



Ethiopian News

June 2020

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Editorial

African solutions to African problems

Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan to resolve outstanding GERD issues within two weeks



In pursuit of an African solution to African problems, the leaders of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt held a meeting via video conference on 26th June on finalizing the technical negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Leaders of the three countries met with the Bureau of the African Union Assembly facilitated by the current Chair of the African Union and President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa. The meeting was also attended by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat.

“The Nile and the GERD are African issues that must be given African solutions.”

Following the tripartite leaders’ meeting, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the **African Union**, acting in a spirit of Pan-Africanism, is the right space to dialogue on issues that are of value to Africa, and that the GERD offers all stakeholders the opportunity for unprecedented economic growth and mutual development.



President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chair of the African Union convening the teleconference

The leaders of the three countries underscored that the Nile and the GERD are African issues that require African solutions. The meeting set directions on the way forward, in which the three countries have agreed to conclude the negotiations and to try to reach a final agreement on the few matters that are pending within the next two weeks.



Ethiopia is scheduled to begin filling the GERD within the next two weeks, during which the remaining construction work will continue.

Similarly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs attended a meeting with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, during which the minister briefed the Chairperson about the successive tripartite talks over the GERD and Ethiopia's stance during the negotiations. He stressed Ethiopia's refusal to recognise the terms of colonial-era treaties, which Ethiopia did not partake in and that unfairly by-passed the country's legitimate right to utilize the Nile waters, adding that preparations are underway to commence the

first phase of filling the reservoir according to schedule. Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat on his part expressed his belief that unresolved issues of the GERD would be solved in line with the spirit of the catchall phrase 'African Solutions to African Problems'.

Egypt by-passed African conciliation mechanisms and appealed directly to the United Nations Security Council on the GERD matter. On 29th June, Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie, Ethiopia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the virtual Security Council meeting on Peace and Security in Africa, said that "Ethiopia does not believe the issue being discussed today has a legitimate place in the Security Council. This Council should not be a forum for settling scores and for exerting diplomatic pressure. It is, therefore, regrettable that the Council has allowed itself to be politicized in this manner."



He added "the African Union is now seized of the matter, and it is only appropriate that this Council allows the AU-led process to take its course."

“The GERD offers a unique opportunity for transboundary cooperation between our sisterly countries. It should never be an object of competition or mistrust. In this spirit, Ethiopia will pursue an amicable solution through win-win negotiations.”

Ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie

Ambassador Taye's full statement is available on our website at <https://bit.ly/GERDxUNSC>.



EMERGENCY CORONAVIRUS APPEAL

DONATE TODAY

HELP ETHIOPIA

SAVE LIVES

Help support Ethiopia through the Coronavirus crisis

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic. The virus has already overwhelmed many countries throughout Europe and America, and now as it sweeps across Africa, fears are mounting that the worst is yet to come.

“The worst of COVID-19 pandemic is yet to come.”
Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

The threat of the pandemic is on the rise in Ethiopia and over the last few weeks the virus has taken hold amongst communities across the country, with Addis Ababa the epicentre of the pandemic.

As of 29th June, Ethiopia – with a population of 110 million – has reported 5,846 cases with 2,430 recoveries and 103 fatalities. Since the first case was reported on 13th March, the Government and partners have been working proactively to respond to the crisis. However, as a greater crisis looms, we will need every help we can get to protect the people of Ethiopia.

We cannot afford complacency - in the first week of June there were three times the number of cases reported during the previous two and a half months and health facilities are already overstretched:

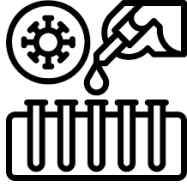
- Intensive care units are rare – there are almost 5,000 active COVID-19 cases with only 30 patients receiving treatment in intensive care units.
- Regional quarantine centres are full or nearing capacity and lack access to personal protective equipment (PPE), electricity, water and food
- There is insufficient testing making effective tracking and coordination near impossible
- Even regular handwashing is difficult - many Ethiopians lack access to running water and girls have to trek for miles to find water for household use and must now fetch additional water for hand-washing as they struggle to keep the lid on the infection in their communities
- Lockdown is not possible in Ethiopia where so many work in the informal economy, often living from cheque to cheque - there is no furlough system

All of the above remain significant obstacles to an effective COVID-19 response.

The existing challenges being faced on a daily basis by families in Ethiopia, who live below the poverty line, will only be magnified the longer this threat looms without the resources to turn the tide.

Ethiopia Situation Update

As of 29th June 2020



250,604
Laboratory tests



5,846
Total confirmed cases



2,430
Total recoveries



103
Total deaths

Daily updates are being provided by the Ministry of Health via social media as well as the Ethiopian COVID-19 monitoring platform at www.covid19.et.

Your help is urgently needed

In April, the Government of Ethiopia, through the Embassy, launched an urgent appeal to galvanise support from the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia in the UK. So far, we have seen contributions worth over £70,000 and medical equipment worth over £40,000 donated to the Appeal. Today, we need your help to raise a further £30,000.

Though we understand that it is a difficult time for everyone, we urgently need your generosity and support. Anything you give today can save lives and make a huge difference to medical professionals battling Coronavirus in Ethiopia. Every penny raised will go directly to the Government and its partners working on the ground.

Help us step up our efforts to protect the people of Ethiopia.

Donate today and help support Ethiopia through this crisis.

To those who cannot give at this time, you can show your support by sharing this appeal via social media and with those you know.

The global nature of this terrible pandemic is a humbling reminder of our common humanity and vulnerability, which is why must continue to be there for those who need us more than ever before.

HOW YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Your donation today can help people in urgent need

£50 can provide a food and water for vulnerable families

£100 can provide vital PPE for frontline healthcare professionals

£500 can contribute to the procurement of life-saving medical equipment for healthcare facilities

HOW TO DONATE

By Bank Transfer

Bank: Lloyds Bank
Account No: 43178968
Sort Code: 30-65-41

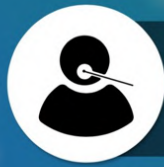
By Cheque

Cheques should be made out to **“The Ethiopian Embassy in London”** and mailed to:

Embassy of Ethiopia
17 Princes Gate
LONDON SW7 1PZ

DONATE TODAY. SAVE LIVES.

100 Days of COVID-19 in Ethiopia



216,328
Laboratory tests



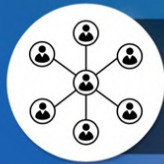
32 Million People visited
through house to house
screening



4532
Tested Positive



17,435 Treatment and
Isolation beds prepared



708 positive among
31,573 Contacts traced



More than **4500** additional
Health workers hired and
12,000 Volunteers mobilized



764,948 Travelers have
been screened
(Since January 24)



513 Million birr worth PPE and
Medical Equipments distributed
throughout the country



For further information
Call 8335 or 952
toll free lines



COVID-19 in Ethiopia from March 13 - June 21. Source: Ministry of Health, Ethiopia

COVID-19 Protocol Update

Some amendments have been made to the State of Emergency in response to the current situation of COVID-19 in Ethiopia:

- All deaths at home or in health facilities: funeral and burial arrangements will be held by the family at their preferred burial ground (with attendance of not more than 50 people)
- All travellers arriving at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport who have a certificate of negative PCR SAR-CoV test done up to 72 hours before arrival to Ethiopia, will be required mandatory 14-day self-quarantine/self-isolation at home after giving a sample upon arrival.
- All travellers with no certificate of negative PCR SAR-CoV test results as well as returnees will be quarantined for 7 days at designated sites, tested, and then required to self-isolate for an additional 7 days at home
- Individuals suspected of having COVID-19 or who test positive with mild or no symptoms will be asked to self-isolate at home if they have the resources, the support, are willing and fulfil the criteria
- Individuals who do not meet self-isolation criteria will be isolated in non-clinical facilities.

Ethio-UK medical professionals discuss impact of COVID-19

In June, the Embassy hosted Ethiopian Medical Doctors in the UK, who, led by Dr Merid Gebru passed on their experience of handling COVID-19 in the UK for Ethiopia's benefit.

Dr Addisalem (Public Health Scotland), commended the handling of the first 100 days of COVID-19 in Ethiopia and related her experience of how scientific evidence is collated and how all options are explored. During lockdown, thought should be given to easing COVID-19 public health measures while keeping COVID-19 at bay.

Dr Abraham Teferi (Virologist), said the designation of hospitals in Ethiopian cities to the sole care of patients with COVID-19 was highly commendable, as it allowed emergency provision for other medical conditions. PPE is crucial from the very early stages, especially for healthcare workers.

Dr Yonas Chernet (Paediatrician) said COVID-19 is less common in children who tend to have milder symptoms and most can be cared for at home. Only a tiny percentage of children develop severe symptoms.

Dr Yohannes Mekonen (Psychiatrist) said COVID-19 induces fear but most people survive, which is reassuring and can bolster immunity. Lockdowns can exacerbate existing mental illness, he added, but COVID-19 can bring out the best in humanity and kindness is therapy to the mind and soul of the giver.

The full discussion will be available on our YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK>

Dexamethasone to be used for COVID-19 patients

Ethiopia has approved the use of Dexamethasone to treat seriously ill coronavirus patients. Making the announcement, Minister of Health Dr Liya Kebede said, "We reviewed the study report from the UK about Dexamethasone use for COVID-19 patients. Following recommendations from our

clinical advisory group and Health Professionals National Advisory Council, the Ministry of Health recommends the emergency use of low dose Dexamethasone for COVID-19 patients who require oxygen and/or mechanical ventilation for treatment."

The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomed the initial clinical trial results from the UK that showed Dexamethasone, a corticosteroid, can be lifesaving for patients who are critically ill with COVID-19. For patients on ventilators, the treatment was shown to reduce mortality by about one third, and for patients requiring only oxygen, mortality was cut by about one fifth, according to preliminary findings shared with WHO.

114-year old Ethiopian monk wins battle against coronavirus

News of Aba Tilahun Woldemichael's full recovery from coronavirus brought hope and captured the hearts of many.

114-year old Aba Tilahun tested positive for the virus when a random screening process took place in his neighbourhood in Addis Ababa, and was admitted to hospital before the symptoms showed.

People over the age of 80 are considered to be among the most vulnerable if they catch the virus.

He spent 14 days in hospital and was given the anti-inflammatory drug dexamethasone, recently hailed as a ground-breaking treatment for patients seriously ill with Covid-19.

"I was praying for the whole country to be healthy again."



Speaking to the BBC, Aba Tilahun said, "When I was in the hospital, I was praying to God asking for my health. I was crying and praying for the whole country to be healthy again." Aba Tilahun is now being looked after at home by his family.

CORONAVIRUS: NEWS IN BRIEF

Ethiopia gets Paris Club debt relief

Ethiopia has become the latest country to secure a suspension on debt repayments from the Paris Club in an effort to ease the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis.

In April, the G20 and the Paris Club agreed to waive most debt payments for the world's poorest countries in 2020, as sweeping virus lockdowns upturned the global economy.

Ethiopia will devote the resources freed by this initiative to increase spending to mitigate the health, economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

World Bank provides additional support to help mitigate economic impacts of COVID-19

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$250 million in supplemental financing for the ongoing Second Ethiopia Growth and Competitiveness Programmatic Development Policy Financing. The financing will help to mitigate the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis on the Government's reform agenda, helping address some unanticipated financing needs the Ethiopian Government is facing.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to severely impact Ethiopia's economy. The austerity of the required containment measures, along with disruptions to air travel and the collapse in international demand for goods exported by Ethiopia are already taking a toll on the economy," said Carolyn Turk, World Bank Country Director for Ethiopia. "An estimated 1.8 million jobs are at risk, and the incomes and livelihoods of several million informal workers, self-employed individuals and farmers are expected to be affected."

"This additional financing will support the continued implementation of the structural reforms towards private-sector-led development under the Homegrown Reform Agenda," said Miguel Eduardo Sanchez Martin, World Bank Task Team Leader for the Operation.

COVID-19 antibody testing launched

A COVID-19 testing campaign was launched across all regional states and Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, with the aim of checking infection rates, levels of immunity of the virus and curbing its spread.



The Ethiopian Public Health Institute called on the community, health professionals, and other stakeholders to ensure the campaign, which will run until 14th July, is a success.

Ethiopia has so far conducted 250,604 lab tests (as of 29th June) for COVID-19 since the first case was announced on 13th March.

130 million face masks needed – Minister

Health facilities in Ethiopia could face a shortage of medical face masks unless urgent measures are taken, a senior official warned. Health Minister Dr Lia Tadesse said Ethiopia will need at least 130 million masks over the next four months.

Ethiopia had only 4 million masks at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in mid-March, but following efforts made after the outbreak, more than 7 million face masks were distributed to health facilities, she said.

In addition to importing medical supplies and receiving donations from various sources, joint efforts are now underway to manufacture face masks locally. She added that Ethiopia has now made available 221 ventilators and distributed more than 3,600 oxygen cylinders across the country.

She said testing capacity has been scaled up as the virus has spread, especially in recent weeks, which has seen a spike in COVID-19 cases of over 300%.

Ethiopia to produce 5 million face masks a day

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) said that 67 textile factories will soon start production of 5.5 million face masks a day for social care.

Industrial parks have started production and companies at Hawassa Industrial Park are currently manufacturing 10,000 masks a day, increasing to 50,000 a day. Once local demands are met, the factories will export masks.

Millennium Hall now accepting COVID-19 patients

A coronavirus treatment facility set up at the Addis Ababa Millennium Hall has begun accepting patients.



The facility will provide beds for 1,040 coronavirus patients, out of which 40 are ICU beds, said Dr Ismael Shemsedin, Director General at the facility. The facility also has a laboratory, drug store and rooms for health workers.

Diaspora Trust Fund Donates COVID-19 Medical Supplies

The Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund (EDTF) has donated 40-million-Birr of medical equipment to the Health Ministry to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDTF Board Chairperson, Eyesuswork Zafu, handed over the consignment to Health Minister Dr Lia Tadesse.

Dr Lia said, "I thank all Ethiopian diaspora from around the world and EDTF staff for their generous contributions."

World Refugee Day commemorated against COVID-19 pandemic backdrop

On World Refugee Day, 20th June, Ethiopia's Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) the UNHCR and UN Refugee Agency, paid homage to refugees, their hosts and humanitarian workers, against a backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The principals of the two agencies extended their appreciation to the Ethiopian Government, donors and partners for their continued support and solidarity during these uncertain times.

"The virus may stop us from organizing physical events to commemorate World Refugee Day, but 'virtual' events can celebrate the indomitable spirit of refugees and humanitarian workers who are fighting COVID-19 on the frontlines", said Addisu Kebelessa, Deputy Director General of ARRA.

He appreciated the support received from donors and close partners for mitigating the scourge of COVID-19 and sustaining the regular programmes, but resources fall far short and he appealed for more financial support to overcome the dire health and economic impacts of the virus.

Refugees and IDPs live in overcrowded conditions. Physical distancing is impossible. There have been no large-scale outbreaks amongst the refugee settings in Ethiopia so far, and ARRA, UNHCR, the Regional Health Bureaux and partners are trying to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in 26 refugee camps and surrounding host community locations.

Ann Encontre of UNHCR Ethiopia, also appealed for more support, saying, "What started as a health crisis has expanded, and today refugees and other forcibly displaced people face serious economic challenges". She appreciated that refugees are included in the national COVID-19 response plan.

Ethiopia has a long and progressive history of hosting refugees, with its open-door policy currently benefitting 763,000 registered and many more unregistered refugees and asylum seekers.

#STAYATHOME:

THINGS TO DO

Make the most of lockdown and dedicate some of that extra time to learning something new...something Ethiopian!

Cook Ethiopian



This month's offering is a Banana Teff loaf recipe from award-winning, Lovegrass Ethiopia, an Ethiopian Teff brand based in London and Addis Ababa, that produces and distributes gluten free, healthy food products made from the Ethiopian super grain.

Their range includes Teff Flour, Teff grain, White Teff Fusilli Pasta, Crispy Teff Flakes and Teff Pancake and Waffle Mix.

For more information about Lovegrass, including recipes, visit thelovegrass.com.

Banana Chocolate Teff Loaf

It seems like everyone is baking banana bread during lockdown. In fact, banana bread recipes have become the most popular for British home bakers amid the coronavirus lockdown.

So here's one with an Ethiopian twist.

Ingredients

- 175 g teff flour
- 1.5 tsp gluten free baking powder
- 4 large eggs
- 160 coconut sugar
- 4 tbsp cocoa powder
- 100 g dark chocolate chips
- 100 ml vegetable oil
- 250 g ripe bananas (peeled)
- 80 ml milk or plant alternative



Method

Preheat oven to 170C/160C fan/gas 3.

Line a 2lb tin with baking paper (allow it to come slightly above the tin).

Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, cocoa and chocolate chips.

Separate the eggs. Mash the bananas and stir in the egg yolks, oil and milk. Beat egg whites until stiff.

Mix the wet banana mixture with the dry ingredients, then gently fold in the egg whites.

Pour into the tin, bake for 1 hr or until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

Serve with coconut yogurt or vanilla ice-cream.

Enjoy!

Watch a documentary



Bekoji 100

The award-winning *Bekoji 100*, a short film that explores the stories of Desta and Zabu, two adolescent female runners from Bekoji, in Ethiopia is now available online.



The film follows them as they embark on the first-ever 100-mile, ultra-relay race across Ethiopia alongside international runners and their Girls Gotta Run Foundation (GGRF) teammates. They share their athletic ambitions and the trials they face as young women in their society.

Viewers see how running can help young girls grow into successful independent, strong runners.

The small town of Bekoji is a “running mecca that has produced some of Ethiopia’s best runners” such as two-time Olympic gold medallist Derartu Tulu and sisters Tirunesh and Genzebe Dibaba, and 18 Olympic medals.



The film was produced by the Girls Gotta Run Foundation (GGRF), which “envisions a world in which every girl is able to design a future of her choosing” and invests “in girls who use running and education to empower themselves and their communities.” The girls are dedicated to running but also want to build lives outside the sport.

The run took place in January 2019, and thanks to the relay and film, \$30,000 was raised and is being invested in the GGRF community in Bekoji. Watch the film on the Girls Gotta Run website at <https://www.girlsgottarun.org/bekoji100film>.

Visit an Art Exhibition

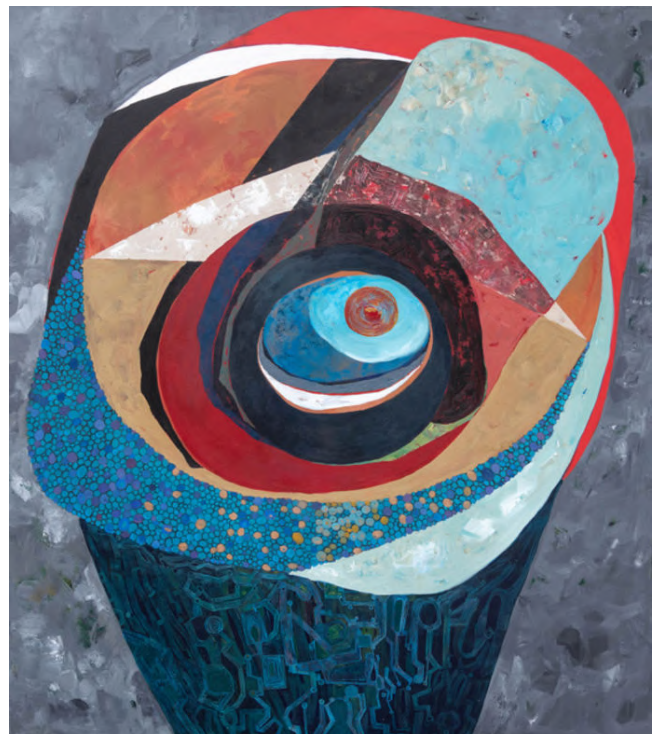


Many exhibitions remain closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has forced cultural institutions to explore alternative ways to showcase their offerings with online exhibitions now on the rise.

Merikokeb Berhanu: Cellular Universe

Addis Fine Art presents *Cellular Universe*, Merikokeb Berhanu's third solo show with the gallery.

Merikokeb's vibrant works at first glance appear abstract: swirls of colour circulate organically across the canvas creating imagery that mesmerises and draws in the viewer. Closer inspection reveals recognisable forms; familiar patterns from the natural world start to emerge, creating a mysterious almost subterranean atmosphere.



Untitled XLIX, 2020

The online viewing runs from 27th June – 14th July.

For further information, visit the Addis Fine Art website at www.addisfineart.com

ETHIOPIA IN UK

Vaccines save lives and help economies prosper: President Sahle-Work at the Global Vaccine Summit

On 4th June, British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, hosted the first-ever virtual Global Vaccine Summit, which brought together representatives from 62 countries, including 42 Heads of State and Government, and leaders from global health organisations, the private sector, vaccine manufacturers and civil society organisations, to support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's work protecting almost half the world's children against deadly, preventable infectious diseases.

Ethiopia's President, H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, addressed the Summit.

Opening the Summit, PM Boris Johnson said, "I hope this summit will be the moment when the world comes together to unite humanity in the fight against disease."



"Just as the UK is the single biggest donor to the international effort to find a coronavirus vaccine, we will remain the world's leading donor to Gavi, contributing £1.65 billion over the next five years."

"I urge you to join us to fortify this lifesaving alliance and inaugurate a new era of global health co-operation, which I believe is now the most essential shared endeavour of our lifetimes," the PM said.

In her address, President Sahle-Work thanked the UK government for hosting the summit, which is

even more important this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Our collective efforts to develop and deploy vaccines rapidly, which are accessible to all, is of paramount importance," she said.



"As Ethiopia tackles the COVID-19 pandemic, our strong partnership with Gavi is helping us bolster health systems and train health workers. Together, we are helping communities and saving lives."

"As the largest African investment in the Gavi portfolio, support equivalent to more than \$1.1 billion has been provided to Ethiopia to prevent the deaths of millions of children from infectious diseases. This has boosted our immunisation coverage from 30% in 2000, to 72% today," the President said, adding that, "Since 2018, 1.1 million girls have been spared the scourge of cervical cancer due to the introduction of the HPV vaccine."

"In order to strengthen our health systems, we have applied for \$300 million of GAVI's support for systematic disease prevention against epidemics."

“In Ethiopia we have reduced the number of unimmunised children by 50% since 2000, while more needs to be done to reach more than one million children who are not receiving vaccines.”

In concluding remarks, President Sahle-Work outlined Ethiopia’s commitment to:

- Work to ensure equity and quality in providing access to health services for all
- Driving up the coverage across the country of DTP-containing vaccine to 90%
- The continuation of essential health services, especially immunisation activities, despite the current demands of Ethiopia’s COVID-19 response
- Increasing the government’s expenditure for health every year, with immunisation exceeding 40% of the total health budget
- Continuing to meet Ethiopia’s co-financing obligation over Gavi’s next strategic period

At the conclusion of the summit, \$8.8 billion was pledged for Gavi, far exceeding the target of \$7.4 billion. This will help immunise 300 million more children in lower-income countries by the end of 2025. It will also support health systems to withstand the impact of coronavirus and maintain the infrastructure necessary to roll out a future COVID-19 vaccine on a global scale.

“Britain has been honoured to host this summit today,” said Boris Johnson. “You can count on our full contribution as together we rise to fulfil the greatest shared endeavour of our lifetime - the triumph of humanity over disease, now and for the generations that follow. As we make the choice today to unite and forge a path of global co-operation, let us also renew our collective resolve to find the vaccine that can defeat coronavirus.”

The Summit also saw the launch of the Advance Market Commitment for COVID-19 Vaccines, a new innovative financing instrument to provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for low- and middle-income countries, the first building block towards a global mechanism to ensure equitable access to future COVID-19 vaccines.

Service Update: Resumption of Consular Services

Amid the changing Coronavirus situation in the United Kingdom, the Embassy has put in place new measures as we re-open to the public.



With health and safety at the forefront of everyone’s mind, the wellbeing of our customers and employees as we resume some of our operations remains the Embassy’s number one priority.

At its foundation, our approach adheres to the current public health guidance and strives to ensure workplace safety and strengthen prevention.

From 8th June:

- The consular section will be open from 10am–3pm, Monday to Friday, providing certain services by [appointment only](#), and others by post.
- Until further notice, all routine visas should be applied for online at evisa.gov.et or on arrival at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.
- Visitors to the Embassy will be required to wear a face covering or mask on the premises and must comply with social distancing rules.

Further guidance on our services will follow in due course. To read our new guidance in full, visit our website <https://bit.ly/EEUK-Update>.

We will continue to monitor the situation and follow guidance given by the Government, making all necessary changes to ensure the safety and health of our customers and colleagues. For the latest updates, please follow the Embassy on social media: @EthioEmbassyUK

LOCAL NEWS

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

#PLANTYOURPRINT



GREENING ETHIOPIA

ONE SEEDLING AT A TIME

Prime Minister Abiy Launches 2020 Green Legacy tree-planting programme

Under the initiative, five billion seedlings will be planted across Ethiopia during the rainy season

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, along with members of the national steering committee, launched the 2020 national Green Legacy tree-planting season by planting seedlings on Tabor Mountain in Hawassa.



Prime Minister Abiy planting a seedling in Hawassa on World Environment Day

The launch, which coincided with World Environment Day on 5th June, was a demonstration of Ethiopia's efforts to sustain biodiversity and commitment to green, climate-resilient growth.

During this year's rainy season, which runs until October, five billion tree seedlings will be planted across the country to help curb the effects of climate change and deforestation, with an ambitious target of planting 20 billion trees over the next four years.

“As the world celebrates World Environment Day, I call upon the global community to stand in solidarity with Ethiopia as we embark on this year's Green Legacy season. Let us stay safe. Let us stay healthy. And let's keep our environment green.”

- Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

Despite the global pandemic, Ethiopia is committed to meeting its target of planting 5 billion trees. National efforts will mobilise planting at household and community level, the PM Abiy said, calling upon all Ethiopians to take up this year's planting

challenge adhering to physical distancing and other COVID-19 preventive measures.



Tree planting in Hawassa on World Environment Day

“If everyone commits to planting over the course of this year’s rainy season, we can demonstrate that Ethiopia can overcome the pandemic and also meet our productivity goals,” he said.

The Green Legacy Initiative, launched last year, resulted in the planting of over 4 billion seedlings nationally, including a record-breaking 353 million seedlings on 29th July. Of all the trees planted in last year's challenge, 84% have survived. The high survival rate of these seedlings is nature's encouragement to "forge ahead", the Premier said.

Similar to last year’s challenge, guests who grace the PM’s Office plant seedlings following discussions.



Prime Minister Abiy with outgoing World Bank Director, Carrie Turk, plant trees within the Office of the Prime Minister’s compound

Ethiopia has lost 98% of its forested areas in the last 50 years. According to the UN, forest coverage fell to just over 4% during the 2000s, down from 35% in the early 20th century. “The main environmental problems include land degradation, soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, desertification, recurrent drought flood, water and air pollution.”

...Oromia Region Introduces Women-Led Green Legacy Initiative

Oromia Regional state announced the launch of a women-led green legacy initiative in Bishoftu town.

Senior government officials, including the Attorney General, Adanech Abebe, attended the launch of the initiative on 19th June, which will be run by women across the region.



In her opening remarks, Adanech stressed the role of planting trees in addressing social burden and realizing the economic welfare of women in the community.

Women can generate income out of trees being planted, like avocado and mango trees, she said, calling on the community to join hands for the success of the Green Legacy campaign that was launched by the Prime Minister earlier in June.

Head of Oromia Region’s Women Children and Youth Affairs Bureau, Muna Ahmed, said 40% of 3.5 billion seedlings ready for the campaign in the region are expected to be planted by women.

Bishoftu town is set to plant 2 million trees in this rainy season.

...#PMGreenLegacyChallenge launched

In a tweet, Prime Minister Abiy said, “As we approach the second month in this year’s #GreenLegacy planting season, I challenge all Ethiopian creatives, film makers, graphic artists, photographers, storytellers, cartoonists, etc. to collaborate and come up with the best and highly engaging short Green Legacy videos and share them on the social media #PMGreenLegacyChallenge.” He added, “A surprise follows for the best productions.”

New Ambassadors take oath before President Sahle-Work

On 16th June, newly appointed Ethiopian ambassadors took an oath before President Sahle-Work pledging to safeguard Ethiopia's interests and carry out their duties to the utmost of their abilities.

Delivering a speech at the swearing-in ceremony, President Sahle-Work urged the ambassadors to be vigilant in identifying opportunities abroad that can be tailored to the needs of their country.

President Sahle-Work also reiterated the profound importance of engaging the Ethiopian Diaspora community in fruitful activities that can advance the prosperity of people at home.



Ethiopia's incoming Ambassador to the United Kingdom H.E. Teferi Melesse Desta (second left), at the ceremony with President Sahle-Work, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his wife

Congratulating the ambassadors during the ceremony, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Gedu Andargachew, expressed his strong belief that the ambassadors would advance Ethiopia's interests in bilateral and multilateral fora.

Paying allegiances to the Green Legacy Initiative of Ethiopia, the ambassadors planted trees on the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ethiopia's Ambassador-designate to the United Kingdom, H.E. Teferi Melesse Desta, is scheduled to arrive at post in the coming weeks. Further details will be provided in due course.

Ambassador Dina Mufti appointed Foreign Affairs spokesperson

Seasoned diplomat, Ambassador Dina Mufti, has been re-appointed as spokesperson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Ambassador Dina was previously the Ministry's spokesperson, before being appointed as Ethiopia's Ambassador to Kenya and then to Egypt between April 2015 and April 2020.

Aden Farah elected speaker of Parliament

The House of Federation elected Aden Farah, Vice-President of the Somali Regional State, as the new Parliament speaker.

He replaces Keria Ibrahim, who held the position from April 2018 and resigned on 8th June.



The new deputy speaker is Etsegent Mengistu replacing Mohammed Rashid.

The House of Federation also approved a decision to extend the term of all assemblies until international health institutions have deemed the threat from COVID-19 is not a public health concern. The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia announced in March that it would not be able to conduct the general elections, slated for August 2020, because of the strains caused by COVID-19.

Ethiopia's 10-year Development Plan unveiled

On 11th June, Ethiopia unveiled its 10-year development plan under the theme "Ethiopia: An African Beacon of Prosperity".

The 10-year plan aims to bring quality based economic growth; increase production and competitiveness; build a green climate resilient economy; bring about institutional transformation; ensure fair and equitable opportunities for women and youth; and guarantee private sector led growth.

"With a five-pillar focus area serving as a foundation for the effective development of other sectors, the plan sets out to capitalise on our existing strengths and abundant resources," the Prime Minister noted.

The energy sector plan is particularly ambitious given many of Ethiopia's development needs are heavily reliant on it, and energy is a crosscutting need, the premier added.

To enable successful implementation of the ten year plan, key factors for the Federal and Regional governments include ensuring the plan adds value to GDP, focusing on quality of projects, so that expenditures are effective and transform attitudes from 'battling poverty' towards 'building multidimensional prosperity', the premier added.

Jobs Creation Commission Launches *Enabling Ethiopia*, a 5-year Job Opportunities Project

The Jobs Creation Commission, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, has launched a 5-year project, *Enabling Ethiopia (EE)*, to support job creation in Ethiopia through driving innovation, policy reform, inclusiveness and advocacy. The Mastercard Foundation has committed \$11.8 million to the project.

Enabling Ethiopia will implement key components of Ethiopia's Plan of Action for Job Creation (PAJC-2020-2025). Launched in October 2019, which

identifies holistic interventions required to create 14 million jobs by 2025 through vibrant private sector and coordinated government support.

EE will create jobs and economic opportunities for about 50,000 women and young people over the next five years and will support the adoption of job-rich macro policies and the implementation of innovative job creation programmes.



The Project will target the expansion of economic opportunities for disadvantaged segments of the populations such as street youth, employed but unpaid rural women, displaced people and people with disabilities. The project will prepare young people for the world of work, and will also help 200 aspiring entrepreneurs to realize their dreams.

"*Enabling Ethiopia* is a good opportunity for segments of our society, who are less served but have high potential to create jobs and generate income when given an enabling environment. It will unlock new opportunities and remove barriers for entrepreneurs, enterprises and the private sector. Innovation, collaboration and excellence are central to this initiative, which will create opportunities for women and help young people secure dignified and fulfilling jobs," said Jobs Creation Commission Commissioner, Dr Ephrem Tekle.

The project will be implemented under the leadership of the Jobs Creation Commission in collaboration with federal and regional government, job creation and enterprise development bodies, financing institutions and private sector actors.

Addis Ababa To Get Two Ultra-Modern Hospitals

Addis Ababa City Administration is set to build two ultra-modern hospitals to meet growing demand for high standard supplementary health facilities.

Health Minister, Dr Lia Tadesse and Addis Ababa Deputy Mayor, Takelle Umma, sought the views of officials on the structural designs of the two modern hospitals so they may inform construction experts.

The two modern hospitals, to be built in Nifas Silk and Lafto Keranio Sub Cities, will have a total capacity of 940 patients.

Addis Ababa currently has 6 hospitals rendering health care services to 1,557 patients on daily basis.

UNICEF and WFP launch partnership to help fight malnutrition in Ethiopia

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Food Programme (WFP) launched a three-year partnership in Ethiopia to support the Government in preventing acute malnutrition in children and mothers and to provide school-based nutrition and health services.



The first-of-its-kind partnership underlines the urgency of preventing acute malnutrition in Ethiopia, which has seen insufficient progress over the past two decades, and where malnutrition levels are likely to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing desert locust infestation, and persistent climate-related crises such as floods and droughts.

This year, 4.4 million will require treatment for severe and acute malnutrition – 2.7 million children and 1.7 million pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Both agencies believe sustained intensive action is required, combining school and community-based prevention activities with expanded access in selected hotspot *woredas* (districts). This approach will help Ethiopia decrease acute malnutrition in children from nearly 10% to less than 3% by 2030.

It targets 100 of the most vulnerable *woredas* in the regions of Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples, Somali and Tigray.

“The Government is investing heavily in the nutrition, health and education of current and future generations of Ethiopians. We are confident this new partnership will add to those efforts and contribute to the Government’s vision of social and economic transformation in Ethiopia.”

Steven Were Omamo, WFP Country Director

For Ethiopia to meet the Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition, the annual rate of reduction in acute malnutrition needs to increase tenfold.

Scientists unlock secrets of Ethiopia's superfood, Teff, to save it from climate change

Scientists have mapped the massive diversity of Teff, an ancient grain originally from Ethiopia, in a bid to save it from global warming.

Teff, the world’s smallest food grain, is a staple for millions in Ethiopia, where it has been cultivated for more than 2,000 years and is the main ingredient in injera, a sour flat pancake. It is increasingly popular worldwide, as a superfood for its gluten-free, high fibre, protein, and low-sugar properties.



Injera, a spongy pancake-like flatbread, is Ethiopia's national dish

Dramatic temperature increases projected in Ethiopia by 2070, could force farmers to grow it only in mountainous areas at higher altitudes, driving down production at a time when food is already scarce, and the population is rising.

For the first time, scientists have mapped Teff's massive diversity, consisting of 3,850 known types. Each has unique "traits," allowing them to cope with different environmental conditions. Depending on where they are grown, varieties might be heat or drought-tolerant; or produce more grain. This information has been pinpointed by researchers and stored in individual "passports" for each type, which can be used to breed more resilient varieties.



"The moment you know what is in the grain, you can fast-track breeding of particular types," said Carlo Fadda, a co-author from Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). "For example, combining low-yielding types cultivated in hot areas, with highly productive types grown in cold areas, to get a highly productive, heat-tolerant grain."

This massive genetic diversity "opens up a huge possibility to breed new climate-resilient varieties naturally, within a shorter timeframe of 5-10 years, compared with hundreds of years in the wild", Fadda said.

"No other country growing this crop has this level of genetic diversity, which makes Ethiopia unique," said Fadda. "This diversity can be used to increase production for local demand, or even for export, despite weather conditions."

Ethiopia produces over 90% of the world's Teff, and as the country of origin, has the highest Teff diversity in the world. In the country, Teff production involves about seven million households and covers some 3 million hectares.

Its growing popularity has led to cultivation in Australia, China, India, South Africa and the US.

Scientists conducted the study entirely in Ethiopia without exporting any seed. Co-authors included researchers from the Institute of Life Sciences at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa, Italy and the Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute (ARARI) in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.

The teff research is part of a broader interaction between Bioversity, Scuola Sant'Anna, and Ethiopian institutions that includes other crops. Research focuses on smallholder farmer agriculture in Ethiopia.

Ongoing teff research includes breeding new teff varieties with increased yield, resistance to pests and climatic and other abiotic stresses, and traits desired by local farmers.

"These actions involve public and private breeding efforts as well as national and international bodies concerned with the conservation of agrobiodiversity of teff in the wake of climate change," said Matteo Dell'Acqua, a co-author from Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna.

The study was published in *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Ethiopia receives 12 bids for telecom licences

The Ethiopian Communications Authority (ECA) has received twelve bids for two telecom licences following the announcement of plans to liberalise the economy and allow foreign and private investors into key state-owned companies.

Of the twelve submissions, nine are telecom operators and two are non-telecom operators and one was incomplete. Among those interested are the Global Partnership for Ethiopia (a consortium of telecom operators made up of Vodafone, Vodacom, and Safaricom), Etisalat, Axian, South African company MTN, Orange from France, Saudi Telecom Company, Telkom SA, Liquid Telecom, Snail Mobile, and the two non-telecom operators, Kandu Global Telecoms and Electromecha International Projects.

Ethiopia's telecoms industry is considered a big prize given the country's population of 110 million people and potential for data services and mobile-money growth.

...Ethiopia among Helios Towers \$450 million Africa expansion

Helios Towers Ltd., a market-leading telecom tower infrastructure company, plans to use about \$450 million in newly raised funds to expand into African countries including Ethiopia, Bloomberg reports.

Ethiopia, which is currently in the process of opening its telecom industry to private investors, will need as many as 10,000 new towers over the next five years to support the expansion, Helios Chief Financial Officer Tom Greenwood said.

"Ethiopia is a very big opportunity, and after a few months of being quiet its government has requested new indications of interest from telecom operators," the CFO said. "With that now back on the table, we are seeking a financing partner and working with mobile operators to be in a strong position to enter the market."

Ethiopia's Economy to Grow By 6% Despite Pandemic: PM Abiy

In response to questions raised during the House of Peoples' Representatives 5th extraordinary session Prime Minister Abiy said Ethiopia's 9% projected economic growth for the financial year to 7th July, will fall to 6% due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ethiopia, like many other nations, will have its share of the humanitarian and economic impacts of the virus, the Prime Minister said.

Quoting an IMF report saying global trade volume growth will decline by 27% and 170 countries will register negative economic growth this fiscal year due to the pandemic, he added that 350 million people worldwide have lost their jobs, tourism has declined by 80% and airlines have to cut 90% of their international flights.

Despite the pandemic, the country's coffee exports grew by 16% to \$667 million and meat exports by 21% to \$41 million in the past 10 months, he said.

Lelise Neme to lead Ethiopian Investment Commission

Lelise Neme is the new head of the Ethiopian Investment Commission, replacing Abebe Abeba, who resigned for "purely personal reasons".



The outgoing Commissioner said, "We warmly welcomed this morning our newly appointed Commissioner. I wish you a very successful tenure and commit to providing support for smooth transitioning." Prior to joining the Investment Commission, Lelise served as Executive Director of the Industrial Parks Development Corporation.



Ethiopia among Forbes' post-Covid 'Rising Stars in Travel'

Ethiopia has been included among Forbes 'Rising Stars in Travel', which feature seven countries that have potential to become major tourist destinations in a post-Covid world.

“As the global tourism industry struggles in the midst of this unprecedented downturn, many nations around the world are preparing for a boom in international visitors once travel is more feasible - for some countries, this could be their first opportunity to establish themselves as a prominent regional force for tourism,” Jared Ranahan said. “While the following countries have yet to become world-class destinations, the ingredients are all there - pristine natural beauty, historic ruins, and fascinating cultural experiences can be encountered in abundance across all seven of these highly underrated nations.”

“Ethiopia has the most fascinating historic background”

For Ethiopia, the report said, “Out of the 54 nations that make up Africa, one could make the argument that Ethiopia has the most fascinating historic

background - it was the second civilization on earth to adopt Christianity, the only African nation to defeat a European power in battle and resist colonialism during the Scramble for Africa, and it's believed that our earliest human ancestors first came from this fertile region.”

“Visitors to this unique country will find a truly diverse scope of natural beauty - the western edges of Ethiopia are home to lush rainforest, which quickly gives way to the towering peaks of the Ethiopian Highlands as one ventures east. If the rich history and spectacular natural sites don't propel this nation to stardom, the national cuisine surely will - eating injera by hand is a cultural experience that everybody should take part in at least once in their life.”

In related news, Tourism Ethiopia said it has started spraying disinfectant on major tourist sites as part of efforts to slowly reopen tourist sites for visitors and contain the spread of Covid-19. “The more we deter the spread of the virus on tourist sites, the more we are ready to welcome visitors sooner,” the tourism body said.

Ethiopian Airlines takes back to the skies

As country and travel restrictions begin to ease, Ethiopian Airlines are resuming operations on many of their routes for business and leisure travel.



During the coronavirus pandemic, the Airline was the go-to airline for essential travel, repatriation flights and airlift of medical and personal protective equipment (PPE) across the world.

“Ethiopian is proud to be there when the world needed it most – repatriating citizens, reuniting families, facilitating essential travel and transporting much needed medical and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health professionals and the general public under very difficult and challenging circumstances. We are proud to be an integral part of the fight against C-19. Now we want to play a leading role in the new-normal,” said Group CEO Tewolde Gebremariam.

From Heathrow a daily non-stop evening departure to Addis Ababa is operating and from 2nd July, the 3-times weekly Manchester–Addis service resumes.

The Dublin service will resume at a later date and until then, passengers are advised to travel via London Heathrow.

Passenger Health and Safety

The airline has taken protective measures in line with CDC, IATA, ICAO and WHO guidelines. “Customers and staff can rest assured that their safety and health are well looked after when flying with us,” Gebremariam said.

International and domestic passengers are required to wear facemasks at arrival and departing airports, except for children under the age 2, during check-in, boarding, and while on board.



All customer-facing staff will also wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), including ticket office, airport and lounge staff, and cabin crew.

The onboard service has also been redesigned to minimize contact while maintaining their signature Ethiopian hospitality.

The crew are also trained to handle flight operations in a COVID-19 travel world.

... Ethiopian Airlines named largest carrier in Africa

Africa Logistics ranked Ethiopian Airlines as the largest carrier in Africa in terms of the number of passengers it carries, destinations it serves, fleet size, and revenue.

Ethiopian has also been ranked the world’s fourth-largest airline by the number of countries served.

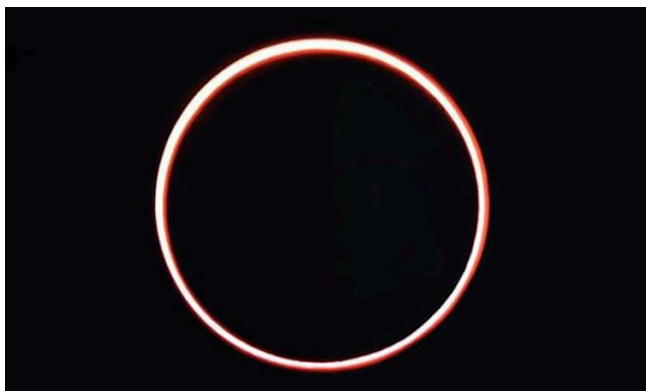
The Airline carried more than 13.3 million passengers in the 12 months to the end of May 2019, a rise of 11.6% compared to the previous year.

Started in 1945, the airline flies to 100 international destinations, and 21 domestic routes across the continent, and also has an air freight service.

Rare annular solar eclipse seen in Ethiopia

On 21st June, parts of Ethiopia witnessed a rare annular solar eclipse that lasted hours.

It was observed in Lalibela, Enjibara, Alamata Tows and Bahir Dar city surroundings among other districts in Oromia, Amhara and Tigray Regional States. People woke up to a spectacular ring of fire, when 90% of the sun was blocked by the moon.



First visible in Central and East Africa starting from the Republic of Congo, the eclipse passed over Oman, Yemen, Pakistan, India and China, covering parts of the Pacific Ocean, according to the Ethiopian Space Science and Technology Institute.

The next time a solar eclipse will be visible in Ethiopia will be in 36 years, according to the Institute.

SPORTS

Kenenisa Bekele joins over 100,000 runners in virtual relay

The MA RA TH ON Worldwide Team Relay, which took place from 6th-7th June, was a widespread success with over 106,000 professional and amateur runners from all over the world.

It was the first time so many professional athletes joined a virtual challenge to run together with fans from all over the world. Each relay runner ran 10.5km, which was then combined for an overall team time, to determine the winning team.

Ethiopia's distance running legend, Kenenisa Bekele was among the star athletes that took part alongside Kenya's world marathon record holder, Eluid Kipchoge.

On Team Kenenisa were Joris, Stephen, Andy and Tharkun from the Netherlands.



Kenenisa ran his 10.5km in 32:57 on the track he built in Sululta, 25 minutes outside Addis Ababa.

"It was a great pleasure to run my 10.5k as part of the MA RA TH ON challenge on my own track in Sululta," Bekele said.

One of Kenenisa's team members said, "I ran this afternoon my 10.5k with a lot of wind in 44.07 and I am very satisfied. You were constantly on my mind and it helped me a lot."

The event was organised by NN Running Team, an international team of elite long-distance runners managed by a company in the Netherlands.

Jos Hermens, director of the NN Running Team said, "Running is the true universal sport. This event has brought together people of all nationalities, of all abilities, all with different motivations, in a shared love of running. This is one of the most challenging times we've faced as a society.. If we can show, through running, that we can mix cultures and people of all colour, in such a positive way, there is nothing that sport cannot do. I was proud to see some of the greatest athletes in the world, team up with amateurs across continents, and show that we really are one."

Haile Gebrselassie takes part in Great Ethiopian Run virtual 5km run

Running legend Haile Gebrselassie took part in the final day of the virtual 5km run, organised by the Great Ethiopian Run, in Addis Ababa. The 47-year-old two-time Olympic 10,000m gold medalist joined two current Ethiopian world champions, Muktar Idris and Netsanet Gudeta, and former world champion Gete Wami in the charity-driven event.

They took part in a “champions’ relay” over 5km to close the event which had opened on 1st June, and has raised more than 100,000 Ethiopian birr (\$2,925) for Ethiopia’s fight against C-19.

More than 500 participants, including runners from around the world, took part in the run.

The champions’ relay took place at the Addis Ababa Stadium and saw Gebrselassie teaming up with Gudeta, the 2018 world half marathon champion, against Idris and Wami, respectively the 2019 world 5,000m champion and 1999 world 10,000m champion.

Gebrselassie and Gudeta covered their 5km in 16:57.26 while Idris and Wami ran 18:56.49.



Gebrselassie said: “This is a difficult time not only for athletes in Ethiopia, but for the whole country. Our hope is that this race will motivate our citizens to stay fit and keep exercising while we fight the disease.”

Gebrselassie still trains daily on his treadmill at home and has been a prominent campaigner on national media during the pandemic, featuring in a campaign video to encourage Ethiopians to stay at home and practise physical distancing.

ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

The world should emulate Rwanda and Ethiopia on green economy

As the world increasingly chokes under a polluted environment, and climate change takes its toll on humanity, governments’ commitment to fight pollutants and embrace climate-resilient green economy has been lack-lustre and snail paced.

Since putting pen to paper on the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, there has been little to write home about as numerous governments continue to pay lip service to the environmental accord. Unprecedented floods, drought, climate-related diseases and disasters define our new normal. It is particularly tough for developing countries with the sectors that feed their people and oil their economic growth taking the greatest hit.

Which is why in this extraordinary times Ethiopia and Rwanda have risen to the occasion once again to champion green initiatives whose benefits will outlive this generation.

For Ethiopia, the commitment to cut carbon emissions by 64% by 2030 may seem overly ambitious. But its recent investment in a groundbreaking national reforestation programme where four billion trees were planted in 2019 and an even higher target of five billion this year inspires hope and confidence that the carbon emissions reduction pursuit is indeed achievable. It also takes pride in having Africa’s first waste to energy plant, electric rail network to tame fossil fuel use and climate-smart agricultural practices that have placed it way ahead of its peers and earned it global admiration.

As the trailblazers in green economy, these countries have one thing in common. Their leaders have been actively involved in pushing for the implementation of these projects...In a phenomenon so crucial for human survival like climate change, the two countries will go down in history as having stood up to be counted with their leaders driving the green economy agenda in talk and deed. The world should borrow a leaf.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/Fair-Planet>.

Nothing but Warmth from Everyone We Met: Cycling in Ethiopia



In a reportage for *The Radavist*, British cyclist and photographer Daniel Hughes writes of his experience cycling in Ethiopia – a journey which took four days with some of the best views imaginable and set of switchbacks that could easily feature in any list of the world’s greatest cycling climbs.

“When Ethio Cycling Holidays reached out and asked if I had ever considered cycling in Ethiopia, my answer was “No, but tell me more!”, he writes.

“Richard (one of the founders of Ethio Cycling) showed me a few photos and told me about the rich culture and history of Ethiopia. “Wow!” I replied “I’d love to make this happen.”



Their journey took on a loop, covering 465km and climbing a significant 8,387m in just four days. The altitude had quite the effect too, as they spent all of their time between 2,000m and 3,100m.

“If you’re looking for something different, where you’ll enjoy better tarmac than in most European countries, better riding than most also then I highly recommend Ethiopia. Our legs and minds got opened up to a whole new world of riding and the people so warm and friendly.”

Read more: <https://bit.ly/CyclingEthiopia>

It’s Terrifying Trying to Get to These 15 Mountain Churches—But Stunning Once You Do

Fodor’s

Prepare to hold your breath in awe—and possibly in fear.



To get to them, you’ll need to creep through tunnels hidden in rocks and climb 1,000-foot vertical cliffs while a guide literally points out the next safe hold for your bare foot and hand. But then you’ll see them:

Ethiopia’s famous rock-hewn churches—hundreds of them, carved out of the mountains themselves. Although not all are so dramatically reached, they’re each full of ancient, mysterious quietude.

There are two regions where these medieval Christian churches cluster. Generally, Lalibela’s churches’ have more dramatic architecture, while Tigray’s older structures reside in more spectacular landscapes where buttes rise to the sky like stalagmites.

There are more than 120 in Tigray and 11 in Lalibela (legend says these were built in one night by determined angels, although King Lalibela’s biography admits to the more realistic span of 24 years). Lalibela’s churches respectively constitute a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/Fodors-Churches>.



This Is What It's Like Trekking the Hottest Place on Earth

Fodor's

One of the world's harshest environments is also one of its most fascinating...Set in northern Ethiopia, the Danakil Depression has a fascinating topography - hot (122 degrees F) - and one of the lowest at 426 feet below sea level, places on earth.

The landscape dramatically changes from yellow, maroon, orange, green, pink, like a painting accidentally created by an unmonitored toddler. In the local Afar language, the name of this area is "Dallol" which aptly translates to "colorful stone."



"We bundled back onto our white jeep, stopping at a green natural plunge pool. This "crack in the earth," initially puzzled the locals. Tiny when it was first spotted two years ago it has expanded, and is deemed safe to swim in. Once in the water, the body is surprisingly buoyant, as in the Dead Sea, a quality attributed to the high salinity of the water and the Danakil's low point on the earth...Cold Habesha beers were passed around from a cooler box and the next hour was spent floating about in a blissful zen-like state. As the others changed into dry clothes, I climbed up a red salt hill a few feet from the pool, considered a holy mountain and Afar tribesmen believe that if it ever disappears, there will be no salt in the Danakil Depression. For that reason, they don't mine it. The entire view, the reflection over the evenly shallow water, is sublime."

Read more: <https://bit.ly/Fodors-Danakil>

Meet the librarians going above and beyond to get books to kids in lockdown

THE BIG
ISSUE

With libraries set to reopen in July across the UK, other countries have taken enterprising steps to boost literacy and give kids all-important access to books.

In Ethiopia, the books go out via land. Or more specifically, camel. More than 26 million children are out of school during the Covid-19 lockdown so Save The Children's camel library is bringing the life-nurturing power of books to 22,000 children in 33 villages.



First started in 2010, the fleet of 21 camels transport up to 200 books at a time to kids like 13-year-old Mahadiya.

She said: "Before the coronavirus, we used to go to school regularly...I feel sad and disappointed that I cannot go to school. I am worried it may not open soon. Because of this, I am worried that we could forget some of the things we learned in school and we could fail our exams...However, the camel library continues to come to our village and supplied us with storybooks. I feel very happy and I am now able to borrow and take home the storybook that I would like to read."

Read more: <https://bit.ly/Camel-Library>.

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