



Ethiopian News

Summer 2019

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Lalibela churches one of the ‘Best Places on Earth’ to visit





Editorial



Historic 2020 Elections Represent Hope on the Horizon

Ethiopia is heading for a historic National Election in May 2020, expected to be the freest, fairest and most inclusive ever held in the country.

Ethiopia, with a population of over 105 million people, has a fixed-term parliament system with elections held every five years. A bicameral system consisting of the House of People's Representatives with 547 constituency members (MPs), and the House of Federation, ensures the representation of minorities from all constituencies based on population size.

Significant reforms undertaken over the last 18 months have seen government critics released from jail and armed opposition movements in exile, previously designated as 'terror' groups, allowed back home, where many have already engaged in

peaceful politics ahead of their participation in next year's elections.

Encouraged by this broadening of the political space, donors have heralded their support. On 18th June, the United Nations Development Programme signed a \$40 million project document to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) to deliver on its mandate to enhance public trust and confidence in the election process. This multi-partner programme, "Supporting Elections for Ethiopia's Democracy Strengthening" (SEEDS), this month, received a \$3 million donation from the Japanese government for the procurement of transparent ballot boxes and indelible ink markers to avoid double voting, thereby enhancing credibility and transparency.

Back in May, when Jeremy Hunt MP, the UK's former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was in Ethiopia for World Press Freedom Day, he announced £15.5 million of UK support to help Ethiopia "run transparent, free and fair elections." In June, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed his appreciation for Ethiopia's grassroots approach, welcomed significant reforms and praised the plans to hold an election. \$1 million in funding has since been approved to support the 2020 elections and will be provided through UNDP.

On the technical side, former opposition leader and outspoken critic, Birtukan Mideksa, now heading up the NEBE, following her appointment by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, commands the highest esteem from Ethiopian society and will be trusted to ensure that the election process is fully free and fair.



Birtukan Mideksa (right) is sworn in as chairperson of NEBE in November 2018

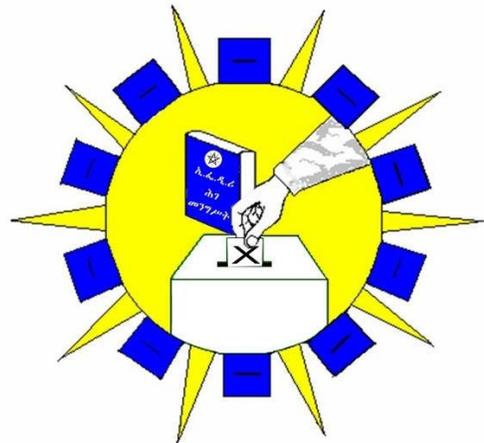
Ethiopia has more than 110 political parties representing the diverse interests of millions of Ethiopians across the length and breadth of the country.

Over a hundred parties have been engaged in successive consultations with the Government and the Electoral Board in anticipation of next year's polls. This is testament to the widening political space and appetite for democratisation felt across society since the coming to power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in April 2018.

Political parties are free to express their views and outline their policies without censorship, and, in an effort to ensure a level playing field, will benefit from the provision of election funding from the Government and guaranteed access to state media to broadcast their manifestos. In fact, many opposition parties have already engaged in fundraising and campaigning, holding town hall meetings and consultations as part of their warm-up for the vote next year.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the ruling coalition headed by Prime Minister Abiy, in a recent regular meeting of its Executive Committee, outlined its own commitment to hold the vote next year, whilst welcoming the continuation of consultations with political parties on the finer details of the poll.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian House of People's Representatives in their extraordinary meeting on 24th August 2019 approved a proclamation on electoral and political parties. The Bill is expected to better facilitate the conduct of future elections by supporting the development of robust political parties in the country.



With preparations afoot across the political spectrum, this historic election holds the promise of embedding a truly inclusive and participatory democracy in Ethiopia for the long haul. However, to meet these aspirations, all stakeholders must capitalise on the public's appetite for change and reform to drive Ethiopia forward towards the hope on the horizon.



Ethiopia unites in record-breaking tree-planting campaign

353 million trees planted in one day as part of efforts to curb climate change and deforestation

In an unparalleled move to go greener, Ethiopia made history by planting **353,633,660 million trees** in the space of just 12 hours, on 29th June, setting a new world record.

Spurred on by the Prime Minister, who kicked off the day by planting trees in the south of the country, Ethiopians from all walks of life, young and old, came together as part of a national movement to restore forests, and to combat effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

In addition to ordinary Ethiopians, the diplomatic corps, various international organisations, and the business community also joined in the tree-planting campaign. Public offices and schools were closed in order to allow maximum participation.



Prime Minister Abiy plants a tree in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State, Ethiopia

The tree-planting challenge initially aimed to plant 200 million trees across identified sites in nine

regional states. Ethiopia's Minister of Innovation and Technology, Dr Getahun Mekuria, tweeted estimates of the number of trees planted throughout the day. By 11.22am local time, more than 67 million trees were planted, breaking the world record held by India. And by 3:00pm local time, the 200 million target was surpassed.



The British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Alastair McPhail plants a tree. The UK has been supporting the planting of an estimated 95 million trees through its contribution to the Productive Safety Net Programme.

This ambitious tree-planting drive is part of Prime Minister Abiy's **#GreenLegacy** Initiative which aims to plant **4 billion trees (40 trees per person)** across the length and breadth of Ethiopia by the end the rainy season in October. Since the launch of the programme in May, almost 3 billion trees have been planted.

According to UN figures, forest coverage in Ethiopia fell to a little over 4% during the 2000s, down from 35% in the early 20th century.



Ethiopian Airlines staff plant trees at their headquarters in Addis Ababa

This tree-planting exercise is a step in the right direction, going a long way in the battle to restore Ethiopia's forests. While similar nationwide campaigns have taken place in the past on an *ad hoc* basis, this year's meticulously planned and executed campaign epitomises the best of mass participation for a sacred cause.

**“Great Things Happen
When We Work Together.”**

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

#PLANTYOURPRINT

GREENING ETHIOPIA

ONE SEEDLING AT A TIME



“Well done Ethiopia, an inspiration to the world.”

Philip Marks

If every country can break records for planting trees like Ethiopia – we can counter the effects of deforestation and climate change. Every one of our actions, big and small, count for people and for planet.

Amina J Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

It's brilliant that you are taking the lead and showing the rest of the World what is required to halt serious Climate Change. I just wish that every country in the World would follow your amazing example and do likewise. Congratulations to your Prime Minister for showing great leadership and for taking this responsible and concerned initiative. Congratulations to all those of your population who planted trees too. They will, I'm sure, all be rewarded in years to come.

Julia Page

This is Leadership from Ethiopia. If they can do it then so can your government.

Extinction Rebellion

This truly impressive feat is not just the simple planting of trees, but part of a huge and complicated challenge to take account of the short- and long-term needs of both the trees and the people.

Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis, Head of the Centre for Wood Science and Technology, Edinburgh Napier University

What an incredible piece of world leadership on the single most important issue of our generation.

Bill Britten

I would like to say how impressed I was to hear the news that your country had planted 350 million trees recently. This is a fine example to set for other countries to follow. Congratulations.

John Beaven

Prime Minister Abiy to receive Hessian Peace Prize



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has been announced as this year's recipient of the Hessian Peace Prize in recognition of his indispensable role in achieving a historic peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea following a 20-year state of "no war no peace".

"A process of reconciliation between the two states offers opportunities for the societies of both states and the East African region. These important developments and the resulting opportunities for a peaceful future are worthy of recognition," the Albert Osswald Foundation said in a statement.

The domestic changes introduced by the Prime Minister are also noteworthy. In the last year and a

half, Ethiopia has made significant progress in political and economic liberalization. In his first year in office, PM Abiy released thousands of political prisoners, welcomed the return of political groups from exile and appointed a gender-balanced cabinet. Free elections are also scheduled for May 2020.

The Hessian Peace Prize was established on 16th October 1993 by former Hessian Prime Minister Albert Osswald and the foundation he established. It is awarded to people who have rendered outstanding services to international understanding and peace. The Hessian Peace Prize will be awarded to the Prime Minister on 23rd September 2019.

“Abiy Ahmed Ali is one of the great hopes on the African continent. We want to honour his commitment to peace with the Hessian Peace Prize and at the same time continue to promote it.”

Nicole Deitelhoff, Head of PRIF and member of the Board of Trustees.

New International Development Secretary in debut visit to Ethiopia

UK's new International Development Secretary, The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, made his debut trip to Ethiopia in August, where he met with various Government officials and British investors to discuss the opportunities and challenges of working in Ethiopia.

While meeting Prime Minister Abiy, the two discussed issues of mutual interest including Ethiopia's political and economic situation, its role in the region and ways to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.



Appreciating the homegrown reforms underway under the Prime Minister, Mr. Sharma affirmed the continued support of the UK Government to Ethiopia. The Prime Minister, on his part, expressed his gratitude to the UK Government for its continued engagement in Ethiopia's development endeavours.

...Ethiopia, UK sign £120m grants

Two grant agreements totalling £120 million were signed by the visiting International Development Secretary and Mr Admasu Nebebe, State Minister at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, £95 million will be used to finance the *Strengthening Climate Resilient System for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Service (SCRS-WaSH)* programme, which aims to improve access to climate-resilient water, developing sanitation services and good hygiene practices.



The remaining £25 million will be used to finance phase 4 of the Ethiopian *Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)*, which aims to increase access to safety net and disaster risk management systems, complementary livelihoods services and nutrition support for food insecure households in rural Ethiopia.

...Support for British businesses

During his visit to Ethiopia, Mr Sharma called for the UK to lead the world in mobilising private sector investment to create jobs and to build the sustainable economic growth that will lift millions out of poverty.

Accompanied by the Deputy Chief Administrator of the Oromia Regional State, Mr Shimelis Abdisa, Mr Sharma visited the Unilever Ethiopia factory, a great example of a British investor benefitting from investments in Ethiopia. There, he met with female entrepreneurs working in partnership with Unilever which, alongside UK aid, is providing vital training and expertise to help women start their own retail businesses selling affordable household products.

Mr Sharma also heard how UK aid is supporting operations at Modjo Dry Port. Aid at Modjo is improving systems to reduce the costs and time it takes for goods to move through customs, making the flow of trade through the Dry Port more efficient.

In meetings with British businesses, discussions focussed on how UK aid can make it even easier for British businesses to invest and trade in Ethiopia.

...new Commission to boost quality infrastructure projects

During his visit to Ethiopia Mr Sharma also announced a new International Development Infrastructure Commission that will be made up of UK and international business leaders. The Commission will leverage the very best of British expertise, and make recommendations to improve the planning, delivery and financing of infrastructure projects. This should help make investment in infrastructure in developing countries more attractive to global businesses and investors.

The Commission will help facilitate private sector support to build more sustainable and resilient cities and improve access to clean energy and water.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

“An extra \$2.5 trillion is needed every year to end poverty in developing countries and the UK must mobilise private sector investment to overcome this challenge.”

“Alongside the lifesaving work of UK aid, we need to boost infrastructure projects that form the backbone of economic growth.”

“This Commission will aim to turbo-charge investment in green, sustainable infrastructure, leading to more jobs, better access to basic services and opportunities for businesses, creating the UK’s future trading partners.”

Alongside mobilising private sector investment, Mr Sharma also announced extra UK aid specifically for Ethiopia as it builds more sustainable infrastructure, helping cities to grow in a green way and providing affordable clean energy.

Mr Sharma’s visit comes ahead of the UK-Africa Investment Summit in 2020 which will look to build on future opportunities for trade between the UK and African businesses. As of 2018, trade between the Continent and the UK was worth over £33 billion.

National plan to end child marriage, FGM by 2025 launched

Ethiopia has launched a five-year national road map to end child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practices across communities in the country.

The launch was held in Addis Ababa in the presence of President Sahle-Work Zewde and the Minister of Women, Children & Youth, H.E. Yalem Tsegaye Asfaw.



Speaking at the launch, President Sahle-Work said, “The will to end child marriage and FGM exists. I am delighted that we now have a plan which is a clear demonstration of the government’s commitment to making harmful practices history in Ethiopia.”

The new national roadmap will cost around \$94 million and is in line with Ethiopia's aspiration to achieve global and continental commitments on countering the health and socioeconomic impacts of child marriage and FGM. Back in 2014, during the first Global Girl Summit held in London, Ethiopia made a pledge to eliminate child marriage and FGM by 2025.

The newly launched national roadmap will be implemented by a consortium of national actors, led by the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, in coordination with the National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM, Ministries of Health, Education, Finance, Labour & Social Affairs, UN agencies, NGOs and other sector stakeholders.

According to figures from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) one in every five girls below the age of 18 is married in Ethiopia. In the last decade, however, Ethiopia has made substantial progress in reducing

the number of girls exposed to these harmful practices.

"The establishment of a National Alliance to End Child Marriage and FGM is another significant stride in the effort to end child marriage as it has been key in coordinating interventions," UNICEF had said.

Malala visits Ethiopia

Malala Yousafzai, a UK-based Pakistani activist for female education, visited Ethiopia in July where she met with various government officials including Prime Minister Abiy, President Sahle-Work and young Ethiopian activists to learn more about Ethiopia's progress on education and equality, as well as the challenges and the changes they wish to see for their country.



Malala with President Sahle-Work

During her meetings with government, the young Nobel Prize laureate exchanged views on the empowerment of women and girls and encouraged the Ethiopian government to make further steps to address the challenges to girls' education. Malala was accompanied by her father Ziauddin, U.K. Board Chair Mabel van Oranje and Malala Fund staff.

In an exclusive interview with Fana Broadcasting Corporation, she said "I met the Prime Minister and the President, and they are passionate in empowering girls and women in Ethiopia. They are also working to implement policies that protect the rights of women and girls."

"I hope these efforts will bear fruit," she said, adding that girls also need to speak out and play their part in women empowerment.

In meetings with young Ethiopian activists, issues discussed included early marriage, unintended

pregnancies, poverty and cultural norms as barriers to girls' education in Ethiopia.

Early marriage, in particular, is a global challenge and the issue should be given due attention in Ethiopia accordingly, she said.

"We need to fight against this issue to inform girls to engage [in] their education," she said.

When asked about her Ethiopia visit, she said "In Ethiopia, there are so many things to celebrate and enjoy. I really like Ethiopian cultural food. I met with girls and they want to become leaders."

She spoke about the Malala Fund, which invests in education programmes to help girls go to school and reach their full potential and expressed her desire to provide support to prevent girl's dropping out of school in Ethiopia.

Malala, who turned 22 on 12th July, celebrated her birthday in Ethiopia by spending the day with young activists.

...women taking centre stage in Ethiopia

As part of Prime Minister Abiy's reforms since taking office in April 2018, Ethiopia has reached huge milestones towards gender parity.

School enrolment for girls has doubled in the last quarter century and for the first time in Ethiopia's political history, women have been elevated to top government posts: a cabinet reshuffle saw a gender-balanced cabinet with women taking up half the ministerial posts, the first female president and first female supreme court president.

Former Ethiopian Prime Minister new AGRA chair

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has announced the appointment of Hailemariam Dessalegn, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, as its Board Chair.

"I received the invitation to chair the AGRA Board as an opportunity to continue influencing African leaders to accelerate the implementation of the AU's

Malabo Declaration to ascertain that food is available, accessible and affordable to all,” said Hailemariam.

Hailemariam will be leading an AGRA Board comprising global leaders with a passion to transform the lives of a majority of Africans living in rural areas through investment in agriculture.



Established in 2006, AGRA is an African-led, Africa-based and farmer-centred institution which puts smallholder farmers at the centre of the continent’s growing economy by transforming their farming from a solitary struggle to survive, to a business that thrives.

Hailemariam served as the Prime Minister of Ethiopia between 2012-2018 and is credited with sustaining the country’s rapid double-digit economic growth and laying the groundwork for key structural reforms.

He also served as the Chairperson of the African Union from 2013 to 2014 and was appointed the AU’s champion of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a continental leadership role that required him to rally fellow African leaders behind policies and strategies to end hunger on the continent by 2025. He joined the AGRA Board in September 2018.

Ancient humans lived high in Ethiopia’s mountains

Scientists have discovered what is said to be the first evidence of human presence high in Ethiopia’s Bale Mountains, dating as far back as 45,000 years ago.



The Fincha Habera rock shelter in the Bale Mountains where numerous signs of human settlement were found

Despite the harsh conditions so high up, researchers say our ancestors made their home in a rock shelter roughly 4,000 metres above sea level (13,123 feet), where they had enough water and could hunt the native giant mole rat for sustenance.

The evidence shows ancient humans populated the site at least twice, with the most recent being around 10,000 years ago, near the end of the last Ice Age.

It is long been thought that the inhospitable conditions would have prevented humans from settling in this location. But, the new research shows that this was not the case.

The findings are published in the journal *Science*.

Construction of state-of-the-art children’s hospital to start soon

The Ministry of Health is to build a state-of-the-art children’s hospital in Addis Ababa at the Alert Hospital.

The construction of the 500-bed hospital, which will be the first of its kind in the country, will cost €120 million.

The hospital, which will provide treatment for about 1 million children annually, will be built jointly by the governments of Ethiopia and the Netherlands and other development partners.

Dr Amir Aman, Ethiopia’s Minister of Health, said, the hospital will be completed in three years’ time.

Ambassador Fesseha to speak at ODI event

Ambassador Fesseha Shawel is among speakers at an upcoming event at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) entitled *Financing the future of the Belt and Road in Africa*.

Chaired by *Financial Times* Africa editor David Pilling, the event will take place on 20th September and will focus on China's investment in Africa and explore the future of Sino-African development relations. In particular, looking at the implications of the opportunities generated by Chinese investment practices, such as Chinese stakeholder lending practices.

The event will also focus on the Belt and Road Initiative in the East African context, looking at how it is financed by both state actors and private investors who seek access to Belt and Road opportunities.

Joining Ambassador Fesseha will be Deborah Brautigam, Director of the China-Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University; Linda Calabrese, ODI Research Fellow and Jinny Yan, Chief China Economist at the ICBC Standard Bank. This is a public event. Register to attend or watch online at: <http://bit.ly/ODIxBRI>.



On 25th July, Ambassador Fesseha and diplomats from the Political Affairs Department paid a courtesy call on the ODI, where they discussed issues of mutual interest, including ODI's work in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

On the occasion, Acting Executive Director, Sara Pantuliano, affirmed the ODI's commitment to continuing their work in Ethiopia.

Dr Tedros receives honorary degrees from Newcastle and Nottingham universities

In July, Ethiopia's former Foreign Affairs Minister and current World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus received two honorary degrees from the University of Newcastle and the University of Nottingham in a single week!

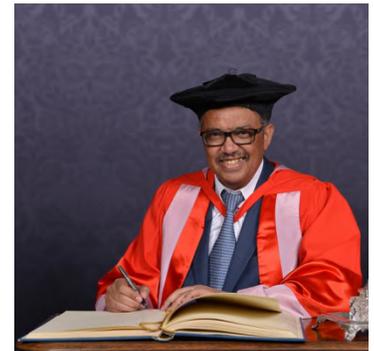
Dr Tedros was conferred the title of Honorary Doctor of Medicine by Newcastle University.

Dr Tedros said: "I am especially honoured to receive this award from Newcastle University, which remains one of the UK's leading medical schools. Its current research in IVF, cancer, diabetes, ageing and dementia are making an invaluable contribution to some of the world's most pressing health problems."

On 19th July, the University of Nottingham recognised Dr Tedros' outstanding contribution to world healthcare, by awarding him an Honorary Degree. Dr Tedros is an alumnus of Nottingham University, having received a PhD in Public Health Medicine in 2000.

Professor Shearer West, Vice-Chancellor of the University said: "I am delighted that Dr Tedros, one of our most inspirational and successful alumni, will accept an Honorary Degree. His career is truly inspiring to everyone here at the university."

Dr Tedros was elected WHO Director-General in 2017, becoming the first African to lead the organisation. Prior to his role there, Dr Tedros served as Ethiopia's Foreign Minister from 2012-2016 and as Health Minister from 2005-2012. His comprehensive reform of the country's health system saw child mortality reduced by two thirds, HIV infections by 90%, malaria mortality by 75% and mortality from tuberculosis by 64%.



Ethio Lease becomes first foreign-owned company to obtain a financial service licence

As part of government efforts to liberalise the economy and create more jobs, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) granted the first financial services licence to foreign-owned company, Ethio Lease.

Increasing foreign direct investment is a centrepiece of Prime Minister Abiy's reform agenda to increase private sector growth.

Ethio Lease will provide local businesses with access to high-quality equipment, allowing businesses to grow their operations and create jobs, increasing productivity throughout the country. Ethio Lease is a wholly owned subsidiary of New York-based equipment leasing firm, Africa Asset Finance Company Inc. (AAFC).

"As the first company to provide equipment leasing services, Ethio Lease promises to be a game changer in Ethiopia, with huge potential to boost the economy, providing significant financial gains for the country."

Dr Yinager Dessie, Governor, NBE

Frans Van Schaik, Chairman and CEO of AAFC, who will serve as Vice Chair of Ethio Lease, commented, "Ethiopia is poised for growth as the government takes significant strides to create jobs and improve the quality of life for its population of more than 100 million. By providing leasing solutions to growing businesses, we believe our capital will help stimulate economic activity while generating attractive risk-adjusted returns for our lenders and investors."

Investment and Jobs Creation National Committee established

PM Abiy Ahmed has launched the Investment and Jobs Creation National Committee with a view to unlocking the full potential of the private sector and creating sustainable and decent jobs.

The committee, chaired by the PM, comprises the Deputy PM, presidents of the nine regional states, the mayors of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, two representatives from the Prime Minister's office and 10 Federal ministries.

The national committee will ensure the creation of sustainable and decent work by aligning policy and institutional systems. It will play a leading role in securing and expanding investments and ensure implementation of plans to increase investments and job creation.

The committee is also set to coordinate effective outputs, the work of Federal and Regional entities and other stakeholders, in creating a conducive investment environment to accelerate job creation.

Every year, 2-3 million youths reach employability age and add to Ethiopia's human resource and talent pool. While Ethiopia's economic performance is progressive, more jobs are needed.

The Doing Business Initiative and Committee led by the Prime Minister have marked key milestones in the goal of creating an enabling business environment in which the private sector can play a critical role in job creation.

These two committees, working collaboratively are expected to help create 3 million jobs by the end of Ethiopian Calendar 2012, the PM's office said.

Key sectors given special focus to accelerate job creation nationwide include agriculture, mining, tourism and IT.

The National Committee will meet every two months to evaluate progress and follow up on issues requiring immediate action to unlock performance.

New \$300m industrial park to be built in Adama

A new \$300m industrial park will be constructed in the city of Adama, 99km southeast of Addis Ababa, before the end of the year. The park, which will focus on equipment manufacturing, will be the second in Adama.

The 100-hectare project is expected to create 25,000 jobs and is part of Ethiopia's grand plan to transform its largely agrarian economy into an industrialised one by 2025. China will cover 85% of the fund and the remainder will come from the Ethiopian government.

...Four more industrial parks

The Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) said four additional industrial parks will be built in the new financial year that commenced in July 2019.

Industrial parks in Ethiopia exported products worth \$110 million in the last fiscal year alone, up 35% on the previous year, creating employment for 50,000 people. In the fiscal year to 7th July, three industrial parks were inaugurated and are now operational.

\$20 million secured from train services

The Ethio-Djibouti Railway secured more than \$20 million in revenue from its freight and passenger train services over the past eight months.

The 750km Ethio-Djibouti standard gauge railway, which was built jointly by Ethiopia and Djibouti, started operation on 1st January 2018 and is accelerating its impact on the economy. During its first year of operation in 2018, the corporation managed to move some 800 trains and earn \$35 million.

"We see this railway not only as a line of transportation, it is the lifeline and the economic corridor. This railway is related to the country's industrialisation and development," Director-General of the corporation, Tilahun Sarka, said.

...Passenger, Freight Capacity to be doubled

The Ethio-Djibouti Railway Corporation (EDR) is planning to double its freight and passenger service trips to match the fast-growing demand on the Ethiopia-Djibouti route.



Tilahun Sarka, EDR Director-General, said the railway is registering remarkable achievements in both freight and commuter services and will continue scaling up.

The Railway aims to achieve Ethiopia's 85% freight facility. "Transporting commodities on time and avoiding demurrage has paid off," the D-G said.

"We are working to transport 40-50% of what is now being transported by trucks. That means we will have four daily freight train trips from Addis Ababa to Djibouti instead of two, as under current practice," he added. While it took 100 trucks three days to transport 212 containers, these can now be handled in one 11-hour trip with the two freight trains. This, Mr Tilahun noted, "is of paramount importance" since Ethiopia imports about 13 million tons of commodities [each year] via Djibouti.

In 2018, the passenger train transported 150,000 passengers.

Built with an outlay of \$4.2 billion, the Ethio-Djibouti Railway has reduced the travel time between Addis Ababa and Djibouti from three days to just 12 hours, or less.

Over \$1.2 billion worth of commodities traded

The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) traded over \$1.2 billion worth of commodities in the Ethiopian financial year, which ended on 7th July.



A total of 681,845 tons of commodities were traded, surpassing the target of 673,057 tons, with coffee and sesame the major commodities with a respective share of 45% and 34%.

Two e-Trade centres built at a cost of over \$700,000 in the city of Hawassa and Humera were also inaugurated during that time.

ECX is a national multi-commodity exchange that brings together buyers and sellers of agricultural commodities who trade spot contracts that standardise the quality, quantity, payment and delivery of agricultural goods.

Ethiopia develops national coffee brand for international market

The Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority is developing a national umbrella coffee brand to boost the country's share of coffee exports to the international market.

Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority Director-General, Adugna Debella, said the new brand, *Ethiopian Coffee*, will enhance the weak brand

promotion strategy of the sub-brands of *Yirgacheffe*, *Harrar*, and *Sidamo* coffee.

The Ethiopian Coffee brand will have paramount importance for developing the coffee sector as it helps the country to decide and negotiate the price of coffee in the international market.

Intellectual Property Asset Development Director-General, Tadesse Worku said the brand will increase the limited knowledge about Ethiopia for the majority global consumer.



It will also enable the nation to transform the consumption, value chain and competitive set of Ethiopian coffee through enhancing customer loyalty and recognition, he added, allowing the country to charge a premium and open the gate for new products.

Ethiopia is Africa's largest coffee producer and coffee production is the backbone of the country's agriculture-led economy.

Ethiopia exports the bulk of its beans to Europe and the U.S., and is trying to tap new markets in Asia, especially China, South Korea and Japan. China has the potential to take half of Ethiopia's shipments.

The new initiative is part of Ethiopia's ambition to triple coffee output within the next five years.

**VISIT | INVEST | TRADE
IN THE LAND OF ORIGINS**



Lalibela churches among Rough Guides' 100 Best Places on Earth

Ethiopia's famous rock-hewn churches of Lalibela are among *Rough Guides 100 Best Places on Earth* to visit in 2020.

In their brand-new guidebook to the most spectacular spots in the world, the travel publisher and tailor-made trip provider wants to encourage and inspire people to travel outside their comfort zone. The list reaches every corner of the globe and includes famous destinations as well as those that are up-and-coming, underrated, or have been previously overlooked.

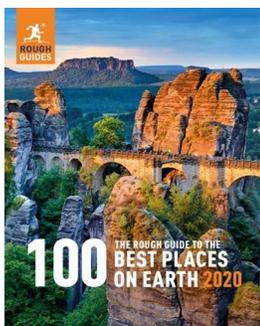
The book's editor, Helen Fanthorpe, said, "We pooled the knowledge of our many experienced and well-travelled authors and editors and together we decided on the spots the world over that are undiscovered, underrated, or simply spectacular. We've made sure there is a geographical mix, as well as a mixture of (justly) famous places and more off-the-beaten-track spots. We've also made sure to celebrate all types of travel by including a mix of type of attractions: urban and rural, atmospheric ruins and glittering cityscapes, biodiversity hotspots, cultural gems, and arresting architecture."

"We hope this list inspires people to get out there and see what the world has to offer."

Some of the recommendations featured in the book include the **Sunken Churches of Lalibela in Ethiopia**, the ‘alternative Grand Canyon’ in France, the famously beautiful and symmetrical Taj Mahal and Victoria Falls’ enormous curtain of water between Zambia and Zimbabwe.

“An enigmatic and utterly beguiling country, Ethiopia has endless intrigue. From its unique, highly sociable cuisine – the basis of which is *injera*, a spongy sourdough pancake, piled high with piquant curries and stews and shared between friends – to its ancient language and curly Amharic script, there’s very little that’s familiar about this place, and your trip will be all the better for it.”

“[Ethiopia’s] religious festivals and structures are something to behold. The sunken churches of Lalibela, hand-carved out of the red rock below ground some nine hundred years ago, are an astonishing feat of engineering. Come January, the network of tunnels and staircases that connect all eleven churches fill up with thousands of worshippers dressed in white, celebrating the birth of Christ with a twelve-hour mass.”



The new book, *"The Rough Guide to the 100 Best Places on Earth 2020"*, which will be published on 1st September, reveals 100 of the most extraordinary places to visit in the world – the ultimate travel bucket list. For a sneak peek of the

book, go to <http://bit.ly/RoughGuides2020List>.

Ethiopia to host World Tourism Forum

On 16th August, Ambassador Fesseha met with the President of the World Tourism Forum, Bulut Bağcı, following his recent trip to Ethiopia where he held meetings with various stakeholders including the Mayor of Addis Ababa city, Engineer Takele Uma.



Ambassador Fesseha with the President of the World Tourism Forum, Bulut Bağcı (right)

Briefing the Ambassador about his visit, Mr Bağcı said that the 2020 World Tourism Forum will be held in Addis Ababa.

Established under Bulut Bağcı’s leadership in 2014, the World Tourism Forum is a global organisation holding tourism events in different parts of the world to further boost global tourism.

Further information about the Addis Ababa Forum will be available on the World Tourism Forum website at www.worldtourismforum.net soon.

...Addis Ababa’s rising profile for global meetings

Ethiopia has, in the past few months, hosted major international meetings, increasing the diplomatic and hospitality profile of its capital Addis Ababa, which is the seat of the African Union and other United Nations offices.

In May, Addis Ababa hosted UNESCO’s World Press Freedom Day, which brought together major stakeholders over a three-day period. Ethiopia will also host the 2020 World Economic Forum on Africa and in June, Addis Ababa was chosen to host the next FIFA Congress in 2020.

...Prime Minister Abiy awarded "Leader in Tourism"



Mr Bagci also announced that the World Tourism Forum board has chosen the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr Abiy Ahmed, as the recipient of the 2019 World Tourism Award for "Leader in Tourism".

PM Abiy is recognised for his outstanding efforts to advance the tourism industry in Ethiopia.



The award will be presented to the Prime Minister at the World Tourism Awards ceremony in London in November.

New Tourism CEO appointed

Seleshi Girma has been named the new CEO of Tourism Ethiopia, replacing Lensa Mekonnen. Prior to taking up the new post, Sileshi served as Chief of Staff at the Addis Ababa Mayor's Office. He was also an advisor to the Minister of Culture and Tourism and deputy head of the Addis Ababa Tourism Bureau.

Sileshi graduated in tourism management from the University of Gondar with postgraduate studies at Mekelle University. He also authored a book in 2011 entitled, "Challenges & Opportunities of Promoting Tourist Destinations: A Case of Ethiopia."

Addis Ababa airport sees record number of passengers

A record number of international passengers have been travelling through Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, the major gateway into Africa, this summer.



Wednesday, 17th July was one of the busiest days for the Airport with 310 flights and 29,528 travellers (21,028 departing and 8,500 arriving passengers, respectively) which marked a record number of daily passengers served at the terminal.

Commenting on the Airport's preparedness for the peak season, Mr Getaneh Adera, Director of Bole International Airport and Acting CEO of Ethiopian Airports said, "With the partial opening of the new terminal, which will more than double the capacity of the airport, we are very excited to serve record number of passengers this summer."

As the home base of Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's largest flag-carrier, serving over 120 cities around the world, Addis Ababa has turned into a bustling hub handling hundreds of flights each day. The Airport has seen a major expansion recently which will boost its capacity to cater for up to 22 million passengers annually.

Upon going fully operational, the expanded terminal will feature state-of-the-art airport facilities, elegant and spacious check-in, arrival and departure halls, various duty-free shops and restaurants, taking the entire passengers' experience to a whole new level.

It is to be recalled that last year Addis Ababa surpassed Dubai as the top transit hub for long-haul passengers into Africa.

Team Ethiopia at the London Anniversary Games

The 2019 Muller Anniversary Games took place in London from 20th – 21st July and featured big wins for some of Ethiopia’s up and coming talent.

On Day 1 at the men’s 5000m, three-time global 5k-medalist Hagos Gebrhiwet, held off Norway’s 18-year-old Jakob Ingebrigtsen, winning in 13:01.86.



Hagos Gebrhiwet winning the men’s 5,000m

On Day 2 Samuel Tefera prevailed in a fierce last lap battle against Filip Ingebrigtsen to add his name to the list of winners of the Emsley Carr Mile.

Pulling ahead in the waning stages, the young Ethiopian athlete fought off the Norwegian to take the win in 3:49.45, the fastest in the world this year.

...1,500m world record ratified

Samuel Tefera's 3:31.04 world indoor 1500m record has been ratified by the IAAF.

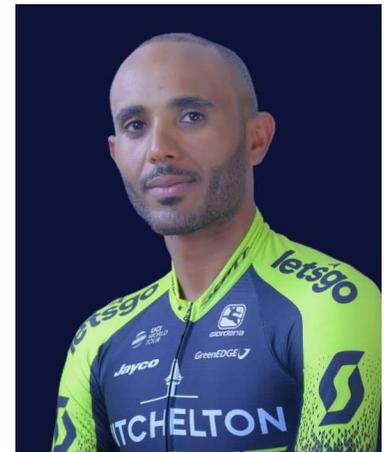


Back in February at the IAAF World Indoor Tour meeting in Birmingham, Tefera, the world indoor 1500m champion, upstaged Ethiopian compatriot Yomif Kejelcha to take 0.14 off the long-standing record set by Morocco’s Hicham El Guerrouj in 1997.

"I can't believe that," said Tefera after the race. "I'm delighted with the outcome and to have the world record is a special feeling."

Tsgabu Grmay competes for 3rd time in Spain’s Vuelta a Espana

On 24th August, Ethiopia’s UCI World Tour cyclist and reigning national time-trial champion Tsgabu Grmay began his 7th Grand Tour when he competed at the 2019 Vuelta a Espana in Torrevieja, Spain.



This is Tsgabu’s third time taking part in the race, having competed there in 2015 and 2016. He has also previously participated three times in the Tour de France and once at the Giro d’Italia.

Tsgabu is the only Ethiopian rider ever to have competed in Grand Tour competitions and will be racing with 220 of the world’s top cyclists from 22 teams in Spain.

He is competing for the Mitchelton Scott racing team, and will hope to continue his excellent form, having recently finished 29th in the General Classification at the 2019 Tour de Pologne.

Grmay is leading the way for cycling in Ethiopia. In his hometown of Mekelle, he is building a team of young riders and in November, he plans to host a new cycling sportive which aims to bring many international cycling tourists to Ethiopia.

EVENTS

“I Appreciate You” – solo exhibition by Catherine Chambers

The Embassy will be hosting a solo exhibition by Catherine Chambers, from Friday 20th September for two weeks.



The majority of works that will be exhibited at the Embassy will be oil portraits of friends in Lalibela, people Catherine visits frequently but who cannot do the same in return. Painting a portrait is a way of showing her appreciation.

The title of the exhibition comes from hearing the phrase “I appreciate you” being used often in Lalibela, which sparked Catherine’s interest in the variations in meaning that can occur by translation from one language to another.

Catherine’s attempts to learn and speak Amharic rely on translations and interpretations of words and phrases by friends, together with her own interpretations leading to some often amusing and confusing misunderstandings.

Catherine’s exhibited paintings, she hopes, will communicate “I appreciate you” of her relationship with Lalibela in both languages.

Venue: Embassy of Ethiopia
17 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PZ

Date / Time: 20th September - 3rd October 2019
Monday – Friday
10am – 1pm and 2pm - 5pm

Meet the Artist: 28th September 2019 at 12pm



Catherine, a London-based artist, has in recent years, developed strong ties with Ethiopia. Since 2015 she has shared her time between Lalibela and London and this has strongly influenced her work. Last summer, Catherine’s portrait of an Ethiopian friend ‘Girma’ was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Show.

2019 PEN Pinter Prize: Lemn Sissay



The 2019 PEN Pinter Prize is to be awarded to poet, performer, playwright, artist and broadcaster Lemn Sissay, who will deliver an address for the occasion at the British Library.

A limited-edition booklet of the lecture published by Faber & Faber will be available to the audience at the event.

Venue: The British Library
96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB

Date: 10th October 2019, From 7pm

Tickets + information: <http://bit.ly/LemnSissayBL>

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

Ethiopian shoemakers stepping in the right direction



Forget Made in China, Germany or Italy...Ethiopia is fast becoming the go-to place for shoemakers, such as British brand Pittards UK, providing jobs in industry for local craftsmanship.



With exotic designs, high-quality output as well as a thriving leather industry, Ethiopia is making gains in the global shoe market, step by step.

Watch video at <http://bit.ly/EthiopianShoes>

GreenPath taps into Ethiopia's burgeoning organic farming market



GreenPath Food is small start-up and Ethiopia's first certified organic fruit and vegetable producer.



In exchange for growing fruit and vegetables on between a third and half of their plots, the company trains more than 150 smallholder farmers to complete European Union Organic Certification. In

addition, the farmers receive credit for inputs like seeds, and, most importantly, market access.

The company ships fresh produce to markets in places like London, Amsterdam and Dubai, and herbal teas and botanical ingredients to Britain and the US. One day, they hope to see the 'Grown in Ethiopia' label on supermarket shelves worldwide.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/GreenPathFood>

Where Does the World's Best Coffee Come From?



Coffee, that magical beverage that gets millions of people going in the morning. The intimate relationship we

have with coffee calls for better knowledge of its origins, where it comes from, and who does it best. Just like with the grapes that are used to make wine, the properties of the beans that make coffee are mostly determined by the conditions in which they're grown, such as sunlight, rain, soil, altitude, and even the mechanism of their picking.



Ethiopia

You may have already heard that Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee, where some of the best beans are grown. There is a guide to coffee from Ethiopia that tells the story of how an Ethiopian goat herder, Kaldi, was the first to discover coffee and its benefits as early as 850 AD, when he observed their energizing effects on his goats. Thanks to the high altitude growing conditions, the

country is known to produce the best coffee in the world. The country is especially famous for its Harar coffee, which is grown in the highlands of the Eastern part of Ethiopia on small farms. Harar usually has a wine accent, with a little astringency. Depending on the growth conditions, it may also have a spicy or fruit flavour.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/BestCoffeeET>

Incredible footage shows a traveller swimming in a stunning natural pool in the middle of a salt desert - renowned for being one of Earth's hottest places



A jaw-dropping clip showing an intrepid traveller swimming in a natural pool in one of the hottest places in the world featured in the *Daily Mail*.



Bridget Thackwray is one half of New Zealand travelling duo *Expedition Earth*, and in June, the 25-year-old and her partner, Topher Richwhite, 33, discovered this phenomenon at the Danakil Depression - an eye-popping geological wonder in Ethiopia.

Bridget said: 'The Danakil Depression is one of the hottest and lowest locations on the planet. The pool was 127 metres below sea level and was very, very salty.'

The Danakil Depression was formed from the divergence of three tectonic plates in the Horn of Africa. It has been referred to as 'the cradle of humanity' following the discovery there of a hominin fossil - named Lucy - dating back 3.2 million years.

The volcanic landscape also has huge green and yellow acid and sulphur lakes - and is popular with tourists.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/DanakilDesert>

Top 10 Prettiest Destinations in Africa



A land of immense red desert, picturesque coastal villages, breathtaking mountains, and other natural wonders, Africa has something to offer every kind of traveller. The landscape is vast, looking completely different in some countries than in others, and there are several sights here that you'll never get the chance to see anywhere else.

The continent boasts opportunities for adventure, learning, cultural immersion, relaxation and respite, and of course, some of the most astounding views in the world.

10: OMO RIVER REGION, ETHIOPIA



Ethiopia's Omo River Valley is truly something to add to your bucket list if you want to get in touch with the African wilderness. Largely untouched, the surrounding landscape is breathtaking and a welcome change for those who are tired of crowded, touristy destinations.

Because the area is so remote, the local tribes have been able to maintain many of their traditional customs, according to *Trip Savvy*. Not only will you get the chance to enjoy the stunning landscape, but you'll also have the opportunity to have an insight into the local culture.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/OmoValleyET>

Exploring Ethiopia's wildlife and ancient monuments

**TRAVEL
WEEKLY**

Ethiopia overflows with experiences you just can't find anywhere else, from rare wildlife in the mountains to the churches of Lalibela, hewn from single chunks of rock.

Because Ethiopia is so vast, an escorted tour makes sense, especially for first-time visitors. Several operators offer small-group trips led by local guides, exploring the country's cultural and natural highlights.

Natural wonders

From mountain peaks and plateaux to cloud forests, lakes and fields of wheat and *teff* (a grain used to make the ubiquitous *injera* flatbreads), Ethiopia's varied landscape makes it difficult to pin down. The dramatic natural beauty is a big draw for many visitors, who come to comb the landscape and spy native birds and wildlife.

Cultural capital

Most visitors arrive in Ethiopia via Addis Ababa, and the capital has plenty to occupy them for a few days.

Suggest starting at the National Museum of Ethiopia for an overview of the country's history. For a more modern dose of culture, the sprawling open-air Merkato is a hectic hodgepodge of stalls selling leather goods, fruit and veg, honey and mattresses.

Many people come to Ethiopia for its palaces and religious sites, including some of the world's oldest Christian churches. Gondar's Royal Enclosure houses several grand emperors' palaces, and visitors can wander around the well-preserved remains of banquet halls, libraries and ceremonial sites.

From there, Lalibela is a short flight away. And the journey provides a hint of what's to come, with the plane swooping above incredible rose-hued rock churches. Even those not especially interested in religious monuments will feel their eyes widen and their breath catch when they see the structures up close.



Mountain retreats

The best accommodation in Ethiopia blends beautifully with its surroundings – which is how it should be, with surroundings as incredible as this.

Limalimo Lodge is one of the country's most modern hotels, and perhaps the best choice for clients looking to relax a little between adventures.

The wooden chalets at **Bale Mountain Lodge** are scattered around a forest clearing, with a few stone huts next to the main building and restaurant, ideal for clients who might struggle with the narrow, winding paths.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/ExploreET>

A Network of hidden churches could be Ethiopia's most adventurous hiking trail

The Herald A new tour takes travellers to areas few Westerners visit. But scaling the Gheralta Mountains requires strength of faith, says Sarah Marshall.

Famous for its elaborate places of worship carved into the earth's core, Lalibela, a small town in northern Ethiopia, is the heartland for religious

festivals such as Genna, celebrated around January 7 every year.



Witnessing Genna is undoubtedly a spectacle and an alternative way to spend the festive period; but year-round, Ethiopia's churches are open for business, and even agnostics can't fail to be moved by an enthralling ancient culture criminally overlooked in Western history books.

Home to the Ark of the Covenant (a chest containing tablets inscribed with The Ten Commandments), Ethiopia has been shaped by Christianity, and many of the country's elaborate, historic and often hard-to-reach churches are still a focus for the community today.

Lalibela is already a popular stop on the tourist circuit, but further north in the region of Tigray, which borders Eritrea, the Gheralta Mountains conceal numerous frescoed caverns sculpted more than six centuries earlier...very few Westerners go to these mountain churches.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/HiddenChurches>

DIASPORA CORNER

Ethiopia opens up banking sector to its diaspora

As part of economic reforms initiated by Prime Minister Abiy, Parliament passed a bill in July to open up Ethiopia's financial/banking sector, which was closed to foreign investment, to its diaspora.

"The law will enable the Ethiopian born diaspora to take part in the economic growth of the country," said Lemlem Hadgo, chair of the Revenues, Budget and Finance Committee of parliament. "It will also address the grievances raised over the issue."

The changes mean that an estimated five million Ethiopians who have taken other nationalities, will now be able to buy shares in local banks and start lending businesses.

Other key sectors of the economy have also recently been open to foreign investment - plans to offer two telecoms licences to foreign firms were announced in June.

Notice: Postponement of Diaspora Festival

The first Diaspora Festival since the establishment of the Ethiopian Diaspora Agency that was scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa from 27th-29th August 2019 has been postponed until further notice. New dates will be announced at a later time.

Please follow the Embassy on social media (@EthioEmbassyUK) and subscribe to our mailing list at <http://bit.ly/ETHDiasporaUK> for the latest updates.

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