economic, social and political gains. Both public and private sectors have to participate in the field understanding its potential, economic and social gains.”

He also said that Ethiopia will inscribe its own great history in the field as AI is a key for digitalizing the nation’s economy.

At the event, Artificial Intelligence Center (AIC) Director General, Worku Gachena said that the eight-month-old AIC has organized such a colorful national workshop and exhibition aiming at helping the government, society and partners build capacity regarding the field.

He further stated that the AI is a result of human being’s innovative that has brought about different opportunities for Ethiopia and Ethiopians to compute with the entire world.

As to him, the center is working on new innovations that will support both rural and urban community to easily access their finance. Accordingly, a new technology is being adopted that helps the illiterate community to make financial transaction solely through voice. With this technology, everyone can send and receive their money through mobile application.

He said: “The center is also adopting prototype technology that is of paramount importance in reducing the loss commercial banks of Ethiopia incurs from debt disbursement. This technology can easily identify customers whether they are willing to return their debt for the banks. These activities will actively support the economy to be digitalized.”

Applying the special attention attached to and the indispensable role Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (Ph.D) has played to enhance the sector, the director stated that AIC is committed to further strengthen digitalizing the economy, and called on all stakeholders to actively participate in the workshop and expo that will last for the coming three days.

AIC in collaboration with different public and private partnerships officially organized the first ever Artificial Intelligence workshop under the theme: “AI for all.”

It was to be recalled that the WHO Chief recently posted in his official twitter account fake news that was made up by the TMH- de funct TPLF affiliated Media to mislead the World.

WHO...

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**Opinion**

Who should be blamed for the deadlock of the latest GERD negotiation?

BY EYOB BELACHEW

The latest round of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) talks wrapped up on the evening of 5 April after reaching another impasse. Egypt and Sudan are now jointly blaming Ethiopia for the latest stalemate. Despite stamping blames on Ethiopia, the factors that contribute to the stalemate could be Egypt's adamant desire to keep the 1952 water share in the current GERD deal, aimed at blocking Ethiopia's chance of utilizing the river for future purposes that become an irrefutable position with Ethiopia's equitable and reasonable use of the river.

However, Egypt's continuous historical right claim and desire to retain the 1952 Nile water agreement with different form, in the current GERD deal, seems unarguable and compared to Ethiopia's equitable and reasonable utilization of the river which is well-suitet with the UN watercourse convention. And, it seems hard and utterly illogical to blame a constant stance of Ethiopia's equitable and reasonable utilization which is the fundamental doctrine of guiding water sharing for international watercourse, as a factor of constant impasse of Nile negotiations. It's rather sound to think that colonial and historical claims could be the main sources of the decade long stalemate on GERD's talk.

**The Futile art of Blaming**

Each nation has been in a futile game of blaming one another for the talks' stalemate in various rounds of tripartite negotiations. For example, Sudan, which was singled out for blame in the last round (January 3, 2021) by Egypt's foreign minister official statement for being more responsive to Ethiopia's demands, is now praised for their pendulum stance on the GERD negotiations. Sudan's support for Egypt in the Ethiopian mega-dam conflict has become more evident in recent months, following Cairo's public condemnation of Sudan's links to Ethiopian condemnation of Sudan's links to Egyptian interests and efforts to gain its support for Egypt's stance.

**Sudan's swinging role**

Apart from blaming Ethiopia, Sudan's changing positions are hardly predictable and have made the decade long negotiation more frustrating and filled with contestation rather than cooperation.

A part from blaming Ethiopia, Sudan's changing positions are hardly predictable and have made the decade long negotiation more frustrating and filled with contestation rather than cooperation.

GERD might collapse one day, coupled with Egypt's uninterrupted pressure on Sudan's internal affairs. The Sudanese changing role and agenda in every negotiation is one of the factors that heavily contributed to the delay in the negotiation in the last couple of years. And there was nothing different in the latest negotiation in Congo Kinshasa, where Sudan once again allies with Egypt to disturb the negotiation with the sole ambition of taking the negotiation out of the hand of African Union, by inviting highly interested and partial mediators to the scene.

The sole purpose of inviting the EU, UN and USA as mediators is not to enhance the performance of the AU-Led process, but to undermine the union's role and further delay the negotiation so that Ethiopia will not fill the dam in the coming rainy season. This will obstruct the negotiation, and will serve as a weapon to support Egypt's stance. If Ethiopia fails to fill the second round the worst may happen to the Sudanese, as the rainy season is followed by flooding that will hit Sudan and cause severe damage to the Sudanese people settled at the banks of the Nile River than what has happened last summer season.

**The quest for enhancing observers' role**

As far as independent observers are concerned, Ethiopia always agreed on the continuation of the three observers in the process (the Republic of South Africa, the United States of America, and the European Union). Accordingly, Ethiopia with its resolve to maintain the full ownership of the process by the three countries and the integrity of the AU-led process, agreed to accept the role of observers to share information and proposal when jointly requested by the Countries.

On the other hand, Egypt's and Sudan's position of granting the observers the same role as the AU is not accepted. Despite the accusation of Cairo and Khartoum, that Ethiopia has failed to accept the proposals, fact it was the two downstream countries that rejected the draft demanding the role of observers to replace that of the three countries and the AU. However, Ethiopia supported the draft communique submitted by the Chairperson of the AU H.E. Felix Tshokwedi with minor adjustments. The two countries followed an approach that seeks to undermine the AU-led process and to take the matter out of the African platform and further stall the GERD negotiation, with the sole attempt to pressurize Ethiopia to sign a binding agreement that only benefits Egypt's age-old demands.

Without Ethiopia's involvement, the two countries signed the 1959 agreement, which is perhaps the worst treaty Khartoum has ever signed. Since they are not in the position to continue imposing these aged old agreements on Ethiopia, they have now pressuring Ethiopia to accept and sign unfair agreement that relatively favours the colonial arrangements, even if it has now a party to sign.

In General Colonial-era treaties and Egypt's interminnable position to include the benefit of these treaties in the current agreement combined with Sudan's swinging stance are to blame for the unresolved dispute over Ethiopia's dam, and not Ethiopia's approach for an equitable and reasonable utilization of the water resources.

Consequently, the three countries under the auspices of the African Union, should work together to find a mutually beneficial solution. Moreover, all parties should be committed to resolving the matter exclusively through the AU-led ways, since having mediators would prolong the negotiation process.
## Editorial

**Ethiopia’s approach in GERD talks is exemplary!**

Ever since the inception of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia, though being the sole owner and financier of the dam, has been in talks with the downstream countries, Sudan and Egypt, to reach a common consensus on the technicality of the project. It was in fact out of self-initiation that the country invited the two countries to a round-table negotiation with no strings attached. It was mainly Ethiopia’s unsolicited role that led to some of the headways in talks. Ethiopia has had a major role in the formation of the international panel of experts and the realization of signing of the Declaration of Principle also known as the DoP. For multiple times, Ethiopia also invited Sudan and Egypt to visit the construction site to have firsthand information about the dam. This is too much as many may argue but Ethiopia’s actions are stemming from the country’s years of commitment and principle of not harming others and living in harmony.

Ethiopia is arguably the first country that invited its downstream riparian to negotiate on its own hydro-electric generating dam on a river it originates from its lands. The US didn’t do it on its Hoover dam in Colorado in relation to Mexico. Turkey didn’t do it on its Ataturk dam in relation to Syria and Iraq. China didn’t do it either on its Mekong River in relation to its five downstream riparian. Despite Ethiopia’s bold moves, the actions of Egypt runs in contradiction to the principle of win-win approach. Both Sudan and Egypt have been coming up with insincere and absurd pretexts hampering possible chance of producing an agreed deal. On contrary, Egypt has been unleashing a tsunami of misinformation campaign about the dam and has been baffling the international community by flip-flopping constantly.

Those who are behind all the atrocities’ done to civilians have been cunningly enabled by regional authorities. The incidents of crimes are rarely talked about in the government-controlled media while they are often documented through videotapes and horrendous stories. Eyewitness accounts of surviving families, or by international journalists. The so-called active human rights organizations are rarely exposed and investigated and learn nothing from these crimes.

For years, Cairo tried to internationalize and politicize GERD; its efforts have been cut short as they lack rationality. In another foiled attempt, Cairo in the latest talks held in Kinshasa, Congo, recently came up with a plan to elevate the status of observers and give them as equal role as the African Union. This was typical of colonial mentality and continuation of years of Egypt’s disregard to Africans and African institutions. The constant flip-flop of Egypt has brought nothing but shame to itself. Surly, nothing could replace the sovereignty of African continent. If talks are to go the right direction, AU should continue playing central role in brokering the tripartite negotiation.

But again, despite the kneejerk acts of Egypt, Ethiopia remains unfurling towards peaceful resolution of the matter and seeks to reach in a win-win deal to this very day. That is why, the country lately invited Sudan and Egypt to nominate dam operators to exchange data before GERD’s second filling. However, both countries have rejected Ethiopia’s offer. This showcases the two countries’ unenessness towards knowing the truth. No upstream country has been generous enough other than Ethiopia in consulting downstream countries about their sovereign projects. It is indeed one of the kinds in the history of trans-boundary river negotiation.

Ethiopia’s actions are bold and worth-sharing examples to the rest of the world. As far as GERD is concerned, the country is sure—i.e., the planned second filling just like the first phase would be carried out with or without a deal or the countries’ presence. Because, the dam is all about connecting millions of Ethiopians living in darkness to the grid, neither false accusation nor smear campaign can stop the unstoppable project.
Endeavors to intensify agricultural researches, feed ever-growing population

BY ALAZAR SHIFERAW

Today, the rapidly increasing population pressure, widespread environmental degradation, recurrent drought, low productivity of the agricultural sector and limited market access have greatly contributed to critical food shortages not only in Ethiopia but also in some parts of the world. Ethiopian Journal of Agriculture stated:

These challenges in turn have resulted in food insecurity, which is characterized by inability of the people to have physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and lead healthy life. Therefore, there is a great need for improving agricultural researches on various agricultural crops. But although presently there are several crop variety findings which can increase productivity, yet further research studies should be carried out to improve varieties that can increase crop production, to ensure food security in the country, it added.

In this regard, among other things, a research on chickpea; an excellent source of food is indicating a promising result. Professionals in the field say that chickpea is an important pulse crop grown and consumed all over the world, especially in the Afro-Asian countries. It is a good source of carbohydrates and protein, and protein quality is considered to be better than other pulses.

Chickpea has significant amounts of all the essential amino acids except sulphur containing amino acids, which can be complemented by adding cereals to the daily diet. Starch is the major storage carbohydrate followed by dietary fiber, oligosaccharides and simple sugars such as glucose and sucrose, they said.

What is more, according to Journal of Dryland Agriculture, chickpeas are a nutrient dense food. It has a 20 percent protein content and is also high in dietary fiber, folate, and dietary mineral content. They are also rich in essential amino acids. Apart from being excellent sources of food, chickpeas play a significant role in improving soil fertility by fixing the atmospheric nitrogen made it available for crop uptake.

Although lipids are present in low amounts, chickpea is rich in nutritionally important unsaturated fatty acids such as linoleic and oleic acids. β-Sitosterol, campesterol and stigmastanol are important sterols present in chickpea oil. Ca, Mg, P and, especially, K are also present in chickpea seeds. Chickpea is a good source of important vitamins such as riboflavin, niacin, thiamin, folate, and the vitamin A precursor β-carotene, it added.

As with other pulses, chickpea seeds also contain anti-nutritional factors which can be reduced or eliminated by different cooking techniques. Chickpea has several potential health benefits and, in combination with other pulses and cereals, it could have beneficial effects on some of the important human diseases such as type 2 diabetes, digestive diseases and some cancers. Overall, chickpea is an important pulse crop with a diverse array of potential nutritional and health benefits, it said.

Although chickpea is regarded as a drought tolerant crop, it is important to identify drought tolerance mechanism so as to develop new cultivars with high yield potential. Breeding chickpea resistant to drought should focus on the introduction or exploration of chickpea germplasm through interchange of genetic material, probing areas with greater genetic variation, collaboration with international research institutes.

An article published on Ethiopian Journal of Agriculture under the title Rapid Generation Advance in Chickpea for Accelerated Breeding Gain in Ethiopia: What Speed Breeding Imply by Dr. Asnake Fikre and Tulu Degafu among others said that there are key roles of the crop improvement over decades to enhance the productivity, revenue generation power farming culture of Chickpea in Ethiopia, which is the secondary center of its diversity.

Modern breeding approaches are increasingly being deployed in legumes such as chickpea to enable the rapid development of improved varieties with enhanced yields under challenging climatic conditions. Understanding the genetics of simple or complex traits has involved the use of multiple approaches association genetics, it said.

The draft genome sequence and sequence information on germplasm lines has provided opportunities to harness chickpea’s whole diversity for trait improvement. Since understanding these traits by developing multi-parent populations is resource intensive and time consuming, the rapid development of populations will enable trait dissection and development of new varieties, it said.

Nonetheless, climate change events along with dynamics of product demands necessitate rapid breeding cycles and swifter replacement of old varieties to ensure speedier genetic gains and sustainable food and nutritional security. It is predicted that feeding a global population exceeding nine billion by 2050 will require 2 percent genetic gain. The length of a breeding cycle or generation interval is inversely proportional to the rate of genetic gain. Although over 350 improved varieties of chickpea have been released across the globe, unlike in the major cereals, the development of new varieties and variety replacement rates have been slow in legumes. Most breeding programs evaluate fixed lines which must be generated via crossing parental lines and subsequent inbreeding for 5-6 generations, it said.

However, crop duration and photoperiod sensitivity hinders the achievement of multiple generations per year. Although chickpea’s maturity ranges from 80 to 180 days depending on genotype, soil moisture, temperature, latitude and altitude; most breeding programs routinely achieve two generations per year—one in the field during the crop season and the other in the off-season either in a greenhouse or in an off-season irrigated nursery. While many use double haploid technology to accelerate development of homozygous (inbred) lines efficient methods are not yet readily available in chickpea.

Recent rapid generation cycling or advance has been used in several crops to accelerate breeding including in vitriculturing, embryo rescue or simplified biotron or photons based extended growth techniques. The recent rapid generation advance technology also known as ‘speed breeding’ uses extended photoperiod and controlled temperature to grow up to 6 generations of chickpea per year.

However, to control the environmental conditions it requires investment in infrastructure, which can be challenging to establish and or adapt in every breeding programof the less resource system.

As a low-cost and easily adaptable alternative, this study reports a field-based technique for rapid generation advance that can be used to cycle at least four generations of chickpea per year. The methodology providing in chickpea is easy to adopt, simple but effective, and can facilitate fast-track development of populations for pre-breeding and breeding to ultimately enhance the development of improved varieties, it said.
Efforts to save Ethiopia’s frankincense forest

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

Even before the Wise Men gave frankincense as a gift, people were climbing the rugged Somaliland mountains in search of the precious resin. But rising global demand is threatening the ancestral forests where it is found.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh - the gifts offered to baby Jesus by the three wise men, so goes the story of the nativity, according to the Bible. Even today, frankincense remains a precious Christmas gift - but the reality behind its harvest differs somewhat.

The rocky Cal Madow mountains of Somaliland, a self-declared autonomous republic in Somalia’s northwest, are one of the few homes internationally to wild frankincense trees. One of the species located in the area is endemic and cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Harvesting these trees is the second main livelihood for local people in Somaliland, who risk their lives to meet the global demand. However, interest in the natural product is rising at such a rate that trees cannot regenerate fast enough.

While once inherently related to the holy paradise, frankincense might end up representing a real hell for local people in Somaliland.

“It will be a disaster not only for the people of Somaliland, but for the whole world,” Ahmed Ibrahim Awale, president of the Somaliland Biodiversity Foundation, told DW. “It will be the end of unique species and of a millenarian heritage.”

The increasing global appetite for frankincense is still very much used in religious ceremonies, but it is no longer only reserved for honoring deities. Multimillionaire markets such as the French perfume business count the tree fragrance among their top components.

While local people in Somaliland have harvested frankincense for millennia, the current rhythm to meet the global appetite for essential oils leaves few options for sustainability - and these ancestral forests cannot replenish fast enough to survive the current overharvesting.

“Frankincense has been harvested in a sustainable manner for millions of years,” Awale said. “But the rise in the global demand has completely changed it.”

Harvesting in an unsustainable way means making a higher number of cuts per tree to extract as much sap as possible and tapping the trees year-round rather than seasonally. These practices weaken the trees, impede them from recovering and, ultimately, means they end up dying.

Of late, the Future Forest Appeal, run by the charity Tree Aid, had signed agreements that aim to provide communities living in the town of Metema, located in the northwest of the East African country, with the tools needed to restore around 10,000 hectares of degraded forest.

The Metema forest in Ethiopia is made up of Boswellia trees. They’re known for producing a substance called frankincense, which is a precious tree resin that is used in essential oils around the world.

Without the necessary actions being taken, it’s believed the forest could become extinct in 20 years, negatively impacting the people living in the Sahel region.

Tree Aid says the Future Forest Appeal will work with close to 3,000 households to increase the money they’re able to make from sustainable frankincense production by 25 percent, while protecting and restoring 9,563 hectares of forest at the same time.

“Website in the Sahel are living with the devastating effects of our global climate crisis,” said Chris Packham.

“Temperatures are rising, land is becoming infertile and the desert is spreading south, like a wave in slow-motion.

“I urge people to support the Future Forest appeal to back this inspiring African solution to the climate crisis,” he said.

The Future Forest project is part of the wider “Great Green Wall” campaign which is looking to restore 8,000 kilometres, which is equivalent to about 5,000 miles, of land across the continent of Africa.

The project will see the planting and regenerating of trees, water and soil conservation and the protection of existing forests, many of which have been badly hit by the climate crisis.

Local communities will also be trained and equipped with the right tools to protect their resources.

Tree Aid’s scheme aims to prevent the further spread of the Sahara Desert which could threaten people’s food security and jobs. Once complete, the Great Green Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet, according to the charity.
Art & Culture

The Pretty Girl of Amazing Grace

Short Story

BY JOSEPH SOBOKA

In a certain country side when the time was not as hectic as today, when the norms of the society were strictly observed, there was a farmer who had a daughter named Yewibdar. The girl grew up herding sheep with her brother and assisting her mother in the household chores as a daughter usually does. She was a girl of rare beauty and high moral value that singled her out as the owner of multiple attributes that any girl of substance aspires for.

Her mother, at times, gazing at her says to herself, “I thank you Lord for making me a mother of such a creature of admiration. How would I feel if she were not my daughter but somebody else?”

One day she said, “Yewibdar, do you know how lucky I am to be your mother?”

Looking down on the ground, without turning to her she asked, “What makes you say that, Mom?”

“Well, you are the prettiest and the most charming girl I have ever seen.”

“How, Mom? Am I as such different from any other girl around? How about the daughters of the land lord in our neighborhood? They are well attired and do not herd sheep and do not assist their mother; their skins are not roughened by hot and cold weather. They are always comfortably in side and I believe they are better fed.”

“No doubt about your matchless beauty daughter, you are far more beautiful than any of them. You are endowed with special gift of nature. Feel rest assured about that. That’s why we named you Yewib dar,” confirmed her mother proudly.

Yewibdar’s father Ato Kumlilachew, was sitting in the corner doing something while the mother and the daughter were engaged in interesting discussion. He overheard what the two of them were saying. He was of the same opinion about his daughter’s physical and moral qualities that his wife was describing. Yet, he never openly mentioned them as his wife did. He was such an intrinsic person that he kept everything to himself. He was known for his behavior that nobody dared mess up with him about anything. He was rather respected and consulted about the dire issues concerning the society.

“Chaltu,” he called his wife, “I am glad you have clearly noticed our daughter’s physical and moral qualities.”

Ade Chaltu felt some warmth of good feelings invading her whole being. She had never heard her husband making such a positive remark about her in front of their daughter or rather anybody else. This situation, for sure, would earn her the confidence of her daughter. She believed Yewibdar would take for granted whatever she tells her.

In furtherance of their discussion, Ato Kumlilachew said, “Do you know that women have no caste or class, their beauty, grace and charm serve them for birth and family.”

“How exciting!” said Ade Chaltu. “I never thought the beauty of an ordinary girl would highly be valued in the society.”

To bring the situation to a full understanding of his wife, he said, “This is not the end of the narration. Girls, their natural delicacy (even though our daughter does not seem to discern), their instinctive elegance, nimbleness of wit, are their only mark of rank and put the slum girl on a level with the highest lady in the land.”

“Now I have a good grip of what you are trying to tell me. You have clearly shown me that beauty and other psychological attributes have a crucial role in the life of a woman,” said Ade Chaltu with broad smile on her face.

In response, he assured her that, “A woman of this stature should have a feeling that she is born for every delicacy and luxury. She deserves it because she has broken the barrier with the power of her beauty.”

While her parents were engaged in the discussion, the topic that concerned them, she was rather fidgety; she was constantly moving her body unaware of what she was doing. This, her mother had noticed it.

To relieve of her of the stress, her mother motioned her to the kitchen as the day was getting dark before dinner was prepared.

“Make fire while I knead the dough for flat bread; we do not have sufficient injera for supper. The good thing is your father likes flat bread.”

Yewibdar was soon busy making fire as her mother had commanded her. Yewibdar enjoys pleasing her mother by obeying her and her mother, too, appreciates that part of her daughter’s character. After dinner was ready, Ade Chaltu called her husband as supper was about to be served.

In the nick of time, their son Tolasa arrived with the herd of sheep. “Good evening,” he greeted the family and joined them for meal. Evenings are the time of family reunion after a busy and tiresome day.

Ato Kumlilachew and the family gathered around the table upon which he said grace, “What a tasty supper you have prepared. God bless you both,” said Ato Kumlilachew. He understands that Ade Chaltu is very happy when the food she prepares is appreciated, especially by him.

From her parents’ daily relationship with each other, Yewibdar learned a lot how spouses should relate to each for a good and happy married life. Their kindness had inculcated the same behavior in her personality.

Many young people in the neighborhood vied for her attention. Yet, nobody dared to reveal his interest in her. It was not because of her pride but her imposing personality created fear in the young people. She was not like any girl who flirts with anyone who approached her. She was well aware of the norms of the society and unre servedly complied with the moral instructions.

Friends and relatives, one way or the other, had her in their minds: some were out of envy and jealousy while others take her as their role model and always aspired to hang about her as though they had nothing else to do and bragged for being able to be around her. Some girls labored to imitating her in their speech and actions to become as respected and sought for as her.

Being human, she had her own desire to achieve her hidden objectives. The fact of moving with time is one of the prime variables in her objectives - the fact to which her parents paid little attention; she knew that unless a girl makes use of her prime age, she might pay a bitter price of fruitlessness. Since she was very smart, she did not want to suffer from heart-broken regret due to her negligence to proactively act before it is too late.

“Now it is time for me to settle. I am in a position to identify the right person who can best suit me. If I keep on like this, my beauty and elegance will be wasted and I will become worthless in due course;” she seriously said to herself.

Once, her father confided in her that he had been approached by a young man of her age to give him her hand.

“Who could that be, Dad?” she asked.

“He is the son of a highly placed gentle man in our village. I favorably considered this young man not because he is the son of a well-reputed person but because he himself is a young man of good reputation.”

“What do you mean and what’s his name?”

“He distinguished from young people of his age by not drinking, smoking and moving with girls aimlessly. He is so gentle that his friends respect him; there is a lot to say about him; for your information his name is Melkamu,” said her father.

There was broad smile on her face and straight looking into her father’s eyes, “Oh my God! I, too, was approached by the same guy.”

That night, their son Tolasa left his sheep to join his friends who had invited him for drinking and smoking. They were not residents of the village. Ade Chaltu was soon betrothed. Her beauty and well-endowed culture were proven worthwhile. What a well-earned bliss!
Are herbal medicines apt or unfit for modern treatment?

BY MENGESHA AMARE

The spectacular and diverse landscape Ethiopia possesses has been suitable to grow a range of flora that can evidently be used for composing medicines perhaps solely known by finger counted individuals. Ethiopians have been practicing medicinal plants for human and animal treatments since time immemorial. Riverbanks, bushes, forested areas and their outskirts, woodlands, grasslands, and home gardens are known for their being preferable locales of herbal medicines. Because of this, healing plants are very vital in providing traditional medicinal prepared by local healers thereby curing different types of diseases that potentially affect local community. This writer approached Tamirat Zerga, a traditional healer, living around Shiromeda, Addis Ababa, originally from West Abbaya, to have a piece of idea about herbal medicines and their association with modern prescription.

He said that as a result of traditional uses and effectiveness of the curative plants, traditional healers have been known for their provision of remedy for local societies keeping cultural values undamaged. “As far as I know, those who have approached Tamirat Zerga, a traditional healer, living around Shiromeda, Addis Ababa, originally from West Abbaya, to have a piece of idea about herbal medicines and their association with modern prescription.

He said that as a result of traditional uses and effectiveness of the curative plants, traditional healers have been known for their provision of remedy for local societies keeping cultural values undamaged. “As far as I know, those who have conducted researches in this regard reaffirmed that the traditional health practitioners have a promising knowledge of medicinal plants used to treat different diseases of the society in their respective community, and family based apprenticeship has been the principal source of knowledge for majority of the healers,” Tamrat expressed. He said, “I have known a range of herbs those apt for different types of diseases especially for sores, skin rashes and hemorrhoids. In addition to these contributions pertinent to traditional medications and cultural values, each medicinal plant could provide the society with opportunities to carry out multipurpose tasks.”

As to Tamrat, the government in collaboration with professionals particularly from plant science has to well focus on identifying and employing medicinal plants used for traditional treatments and takes appropriate measures to get them assimilated with modern medication subsequent to scientific approval. “There are a number of medicinal plant species in the country whose leaves, buds, roots and barks are the main parts for the preparation and composition of traditional medicines. The known herbal medicine practitioners have been providing patients with various traditional mediciations so as to help them soothe pain even to the extent that cure them from diseases such as stomachache, headache, diarrhoea, asthma, dysentery, malaria, evil eyes, cancer, skin diseases and tumors,” he said.

Herbal medicines used for traditional healing have been playing a significant role in the healthcare of the majority of the people in the nation. However, he said adding they are highly susceptible to extinction due to major threats like rampant of urbanization and agriculture expansion, deforestation, loss of habitation among others. As to Tamirat, community-centered participatory conservation mechanisms have to be applied and well consolidated to rescue these important plants from obliteration via preserving their natural sites.

“Therefore the majority of Ethiopians have been using traditional medicine since long back as they are dependent on traditional medicines, the contribution traditional healers have made to modern public health system is quite trifling. Aselef Demena, a resident of Kebele got along with this writer while she has above neck oiled with a green fluid said herbal medicines have been widely used in urban areas such as in Addis Ababa and traditional healers have considerably contributed to public health care. She said, “The majority of the community has made traditional healers their first choice when they faced health problems like hemorrhoid and acne, but there is a problem following absence of cooperation with modern health professionals. The reasons are lack of motivation to collaborate and communicate with modern health service workers.” The contribution of traditional healers to the public health system will be better if the system of synchronizing them with modern health arrangements is well exercised, Aselef opined.

Responding to the question posed on her ‘What does, do you think, a traditional healer mean?’ Aselef replied to it saying, “An educated or layperson, I think, who claims ability or a healing power to cure ailments drawing lessons from ancestors and basing power or rehearsal on supernatural religion, exercise and traineeship or family birthright. These people could have a particular skill to treat specific types of afflictions and might have gained a reputation in their own respective society or elsewhere.” Aselef further said that the major reasons behind an increase in the use of herbal medicines are traditional acceptability, apparent effectiveness, and affordability, psychological comfort, among others. As learned from Aselef, the medicinal plants have shown very effective medicinal values for some diseases of humans and livestock especially in rural localities with regard to the latter.

“Due to the trust of communities on medicinal values of traditional medicines, culturally associated norms, and their relatively low cost, medicinal plants are highly demanded in Ethiopia both in urban and rural localities,” stated Aselef. According to Tamirat, traditional medicine in Ethiopia is faced with sustainability and continuity problem mainly due to the loss of assortment of medicinal plants and lack of quality control for herbal medicines. Besides, the medicinal plant materials and associated traditional knowledge are being lost due to lack of systematic conservation, research, proper utilization, and certification. He further explained and said, the knowledge on identifying and employing medicine herbs is mostly associated with local and senior people, who transferred their knowledge verbally as such verbal knowledge transmissions have resulted in eroding and loss of knowledge and the plant as well.

Yes, said Tamrat, “We, as traditional healers have accustomed to harvest leaves, roots, barks, seeds, fruits, stems, flowers, or latex of medicinal plants to prepare herbal medicines for patient treatments.” Asked about why most herbal medicines are composed on leaves, Tamirat explained that the main reason that many traditional medicine practitioners used the leaf compared to other parts for remedial preparation is due to their accessibility and for preventing the plants from extinction. “Actually, harvesting the root parts of the medicinal plant for preparation of traditional medicines has a negative repercussion on the existence of the plants themselves in the year to come. That is why most of the remedial plants are currently at risk, declining highly due to them using their root parts.”
Egypt’s approach in GERD talks: Greediness at its best

BY HAILE DEMEKE

The bilateral negotiations being held among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan in how to fill and operate the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is still at standstill.

The three countries have been meeting and discussing in outstanding issues, no deal is yet to be produced. The talks rather have been put on hold. But the negotiation has resumed last week which was chaired for the first time by the DRC after it took over the chairmanship of the AU from South Africa.

However, the talks ended without finding the binding agreement once again just like the predecessors. The parties to blame are Sudan and Egypt that sought to give observers as equal status at the AU. Many argue that the two countries have gone to Kinshasa with a prior decision to just abort it before it ends.

Ethiopia supported the draft submitted by the Chairperson of the AU with minor adjustments. However, Egypt and Sudan rejected the draft demanding the role of observers to replace that of the three countries and the AU, Ministry of Water, Energy and Irrigation announced.

The two countries followed an approach that seeks to undermine the AU-led process and to take the matter out of the African platform looking for quartet negotiation.

Commenting on the quartet mediation proposed by the two downstream countries, Ethiopian GERD Negotiating Team Member and expert on trans-boundary river, Ambassador Ibrahim Idris told The Ethiopian Herald lately said that “the idea of quartet mediation is not a genuine proposal on the part of Egypt and Sudan but a trap for their cynical goal.

The suggestion for involving the quartet is to pressure Ethiopia to accept their proposal which will strip the rights of the country to develop its water resources. The purpose of involving the quartet is to prolong the forthcoming second filling of the dam and undermine Ethiopia’s right to equitable and reasonable use of the Nile waters, he added “Water sharing issues have always been resolved through negotiations based on international water law. We should resolve the issues based on criteria not by the decision of third parties.”

Despite, the constant flip-flopping of the two countries and their disregard to AU capacity to broker a negotiation, Ethiopia still pins hope on the AU-led negotiation towards the resolution of the dispute on the GERD only on the basis of equitable utilization rejecting any claim of historical rights.

Ethiopia who invited its downstream riparian to negotiate on its own hydro-electric generating dam on a river it originates from its lands. The US didn’t do it on its Hoover dam in Colorado in relation to Mexico. Turkey didn’t do it on its Ataturk dam in relation to Syria and Iraq. China didn’t do it either on its Mekong River in relation to its five downstream riparian.

Posing query regarding the usage of the river is one thing and what the Egypt is doing is blocking Ethiopia not to use the river and maintain their colonial hegemony over the river, said lecturer of Law at the Addis Ababa University Dr. Sisay Mengiste.

On the other hand, they are exerting pressure on Ethiopia simply for the fear of Ethiopia’s development. Most of the Ethiopians are living out of light and in contrary more than 95 percent of Egyptian people have access to electricity.

The downstream countries are continuously working in confusing the international community rather than engaging rationally in the talks. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi against “No one can take a drop of water from Egypt and whoever wants to be tested” and Egypt has no moral ground to say this while it contributes no drop of water to the river.

Ethiopia is providing all necessary possibilities not to cause significant harm and the Egyptian need to take the advantage of Ethiopia’s notion of equitable and reasonable utilization the resource.

Minister of Water Irrigation and Energy Selsey Bekele (PhD) said that after the talks that Egypt and Sudan have made unconstructive attempts to block the progress of African Union-led negotiations on the GERD in the latest round of talks in Kinshasa.

He stated that due to Egypt and Sudan’s negative approach towards AU-led negotiations, the Kinshasa’s deliberation was ended with no progress being made. The two countries have also made attempts to disrupt AU’s efforts to discharge its entrusted responsibility of seeking African solutions to Africa’s problems.

The minister further stated that Egypt and Sudan deliberately employed a strategy to hamper the progress of the talks whilst their request to the removal of South Africa from its observer status is not suited to AU’s status as a continental body. In Kinshasa, both Egypt and Sudan were mainly concerned to alter the negotiation’s procedure and they were mesmerized by how to conduct the talks rather than engaged in constructive dialogue.

Ethiopia’s resolve to reach a settlement on the first filling and related operation of the dam failed to bear result due to Egypt’s and Sudan’s rigid stance to make the negotiation and the outcome a tool to affirm their self-claimed water share and foreclose Ethiopia’s share. Ethiopia cannot enter into an agreement that would foreclose its current and future legitimate rights over the utilization of the Nile.

The second-year filling of the GERD will be carried out as scheduled pursuant to the Declaration of Principles (DoP). Accordingly Ethiopia expressed its readiness to facilitate data and information exchange on the filling of the dam. The positions contesting the filling of the dam ahead of the conclusion of an agreement has no basis in law and contravenes Ethiopia’s inherent right to utilize its natural resource.

Still now the major sticking point is that Ethiopia wants the GERD talks to be led solely by the African Union. “The government of Ethiopia said that Egypt and Sudan came up with points that were not part of the agenda, such as postponing the filling of the GERD until a deal is reached which are against the DoP principles.”

The government of Ethiopia repeatedly said that the country never wants to harm the downstream countries Egypt and Sudan; however, want to ensure fair and equitable use of Nile waters based on the contribution and international law of trans-boundary Rivers.

Ethiopia respects win-win approach on the dam and strongly believes that evidence-based and peaceful negotiation is the only option to reach a binding agreement among parties. Ethiopia has an unwavering commitment towards peaceful negotiation on the GERD, said spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia Ambassador Dina lately.

Ethiopia did underline its most preferred option that the negotiation remains with the AU framework rejecting the idea of changing the modality to quartet mediation. Ethiopia believes that the matter at hand, the GERD, is an issue among Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt and lack of an agreement has nothing to do with who the mediator is, rather what are the compromises offered by the parties is what is halting progress, he added.
Ethiopia disregards to invest in high tech

BY MEHARI BEYENE

Ethiopia government shoulders the responsibility of investing on capital expenditures and initial investments high techs including, semi-conductors, automobiles, steel, and aluminum machine products and among others. This was disclosed by Ethiopia 2050 think tank groups.

According to the statement of Ethiopia 2050 think tank group sent to The Ethiopian Herald, new technologies in the broader areas of advanced manufacturing offer an opportunity for leapfrogging to emerging economies like Ethiopia. For instance, digital manufacturing requires significantly less capital expenditure as compared to traditional manufacturing, particularly when coupled with government supports like tax credits or public and private partnerships.

As per the statement, the preferred model around the world in advanced manufacturing involves collaborations with universities, as they are more driven by cutting-edge technology than massive capital. This emerging age of manufacturing that is gaining traction around the globe is a key component of fourth generation Industry. For countries like Ethiopia, advanced manufacturing opens up further possibilities in fintech, big data analytics, advanced robotics, cyber-security, artificial intelligence, precision medicine, and agri-tech.

Ethiopia should take measures to be a beneficiary of the fourth industrial revolution, particularly in advanced manufacturing. Regarding launching advanced manufacturing center for metals, a pervasive problem that had contributed to inefficiencies and delays in completion of important infrastructure projects in Ethiopia has been the lack of spare parts. Prohibitive expenses, as well as delays in importing materials, have had significant negative impacts in several sectors such as the manufacturing industry, freight and passenger transportation infrastructure, and agricultural equipment. We propose that with additive manufacturing, particularly 3D printing technology, the time has come for Ethiopia to address the spare parts problem by building an infrastructure for 3D printing.

As to the report, this will save foreign currency, time, and also encourage innovation in metal manufacturing in Ethiopia. A consortium of government particularly the military and industries could take the lead. This will be a for-profit entity charging for services rendered. Recycled metal can be used, significantly reducing the costs. There are several examples in Africa where such technology is being effectively leveraged. While its current status is unknown, Ethiopian Airline’s plan announced in 2016 to collaborate with a South African company in aerospace for establishing a digital manufacturing center in Addis is a possibility worth mentioning. Ethiopia which is currently aggressively investing on textile manufacturing infrastructure also faces a risk of automation that could significantly compromise opportunities as this industry could move back to Europe or the US.

The statement indicated that this eco-system will train undergraduate and graduate students in additive manufacturing and also create a conducive environment for entrepreneurial ventures. Twining with international collaborators as well as local industry will enrich the opportunities available to students, faculty, the private sector, and government.

In Promoting Pharmaceutical Industry for leadership in the African Market, Ethiopia has positioned itself as a destination for the pharmaceutical industry for some time. The demographic dividend has been cited as one of the compelling reasons, together with access to the sizable African market. The government had also identified pharmaceutical manufacturing as a priority sector and the Kilinto Industry Park has been identified as a hub. Therefore, together with the proposed initiatives for center-level university, industry and government ecosystems to train a globally competitive workforce, there is ample opportunity in this area.

Concerning expansion of eco-industrial Parks, the statement noted that the concept of eco-industrial Parks where there is a well-planned cooperation among businesses and the local community with the goal of achieving sustainable growth and efficiently share resources is emerging as a popular model. Such model will have a natural fit for Ethiopia where there is strong need for developing growth models. This integration with the local community should also be reflected at the national level in both vertical and horizontal integration.
Global Affairs

Behind Africa’s instability

BY ADDISEALEM MULAT

Egypt has been beating the drums of war since the laying of the corner stone for the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). On the basis of its selfish motive, aside from making every effort to twist Ethiopia’s arm and stymie Ethiopia’s development endeavors, Egypt has been turning a blind eye to the existing reality and covering up the truth.

Egypt has been moving heaven and earth to destabilize Ethiopia thinking that they would transform their vision into action at the earliest possible juncture. By every possible means, they cannot materialize their dreams. Their dreams remain a dream.

Speaking The Ethiopian Herald, Dr. Tilahun Erduno, a member of the Committee for Planning and Construction of GERD model Addis Ababa Park, at the office of National Council for the Coordination of Public Participation on the Construction of the GERD said that Egypt has never attempted to solve its problem related to Nile peacefully with Ethiopia or any other upper basin countries.

Rather Egypt strived to fulfill its interest destabilizing Ethiopia. Since ancient times the issues of Nile and Ethiopia have been means of solutions to the problems of internal politics in Egypt.

“The same way today’s government of Egypt is politicizing Nile issue and attempting to cover the face of its people by instigating “water war” against Ethiopia. As usual, today, Egypt is trying to coordinate Ethiopia and its river as first aid for its internal political disease. It should be noted that Egypt and Sudan experienced no democratic election. Most of the time the government officials of both countries come from military coup one after the other,” he continued.

“Egypt did everything possible and continues to do the same today aiming at weakening, destabilizing and crumbling Ethiopia in to so many small pieces of states to keep its dominance on Nile. Egypt’s veiled agenda was to bring the whole territory under its control and if not to occupy the Nile Basin at any cost.”

Nowadays, Egypt has been endeavoring to destabilize the horn of Africa bringing into play a wide spectrum of strategies every now and then in a bid to gain the upper hand in the region and return to its former glory.

As learnt from the website of Politics world, Africa, a top Ethiopian diplomat said that the government of Egypt has been fast-tracking its unfluctuating policy of knocking off the balance and undermining Ethiopia by “providing full support to anti-peace elements” and pitting neighbors against it. The official told Anadolu Agency that Egypt has been rolling up its sleeves with a view to destabilizing Ethiopia and the horn of Africa.

The diplomat went on to say, “For more than half a century, Egyptian establishment has been granting economic, armed services and ambassadorial support to different forces with the purpose of subverting and weakening Ethiopia and impede its determination to make use of the Nile River.”

Despite strong opposition from Egypt and Sudan, Ethiopia is planning to embark on filling the second phase of GERD reservoir. While on the subject, it is in consideration of this development that Egypt escalated its clandestine and unconcealed anti-Ethiopian happenings over the past couple of years.

The diplomat stressed that the armed Gumuz militia has been has been carrying ruthless ethnic assaults on ethnic minorities in Ethiopia’s western Benishangul-Gumuz state, where the dam is situated. The sole aim of the Gumuz militia, which has been trying to block the main road leading to the dam, is to trigger a civil war in the region and beyond and eventually delay or thwart the dam’s construction.

“We have credible intelligence that Egypt has been assisting the Gumuz militia. On top of that the Egyptian security agents have been in touch with the leaders of the rebel group, and they are working on enhancing their support.”

It is worth saying that recently Egypt solicited the government of South Sudan to provide a military base for the groups. But the South Sudanesse authorities, who highly value our friendly relations, rebuffed the request in no uncertain terms.

In a similar vein, Cairo has been actively seeking a presence in Somalia, a troubled Horn of Africa country which for decades has struggled to form a viable state and establish security. Throughout last year, Egypt tried to befriended the federal government of Somalia by promising military aid,” said the official. But, he added: “The Somali authorities recognized Egypt’s sinister motives and refused the military assistance.”

According to the diplomat, after the Somali federal government refused the offer, Egypt turned to Somaliland, a self-declared “country” that is part of Somalia and has been at loggerheads with the federal government. Last July, Cairo asked officials in Hargeisa, the Somaliland “capital,” to allow them to set up a military base. Egypt’s policy of trying to gain ground in the Horn of Africa is meant to get back the influence it has lost in the Middle East.

For decades, Egypt positioned itself as a peace broker in the Middle East conflict and managed to garner diplomatic, financial, and military support from the Western world. However, the rise of Gulf countries and other friends of the Arab world helped shrink Egyptian influence in the region.

Moreover, Egypt is trying to gain influence in our region. However, the region has demonstrated its will and capability to deal with its own problems and does not need Egypt to meddle in its affairs,” he concluded.

Egypt’s hawkishness does not stop somewhere in the horn of Africa. It has been as well making an effort to expand its military presence in the other parts of Africa and achieving its hidden motif.

As information obtained from Al Sharq, the Libyan conflict forced Cairo to become more involved in Libya and in the Eastern Mediterranean, respectively. Egypt began to strengthen its presence in the Libyan affair and succeeded in understanding the power and security scene in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As a consequence, Egypt made great advancements in its navy and developed and strengthened its capabilities through a massive process of rearmament, training, and forming joint maneuvers with many international parties. Then, it reconstructed its military bases in the west of the country by building two bases, Muhammad Naguib and Sidi Barani, and deployed multiple and diverse forces within them.

It is to be recalled that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addressing the House of Peoples representatives said, “We are facing opposition from filling the GERD with rain water. The water flowing out of the Abay River never stopped flowing. Our plan is to develop ourselves and benefit neighbors. Despite the various challenges GERD is faced with, it will be completed as we promised. If we wait until negotiations are finalised to fill the dam, the rainy season will pass and our country will lose 1 billion dollars a year. We are certain to fill the dam without causing harm to our neighbours. We would like our Egyptian and Sudanese brothers and sisters to see that our intentions are not to harm them.”

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Nation needs to make the 6th national election peaceful, inclusive

Only a few weeks are left to hold the 6th national elections. Citizens are expected to actively participate in the process to exercise their right. Article 38 of our constitution stipulates that every citizen has the right to vote and to be elected. Let us register today to vote and determine the future of our country's democracy.

- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

It is a must to undertake an election that ensure democratic and human rights with active participation of citizens. Therefore, all stakeholders including the ruling and competing parties have to play their role to ensure a peaceful election.

- Law Scholar Mesenbet Assefa (PhD)

The voters' registration process is not undertaking as fast as planned. Around 24,000 constituency offices haven’t been opened to commence services. And only a small number of voters are registering in the offices that have been opened so far. The delay to logistics, security and lack of cooperation are the challenges and we are doing our level best to open the offices and address the logistics in the remaining days.

- National Election Board Chairperson Birtukan Mideksa

The government has facilitated platforms to make the 6th national elections peaceful, secured and credible. Accordingly, a national committee comprised of various stakeholders is organized to ensure data exchange. The committee has also given training to security bodies to ensure the safekeeping of nominees, election observers, executives, and logistics. It is ready to overcome shortcomings raised by election participants on the process.

- National Security Affairs Advisor and National Elections Committee Chairperson Gedu Andargachew
Cape Verde PM Correia E Silva, ‘confident’ he will win re-election in legislative polls

Cape Verde Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva, who is running for re-election in this week’s legislative elections, says he is “confident” he will win “with an absolute majority”, arguing that government stability is important for the country, and also “good for our oil, our diamonds.

“We are confident in the sense that we can achieve victory with an absolute majority that will allow for government stability in parliament, because this is very important for the country. Stability is fundamental because the country depends on trust and stability. This is good for the people, the citizens, the investors, and our partners. It’s our oil, our diamonds: democracy, stability, security.”

Ulisses who says his priority when reelected is to beat Covid-19, runs against Janin Hopfner Almada of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde.

She took to the streets to invite her supporters to go to the polls in a cheerful and festive atmosphere, in spite of restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Since the official start of the election campaign, some of the political parties in the running have been trying in vain to obtain an agreement to ban rallies, citing the Covid-19 pandemic, without success. The CNE officially banned rallies, but did not react to events held by the ruling party and PAICV candidates.

The parties are competing for control of the 72-seat national assembly.

Source:- AFP and Africanews.com

Ukrainian forces wary of Russian troop movements near eastern front line

Seven years after Ukraine launched an “anti-terrorist operation” against Russian-backed separatist forces, fighting has never really stopped in the country’s restive east. FRANCE 24’s correspondent Gulliver Cragg visited the front line, near the government-held port city of Mariupol.

Wednesday, April 14, marks seven years to the day Ukraine launched a military operation against Russian-controlled forces in the eastern Donbas.

Ukrainian volunteers rushed to defend their country at the time. Some are still active on the front line – and apprehensive.

“Well there is an escalation? No one knows… Tensions rise, then calm down, then rise again,” says Taira, a volunteer medic.

“We do have information, though, that the Russians are setting up field hospitals near the border with Ukraine, and that’s a pretty serious sign,” she adds.

A strategic port, Mariupol was shelled by Russian-backed forces in 2015 and many here fear the city may once again be in Moscow’s sights.

Source :- France 24 news

Turkish court frees journalist Altan after European rights court ruling

A Turkish court on Wednesday released journalist and novelist Ahmet Altan after more than four years in prison on charges of involvement in a failed 2016 coup attempt that he had always denied.

The Court of Cassation ruling came a day after the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) demanded the 71-year-old’s release because of violations of his rights. Turkey’s Supreme Court has just ordered the release of journalist Ahmet Altan after more than 4.5 years in jail, the European Parliament’s rapporteur Nacho Sanchez Amor tweeted.

Will be even happier after seeing him enjoying fully his freedom and all charges dropped. Hope all other (ECHR) rulings will be applied too.

Nacho Sanchez Amor who is a Socialist Deputy in the European Parliament. AFET, DROI, JURI, Turkey Extremadura thanked them “very happy to hear Turkey’s court of cassation has just ordered the release of novelist Ahmet Altan after more than 4.5 years in jail! I will be even happier after seeing him enjoying fully his freedom and all charges dropped. Hope all other rulings will be applied too.”

Charm offensive

The Court of Cassation ruling came as Erdogan mounts a charm offensive aimed at mending torn relations with the European Union and building a new rapport with the US administration of President Joe Biden.

EU leaders highlighted Turkey’s deteriorating human rights record during a summit in Ankara last week.

Biden’s White House has also made human rights a much bigger issue in US-Turkish relations than it had been in the former administration of Donald Trump.

Turkish officials argue that the courts are independent and not swayed by politics or Erdogan’s whims. But critics accuse Erdogan of stacking them with supporters after sacking or jailing tens of thousands of people who held various government jobs.

Western observers have thus been watching Altan’s case and some other renowned prisoners for signs of Turkey’s diplomatic intentions and future political course.

Perhaps the most celebrated case involves civil society leader Osman Kavala – in custody without a conviction for nearly four years and re-arrested after being cleared of all charges in 2019. “Grotesque”

Ahmet Altan was also briefly freed and cleared of all charges before being almost immediately rearrested in 2019.

The Court of Cassation ruling on Wednesday overturned his conviction in the 2019 case related to charges of “assisting a terrorist organization”.

He had turned to the ECHR for help in 2017 after calling the charges against him “grotesque”. Daily newsletter Receive essential international news every morning. The Strasbourg-based rights court on Tuesday found “no evidence that the actions of the applicant had been part of a plan to overthrow the government”.

It ordered Turkey to immediately release him and pay him 16,000 euros ($19,000) in damages for violating his rights to freedom of expression.

“Deprivation of liberty, in particular continued detention, must be based on reasonable suspicion,” the ECHR ruling said.

It found that “the applicant’s criticisms of the president’s political approach could not be seen as an indication that he had had prior knowledge of the attempted coup,” it added.

Source :- AFP

Uganda, Tanzania sign major oil pipeline agreement

Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni signed on Sunday the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project agreement with his Tanzanian counterpart Samia Hassan Suluhu.

“The EACOP Tripartite Project Agreement has been signed by all parties with commitment for realization of the Equal project; for the benefit of all people of Uganda and Tanzania in the spirit of East Africa,” said Sam Kuteesa, Uganda’s foreign minister.

The agreement, signed in the Ugandan capital Kampala, paves the way for the construction of a 1,445 km crude oil pipeline from Uganda’s Albertine region to Tanzania’s seaport of Tanga.

Extraction will take place at two oil fields: the Kingfisher field, which is operated by China National Offshore Oil Corporation Ltd, and the Tilenga field, operated by Total S.A.

Uganda last month suspended the signing of the agreement to mourn the death of then Tanzanian president John Pombe Magufuli.

The $3.5 billion pipeline could be the longest electrically heated crude oil pipeline in the world. Once completed, more than 10,000 job opportunities will be created during execution, according to Suluhu.

Environmental activists say the project poses risks to protected environments, water sources and all people of Uganda and Tanzania due to CO2 emissions from the burning of oil through the pipeline.
Tej: Ethiopia’s national drink

Compiled by Staff Reporter

Every society has its own traditional alcoholic beverages that are unique for that specific community, and representing its rich history, identities, and overly proud of it.

Turkey’s Raki, Japanese Nihonshu, Ghanian Nsafufuo, Brit’s Guinness, Mexicans’ Tequila, Chineses’ Maotai and Koreans’ Soju are some of the beverages that are unique for those countries and the countries are well known for the drinks.

Ethiopia is no exception. Ethiopians, apart from their coffee, which they grow it at home and prepare it with special breathtaking ceremony, they are also known for their homemade alcoholic drink, (honey beverage), Tej that is prepared in a distinctive way and care.

‘Tej’, pronounced as in T’édge, is the generic name for Ethiopian traditional honey wine or mead and it is only available in Ethiopia. This alcoholic beverage is yellow in color and it is sweet in taste. The drink is typically served in glasses, known locally as ‘Brille’ that has a shape of laboratory beaker.

As studies indicate, in Ethiopia, the tradition of brewing Tej from honey goes back to ancient times, Accounts from as early as the 16th century when European exploration of Abyssinia began in earnest, document the presence of this special honey wine, usually consumed only by Ethiopia’s ruling elite.

These historic chronicles, published in the 16th through early 20th centuries, offer many sweet tidbits about Tej: its production and consumption, and its place in Ethiopian society.

Theophilus Waldmeier, an English missionary, wrote in his 1866 memoir: “honey wine (mead) is much appreciated, but all cannot afford to obtain it, which is no loss to them, as it is intoxicating.”

Four years later, Henry St. Clair Wilkins stops for a meal with his party in Takoonsa and writes: “Here we partook of our own fare in contentment, after an ineffectual attempt to swallow some Tej, the home-brew of the village.”

Charles Hindlip, another Englishman, writing in 1906, refers to ‘Tej’, the national drink made of honey, nasty and strong:”

The first Western account of Ethiopian culture was written and published in the 1530s by Father Francisco Alvares, a Portuguese Priest who spent six years in Ethiopia with a mission from his country. He seemed to enjoy ‘Tej’ more than his Scottish counterpart of two centuries later.

“They make wine from many seeds,” Alvares wrote, “and the wine of honey is much the best of all.” He reported that this wine “walked about with great fury, the mistress of the house, concealed behind a curtain, taking her own share.”

Edward Gleiachen, a traveler from fin-de-siècle England, also the other visitor who wrote in 1898 about ‘Tej’. As to him, ‘Tej’ is extremely popular with all ranks, but it is only the middle and upper classes who can afford it.

In fact, in earlier times Tej was considered as a favorite drink of well-off families because it was consumed by privileged classes; mainly member of the royal family, noblemen, aristocrats and the like upper class individuals who have the highest status in society.

Following ‘Tej’ was an important beverage among to the highest of Ethiopian society; royal homes have had a ‘Tej’ Azaz’e, or ‘Tej’ Butler, who was in charge of the royal mead.

The beverage is mainly used for great feasts, such as weddings, anniversaries, and similar ceremonial meals. It is a prestige beverage, and more expensive than the local beer.

‘Tej’ is served in ‘Tej’ beé’ (‘Tej’ House, similar to Coffee House), or special bars set up strictly to sell ‘Tej’ either by ‘Berekele’ or by the bottle to take home.

Currently, several restaurants that are serving traditional Ethiopian food also offer ‘Tej’ on the menus. The distilling ritual, with glass beakers reminiscent of high school chemistry lessons, is fun to watch.

‘Tej’, apart from being a beverage that is taken to enjoy, it had also played a role in diplomacy. In his 1868 book that tells about a British mission to Abyssinia, Henry Blanc recounts this moment between the ambassadors and Emperor Theodorus:

As it is stated ‘Tej’ is made in the following way: to one part of honey are added seven parts of water, and well mixed; then some leaves of a plant called “Geshoo” are put into the mixture, to make it ferment; it is put outside in the shade and left for a day or two. A piece of cotton cloth is strained over the mouth of the large earthenware jar, or gumbo, and through this the ‘Tej’ is poured; the servant tapping the cloth with his fingers to make the liquid run freely. It one wants to make it stronger, the first brew is used instead of the water; adding honey and Geshoo leaves in the same way.

In the time of King Theodore, the monarch had ‘Tej’ five years old, which made any one drink in a very short time.