



Ethiopian News

February - March 2015 Issue

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- PM Hailemariam message to the people of South Sudan.....2
- Ethiopia burns 6.1 tonnes of confiscated ivory4
- Ethiopia meets MDG target for drinking water.....5
- Gibe III Dam to start electricity production this year7
- Over 9,000 farmers to benefit as Ethiopia joins sustainable cotton initiative.....9
- Ethiopia set to be home to Africa's first electric car assembly plant.....10
- KUONI: Ethiopia an emerging destination for 2015.....11
- Dublin Airport's first 787 is Ethiopian.....12
- 'First human' discovered in Ethiopia.....14
- Dawit Abebe's work featured in Saatchi Gallery.....14
- Ethiopians in the UK buy bonds worth over £40,000.....16
- The Ethiopian Story website launched.....18
- Grmay makes history as 1st Ethiopian to win gold at the CAC Road Championships.....19
- Watch out London, the Ethiopians are coming!.....20
- Ethio Telecom launches Addis 4G mobile service.....21
- Ethiopia's \$5bn project that could turn it into Africa's water powerhouse.....22



Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt sign historic agreement on the Renaissance Dam

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt sign a Declaration of Principles on the Renaissance Dam

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt have signed a historic agreement on a Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). On 23rd March, in Khartoum, it was signed by Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El Sisi.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Hailemariam said the Nile waters constitute an important livelihood for the people who share the river and that the economic development to which all riparian countries aspire could only materialise through dialogue and continuous cooperation. The GERD project can catalyse cooperation and provide a basis for regional integration. He said Ethiopia took a bold step in proposing the establishment of the **International Panel of Experts (IPoE)**, to encourage the building of mutual trust and confidence among the three Eastern Nile Basin countries.

Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir on his part said Sudan understands the need for cooperation and collaboration on the Nile waters, where confidence and trust building are essential mechanisms for realizing development and peace in the Nile Basin.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi underscored that Egypt did not stand against Ethiopia's right to develop and use its natural resources. He said firmly: "we have chosen to cooperate on any issue regarding the Nile waters."

By laying down the Principles relating to the GERD, the document underlines its historic importance. It also demonstrates that cooperation is the only way to solve disagreements and enhance confidence and trust among the three countries regarding the GERD. The three countries have agreed "to cooperate based on common understanding, mutual benefit, good faith, win-win and principles of international law, [and...] in understanding upstream and downstream water needs."



The signing of the Declaration of Principles has been welcomed by various institutions. The Nile Basin Initiative issued a statement congratulating the three countries on the signing, describing it as “a milestone in the history of cooperation on the Nile.” It said it could be expected to have immense significance for trans-boundary water resources management and development in the Nile Basin. The signing has also been welcomed by the EU and by the US and others.

A short film about the Grand Renaissance Dam highlighting its benefits for the region was screened at the signing ceremony.

The full text of PM Hailemariam’s speech and the declaration is available on request. The 27th March 2015 issue of “A Week in the Horn” also covers the signing ceremony in detail.

PM Hailemariam urges people of South Sudan to give peace a chance

PM Hailemariam Desalegn, as Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Assembly, issued a message to the People of South Sudan on 6th March, concerning the failed peace talks that had been ongoing in Addis Ababa, calling on them to give peace a chance.

“My dear brothers and sisters,” PM Hailemariam said, “On February 1st of this year, President Kiir and



Dr Riek Machar agreed to a plan to conclude negotiations on the formation of a transitional government of national unity and begin a process of healing and reconciliation in your country. My colleagues, the Leaders of the IGAD Member States, and myself, were hopeful that this moment signaled the nearing of the end of the terrible tragedy that has befallen South Sudan since December 15th, 2013...President Kiir and Dr Riek Machar agreed that they would come to an agreement by March 5th. That deadline has been missed. Talks continued this morning, past the deadline. I regret to inform you that the talks did not produce the necessary breakthrough.”

“The consequences of inaction are the continued suffering of you, the people of South Sudan, and the prolonging of a senseless war in your country. This is unacceptable, both morally and politically. On behalf of the people of Ethiopia, and the people of the entire IGAD region, we stand with you at this difficult and disappointing time: we remain hopeful that the promise of peace will be fulfilled in the near future.”

“Leadership is never easy, but continuing a war flagrantly disregards the interests of you, the people. It is an abdication of the most sacred duty leaders have to you, their people: to deliver peace, prosperity and stability.”

“Both President Kiir and Dr Riek Machar have assured the Leaders of the IGAD Member States that they are committed to peace. At the same time, there are individuals on both sides who continue to beat the drums of war. This cannot be right. There can be no justification for the continuation of this conflict. The war must end now.”

The full text of the message from H.E. PM Hailemariam Dessalegn to the people of South Sudan can be found on the IGAD website via the following link: <http://goo.gl/sF5Cf9>

“My dear brothers and sisters, do not lose hope. The region, and the world, stands with you. Peace is our only priority. Peace will be achieved. You, the people of South Sudan, need and deserve no less.”

Ethiopia's Finance Minister Sufian Ahmed among candidates for AfDB presidency

The Steering Committee of the Board of Governors of the African Development Bank (AfDB) met on 11th February and agreed to a list of eight candidates for the election of the next President of the African Development Bank. Ethiopia's Sufian Ahmed, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, is among those candidates.



The Bank operates under the leadership of the President, who serves as the legal representative of the Bank, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and the Chief of Staff of the Bank. The President conducts the current business of the Bank, under the direction of the Board of Directors. The President is elected by the Board of Governors and serves a 5-year term, renewable once.

The current President, Dr Donald Kaberuka, a national of Rwanda, commenced his first term on 1 September 2005. Following his re-election in May 2010, he commenced his last 5-year term on 1 September 2010.

The Board of Governors will elect Dr Kaberuka's successor on 28th May, during the Bank's Annual Meeting, due to take place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Ethiopia burns 6.1 tonnes of confiscated ivory

On 20th March, Ethiopia burnt 6.1 tonnes of ivory, worth an estimated £8million (\$12m), seized from poachers and traders over twenty years, vowing a zero tolerance policy towards poachers. H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Diemeke Mekonnen lit the stockpile at a ceremony held at the Gulele Botanic Gardens in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia has been undertaking multi-faceted activities to preserve and protect its natural and wildlife resources.

The elephant is among the wildlife resources most threatened by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, and the Deputy PM said the event gives a signal to illegal poaching and wildlife trafficking and stressed the need to strengthen regional and international partnership to curtail illegal practices.

The **African Wildlife Foundation** says Ethiopia has about 1,900 elephants in nine designated sites. Conservationists say 42 elephants were killed between 2011 and 2014, three since January.



Ethiopia has lost 90% of its elephants in just three decades. Last year, during the **Illegal Wildlife Conference** in London, Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom noted that Africa was hit particularly hard by the upsurge in illegal trade. Tourism industries in many African countries depend largely on wildlife as a major attraction. He said wildlife tourism had become a priority area in Ethiopia's development agenda, and the country was promoting its national parks. Measures were being taken to prevent poaching by reinforcing the law enforcement capacity and adopting appropriate legislation, he said.

The ash from the ivory burn will be used to fertilise 90,000 trees to be planted at the Gardens where a statue of an elephant will be erected.



Ethiopia meets MDG target for drinking water



On 23rd March, Ethiopia announced a remarkable achievement in the Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector as it met Target 10 of the MDG 7c for access to drinking water.

Speaking on behalf of the Water Minister, H.E Engineer Wondimu Tekle said, “Thanks to the great leadership of the government, the diligent efforts of WASH in particular and Ethiopian communities at large for reaching the have-nots in water supply; the country has achieved MDG 7c target”.

The announcement was made in the presence of H.E Dr Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E Engineer Wondimu Tekle, State Minister on behalf of H.E. Minister Alemayehu Tegenu, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Senior Government Officials, Ambassadors, UN representatives, WASH partners and the media.

President Mulatu congratulated all present, assuring them of the Government’s commitment to realising its responsibility of providing safe water and sanitation services to all its citizens. “I call upon you to continue joining hands with the Government to reach the unreachable” he added.

The 2015 assessment report by the UNICEF/WHO Global Joint Monitoring Programme for Water and Sanitation (JMP) indicates that Ethiopia has met the target of 57% of the population using safe drinking water, by halving the number of people without access to safe water since 1990.



“Today’s event represents a great milestone to us. It is also a historic moment, when Ethiopia demonstrates its political commitment to resolving challenges in the Water and Sanitation Sector.”



Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) places water supply at the core of development. The Government's heavy investment in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) fund, combined with increased donor contribution, enabled the rapid acceleration of water supply coverage in many parts of the country. In addition, Ethiopia has developed a ONEWASH programme designed to ensure universal access to WASH services by 2015, with a budget of US\$ 2.4 billion.

Election 2015 – Sunday 24th May



Political parties have registered their candidacy for both the national and federal elections.



More than 35 million voters have registered to vote in the 24th May elections, according to the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) – voter registration closed on 19th February. 45,000 polling stations have

been established across the country.

...Televised election campaign debates begin

Election campaign TV and radio debates began in mid-March, to help voters make informed decisions for the May National and Federal Elections.

The **Joint Council of Political Parties** have selected nine subjects for discussion for the debates between the political parties, covering a variety of subjects: the Multi-Party System and Building Democracy; Federalism; Agricultural and Rural Policy; Urban Development and Industrial Policy; Good Governance and the Rule of Law; National Security; Foreign Policy; Infrastructure; Education and Health.

Ethiopia marks the 119th Anniversary of the Battle of Adwa

On 2nd March, Ethiopia marked the 119th anniversary of the Battle of Adwa, which commemorates the bravery of Ethiopian troops, under Emperor Menelik II, in the battle for freedom

against an Italian invasion on 1st March 1896. Celebrations took place in Addis Ababa and across the nation.



Italy had invaded Ethiopia to expand its colonial territory following a dispute over the earlier Treaty of Wuchale, the Italian version of which claimed that Article 17 meant Ethiopia had relinquished its foreign policy to Italy and had become a protectorate. The Amharic version clearly stated that Italy and Ethiopia would cooperate on foreign affairs.

Italy used this as a reason for invading in 1896. So thorough was the defeat of Italy that there was widespread rioting in Italy. Italy was forced to pay indemnities to Ethiopia and recognise its borders. The Italians suffered about 7,000 killed, 1,500 wounded in the battle and subsequent retreat, with 3,000 taken prisoner, as well as the loss of their artillery and 11,000 rifles; Ethiopian losses were estimated around 4-5,000 killed and 8,000 wounded. Public opinion in Italy was outraged, with street demonstrations in most major cities. The King of Italy declared a day of national mourning.

The Battle of Adwa was of huge significance for Africa and in retrospect marked the beginning of the end of colonialism. The victory made Ethiopia an emblem of African valour, resistance to European conquest and colonialism, and a symbol of independence and pride for all black people around the world. Ethiopia is the only nation in Africa that has never been colonised.

The colours of Ethiopia's flag [Green, Yellow, Red] were adopted by many African countries after their independence and school children across Africa are taught about the Battle of Adwa.

At the commemoration in Addis Ababa, the Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, Abadula Gemeda said the victory achieved over great odds at Adwa should now be replicated over the country's major enemy today, "poverty". He urged young people to help sustain peace and stability, and develop the nation as their forefather's had done, and to take part in the country's renaissance.

Gibe III Dam to start electricity production this year

The Water and Energy Ministry has announced that the Gibe III hydro dam should start generating 187MW of electricity this year, following the rainy season in August.

The dam, when fully operational, will generate 1,870MW of electricity from its 10 turbines.

The plan is to bring a turbine online every month after the plant starts generation, depending on the amount of rainfall in the basin.

Project Coordinator, Mebratu Teshome, said the dam will store three billion cubic metres of water this season, and the first two units will start generating power successively. The functioning of the remaining eight units depends on the amount of water stored in the dam.

The dam can hold 15 billion cubic metres of water, of which about 80 million cubic metres has been collected since January 2015.

The artificial lake dam that will be created will not displace a single person, the coordinator said, adding that it will help prevent the frequent occurrence of floods.

The dam will be full within three years, he said and projects that benefit the localities around the natural lake through tourism and fishing will be built simultaneously.

A UNESCO team will be visiting the locality to assess the impact the dam may have on Lake Turkana.

Experts from 26 countries took part in the project.

Adama II wind farm to go operational soon

The Adama II Wind Farm is nearing completion and should go operational within three months according to the project managers.

Currently 83% complete, 78 of the total 102 wind turbines, have already been erected.



Upon completion, the \$345 million power project will generate a total 153MW of electricity, making it the largest ever in Ethiopia.

TRADE & INVESTMENT

Ethiopia assumes COMESA chairmanship

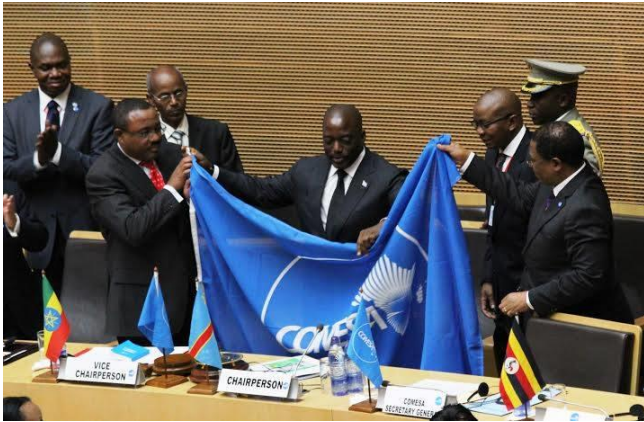
The 18th COMESA Heads of State and Governments Summit was held in Ethiopia from 30th-31st March under the theme “**Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation**”, where H.E. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn assumed the chairmanship of the 19-Member States regional bloc.



In his keynote address, the PM described sustainable industrialisation as a key step towards sustained economic growth, food security and poverty eradication within the COMESA region.

“Inclusive industrialisation calls for cooperation between governments and private sector actors to harness the investments necessary to strengthen the productive and trade capacities of our Member States,” the PM said.

He addressed the link between industrialisation and environmental sustainability, describing it as central in any industrialisation programme.



The outgoing chair of COMESA, President Joseph Kabila Kabange of the D.R. Congo, outlined the milestones that the regional bloc had attained during the one year of his leadership. These covered progress on the COMESA and Tripartite Free Trade Area [FTA], trade facilitation programmes, agriculture, food and nutrition security and women's economic empowerment.

In 2014, intra-COMESA trade rose to \$22 billion from \$19.2 billion in 2013, which President Kabila attributed to the COMESA Free Trade Area. He said with the participation of his country - D.R. Congo - Ethiopia and Uganda in the FTA. Intra-COMESA trade should rise to \$25 billion in the coming year.

COMESA Secretary General, Sindiso Ngwenya, informed the Summit that the potential trade within COMESA is \$97 billion worth of goods that are produced and traded within the region. This follows an analysis conducted by the Secretariat in 2014.

"The sectors with the highest trade potential are in textiles, wooden furniture, household items, leather products and white and red meat," the SG said.

The Summit also saw the swearing-in of the 12 Judges of the COMESA Court of Justice, the COMESA Committee of Elders and the Commissioners of the COMESA Competition Commission.

The Summit came to a close on 31st March. PM Hailemariam, as the new Chair, called on Member States to recommit to regional integration.

The Final Communique of the Summit is available on request.

The next COMESA Summit will take place in Madagascar in 2016.

Ethiopia showcases its preparations to host the World Coffee Conference in Addis Ababa

During the 114th Session of the International Coffee Council, held in London from 2nd to 6th March, a delegation led by H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede presented Ethiopia's preparations to host the fourth World Coffee Conference.

During the 112th Session of the International Coffee Council held in London last year, Ethiopia won the bid to host the World Coffee Conference together with the 116th Session of the International Coffee Council in Addis Ababa in March 2016 – **the first time the conference will be held in Africa.**

The agenda of the 114th session included a progress report on the preparation of the fourth World Coffee Conference in Addis; sustainable coffee partnerships; the impact of climate change on the coffee sector and the global coffee market.

Ethiopia's delegation made a thorough presentation on the measures taken by the national preparatory committee with regards to logistical arrangements, side events, exhibitions and the launching of a dedicated website.



The delegation also proposed two themes, to be considered by the council for next year's coffee conference: "Celebrating coffee culture from seed to

cup” and “Increasing consumption through diversity and culture”.

The Council advised the delegation to consult with the International Coffee Organization (ICO) on the issue and inform member countries of the decision before the 115th Session of the Coffee Council, to be held in Milan this September.

The delegation conducted a series of consultations with other members and organisations, especially with African coffee associations, with a view to mobilising unified support from producers, consumers and roasters for the success of the conference.

The delegation stated its commitment to continue consultation with all stakeholders in the run up to the conference and integrate their input during the preparatory process and also expressed the commitment of the people and Government of Ethiopia to welcoming the entire coffee community **to the birthplace of coffee.**

Coffee exports exceed projected targets

Ethiopia’s coffee export revenue for the first half of the 2014-2015 fiscal year has exceeded the planned target – about 73,227.9 tonnes of coffee produced a revenue of \$307.5 million, up from the projected \$269 million from the export of around 73,593.5 tonnes.



According to the Coffee Marketing Director at the Ministry of Trade, Getahun Bikora, the gain from the export exceeded expectations because the international coffee price was higher and the new season’s coffee was now coming to the market and this will increase the volume of coffee exported.

Over 9,000 farmers to benefit as Ethiopia joins sustainable cotton initiative

Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF) that supports African smallholder cotton farmers, recently announced that Ethiopia will now be part of the initiative following successful verification within the CmiA sustainability standard.



More than 9,000 smallholder farmers in North-West Ethiopia will benefit from the initiative, cooperating locally with the Ethiopian Cotton Producers, Exporters and Ginners Association (ECPGEA). The initiative now reaches over 5 million people in Africa.



"With the addition of Ethiopia, there are now about 650,000 smallholder farmers growing cotton according to the CmiA sustainability standards. With their family members included, this totals over 5.5 million people in 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Our standard is specifically aimed at smallholder farmers who only have a small plot of land and who are most in need of support. In order to protect the environment and vital resources, the exploitation of primary forests is forbidden, as is encroachment into established protected areas, the use of genetically modified seeds, and artificial irrigation," said Christoph Kaut, Managing Director of the Foundation.

Last year, over 150,000 tonnes of cotton were produced in accordance with the CmiA standard. As

a result of the latest successful verifications in Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Cameroon, the quantity of CmiA-verified cotton produced will again rise significantly in 2015. As well as benefitting from agricultural and business training, the CmiA partnership also means that smallholder farmers can rely on fair contracts with the cotton companies and reliable payment for their crops.

Ethiopia set to be home to Africa's first electric car assembly plant

Ethiopia will soon be assembling electric cars – the first ever in Africa – following discussions between President Mulatu Teshome and US ambassador to Ethiopia, Patricia M. Haslach, and the CEO of Global Electric Transportation Ltd of the US, Ken Monter.



Construction of the plant is set to commence in September this year, according to Mr Monter, and upon completion, will be able to produce 10,000 electric cars in three months.

Haslach said the US was expanding its strong relationship with Ethiopia in the sectors of peace and security to also include co-operation in the economic sphere. The electric car plant is part of this initiative, she added.

President Mulatu said Ethiopia was working to expand its green economic development and the plant should therefore be encouraged as it is going to produce carbon-free cars.

\$114 million earned from horticulture exports

In the first six months of its budget year (since July 2014), Ethiopia has generated \$114 million from horticulture exports, according to the Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency (EHDA), up 7.2% on the same period last year.



Around \$91 million of total revenue was secured from the export of 289 million cut flowers and over 20,000 tonnes of roses and summer flowers, while the balance was obtained from nearly 77,000 tonnes of vegetables, fruits and herbs.

The Netherlands is the main export destination for Ethiopian flowers accounting for 80% of total flower exports. Other markets include Germany, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, the United Arab Emirates, France, Italy, Japan and the U.S.

For fruit and vegetables, the main destinations are EU countries, the UAE, Somalia, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Sudan.

More than \$245 million was earned from horticultural exports in the last fiscal year, up 6% on the last budget year.

Mekonnen Hailu, head of public relations at the EHDA, said "Demand for Ethiopian horticultural products has increased significantly in the global market and the country's foreign currency earnings from the sector have grown in tandem. New investors - from the Netherlands, India, Ecuador and Saudi Arabia - have all recently engaged in the [horticultural] sector."

Ethiopian marmalade to hit shelves at 'Eataly'

A cooperative of women in Ethiopia is set to benefit from selling to the international market thanks to a partnership between Italian gourmet food store Eataly and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), who joined forces in 2013 to support family farmers around the globe in boosting their

production and finding ways to reach new overseas customers.



Members of the cooperative with their cactus pear marmalade

Last year, Tsega Gebrekidan - one of the women from a co-op who runs a small kiosk in Mekelle selling fresh fruit juice, biscuits and homemade marmalades - benefited when she and her colleagues produced cactus pear marmalade, which was then bought and shipped to European tables.

The co-op was offered training to improve harvesting and increase quality standards. Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture has been providing technical assistance throughout.

This support forms part of a larger, broader development initiative undertaken in a partnership between FAO and the governments of Ethiopia and Italy, for which the Italian Development Cooperation has provided approximately \$9 million in funding support over the past eight years.

Tsega and her colleagues produce jam that meets Ethiopian and European food safety standards. The co-op has also benefited from Eataly's knowledge of best practice for packaging and marketing and their 4,000 jars of jam are now on their way to shop shelves in Rome.

In this pilot phase, daily production has reached 200 jars. Each of them will be bought at €3.50, a price considered in line with local market standards and which covers production costs and guarantees significant revenues for its members.

Founded in northern Italy in 2007, Eataly has grown into a global, high-quality food and beverage chain

that combines culinary excellence with tradition - with a special focus on small-scale production, sustainability, and fair trade.

CULTURE & TOURISM

KUONI: Ethiopia an emerging destination for 2015

Ethiopia has been added to Kuoni's 2015 programme. "While it remains a largely undiscovered destination, getting there and around is eased by direct Ethiopian Airlines flights to Addis Ababa from the UK, and a reliable domestic service. In the short-term, most travellers are expected to join touring holidays, given the peace of mind offered by travelling with an expert guide," Kuoni said.



"Award-winning tour operator Kuoni has 108 years' experience, creating tailor-made holidays to 88 destinations worldwide and offering a hand-picked selection of the best hotels, tours and experiences."

AU Grand Hotel, Addis Ababa's first seven star hotel

Addis Ababa is set to obtain another world class hotel by the end of the year when the AU Grand Hotel, managed by Westin Hotels and Resorts, is inaugurated in the African Union (AU) compound.

The seven star hotel will be the fourth international brand in Ethiopia after Hilton, Sheraton and Radisson Blu.

When it opens, the hotel will be the first seven star luxury facility in the country.



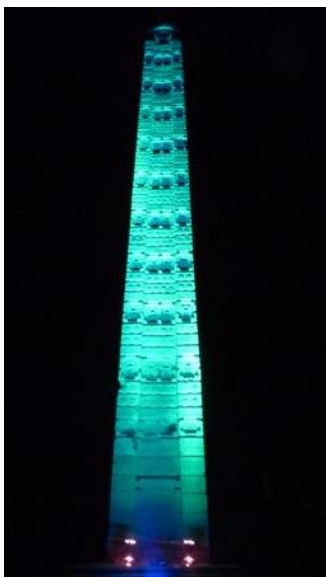
The hotel will have 610 rooms including 27 presidential and 31 ministerial suites; a 3,500 seating capacity conference hall, which will be the biggest conference facility under a hotel business, and another one with a capacity of 2,200 seats for banquets. The hotel will also have eight medium-sized meeting rooms.



There has been a lot of interest recently by international hotel brands wishing to join the hospitality industry in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's ancient Aksum Stelae goes green for St. Patrick's Day

As part of the global greening campaign, on St. Patrick's Day on 17th March, the Aksum Obelisks went green for the first time, joining famous landmarks all over the world including Rome's Coliseum and London's Nelson's Column.



The Axum Obelisks are the symbol of the wealth and civilization of the ancient Axumite Kingdom that lasted from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD. The Kingdom was at the crossroads of Africa, Arabia and the Greco-Roman World, and was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia, and parts of South Arabia.

The ruins of the ancient city of Aksum are one of nine sites in Ethiopia which feature on UNESCO's World Heritage List and are one of Ethiopia's major

tourist sites. The Stelae (or obelisks) are about 1,700 years old and are said to mark the burial chambers of the Kings of Aksum.

The largest standing obelisk stands at over 23 metres and is intricately carved to replicate a nine-story building. But the largest stelae overall is 33 metres long and lies where it fell, perhaps during the process of erection.

Dublin Airport's first 787 is Ethiopian

A little piece of history was made on 20th March as Ethiopian Airlines B787 Dreamliner made a scheduled first visit to Dublin Airport. The largest airline in Africa will commence three-times-a-week flights direct from Dublin to Addis Ababa and Dublin direct to Los Angeles with the Dreamliner 787.



The Dreamliner touched down at Dublin Airport on a short visit ahead of its inaugural flight to Los Angeles which will be on 20th June. Ethiopian Airlines Chief Executive, Tewolde Gebremariam, travelled on the aircraft from London Heathrow with crew and a number of African journalists and were welcomed by Kevin Toland, Chief Executive, of the Dublin Airport Authority.

This is the first time a Dreamliner 787 has made a scheduled stop at Dublin Airport. The ultra-modern Boeing 787 Dreamliner offers unparalleled on-board comfort especially for long haul routes with its unique features such as greatly reduced noise, higher cabin air humidity, the biggest windows in the sky and spacious cabin interior.

The first service linking three continents

These new ADD-DUB-LAX route will be the only direct service connecting Africa with Ireland and the West Coast of the United States.

Passengers from Ireland and Los Angeles will be able to enjoy seamless, convenient connectivity options thanks to Ethiopian's extensive network in Africa, spanning 50 destinations. As the flights will be the only direct service between Dublin and Los Angeles, the Irish and U.S. travelling public between the two cities will greatly benefit from the opening of the route.

Ireland's Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Paschal Donohoe, welcomed the Dreamliner into Dublin Airport saying, "This is a very exciting day for Dublin airport and for Irish tourism.. The new routes will strengthen Ireland's connectivity to the west coast of the United States and will provide the first direct link to Ethiopia and other points in Africa and beyond from the Ethiopian Airlines Addis Ababa hub, offering additional choice and convenience for passengers."

Dublin Airport Authority Chief Executive Kevin Toland said he was delighted to welcome Ethiopian's Dreamliner to Dublin in advance of the official launch in June. "Ethiopian's Dublin route will be the only direct service connecting Africa with Ireland and the west coast of the US. The new service will reconnect Dublin with Los Angeles and bring unrivalled connectivity in Africa, opening up opportunities from its Addis Ababa hub to almost 50 African destinations."



Tewolde Gebremariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Group said: "We are proud to be the first airline to link Africa and Ireland and bring the ultra-modern 787 aircraft to Dublin airport. I wish to thank the

Government of Ireland and the airport authority for their tremendous support. Our flights connecting Addis Ababa, Dublin and Los Angeles will play a critical role in the expansion of trade, tourism and investment between the fast growing continent of Africa and Ireland".

Ethiopian Airlines announced special promotional launch fares for the new routes, valid for travel from 20th June to November 31st 2015 – tickets start from just €499.00 return. This offer can be booked from 20th March to 30th April 2015.

With the addition of Dublin, the airline's 11th European city and Los Angeles, its fourth point in the Americas, Ethiopian's international network will cover 85 destinations across 5 continents.

Ethiopian is a Pan-African global carrier voted by passengers as the Best in Africa for two years in a row by Passenger Choice Awards, the most comprehensive survey in the industry.

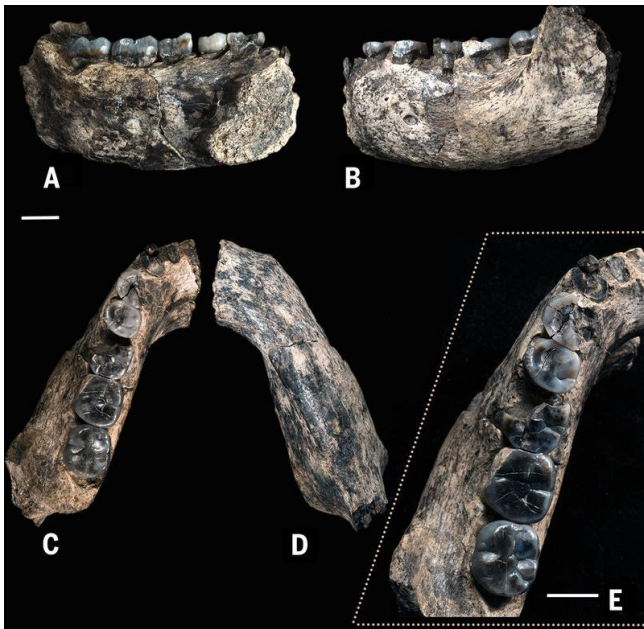
The airline operates the youngest fleet on the continent with an average of less than seven years and currently serves 83 international destinations across five continents with over 200 daily departures.

'First human' discovered in Ethiopia

In early March, scientists announced the discovery of a 2.8 million year old partially complete lower jawbone, which they claim is one of the very first humans.



The jawbone, seen above with teeth still in the bone, was found in Ledi-Geraru in the Afar region in Ethiopia in 2013 and is the oldest known fossil evidence of the genus *Homo*, to which modern day humans belong.

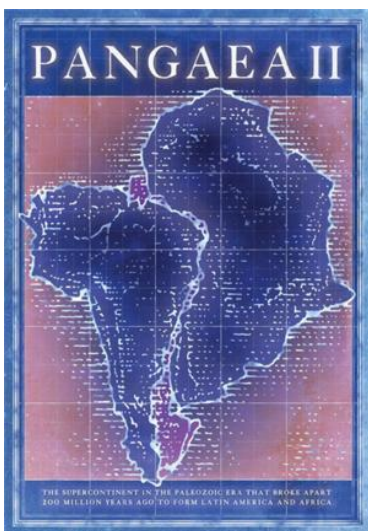


Several dating methods confirmed its age as roughly 400,000 years older than the previous record for a human-related fossil.

The specimen went on display at Arizona University.

Researchers have previously found fossil remains dating back 3 million years or more, such as the skeleton of "Lucy," the famous 3.2 million-year-old remains of the species *Australopithecus afarensis*. Those remains were found in 1974 not far from the site of the latest discovery.

Dawit Abebe's work featured in Saatchi Gallery



A young Ethiopian artist's work is being featured at the Saatchi Gallery's *Pangaea II: New Art from Africa and Latin America*, running from 11th March to 6th September 2015.

Dawit Abebe is one of eighteen emerging artists whose work will be featured, including sculpture, painting, installation and photography.

The exhibition explores the diverse cultural influences and thriving creative practices in the two great continents that were once conjoined as the prehistoric landmass of Pangaea.



Dawit Abebe's No.2 Background 1

Dawit's work will also be showing at the Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery from 26th March – 2nd May 2015.

Background 2 is Dawit's first solo show and second exhibition at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery. He previously participated in the group show *Trade Roots*, with Faig Ahmed and Phoebe Boswell in April 2014.

Background 2 sees Dawit raise questions about the often difficult relationship between history and technology, and the ways in which the two co-exist today, through mixed media and acrylic paintings.

Dawit graduated from **Addis Ababa University School of Fine Art and Design** with a diploma in painting, sculpture, graphics, photography and industrial design. Since 2001, he has been a full-time artist in residence at the Habesha Art Studio, and has also worked with UNICEF to hold workshops for street children in Arba Minch, Jinka and Addis Ababa.



Ethiopian art in the UK courtesy of Blue Nile Art

Blue Nile Art, a contemporary African art gallery with a focus on Ethiopia will, for the first time, feature Ethiopian art at the **Reading Art Fair** from 26th to 28th April.

Speaking exclusively to the Embassy, Chris Parrott, Director of Blue Nile Art said, "This will also be the fair's first African contemporary art gallery. We encourage all to visit so we can share these unique and vibrant artworks."



Abraham Abebe with his Meskel Flower paintings

"Perhaps the first images that come into many people's minds when we think of Ethiopia and its culture are those that have been long fed to the Western world by the media; images of famine, of drought, of refugees [from 30 years ago]...But Ethiopians know Ethiopia for the unique country that it is - filled with generous people, distinctive heritage and endless opportunity. These are the true images of Ethiopian culture. And it is this Ethiopia that we wish to promote," Chris said.

Set up in 2014 by four siblings, Blue Nile Art's mission has been to promote and support the flourishing art scene in Ethiopia and expose it to the British public. They currently work with eight young emerging Addis Ababa artists, unveiling the richness of Ethiopia's art scene.



For more information about future events, please visit the Blue Nile Art website: www.bluenileart.com

DIASPORA NEWS

Ethiopians in the UK buy bonds worth over £40,000

More than 300 members of the Ethiopian Diaspora attended a successful bond selling event held at the Embassy on 21st March, to raise funds for the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD).

In his opening speech, H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede thanked the guests for, once again, turning up to demonstrate their continued support for the construction of the GERD, which is crucial to consolidating the double-digit economic growth Ethiopia has been experiencing for over a decade. The project is 41% complete. He said the ever-increasing determination and enthusiasm of the people of Ethiopia will ensure that the construction of the dam will be completed in 2017, as originally scheduled.



Eng. Simegnew Bekele, Chief Engineer of the GERD construction project, addressed the gathering via direct telephone link from the construction site. He gave a comprehensive briefing on the progress of the construction and the national significance of the dam. "Myself and 8,500 plus employees are working round the clock to ensure the timely completion of the dam", he said. He said that, in addition to its economic benefits, the construction of the dam was a capacity-building exercise, which has made it possible to equip a new crop of young Ethiopian engineering professionals with the knowledge and experience of dam construction and large-scale project management, including women engineers.

Adding that cost-effectiveness is a major consideration in the construction process, he called on fellow compatriots to leave behind a vivid historical legacy by contributing towards the national flagship project. He highlighted the public mobilization aspect of GERD, saying that he did not

know of any other project behind which people rallied so much and so enthusiastically. He said the GERD should make it into the Guinness Book of Records for public mobilization. The participants expressed their heartfelt gratitude and support to Engineer Simegnew and the entire workforce at the site with enthusiastic applause.

Chairman of the GERD support Committee in the United Kingdom, Ato Mulat also thanked the audience for responding so generously. The Committee will continue to undertake a range of activities to raise more funds for GERD.

A film documenting the progress of the construction was screened and drew enthusiastic applause. Participants were treated to a wide selection of Ethiopian dishes and of Ethiopian music.



The event was a joyous occasion and a clear manifestation of the unity, patriotism, devotion and determination of Ethiopians to rally behind the project. At the end of the event, it was disclosed that the participants had

bought bonds worth over £40,000 (\$60,000).

Ethiopians in London celebrate Women’s Day



The Embassy of Ethiopia in London, in partnership with the Tigray Women’s Association, the Ethiopian Somali Women’s Association and members of the Ethiopian community in the UK joyfully marked

International Women’s Day on Sunday 8th March at the Embassy under the theme **“Make it Happen”**.

In a speech, Mr Demeke Atnafu, Minister Counsellor for Diaspora Affairs at the Embassy, said women’s active participation is making a significant contribution to development endeavours. “Ethiopia is committed to achieving gender parity in the economic, social and political fields, and the current 30% representation of women in parliament is expected to increase to 40% in the near future.”

W/ro. Sofia Abdulkadir, Chair of the Tigray Women’s Association, said past experience and history showed that lasting peace, development and prosperity of nations was guaranteed only if women are equal participants and beneficiaries of existing opportunities and that women’s organisations and associations play a pivotal role in promoting equal rights for women and called on members to strengthen their efforts.



(l-r) W/ro. Sofia Abdulkadir and W/ro. Ifrah Sheik addressing the attendees

W/ro. Ifrah Sheik, Chair of the Ethiopian Somali Women’s Association, welcomed participants to the celebration and gave a brief historical overview of women’s struggle for equality internationally. She added that African women are still suffering from harmful social and traditional practices such as FGM, which should be done away with. She also lamented the continued suffering of women as a result of cross-border human trafficking. She urged collective efforts to tackle these harmful practices.

Ethiopian Diaspora meeting held in Newport-Wales

A half day meeting organised by the Ethiopian Diaspora Association in Wales was held in Newport on 24th February in the presence of councillors from Newport City.



Speaking to guests, Mr Demeke Atnafu, Minister Counsellor for Diaspora Affairs at the Embassy gave a briefing on Ethiopia’s Diaspora policy and outlined areas of Diaspora engagement, focusing on trade and investment, tourism, knowledge transfer and cultural exchanges. He praised the Ethiopian Diaspora for their efforts in linking Newport City with Dire Dawa in Ethiopia as sister cities.

Councillor Omar Ali, Chairman of the Association, spoke of the vision of the association in promoting Ethiopian culture, heritage and values and actively establishing links for business opportunities between Ethiopia and Wales.

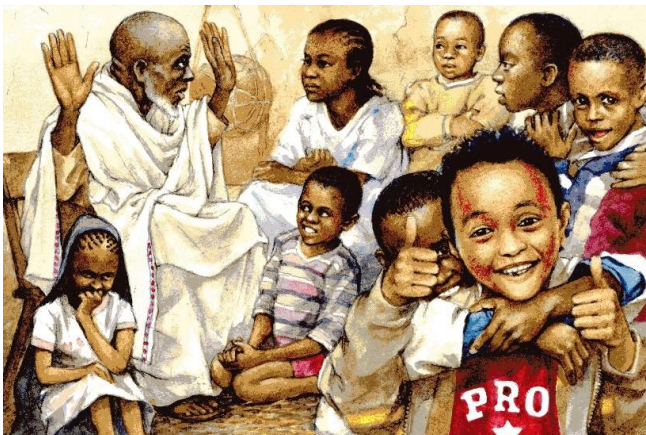
Councillor Bob Wellington, Chairman of Wales Local Government Associations, expressed his satisfaction at association activities and promised to support its objectives.

Oromia Diaspora Organisation established

The Oromia Diaspora Organisation-UK was established on 1st February in London, committed to the advancement of peace and development in Ethiopia.

The organisation’s main objectives include encouraging the Oromia Diaspora to invest and participate in the reconstruction of their country; promoting the advancement of education; and encouraging and promoting Ethiopian unity among its people. It is incorporated under the Companies Act as Oromo Diaspora Ltd.

The Ethiopian Story website launched



On 13th March, award-winning children’s author **Elizabeth Laird** launched the **Ethiopian Story**

Project website at the Embassy in the presence of H.E. Ambassador Berhanu Kebede and friends.

The Story Project was set up in 1996 by Elizabeth together with the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the British Council. Over four years, Elizabeth collected more than three hundred stories told to her by story-tellers in the many different regions of Ethiopia, working closely in collaboration with the Regional Educational and Cultural Bureaux.

A large selection of the stories were rewritten by Elizabeth Laird in simplified English with the aim of producing readers for Ethiopian schools, so that children could increase their fluency in the reading of English while enjoying their own cultural heritage.

Eight readers were produced, but it was not possible to print books for every region. However, it became clear that the collection of stories was an important cultural resource, which was in danger of being lost. Thanks to a generous grant from the Christensen Foundation, the website www.ethiopianfolktales.com was created. This contains all the original stories in the words of the translators. It is available to be read in both English and Amharic. The voices of the storytellers, in many different languages, can also be listened to.

The www.ethiopianenglishreaders.com website, funded by the Christensen Foundation, publishes for the first time all eighty-eight rewritten stories.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Berhanu said that he hoped this project would help the children from various nationalities to understand each other’s culture and history while also improving their English proficiency. “Ethiopia is a melting pot of different cultures and nationalities. We Ethiopians are united, recognise our differences and have decided to unite and build a vibrant Ethiopia,” the Ambassador said.

Elizabeth’s account of the journeys she took in Ethiopia, the story-tellers and the stories has been published under the title *The Lure of the Honey Bird*, available online and in bookstores.

SPORTS

Tsgabu Grmay makes history as first Ethiopian to win gold at the CAC Road Championships

February was a historic month for the Ethiopian cycling team as Tsgabu Grmay became the first Ethiopian to ever win an African Continental Championship - in Wartburg, South Africa.



"I am so happy to be the first person from Ethiopia to win an elite gold!" an elated Grmay proclaimed. "It was a great race for me today and everything went perfectly and my preparation coming into the race had been good so I was confident that I could do well."

"I came into the race knowing that I had a chance of winning it if I rode well and everything went smoothly...It all went to plan and it is great for the whole team who have come out here, as well as the federation, who have been working really hard for us riders recently and trying to grow the sport back home and so I am happy to give back with this win," he said with a smile.

Genzebe sets world indoor 5,000m record in Stockholm again; misses the Carlsbad 5,000 record by 2 seconds!



Last year in February, Genzebe Dibaba smashed the 3,000m world Indoor record at the XL-Galan in Stockholm. This year it was a case of deja-vu as she broke the 5,000m record, set by compatriot Meseret Defar in 2009, by more than five seconds, finishing in 14:18.86.

Fellow Ethiopian Birtukan Fente finished second in 15:22.56, while Birtukan Adamu finished third in 15:34.15.

...runs second-fastest 5km in history at Carlsbad 5000



On 29th March, the two-time world indoor champion Genzebe Dibaba narrowly missed, by two seconds, breaking the world record at the Carlsbad 5,000 in the United States, but her winning time of 14:48 was the second-fastest ever recorded for 5km on the roads and the fastest 5km debut in history.

Just like in Stockholm, Genzebe was looking to break Meseret Defar's record of 14:46 set in 2006.

Genzebe led an Ethiopian sweep in Carlsbad as compatriots Gelete Burka, the 2006 world cross-country champion and 2008 world indoor 1,500m champion, finished second in 15:13, taking 13 seconds off the PB she set when she won in Carlsbad two years ago, and Wude Ayalew, the 2009 world 10,000m bronze medallist, finished third in 15:18, also setting a PB.

Watch out London, the Ethiopians are coming!



The 2015 Virgin Money London Marathon, scheduled to take place on 26th April expects the world's greatest marathon runners to go head-

to-head over the marathon distance for the first time.

In the men's race, Team Ethiopia will be clashing with Kenya's greatest runners including former world-record holder Wilson Kipsang, who will also defend his London Marathon title in a mile-by-mile bout against fellow Kenyan Dennis Kimetto, in what is dubbed by organisers as "The Clash of the Champions".

The men's elite field also includes the three quickest marathon runners of all time (on legitimate courses); five of the world's all-time top 10; and eight men in total who have run sub-2:05.

Triple Olympic track gold medallist, Kenenisa Bekele, has been forced to pull out of this year's 35th Anniversary race due to injury, but Ayele Abshero, the 2012 Dubai Marathon champion, Tsegaye Mekonnen, who became the fastest junior in history when he won the Dubai race last January, and Tilahun Regassa, a former Rotterdam Marathon champion, are among top contenders. Guye Adola will be making his debut in London.

...Mergia ready to challenge the Fantastic Four



The women's race will be just as tough as Aselefech Mergia is expected to challenge Kenya's "Fantastic Four", which includes the last three London Marathon champions plus last year's runner-up and world half marathon record holder, alongside fellow Ethiopian Tirfi Tsegaye, the 2014 Tokyo and Berlin Marathon champion.

Mergia returned from pregnancy to win the women's race at the lucrative Dubai Marathon in

January for a record third time. Tsegaye broke the course record when she won the Tokyo Marathon last February, and ran a personal best to take victory in Berlin last September. This will be Tsegaye's London Marathon debut but Mergia runs the race for the third time having reached the podium on her first appearance in 2010.

TEAM ETHIOPIA

at the 2015 Virgin Money London Marathon

Men: Ayele Abshero; Tsegaye Mekonnen, Tilahun Regassa and Guye Adola (debut)

Women: Aselefech Mergia, Tirfi Tsegaye, Feyse Tadese and Tigist Tufa.

Athletics Roundup

Over in Prague on 28th March, Worknesh Degefa won the Prague Half Marathon in a PB of 1:07:14. Yebrqual Melese came second in 1:08:21.



In Rome on 22nd March, Abebe Degefa and Meseret Kitata made it an Ethiopian double as they took the men's and the women's titles at the 21st edition of the Rome Marathon, finishing in 2:12:23 and 2:30:25 respectively. Birhanu Achame and Alem Fikre Kifle placed Ethiopia second and third in 2:12:32 and 2:31:01 respectively.



In the UK, at the Sainsbury's Indoor GP, Axumawit Embaye won the women's mile in 4:23.50 recording

the fastest mile run by a woman ever recorded in Britain! In the women's 3,000m, Senbere Teferi came second in 8:46.84.



Double delight at the Tokyo Marathon on 22nd February as Endeshaw Negesse and Berhane Dibaba took the honours winning in 2:06:00 and 2:23:15 respectively – the first time in the nine-year history of the event that runners from the same nation had won both

the men's and women's titles!

Negesse became only the second Ethiopian man, after Hailu Mekonnen in 2011, to win Japan's most prestigious road race and recorded the third-fastest time.

London 2012 Olympics champ, Tiki Gelana finished third in the women's race in 2:24:26.

And finally, at the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix on 7th February, Dejen Gebremeskel won the men's 3,000m in 7:48.19, less than 0.2 ahead of Bernard Lagat. And Sentayehu Ejigu and Buze Diriba came second and third in the Women's Two Mile race finishing in 9:27.05 and 9:29.03 respectively.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Environmental, forestry research institute launched

As part of Ethiopia's effort to benefit from its forest resources by undertaking research activities, an Ethiopian Environmental and Forestry Research Institute was launched on 17th March by the Minister of Environment and Forestry, H.E. Mr Belete Tafere.

The Minister said the institute would play a pivotal role in sustaining the continued building of the green economy for which Ethiopia has gained international recognition. The institute will help reduce widespread deforestation and enhance the

utilisation of forests, and will become fully operational within the next three months.

Additional 7,800 km of roads built, repaired

The Ethiopian Road Construction Corporation (ERCC) has built and renovated 7,819 km of road at a cost of 1 billion birr in the past seven months.

ERCC Public Relations Head, Demeke Chane, said the roads built and repaired across the nation have made a significant contribution to the country's economic growth.

Road projects include Shekosh-Kebridehar, Kebridehar-Denan, Denan-Gode, Gambella-Itang-Jikawo, Wezka-Gidole and Beseka-Baipas.

"The authority plans to build and repair more than 2,900 km of roads in the remaining months of this budget year" [by June 2015], he said.

Ethio Telecom launches Addis 4G mobile service

Ethiopia has launched 4G mobile services in Addis Ababa promising a super-fast and reliable internet service, as part of a \$1.6 billion deal.

The new service will initially serve around 400,000 subscribers. Internet packages will range from 420 birr (\$21) a month for 2GB of data to 3,600 birr (\$180) for 30GB. Customers outside the 4G coverage area will be automatically switched back to the operator's 3G network.



As part of Ethio Telecom's commitment to improving its network, they plan to double 3G capacity to 60 million subscribers by the end of the year.



It's official, Guinness World Records recognises Ethiopia's record for "Most People Tested for HIV"



Ethiopia is now the official Guinness World Record holder for the "most people being tested for HIV in a single venue."

Last year during World Aids Day on 30th November, 3,383 people were tested at Gambella Stadium in eight hours.

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

Space Observatory Offers Ethiopia Pathway to Stars, Development

Two optical telescopes are the latest means through which Ethiopia aims to use space technology to further the country's development.

"Ethiopia is going to launch its own satellite, built by Ethiopians and launched by Ethiopians."

- Dr. Solomon Belay, Director Ethiopian Space Observatory

The observatory is fully functional, and soon it will be fully operated by Ethiopia's own engineers.

Dr Solomon Belay, director of the Space Observatory, said the project was worth the cost because space technology will contribute to the development of Ethiopia - "for example, in agriculture, data processing, crop production and modernizing of the agriculture industry. And in the energy sector and fossil exploration of mining and energy. And in the telecommunication sector."

VoA Voice of America <http://goo.gl/OHSM6x>

Ethiopia's \$5bn project that could turn it into Africa's water powerhouse

"It's called the Grand Renaissance Dam -- and the clue is in the name...With some 8,500 laborers working around the clock on its construction, the imposingly-named dam is surely one of Africa's most ambitious infrastructure projects, reaffirming

Ethiopia's ambitions of becoming a big regional player and a major exporter of power. When completed, the project will generate around 6,000 megawatts of electricity for both domestic use and exports. The most striking aspect of the nearly \$5 billion enterprise is, however, that it is entirely funded by Ethiopia, without any foreign investment. According to the authorities, 20% of the project is financed from bond offerings to Ethiopians, and the remaining 80% from tax collection."



Without electricity there won't be industrialization in Africa.

Zemedeneh Negatu,
managing partner at Ernst & Young Ethiopia



<http://goo.gl/EVj8GS>

Teff - Ethiopia's tiny secret going global



"Every six days a week an Ethiopian Airlines flight departs Addis Ababa for Washington in the US with a fresh batch of 3,000 injeras on board. This pancake-shaped grey spongy bread is a centuries-

old Ethiopian staple made from teff, a tiny grain now making a health food name for itself globally...Teff's tiny seeds are high in calcium, iron, protein and amino acids and it is also gluten-free. Even before the modern state of Ethiopia existed, Ethiopians have been grinding teff into flour to make injera, remaining unaware of the nutritional gem in their midst. But increasing global demand for healthy food along with Ethiopia's large diaspora in cities like Washington has put teff flour in the spotlight."

"I'm very happy, Ethiopia is the founder of teff, so like coffee our teff is becoming important all over the world," Hailu Tessema, founder of Mama Fresh.



<http://goo.gl/JybAQQ>

Ethiopian Shade Coffee Is World's Most Bird Friendly

New research shows that shady coffee plantations in Ethiopia, where coffee has been grown for at least a thousand years, hold relatively more forest bird species than any other coffee farms in the world.

The research suggests that traditional cultivation practices there support local forest bird biodiversity better than any other coffee farms in the world.



In Ethiopia, coffee is traditionally grown on plantations shaded by native trees. These farms boast more than 2.5 times as many bird species as adjacent mountain forest, says a study published in the journal Biological Conservation.



<http://goo.gl/SFHpB0>

Ethiopia - a land where coffee meets tradition



"Ethiopia, widely regarded as the cradle of coffee, is a nation devoted to the stimulating beverage. The country is Africa's biggest producer and ranks fifth globally...Far from being just coffee exporters, Ethiopians are also major coffee lovers. Cafes densely line the streets of the capital Addis Ababa, and in 2013/14, 3.6 million bags were consumed in the country, representing 71.6% of the total domestic consumption of Africa and 8% of all exporting countries."

"Ethiopians are coffee drinkers with a history of drinking and enjoying coffee for over 1,000 years... [The] traditional coffee ceremony is very sacred to Ethiopian culture. It's not just about the drinking of coffee but it's a spiritual ceremony." -

Wondwossen Meshesha, COO of TO.MO.CA



<http://goo.gl/cnqBj2>

Paris, London, Addis Ababa? Ethiopia's future is fashion forward

Watch out Paris and London...Addis Ababa could be the next fashion capital of the world according to this CNN Inside Africa special.



“The country has an international supermodel. It has a world-renown designer, a centuries-old textile industry, and its very own fashion school. It's Ethiopia, and it's perched to hit the global fashion industry by storm...Many companies are drawn by Ethiopia's textiles -- stunning woven cotton with a range of rich designs. However, there is also an increasing number of home-grown designers hitting the scene.”



<http://goo.gl/jFBMv5>

CONSULAR NOTICE

We now have a new email address for our Consular Department. To follow up on the progress of applications or for any enquiries, please email: enquiries@ethioembassy.org.uk

The awe-inspiring cave churches of Ethiopia: Carved out of sandstone and reached by rope ladders, fresco-covered rock refuges are 1,600 years old



“Carved into the sandstone Gheralta mountains up to 1,600 years ago, this is an extraordinary network of Ethiopian cave churches. The network of Christian places of worship was carved into the rock in Tigray between the 5th and 15th centuries and painted with frescoes. The Abune Yemata Guh church, which sits 2,500ft above ground, is said to have been carved out by an Egyptian priest who walked all the way there. Father Yemata’s journey established a church which the congregation can now only reach by scaling a 19ft-high rock wall without ropes or harnesses.”

MailOnline <http://goo.gl/9I3BIX>



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