



# Ethiopian News

March 2020

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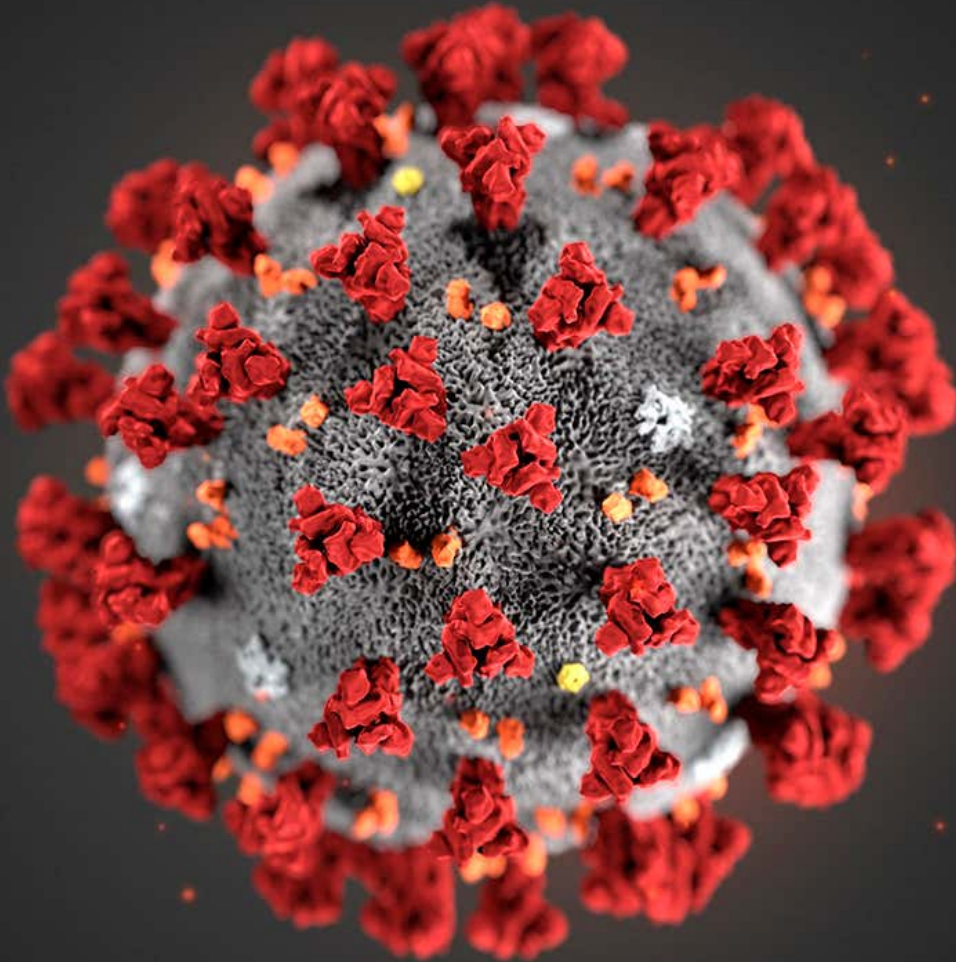
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## CONNECT WITH US



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# Ethiopia leads calls for Collective Response to Coronavirus





## **TOGETHER, WE CAN!** **Ethiopia leads calls for collective response to Coronavirus**

Writing in [The Financial Times last week](#), Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr Abiy Ahmed, affirmed that “we can defeat this invisible and vicious adversary – but only with global leadership...COVID-19 teaches us that we are all global citizens connected by a single virus that recognises none of our natural or man-made diversity. For the virus, what matters is the fact of our common humanity.”

As we went to press, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute and Federal Ministry of Health had confirmed 29 cases of COVID-19 within Ethiopia, of which two have recovered, two are in intensive care, two have been transferred to their home countries and zero deaths have been registered. Though Ethiopia, much like the rest of Africa, has thus far been spared the most devastating effects of COVID-19, this has not stopped the Government

from championing the need for a coordinated response to the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Ethiopia has focused its strategy on the need for proactive interventions to curb the potential spread of the virus while putting in place the necessary infrastructure to ensure critical preparedness and capacity within the Health sector. Through the COVID-19 National Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, the Government has announced a range of measures since mid-January including:

- the allocation of an emergency budget
- the mandatory quarantining of all travellers arriving into Ethiopia for a period of 14 days
- the closure of schools

- limiting the majority of the Federal workforce to working from home
- the postponement of large public gatherings, including sporting events
- releasing prisoners who had committed minor crimes and those whose probationary period is nearing its end
- the closure of all bars and nightclubs and
- the expansion of public information and media campaigns to raise Coronavirus awareness.

In addition to these measures, the Government, in collaboration with the business community and civil society, has recently announced the launch of a nationwide resource mobilisation initiative aimed at sourcing materials for newly established quarantine and treatment centres.

Though this domestic preparedness has won Ethiopia praise in public health circles, all along the Government has maintained the importance of pursuing a joined-up approach with global solidarity at its core. In defence of the global norms of cooperation and interdependence, the Prime Minister has launched a variety of initiatives aimed at galvanising collective action on COVID-19.

Last week, as part of a joint relief initiative for the African continent between Prime Minister Abiy and Chinese billionaire founder of Alibaba, Jack Ma, the Government of Ethiopia coordinated the successful distribution of millions of testing kits and personal protective equipment from China to African states.



Ethiopian Airlines plays vital role in distribution of medical equipment across Africa

This was yet more evidence of Ethiopia's longstanding commitment to the ideals of Pan-

Africanism – a fact further illustrated by the indispensable role played by Ethiopian Airlines, the first African airline, in the distribution of the donations to over 50 countries in just 6 days.

Similarly, Prime Minister Abiy held discussions with leaders of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on March 30 via video conference.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of collective leadership as a means of withstanding the challenge of COVID-19.

Even here in the United Kingdom, the Ethiopian approach has won praise, with Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, singling out the Government and Ethiopian Airlines for the decisive role they are playing, at a time of national crisis, in the continuing repatriation of British nationals from across Africa.

In a post on Twitter, the Foreign Secretary said, "Good conversation with Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed Ali. Thanked him for Ethiopian Airline's ongoing commitment to supporting Brits across Africa get back home. Also discussed how UKAid can support African partners like Ethiopia in the fight against Covid-19."

Ethiopia has also led calls for a globally coordinated response to the economic fallout caused by the Coronavirus, arguing that just as the virus knows no borders, neither will the economic challenges that await us. Accordingly, in a 3-point proposal to the G20, on behalf of the African continent, Ethiopia called for a \$150 billion COVID-19 Emergency Financing Package, a Global Africa Health Emergency Package to strengthen the WHO and a Debt Resolution and Restructuring Package to bolster low-income economies.

As the famous Ethiopian saying goes, **if your neighbour's house is burning, it is your duty to put out the flames, as one day those flames will visit your home.**

At a time of unprecedented global suffering and uncertainty, it is only together as neighbours, bonded by our common humanity and frailty, that we can hope to douse the flames in our world. Together we can!



## Donate and Save Lives

As the global community is gripped by the uncertainty wrought by the Coronavirus outbreak, one thing that is certain is that the level of our preparedness and strict adherence to health guidelines will determine how we cope with and overcome this pandemic.

In order to better equip Ethiopia's national response, the Government has recently launched the COVID-19 National Resource Mobilisation Committee to oversee the pooling of financial and non-financial resources, as a measure to bolster preparedness for a severe outbreak.

This is the time for us to redirect our energy from panic, fear and worry towards a purposeful contribution – pooling our resources together in support of our emergency response.

Accordingly, a number of bank accounts have been established to facilitate monetary contributions from within Ethiopia and the Diaspora. For details of official bank accounts for the COVID19 resource mobilisation, visit our website at <https://bit.ly/COVID19xDonate>.

Ethiotelecom has also launched a fundraising program for COVID19. Ethiopian Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia who want to contribute from abroad can use [www.ethioremmit.com](http://www.ethioremmit.com) to send any amount starting from as little as \$1 to +251-991-444-444.

Let us demonstrate, as a nation and people, that in the face of adversity, we rise to the challenge of confronting the Coronavirus, united by our responsibility to the home we call Ethiopia!

## Our Approach to the Coronavirus Outbreak

As Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to change our lives in unprecedented ways, the Embassy has put measures in place to keep all of our customers and employees safe, and updated some of our policies to ensure we continue to provide essential services in these difficult times.

As a responsible employer and service provider, we have therefore updated some of our policies, as follows:

- We have adjusted our Consular opening hours: Until further notice, the Consular Section will be open on **Tuesday and Thursday only, from 10:00am–12:00pm (midday)**, and will only be providing **essential services**.
- We have adjusted our operations across the rest of the Embassy: All other departmental staff, apart from key members of staff, will be **working remotely until further notice**. We will therefore no longer be offering appointments nor accepting drop-in visitors. Those who require services or information are advised to consult our website or to contact the relevant departments via the details below.

Going forward, we will continue to monitor the situation and adjust our operations in line with Government guidelines to ensure we are doing right by our customers, staff and the wider public. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us via our social feeds: @EthioEmbassyUK. Read our approach in full via our website at <https://bit.ly/COVID19-EEUKv2>.

## Embassy Emergency Contacts

Due to the impact of the Coronavirus and Government guidance advice, most of our staff will be working remotely until further notice. Please note the below contact details for any urgent enquiries during this time:

Consular Section: 020 7838 3898

General Enquiries: [info@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:info@ethioembassy.org.uk)

Diaspora Affairs: 020 7838 3873 | 0203 846 6682 | 0207 838 3886

Press / Media Enquiries: 020 7838 3883 | [press@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:press@ethioembassy.org.uk)

Trade and Investment: 020 7838 3870 | [business@ethioembassy.org.uk](mailto:business@ethioembassy.org.uk)



With the safety and wellbeing of Ethiopians, as well as travellers to Ethiopia, the Government's top priority, a number of measures have been introduced as part of efforts to control the spread of coronavirus.

Since the outbreak, the Government, the Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, the emergency services and other partner institutions have been working round the clock to ramp up Ethiopia's response.

As of 23<sup>rd</sup> March, **all passengers entering Ethiopia have been subject to a 14-day mandatory quarantine** at government-designated hotels and facilities, at the passengers' own personal cost. Diplomats will be quarantined at their respective embassies.

The **14-day quarantine does not apply to transit passengers**. Transit passengers on a connecting flight will stay at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel until taking their connecting flight.

### **...Closure of borders**

Ethiopia's land borders have also been closed as of 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The restrictions do not apply to the movement of essential goods.

### **...Ethiopian Airlines**

On 29<sup>th</sup> March, Ethiopian Airlines announced the suspension of flights to more than 80 international destinations due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

At the time of publishing, flights from London Heathrow and Manchester Airports into Addis Ababa are still operating.

Domestic services are still running, though demand has fallen by 50%.

For any queries about flights or for updated information on refunds and re-booking and a detailed list of Country travel restrictions that are in place please check the Ethiopian Airlines website at <https://bit.ly/EthiopianAirlinesCOVID19>, which is being regularly updated. For the latest Ethiopian Airlines UK updates, go to <http://bit.ly/EAL-UKupdates>.

### **...information for British nationals**

As countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel and border restrictions, **the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises British nationals against all but essential international travel**. British nationals living in the UK who are currently travelling in Ethiopia or abroad, are **strongly advised to return now**, where and while there are still commercial routes available.

For further information and additional advice, visit <https://bit.ly/FCOxEthiopia>.

For the latest updates on the situation in Ethiopia, visit <https://www.ephi.gov.et>. You can also call the Ethiopian COVID-19 helplines on 8335 or 952 for advice or if you are experiencing symptoms while in Ethiopia.

### **...visas for Ethiopia**

Until further notice, the Embassy's Consular Section will only be providing essential services. Travellers to Ethiopia who require visas are advised to apply online at [www.evisa.gov.et](http://www.evisa.gov.et) or on arrival at Bole International Airport. **The Embassy will no longer be issuing routine visas.**

## ETHIOPIA IN UK



# Civilisation and peace for whom? Nile Basin is made up of 10 countries

*Letter to the Editor of The Independent Newspaper*

Ahmed Aboudou's piece "[Blood on the Nile is what's coming if Egypt and Ethiopia continue their war of words over water](#)" of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 with its 13 mentions of "war", was alarmist, and contained inaccuracies.

It is not the case that "war looms on the horizon". All 10 African countries through which the Nile passes, including Egypt, know that war would be disastrous for all concerned. Furthermore, *The Independent* seems oblivious to the fact that the origin of these disagreement lies in the unrecognised 1959 Agreement between Egypt and Sudan, which unfairly attempted to allocate all Nile waters to two downstream states at the expense of the rest of the Basin. This absurd attempt to curtail the rights of upstream states has never been and will never be recognised by Ethiopia.

Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia agreed to talks in Washington, with the US and the World Bank

as observers not, as the article states, as "external mediators", and as such, the US was not qualified to draft an agreement – this task falls solely to the three countries concerned – Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan – as was originally agreed by the three countries.

As Ethiopia's Foreign Minister, Gedu Andargachew, has recently stated, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) will create vibrant economic integration with our neighbours and this will end the age-old distorted thinking that considers the Nile as a source of conflict rather than cooperation."

This GERD is exclusively dedicated to the generation of electricity and will provide electricity not just to Ethiopia but to Egypt, Sudan, and other neighbouring countries. As Foreign Minister Gedu has said, "people should know that the River is

adequate enough to address our needs provided that we use it equitably.”

It is stated in the article that Egypt is “for the first time threatened by thirst.” But the threat of thirst in Ethiopia has been a recurring tragedy. The Nile is a life-or-death matter for the many Ethiopians living without access to electricity or clean water.

## **The “fair share” that Egypt is demanding is everything but fair to the nine other countries in the Nile River Basin that Egypt has sidelined in its hunger for water.**

Ethiopia contributes about 86% of the water flow to the Nile River Basin and reserves the right to reasonably utilize these water resources in a fair and equitable manner to address the needs of current and future generations. It remains committed to addressing any outstanding issues together through constructive dialogue with Sudan and Egypt to improve and refine a future agreement on the guidelines and rules for the first filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Ethiopia has taken all the necessary precautions to avoid significant harm, if any, that the dam could bring to downstream countries, and has conducted detailed and multifaceted studies which have embraced international dam standards and safety. Sudan welcomes the GERD; Egypt should do likewise.

Yours,

Fesseha Shawel Gebre

*Ambassador*

*The Independent* published the Ambassador’s letter on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 under the headline “[Ethiopian water](#)”.

## **New Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom announced**

Earlier in March, President Sahle-Work announced the appointment of 15 new Ambassadors.

H.E. Mr Teferi Meles will be the new Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, replacing outgoing Ambassador Fesseha Shawel who has been in post since March 2019.

Ambassador Fesseha will remain at post in London until further notice. More information to follow in our April newsletter.

## **Ethiopia awarded certificate at national climate change awards**

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, the Climate Coalition’s Green Heart Hero Awards were held at the Houses of Parliament in London in the presence of nominees, Members of Parliament and TV personalities. Ambassador Fesseha and the Head of Public Diplomacy, Mr Mekonnen Amare, attended the awards.



Ambassador Fesseha (left) with the Head of Public Diplomacy, Mr Mekonnen Amare, at the awards ceremony

Ethiopia was shortlisted in the “Overseas Inspiration” category for the Green Legacy Initiative, which resulted in over 4 billion trees being planted in 2019 as part of efforts to fight climate change and deforestation.

The Awards are aimed at celebrating the unsung heroes who are helping to create a safer and cleaner future, and include green businesses, schools and Members of Parliaments.



Ethiopia was shortlisted alongside Sierra Leone's Ngoleagorbu Cocoa Farmers Union and Nigeria's Jos Green Centre E-Waste Solar Project. The award went to Jos Green Centre E-Waste Solar Project.

Although Ethiopia did not win, the Embassy would like to take this opportunity to applaud the millions of Ethiopians, young and old, who came together in solidarity in support of this initiative.

We would also like to say a big thank you to everyone who nominated Ethiopia and congratulations to all the winners.

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## Northwood School student visits Ethiopian counterpart

NAEF (Northwood African Education Foundation) was founded in 2011 by parents, children and staff of Northwood Schools in South West London. The charity's aim was to build and run a new school for orphans and the most vulnerable children in Ethiopia. St George's School, Azezo, Northern Ethiopia opened its doors to its first 50 children in 2014 offering a free, rounded education to help children who would not otherwise have had such a chance. St George's now provides an education and future for over 400 children aged 5-11 years.

A successful sponsorship programme ensures all St George's children are sponsored meaning that every child is provided with free education, educational resources, uniforms, two meals a day, development checks and healthcare.

Parents, pupils, staff and donors are encouraged to visit St George's to see where the money raised is going, to meet their sponsored child and to experience all that Ethiopia has to offer. In the February half term Nick Johnston and his daughter Daisy Johnston and his daughter Daisy Johnston did just this.

Flying from the UK during Storm Dennis they eventually arrived in Gondar to a very warm welcome at St George's.

"I helped teach Jolly Phonics and maths in a class called KGA who were 4 and 5 years old. I also taught them colours, animals and how to introduce

themselves in English. They were really sweet and welcoming, and I was surprised by how well behaved they were. It was really funny how every time I turned a corner the children were trying to shake my hand and I had trouble getting anywhere."



"I also had the opportunity to meet my sponsored child who is called Yordanos. She was very shy and sweet. It was an incredible experience to see for myself how all the money we raise in the UK is helping these children and their communities," Daisy Johnston said.

As part of their trip, the Johnstons were lucky enough to travel through Ethiopia and to the Simien Mountains. They were overwhelmed by the breathtaking and spectacular landscape, the rich history and culture and the friendly and welcoming nature of the people they met and the hospitality and generosity that they were shown.

St George's enables children born into the most deprived circumstances imaginable to move from merely surviving to a position where they will be able to take control of their own lives and futures. Education is a key driver in human development and at St George's their main mission is to nurture our children's talents to best prepare them for the future ahead.

For further information about NAEF's work, visit <https://www.naef.uk.com>.





## “The Saint of Addis Ababa”, Dr Catherine Hamlin, laid to rest

World-renowned obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Catherine Hamlin, who devoted her life to Ethiopia, passed away peacefully on 18<sup>th</sup> March, at her home in the grounds of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia where she had lived for 61 years. She was 96.

Dr Hamlin, together with her late husband Dr Reginald Hamlin OBE, co-founded Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, a healthcare centre treating women who suffer from the debilitating effects of obstetric fistula – a crippling condition that results from complications in childbirth.

In 1958, the Hamlins answered an advertisement in *The Lancet* medical journal for gynaecologists to set up a school of midwifery in Addis Ababa. Together with their six-year-old son, Richard, they travelled to Ethiopia to take up the contract. What had been

intended as a three-year stay in Addis Ababa turned into a lifetime of service to the Ethiopian people.



Dr Hamlin with Mamitu Gashe in 1994. Mamitu was one of the women who Dr Hamlin and her husband treated in the early days, when they worked at Princess Tsehai Hospital. Trained by the Hamlins, Mamitu is now an internationally respected fistula surgeon.

Today, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is a healthcare network of over 550 Ethiopian staff – many trained by Catherine – servicing six hospitals, Desta Mender rehabilitation centre, the Hamlin College of Midwives and 80 Hamlin supported Midwifery Clinics.

Over the past 61 years, more than 60,000 Ethiopian women have received the life-changing reconstructive surgery for obstetric fistula.



**My dream is to eradicate  
obstetric fistula. Forever. I  
won't do this in my lifetime,  
but you can in yours.**

– Dr Catherine Hamlin

Leading tributes, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed tweeted, “I express my deep sorrow at the passing of Dr Catherine Hamlin. Ethiopia has lost a true gem who dedicated more than sixty years to restoring the dignity of thousands of women. I wish her loved ones, friends and colleagues comfort. May she Rest In Peace.”

President Sahle-Work Zewde said, “Dr Hamlin was a hero who saved more than sixty thousand Ethiopian women and girls from obstetric fistula; a physically and psychologically traumatizing condition which caused many women and girls to be

ostracized from their communities. I am confident that the many professionals trained under Dr Hamlin throughout the years will continue the work she started at the Fistula Hospital she founded; the only one of its kind in Ethiopia.”

Dr Tedros Adhanom, World Health Organisation Director General and former Ethiopian Minister of Health said, “This news breaks my heart. Thank you Catherine for the vast legacy you leave for the women and girls of Ethiopia and the world. You were the best of humanity and very special. We all must continue carrying your mission forward.”

Her biographer John Little described her as a “marvel” and quoted *The New York Times* which wrote “Dr Hamlin is the new Mother Teresa of our age.”

Committed to ensuring Catherine’s dream to eradicate obstetric fistula in Ethiopia becomes a reality, Tesfaye Mamo, Chief Executive Officer of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, said, “Most of her 96 years were generously given to help the poor women of our country with traumatic birth injuries. We are all thankful for Catherine’s lifelong dedication. We promise to continue her legacy and realise her dream to eradicate fistula from Ethiopia. Forever.”

In 2012, the Ethiopian Government awarded Catherine an Honorary Ethiopian Citizenship and in 2019 Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed presented her with the Eminent Citizen Award in recognition of her lifetime of service to the women of Ethiopia. She was also twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and received numerous awards.



Prime Minister Abiy with Dr Hamlin in 2019



In 2020 Catherine celebrated her 61<sup>st</sup> year in Ethiopia, where she lived most of her life, in her original house in the grounds of her Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, adored by her patients, staff and the Ethiopian people. She was often referred to as “Emaye” meaning Mother. Catherine was not just committed to spending her life treating thousands of women, she spent her whole adult life changing lives – for the better.

During the last years of her life, Catherine was confident that her legacy would live on:

**“When I die, this place will go on for many, many years until we have eradicated fistula altogether – until every woman in Ethiopia is assured of a safe delivery and a live baby.”**

Catherine was buried at the St Peter and St Paul Catholic Cemetery in Addis Ababa. At the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2019, Catherine said, **“I love Ethiopia and I have loved every day here. Ethiopia is my home.”**



Catherine is survived by her only son Richard and his four adult children: Sarah, Paul, Catherine and Stephanie, two great grandchildren, her sister Ailsa Pottie and brothers Donald and Jock Nicholson.

## **Ethiopia marks one year since tragic plane crash**

On 10<sup>th</sup> March, the world united again in remembering those who perished in the tragic Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET302 crash.



Relatives and friends of the victims gathered for a private ceremony at the site where the Nairobi-bound Boeing 737 MAX crashed six minutes after take-off on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019, killing all 157 people on board and triggering the global grounding of the MAX jets and the worst crisis in Boeing's history.

The victims hailed from more than 30 countries.

PM Abiy led tributes by saying “A year ago today we lost 157 sacred lives in the ET302 plane crash. As friends and family gather in Ethiopia from all over the world to honour the memories of their loved ones, I pay tribute to the victims of this accident and wish their families continued strength.”

### **...interim report on crash released**

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, Ethiopia released an interim report on the crash.

The 136-page report, issued by the Ministry of Transport, suggests that pilots faced challenges controlling the Boeing 737 MAX.

The report supports the initial findings by Ethiopian officials last April that Boeing's Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) made it impossible for crew to regain control of the aircraft.

Erroneous readings from an Angle of Attack (AOA) sensor led to four separate nose-down trim



activations by the MCAS system, each requiring increasing strength by the pilots to regain control.

According to the report, the left and right recorded AOA values deviated shortly after take-off. The pilots notified air traffic control that they were encountering a “flight control problem.”

## **New Ministers appointed**

The House of People’s Representatives (HPR) of Ethiopia has approved the appointment of senior government officials as follows:

- Adanech Abiebie - Attorney General
- Dr Lia Tadesse – Minister of Health
- Lake Ayalew - Minister of Revenues
- Filsen Abdulahi – Minister of Women, Children and Youth



The House also approved the appointment of Tsegaye Arage as Commissioner of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) and the appointment of board members of the Ethiopian Press Agency.

## **Electoral Board announces postponement of elections**

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia has said it cannot hold the upcoming general elections as per the schedule due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

In a statement, the Board said it has cancelled the timetable set to hold the election and temporarily ceased activities related to the election.

Ethiopia was set to hold the elections on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The new schedule will be announced once the threat of the pandemic is over.

## **Ethiopians Celebrate 124<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Adwa Victory**

Ethiopians celebrated the 124<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Adwa Victory Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

The historic victory of the Battle of Adwa, that took place in 1896 against invading Italian forces, made Ethiopia the only country in Africa never to be colonised.



Statue of Emperor Menelik II, who led Ethiopia to victory in 1896

Official celebrations took place in the town of Adwa in the Tigray Regional State, in the presence of President Sahle-Work Zewde. The event was also attended by Deputy Chief Administrator of Tigray, Dr Debretsion Gebremichael, Speaker of the House of Federation, Keria Ibrahim and Minister of Culture and Tourism, Hirut Kassaw, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, President Sahle-Work said the victory of Adwa is a demonstration that Ethiopians would not compromise at any time on their sovereignty, rights and freedom. The President also called on all Ethiopians to stand united for peace and to pull the country out of poverty.

Ahead of the occasion, Prime Minister Abiy said, “The victory of Adwa is a huge resource that we can use in our journey towards prosperity...The victory of Adwa is not only a national victory. It is a victory that re-initiated the birth of Africa’s freedom. This hard-fought freedom shows how we can make the future of Africa positive in cooperation.”

The battle of Adwa in 1896 is known in history as a symbolic pageantry of African resistance where the Ethiopian army won against a highly trained European colonial invader, Italy. The victory later became an emblem of the struggle for decolonization in Africa.

## Smallest *Homo erectus* cranium in Africa and diverse stone tools found at Gona, Ethiopia

An international research team led by scientists from the U.S. and Spain, has discovered a nearly complete cranium of an early human ancestor, estimated to date from about 1.5 million years ago, and a partial cranium dated to about 1.26 million years ago, from the Gona study area in Ethiopia's Afar State.



The DAN5 cranium. Image credit: Dr Michael J. Rogers, Southern Connecticut State University

Both crania, assigned to *Homo erectus*, were associated with simple Oldowan-type (Mode 1) and more complex Acheulian (Mode 2) stone tool assemblages. This suggests that *H. erectus* had a degree of cultural/behavioural plasticity that has yet to be fully understood.

The team was led by Sileshi Semaw of the Centro Nacional de Investigación sobre la Evolución Humana (CENIEH) in Spain and Michael Rogers of Southern Connecticut State University.

The team's findings were published on 4<sup>th</sup> March in the journal *Sciences Advances*.

Gona is located in the Afar Triangle of Ethiopia, adjacent to the well-known Middle Awash and Hadar study areas, where the famous skeletons "Ardi" and "Lucy" were respectively found.

The nearly complete cranium was discovered at Dana Aoule North (DAN5), and the partial cranium at Busidima North (BSN12), sites that are 5.7 kilometres apart.

The research team has been investigating the Gona deposits since 1999, and the BSN12 partial cranium was discovered by N. Toth of Indiana University during the first season. The DAN5 cranium was found a year later by the late Ibrahim Habib, a local Afar colleague, on a camel trail.



Drs S. Semaw (right) and M. Rogers with the DAN5 cranium. Image credit: Dr Michael J. Rogers, Southern Connecticut State University

The BSN12 partial cranium is robust and large, while the DAN5 cranium is smaller and more gracile [slender], suggesting that *H. erectus* was probably a sexually dimorphic species. Remarkably, the DAN5 cranium has the smallest endocranial volume documented for *H. erectus* in Africa, about 590 cubic centimetres, probably representing a female.

The smallest *Homo erectus* cranium in Africa, and the diverse stone tools found at Gona, show that human ancestors were more varied, both physically and behaviourally, than previously known, according to the researchers.

This physical diversity is mirrored by the stone tool technologies exhibited by the artefacts found in association with both crania. Instead of only finding the expected large handaxes or picks, signature tools of *H. erectus*, the Gona team found both well-made handaxes and plenty of less-complex Oldowan tools and cores.



## TRAVEL AND TOURISM



### Cycling in Ethiopia tops list of worldwide destination images

In March, cycling photographer Daniel Hughes, who made a name for himself by delivering the world's highest video broadcast to the BBC from the summit of Everest, completed a 5-day cycling tour in Ethiopia, describing the tour as “unbelievable” and “extraordinary” – which is saying something, since Daniel travels to over 40 destinations around the world each year.

“The riding was superb, the roads super smooth, and the people incredibly friendly”, was how he summed up his tour.

Ethiopia features at the top of his list of photos which Daniel has compiled for [www.worldtogether.org](http://www.worldtogether.org) where he shares some of the highlights from his recent travels.

“A place where one of the world's first recordings of humankind was found (3.2 million years old) and in the northern region of Tigray, incredible switchbacks and roads can be found.”

**“Miles and miles of glorious tarmac which would put most European countries to shame. If you're into gravel, then you're going to be in heaven too. But my favourite part? The people. Genuine warmth and generosity where many have little to give.”**

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# Ethiopian Airlines marks International Women's Day with All-Female Crew



To celebrate International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March, an all-female flight crew from Ethiopian Airlines flew from Addis Ababa to Washington D.C., highlighting the airline's progress in empowering African women, and the contribution of women to the socio-economic development of the continent.

The flight marked the sixth consecutive year the airline has made the symbolically important flight with a female crew. Previously, the airline has flown to Bangkok, Kigali, Lagos, Buenos Aires and Oslo with an all-female crew.

Other female professionals handled all the ground operations including flight dispatch, load control, ramp operation, on-board logistics, safety and security, catering as well as air traffic control.

"Ethiopian Airlines aims to show African girls that there are no professions reserved for men only and inspire them to have no limits to their dream of becoming anything they set their hearts to," Rahel

Assefa, Marketing Vice President for the airline said to VOA News.

Captain Amsale Gualu, who piloted the transatlantic flight, became the first female captain in Ethiopian history in 2010. She said it is important for women to support one another in fields where they are under-represented.



File photo: Captain Asmale (left) with her female co-pilot

Amsale said at the time of the first all-female flight in 2015, that there were only eight female pilots at the airline. Today, she said, there are 20 with another 24 training in aviation school.

## **Ethiopia wins ‘Best Destination-Archaeology and Ancient History’ Award**

Ethiopia has won the ‘Best Destination-Archaeology and Ancient History’ award.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism received the award from the Pacific Travel Writers Association Awards (PATWA).

Moreover, Ethiopia’s Minister of Culture, Dr Hirut Kassaw, won the ‘Best Tourism Minister’ award.

The PATWA International Travel Awards are handed out once a year in March at ITB Berlin, the world’s biggest travel and trade fair. This year’s show was cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

The awards recognise individuals and organisations that are involved in the promotion of tourism and other service providers related to the industry.

- Continued the implementation of reforms in the energy sector to improve efficiency and cost recovery, while protecting the poor.
- Established the new telecom regulator, the Ethiopian Communication Authority, and launched the process of consultation and issuance of two licenses to new firms.
- Enabled private sector actors to provide value added services at dry ports, to continue enhancing the efficiency of the logistics sector, which is catalytic to growth and exports.
- Approved new Investment and Privatization proclamations, fostering competition and facilitating private sector participation in a number of sectors.
- Removed distortions in the financial sector and introduced new government financing instruments, helping reduce direct cash advances from the Central Bank that were generating inflation.
- Continued introducing regulation that allows for greater civil society organizations and citizen participation in the development process.

## **TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

### **World Bank approves \$500 million for Ethiopia’s economic reform**

The World Bank has approved \$500 million (\$312.2 million grant and \$187.8 million credit) in continued support of Ethiopia’s Homegrown Reform Agenda. The Second Ethiopia Growth and Competitiveness Development Policy Operation (DPO) is intended to accelerate Ethiopia’s economic growth and achieve its vision of becoming a lower-middle-income country.

This operation is the second of a series of DPOs and provides both financial and technical support to Ethiopia’s economic reforms. The operation is designed to help Ethiopia revitalize the economy by broadening the role of the private sector and attaining a more sustainable development path. Ethiopia, with support from the operation has:

“This operation builds on the structural reforms initiated in 2018 and contributes to Ethiopia’s efforts to improve competitiveness, boost exports, generate jobs and accelerate inclusive growth,” said Miguel Eduardo Sanchez Martin, World Bank Task Team Leader for the Operation.

The Second Growth and Competitiveness DPO focuses on three pillars: maximizing finance for development, improving the investment climate and developing the financial sector; and promoting transparency and accountability.

“The reforms implemented will help turn around the electricity sector’s financial performance and support Ethiopia’s ambition to provide universal access to electricity,” said Mikul Bhatia, Senior Energy Specialist and Task Team Leader for the programme.

## SPORTS

### 2020 London Marathon postponed to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October

The 40<sup>th</sup> edition of the London Marathon, which was scheduled to take place on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April, has been postponed due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. The 2020 Virgin Money London Marathon is now scheduled to take place on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

The race was one of the most eagerly anticipated races in marathon history as Ethiopia's long-distance legend, Kenenisa Bekele and Kenya's world marathon record holder Eliud Kipchoge were set to go head to head.



Kenenisa, who is the current world record holder for both the 5,000m and 10,000m, finished just two seconds outside Kipchoge's world record at last September's BMW Berlin Marathon. Ever since that incredible run from Bekele, there has been a worldwide clamour for the two men to race each other again over 26.2 miles.

In preparation for the London Marathon, Kenenisa broke Mo Farah's course record in the men's Vitality Big Half race in London on 1<sup>st</sup> March with a time of one hour and 22 seconds.

Hugh Brasher, Event Director, said: "The world is in an unprecedented situation grappling with a global pandemic of COVID-19 and public health is everyone's priority. We know how disappointing this news will be for so many – the runners who have trained for many months, the thousands of charities for which they are raising funds and the millions who watch the race every year."

## ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

### If Covid-19 is not beaten in Africa it will return to haunt us all

*Only a global victory can end this pandemic, not a temporary rich countries' win*



In this opinion piece published in the *Financial Times*, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed argues that there is a major flaw in the strategy to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

"Advanced economies are unveiling unprecedented economic stimulus packages. African countries, by contrast, lack the wherewithal to make similarly meaningful interventions. Yet if the virus is not defeated in Africa, it will only bounce back to the rest of the world," he writes.

"That is why the current strategy of uncoordinated country-specific measures, while understandable, is myopic, unsustainable and potentially counter-productive. A virus that ignores borders cannot be tackled successfully like this."

**"We can defeat this invisible and vicious adversary – but only with global leadership. Without that, Africa may suffer the worst, yet it will not be the last. We are all in this together, and we must work together to the end."**

Read more at <https://on.ft.com/2JaXa8v>.

### Exploring the hidden sacred churches of Ethiopia



"I should have known that exploring the rock-hewn mountain churches of northern Ethiopia probably wasn't for me when my guide, Tekle, asked if I required a climbing harness," writes Rachel Dove. "But here I am peering out of Abuna Yemata Guh Christian Orthodox church, a human-carved hole 2,580 metres above sea level in a spire of sandstone that forms part of the Gheralta Mountains."





Hidden within these sheer cliffs, which dramatically erupt out of the vast, flat plains of the Tigray region of Ethiopia, is a constellation of more than 30 cave-like churches that historians believe were carved out of the rock by some of the earliest adopters of Christianity between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

“If your time in the country is limited, the Gheralta Mountains are a good shout: only half a day’s travel from the capital (via plane and public bus or 4WD), not touristy, with plenty of hiking, rock climbing, history and churches.”



Priests and deacons inside Abuna Yemata Guh church

...the church itself is remarkable, with pillars, three chambers and what Tekle tells us are original paintings of religious figures and animals on the walls. “It’s so remarkable, in fact, I really, really don’t want to leave.”

Read more: [http://bit.ly/ES\\_VisitEthiopia](http://bit.ly/ES_VisitEthiopia)

## **Classic rock: Incredible images show the world's most amazing stone structures**



Forget concrete and brick - it's stone that's the star of the show here. The *Daily Mail* features incredible images showing how stone is a building material of endless opportunity, that it can be formal, elegant, playful and energising.

The photographs feature in a new book, simply called *Stone*, by architect William Hall, which showcases a spectacular selection of structures from the past 5,000 years and highlights the beauty of this seemingly humble substance.

Among the featured buildings is Ethiopia’s famous 12<sup>th</sup> century rock-hewn church in Lalibela, Saint George’s.



The Church of Saint George in Lalibela, Ethiopia, is a 12<sup>th</sup>-century sunken, rock-hewn church that was built in a pit carved out of volcanic rock. It is still a place of pilgrimage for those in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and is a Unesco world heritage site.

Read more at <http://dailym.ai/39rnDJC>.

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