



# Ethiopian News

October 2020

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## CONNECT WITH US



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## PM Abiy issues statement on the current situation in Ethiopia

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# GERD: An affirmation of Ethiopia’s commitment to equitable and reasonable utilisation of the Abbay



# Prime Minister's Statement on the Current Situation on Ethiopia

*“Operations by federal defence forces underway in Northern Ethiopia have clear, limited and achievable objectives — to restore the rule of law & the constitutional order, and to safeguard the rights of Ethiopians to lead a peaceful life wherever they are in the country.”*

In the early hours of 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) attacked the Ethiopian National Defense Forces Base located in Tigray region and attempted to rob the northern command of artillery and military equipment. The Northern command has been stationed in the Tigray region for more than two decades in service and protection of the people of Tigray from any threats.

It is to be recalled that in the past few weeks the TPLF has been arming and organizing irregular militias outside of the constitutionally mandated structure. The attack on the Northern Command has been premised on TPLF viewing the Ethiopian National Defense Forces as a foreign army rather than an army that has been protecting the people of Tigray for more than twenty years. Resultantly, TPLF has chosen to wage war in Dalshah.

Over the past months of continued provocation and incitement for violence by TPLF, the Federal Government has maintained a policy of extreme patience and caution in order to avoid any harm that such provocations would cause the people of Tigray. In addition to Federal government provocation, the TPLF through Almeda Plc – a textiles manufacturing company based in the region – have been manufacturing military outfits resembling that of the Eritrean National Defense Forces, to implicate the Eritrean government in false claims of aggression against the people of Tigray.

While the Federal government has used all means to thwart a military engagement against the TPLF, a war however cannot be prevented only on the goodwill and decision of one side, but on the mutual choice for peace by both parties. The last red line has been crossed with this morning's attacks and the Federal government is therefore forced into a military confrontation.

The Ethiopian National Defense Forces, under the direction of a Command Post, have been ordered to carry out their mission to save the country and the region from spiralling into instability.

The Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, calls upon the Ethiopian people to remain calm, to be vigilant in the face of possible harassment, and to stand by our National Defense Forces in this critical time.

## ...State of Emergency Declared in Tigray

In its 21<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary Session held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, the Council of Ministers declared a six-month state of emergency throughout the National State of Tigray, in accordance with article 93(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The Council of Ministers has decreed the state of emergency:

- recognizing the constitutional responsibility of the state to maintain the country's peace, the safety and security of its citizens and to prevent acts that may lead the country to further unrest and instability;
- recognizing that illegal and violent activities within the National Regional State of Tigray are endangering the constitution and constitutional order, public peace and security, specially threatening the country's sovereignty, seriously impeding the Federal Government from discharging its constitutional responsibility in the Region, violating decisions of the House of Federation, and
- understanding that this situation has reached a level where it cannot be prevented and controlled through the regular law enforcement mechanism;

A State of Emergency Task Force to be led by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and composed of representatives from pertinent institutions, accountable to the Prime Minister, has been established through the State of Emergency decree.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November, The House of Peoples Representatives (HPR) unanimously approved the State of Emergency.

## Prime Minister Abiy at the FT Africa Summit

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed delivered an opening keynote address at this year's Financial Times (FT) Africa Summit on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

In his address, the PM said the theme of the Summit, "*Getting Africa back to Business*" following the COVID-19 pandemic was a timely and pressing theme.



In his remarks, the Prime Minister focused on three major and interrelated considerations:

First, he said, "we need a renewed approach to our systems of governance that is rooted in the politics of principled pragmatism, which recognizes that complex challenges have no easy solutions...it requires collective efforts—as we say in Ethiopia—*Medemer*, based on deep and principled cooperation."

"A good part of the credit for Africa's relatively effective response to COVID-19 lies in the recognition that the solutions to collective challenges must come from many places, with everyone working together."

"For example, in Ethiopia, our collaboration with the Jack Ma Foundation to distribute medical supplies to every African country soon after the outbreak of the pandemic through our national carrier Ethiopian Airlines, was motivated by the recognition that the pandemic was a collective challenge that called for shared responsibility. To survive, we had to work together, not against one another. And that is what we did."

"Together with other African leaders, we collectively championed the cause for debt relief, for increased financing of the World Health Organization, and coordination in the search for vaccines and treatments. We are determined to continue on this course until the virus is defeated."

Second, the Prime Minister said, "we need to build our capacity for resilience by investing in our productive capacity."

The third priority is the need to invest in our overstrained healthcare system and to extend more healthcare to the most vulnerable people who live in extreme poverty. This pandemic has made clear the need for additional investments in personnel, equipment and facilities. In Ethiopia, in a typical year what we spend servicing our external debt is twice the size of our annual health budget.

Healthcare has been our single most important priority this year, with our spending in healthcare rising 46% on last year, making it the fourth largest sector in terms of budget spending.

The PM concluded with the improving investment opportunities in Ethiopia, as revised investment laws have opened Ethiopia's markets to investors in telecommunications, logistics, energy and other industries.

Tourism projects will "no doubt make Ethiopia an attractive tourist destination in the years to come. Invest in Ethiopia, help us make these riches accessible, so the rest of humanity can come and have a world-class experience in Ethiopia", the Prime Minister said."

The Summit, held virtually for the first time, also featured two other Ethiopians – Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Ethiopia's former Health and Foreign Minister, and the current WHO Director-General, who also delivered a keynote address; and Samrawit Fikru, CEO of RIDE (Hybrid Designs), who took part in the Doing Business in Africa session.



# Ambassador Teferi reaffirms Ethiopia's claim to Maqdala treasures at the V&A



On 29<sup>th</sup> October, Ambassador Teferi visited the world-renowned Victoria and Albert Museum, and met the Museum's Director, Dr Tristram Hunt.



The V&A (and other UK national collections) houses a number of priceless treasures seized by the British Army at the Battle of Maqdala in 1868.

Ambassador Teferi and Dr Hunt engaged in a productive discussion on how best to revitalise the Government of Ethiopia's claim to the Maqdala treasures.

**“I am here to thank and appreciate the V&A for the remarkable manner in which it continues to look after the Maqdala treasures, and to repeat and underline my Government's fervid claim to the Maqdala treasures.”**

Ambassador Teferi Melesse Desta

Dr Hunt thanked the Ambassador for his visit, and expressed the "V&A's readiness to revamp its working relations with the Ethiopian Embassy", offering to explore a new bilateral proposal for future partnership.

Later, in a social media post, Dr Hunt said, "Great honour to host H.E. Ambassador Teferi at the V&A to discuss Maqdala collection and how we can work together to ensure these artefacts can in the future be seen in Ethiopia."

### **...V&A committed to further consultations on return of Maqdala artefacts**

Spurred by the exemplary relations between Ethiopia and the UK, the Embassy has been engaging proactively with the V&A since 2018, as part of efforts to explore avenues for cooperation.

In April 2018, to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events at Maqdala, the V&A launched a year-long display of 20 rare Maqdala artefacts and expressed its support of a long-term loan request to Ethiopia of the artefacts.

A year later in March 2019, Her Excellency Dr Hirut Kassaw, Ethiopia's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sport, made her debut visit to the United Kingdom where she visited cultural institutions and museums, including the V&A.



The Minister met Dr Hunt and his team, to continue discussions on the return of Maqdala artefacts. Dr Hunt on the occasion expressed the sincere desire of the Museum to see these artefacts on display in Ethiopia soon, but noted, with regret, that the biggest obstacle to fully returning them was the present status of the law in the UK which prohibits restitution.

Dr Hunt, however, committed to continuing consultations with the Minister, her team and the Embassy going forward on the restitution issue.

### **...museums must start telling a more honest story about provenance, V&A deputy director**

In related news, while speaking at the Cheltenham Literature Festival earlier in October about the return of the treasures, Tim Reeve, the deputy director of the V&A, said that museums must start telling a more honest story about provenance.

**“There is no dispute about whether or not they were borrowed; they were looted and that’s a story we have tried to tell very openly and very honestly at the V&A.”**

Tim Reeve

“Provenance is a big area for museums to invest in researching where these objects come from and how they came to be in these national collections, being able to tell a much more rounded, holistic, accurate and honest story about those objects.”

Reeve said a long-term loan was being discussed as an initial step to returning the treasures, given the V&A and other national museums were forbidden in UK law to simply return items in perpetuity.

“We are in very close discussions with the Ethiopian embassy about those artefacts and how they might in due course find their way back to Ethiopia,” he said.

“A long loan of those objects as a sort of an initial step is the kind of thing we want to discuss if the right kind of conditions are there and they are in agreement with the Ethiopian embassy.”

“The next step is exactly as we’re doing with Maqdala which is to try and work out a way forward, a long-term solution for those objects.”



# Blue plaque at former residence of Emperor Haile Selassie unveiled in Wimbledon

A Blue Heritage Plaque was unveiled at the former Parkside residence of Emperor Haile Selassie I on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, in commemoration of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his coronation.

The private installation ceremony was attended by guests including the Emperor's grandson, Prince Michael Mekonnen, Ambassador Teferi, the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Sally Kenny and Ras Tinnish.



The event was organised by the Nubian Jak Community Trust, with support from the Ethiopian World Federation Incorporated Local 3 Negast.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1930, the Emperor and his wife Empress Menen Asfaw, were crowned Emperor and Empress of Ethiopia. Six years later the emperor and his family were accommodated as esteemed guests at a stately house in Wimbledon, owned by the chemical metallurgist Dr Richard Seligman and his wife Hilda.

The Parkside address was a temporary refuge for the royal family, while they were exiled in Britain after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia 8 months earlier. The invasion caused international condemnation, and Hilda Seligman along with a group of supporters, including the former

suffragette, Sylvia Pankhurst, were particularly vociferous in campaigning against Britain's soft pre-WWII stance against the fascist dictator Mussolini. Hilda would later memorialise the emperor's stay at Parkside by sculpting a bust of him.

On the occasion, Ambassador Teferi thanked the organisers and reminded invited guests of the former Emperor's sense of appreciation and gratitude that he had demonstrated by donating his 2-acre mansion (Fairfield House) to Bath and North East Somerset Council, to be used for the benefit of the elderly.



The plaque was unveiled to the tune of the Ethiopian National Anthem.

"It is a source of even greater satisfaction to witness that the unveiling of the Blue Plaque comes at a time when UK-Ethiopia relations are growing in leaps and bounds," the Ambassador said.

The Mayor of Merton expressed her delight to be present, while Prince Michael Mekonnen highlighted the Emperor's contribution to abolish slavery in Ethiopia as well as his commitment to pan-Africanism.

# Addis Fine Art reopens in South Kensington

Ambassador Teferi was among the first to visit Addis Fine Art's new permanent space in South Kensington's Cromwell Place.

Ambassador Teferi, accompanied by Ethio-British poet Lemn Sissay, was welcomed by Addis Fine Art's Co-Founder Rakeb Sile.



Ambassador Teferi applauded Addis Fine Art for their hard work and efforts in showcasing Ethiopian Contemporary Art and culture to a global audience and vowed to work with them going forward to promote Ethiopian art in the UK.

Addis Fine Art relaunched at Cromwell Place with an exhibition of 10 new paintings by Ethiopian modernist, Tadesse Mesfin.



*"Pillars of Life"* is Tadesse's first-ever European solo show and pays homage to women who work as small-holder vendors in markets across Ethiopia, across Ethiopia, celebrating their importance within the social and cultural framework of Ethiopian life.

"The markets I encountered were very sociable places. People from across every cultural and

religious group could be found shopping and mingling at these weekly bazaars. Every time I visited, I was overwhelmed by the colours, the smells, the heat, the beautiful fruits on sale," Tadesse said.



Pillars of Life: Saturday Market VI (2020)

**"I wanted to create works which uplifted the story and lives of the women who worked as traders. They take pride in what they do, and I felt their beauty and spirit radiating onto me. I did not want to create works that focused on the hardship in which they lived, I wanted to celebrate them."**

Founded in 2016 by Rakeb Sile and Mesai Haileleul, Addis Fine Art is a pioneering gallery based in Addis Ababa and London.

Listed as one of the "Most Important Young Galleries in the World" (Artsy 2019), it is the very first local white cube space and international



platform based in Ethiopia. The gallery focuses on highlighting modern and contemporary fine art from the Horn of Africa region and its Diaspora.

For more information about Addis Fine Art, visit: <https://bit.ly/AFaxCromwellPlace>. Due to the current national lockdown, 'Pillars of Life' has been temporarily closed from 4<sup>th</sup> November and will reopen in December after the lockdown.

A video of the Embassy's visit to Addis Fine Art will be available on our YouTube page soon. Subscribe to our channel at: [www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK](http://www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK).

### ...Ethiopia at the 1-54 African Art Fair

On 9<sup>th</sup> October, Ambassador Teferi visited the annual 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London, where Addis Fine Art was showcasing works by artists from Ethiopia.

1-54 is the leading international art fair dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora.



This was the fifth time the gallery exhibited at the Fair, presenting new works by Addis Gezehagn, Ermias Kifleyesus, Tsedaye Makonnen and Tesfaye Urgessa.

## Northwood African Education Foundation launch online art auction in aid of St George's

The Northwood African Education Foundation (NAEF) - a charity which has built and runs St. George's, a school offering free education to disadvantaged children in Gondar, Ethiopia - has launched an online art auction in aid of the school.

The online auction will run from 2<sup>nd</sup> November, for four weeks, until 3<sup>rd</sup> December, and will feature original art works from a host of prominent artists.

The Executive Director of NAEF, Ms Evrim Maitland said: "While we cannot come together in a physical sense due to current restrictions, we hope you can appreciate the beauty and emotional power within the visual forms created by the artists from the comfort of your own homes. With over 40 works of art on display from exquisite oils and watercolours, photography and sculpture, still life, figurative and abstract we hope there is something to interest everyone."

Included in the auction is an original drawing by the world renowned, Turner Prize winning artist, Sir Antony Gormley.

For further information about the auction, visit [www.givergy.uk/NAEF](http://www.givergy.uk/NAEF).

### ...plans to expand reach

Meanwhile, in October, Ambassador Teferi held introductory discussions with Sir Malcolm and Lady Colquhoun, founders of the Northwood African Education Foundation (NAEF).





On the occasion, Evrim Maitland, the charity's Executive Director, briefed the Ambassador on their work in Ethiopia. Launched in 2014, St. George's currently provides free education to around 400 children in Gondar and by 2025, they hope to expand their reach to 750 children.

Ambassador Teferi thanked the charity's Trustees and reaffirmed the Embassy's commitment to continue working with them in order to add value to Ethiopia's education sector.

For more information about NAEF, visit their website at <https://www.naef.uk.com>.

### **Ambassador Teferi meets renowned BBC Broadcaster, Zeinab Badawi**

On 21<sup>st</sup> October, Ambassador Teferi met with renowned BBC News broadcaster, Zeinab Badawi.

The two exchanged views on issues of mutual interest including Ethiopian and African history, climate change, and tourism.



The Ambassador provided a broad overview on the current situation in Ethiopia including the reform process under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Green Legacy campaign, which aims to plant 20 billion trees by 2025, the upcoming Ethiopian elections, impacts of COVID-19, regional issues, and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Zeinab on her part welcomed the Ambassador's commitment to presenting a more authentic and inclusive narrative of all countries in Africa.

### **Embassy hosts virtual #DineForEthiopia campaign**

From 28<sup>th</sup> October–1<sup>st</sup> November, the Embassy hosted a virtual campaign to galvanise support for the Dine For Ethiopia projects in Gorgora, Wonchi and Koysa, inviting members of the Diaspora and friends of Ethiopia to be part of Ethiopia's journey towards prosperity and transformation.



Building on the successes of the Unity Park, Sheger Riverside and Entoto Park projects in the capital, the Dine for Ethiopia initiative was officially launched earlier in the summer with the vision to develop three new world-class tourist sites in Ethiopia's regions.



A national legacy resource mobilisation initiative was launched to raise 3 billion Birr within two months. The new sites will solidify Ethiopia's place as a rising star within global tourism.

## KOYSHA

Located in the Southern region of Ethiopia is blessed with lush hills and dense forests with a variety of climatic and topographical features, and is host to abundant wildlife.



Cool highlands, temperate plains, refreshing volcanic crater lakes and rejuvenating hot springs make Koyscha an ideal site for tourists.

## WENCHI

Home to a series of crater lakes, WENCHI, is an oasis in the heart of the Oromia region.



Birthered by volcanic eruptions along the Rift Valley, hot springs, rivers and waterfalls cut through the land, creating a rare paradise on earth.

## GORGORA

On the northern shores of Ethiopia's largest lake, Gorgora, a former capital of Ethiopia is an undiscovered gem. Close to Gondar, it combines medieval history with the heavenly Lake Tana, with its ancient monasteries, lakeside relaxation and endemic wildlife.



### These projects will:

- create green local jobs
- mobilise the service sector
- generate foreign and domestic currency for communities, and
- increase Ethiopia's share in global tourism

Embassy staff each pledged a month of their salary to the support the initiative and the diaspora members of the Ethiopian Diaspora have so far raised \$283,378 for the 'Dine for Ethiopia' projects.

PM Abiy said "we will invite 10 of the Ethiopian diaspora communities who responded to this national call to the 'Dine for Ethiopia' programme in mid-November by covering all their expenses." The 10 winners will be selected in a random draw.

**"It takes a daring few to reach a tipping point in achieving a desired positive result. The brave few that take a leap of faith without a guarantee of the outcome."**

H.E Dr Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia

**TOGETHER FOR A BETTER ETHIOPIA!**



## DIASPORA CORNER

### Embassy launches weekly briefings by the Ambassador

To update the Diaspora on the Embassy's activities and engagements, the Embassy has launched an online video briefing.

Now in its third week, the briefings provide an insight into the Embassy's key engagements with the Diaspora, development partners and friends of Ethiopia, as well as highlighting important news updates that affect Ethiopia. The weekly briefings always include a message from the Ambassador.

The videos go live every Sunday on our YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK](http://www.youtube.com/EthioEmbassyUK) and on Mondays on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/EthioEmbassyUK](http://www.facebook.com/EthioEmbassyUK). To catch up on previous briefings, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/622411741127339/3149195565185082>

### Ambassador continues engaging with the Diaspora

Ambassador Teferi has continued his engagements with the Ethiopian community in the UK. In October, he met with Ethio-British poet and broadcaster, Lemn Sissay MBE.



The two exchanged views on educational partnerships between the UK and Ethiopian institutions, the role of culture in promoting Ethiopia globally and the importance of the Diaspora in advancing Ethiopia's interests.

The Ambassador also met with the interim committee members of the Somali State Diaspora Association in the UK. Discussions focused on the current situation in Ethiopia, common strategic issues and how to actively engage in regional and national development efforts in Ethiopia.



Members of the group pledged their unwavering support to the ongoing reforms in Ethiopia and the achievements so far.

Ambassador Teferi underlined the important role of the diaspora and asked members to strengthen the community's engagement in the socio-economic development of the region and the country.

The Ambassador also met with other diaspora groups including executive committee members of the Ethiopian Isaaq Forum; senior members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, St Mary Debre Tsion, London (Save St Mary of Debre Tsion Group); the Iqraa Foundation - a UK-based non-profit organisation working for the betterment of Ethiopian Muslims; senior members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) for the Archdiocese of Great Britain and the Island of Ireland; and the Ethiopian Association of the United Kingdom.

### ...Ethiopians unite for peace

On 10<sup>th</sup> October, a "Grand European Virtual Rally for Peace and Stability in Ethiopia" organized by the Ethiopian Association UK and the Council of Ethiopian Diaspora for Action, took place.



The virtual rally was held under the theme, "Ethiopia *Shall Continue*."

In her opening remarks, the Minister of Peace, H.E. Muferihat Kamil Ahmed thanked all those involved in organising the rally and underlined that "the reform ventures that we have embarked on will transform Ethiopia into a new chapter." She called on the Diaspora to continue their support of the

peace, development and democratisation process of Ethiopia.

Ambassador Teferi stressed the importance of supporting the ongoing reforms in Ethiopia, which are key to ensuring the country's prosperity and urged the Diaspora community to extend support to Ethiopia's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, GERD and 'Dine for Nation' projects.

## **COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE**

### **...cases surge past 90,000**

As of 6<sup>th</sup> November, Ethiopia has reported 98,746 cases with 58,103 recoveries and 1,512 fatalities.

1,498,360 tests have been conducted, including nearly 190,000 samples collected and tested as part of a nation-wide Community-Based Activities and Testing campaign (ComBAT) in September.

Ethiopia is the fourth highest case country in Africa after South Africa, Morocco and Egypt.

### **...safe re-opening of schools**

Ethiopia began gradually re-opening schools from 19<sup>th</sup> October after more than seven months due to the pandemic, and has put in place prevention protocols for schools to strictly follow and monitor.

The schools reopened in stages with students in rural districts returning to classes first.

Addis Ababa began opening schools from 26<sup>th</sup> October, starting with grades 8 and 12. Zelalem Muleta, head of Addis Ababa education bureau, said other grades will return from 9<sup>th</sup> November.

The construction of an additional 2,300 classrooms is currently underway to reduce class sizes to 25 and for one student per seat arrangement, he said.

School-based health centres will also be established in 513 schools in Addis Ababa and a total of 2,052 health experts will be deployed.

For the remainder of the country the aim is to reopen all primary and secondary schools by mid-November.

The Minister of Health said "the current reality is that COVID-19 will be here for some time. Decisions had to be made in light of this. We cannot keep children out of school any longer."

The Ministry has started training leaders, professionals and parents in safe school re-openings. The first training was delivered on 14<sup>th</sup> October in Adama city.

\$25 million is needed to support safe school re-opening. Essential supplies are needed to keep schools safe and operational during the pandemic, including masks, water supply, thermometers, detergents for cleaning, learning materials and teacher training support. The support requested will target the most vulnerable children from IDP settings, hosting communities, IDP returnees and migrants returning from other countries.

Remote learning through radio and TV will continue being rolled out since children will not be able to attend school daily due to space limitations.



### **...50 Million Facemasks to be distributed to schools**

The Ministry of Education said it will distribute 50 million facemasks to 46,000 primary and secondary schools across the country as part of efforts to resume classes with the necessary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. State Minister Nebil Mehid said that an additional 500,000 facemasks will also be distributed to teachers.

Preparations are also underway to distribute COVID-19 testing thermometers to regional states to provide to all schools.

### **...250,000 test kits produced in newly-inaugurated Ethiopian factory**

A recently inaugurated Chinese-built factory – BGI Ethiopia - has supplied the first 250,000 COVID-19 test kits to the Ethiopian Public Health Institute.

The factory, at Bole Lemi industrial park on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, was inaugurated in September 2020 and will save much-needed foreign currency that the Ethiopian government spends on importing test kits.

The COVID-19 test kit factory, established as a joint venture between the Ethiopian government and a Chinese private firm, will produce 10 million test kits annually, when at full capacity. It is hoped that the factory will soon start exporting to other neighbouring countries.

### **...COVID-19 National Cohort Study launched**

A one-year COVID-19 National Cohort Study that involves 45 scientists from local universities, international research institutes and foreign universities has been launched at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPI).

EPI Director-General Dr Ebba Abate told journalists that the study, costing over 90 million Birr, will help the country's policy decision regarding the management, spread and control of coronavirus.

Virus Research Director Saro Abdulahi said the studies are similar to those in China and Italy, and provide information on the level of coronavirus in the country, so methods of prevention can be assessed.

Severity of the disease in high-risk groups, suppression of symptoms among COVID-19 patients due to medication and the use of herbal remedies as prophylaxis to prevent COVID-19, will also be assessed, the coordinator added. The socio-economic and psychological impacts of the disease and its impact on pregnancy and children are other objectives of the study.

### **...Ethiopia celebrates Global Handwashing Day**

On 15<sup>th</sup> October, Ethiopia joined the rest of the world in observing Global Handwashing Day, under the theme "I wash my hands properly to save lives," aligning with the recently launched global initiative led by WHO and UNICEF – Hand Hygiene for All.

Whole communities will scale up hand hygiene practices through increased political leadership, a stronger enabling environment, and robust supply and demand of hand hygiene facilities and supplies. The pandemic provides an important reminder that hand hygiene is a fundamental component of health and safety.

"Hand washing is a simple, cost effective and yet a very impactful intervention effective way to reduce the communicable disease burden, under-5 mortality, health facility infection and antibiotics resistance," said Dr Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health.

In Ethiopia, it is estimated that 92% (about 100 million) of the population lack access to basic handwashing facilities (UNICEF/WHO JMP, 2019), about 80% of whom live in rural settings and are among the most vulnerable groups, including families living in informal settlements, migrant and refugee camps, and in areas of active conflict – and more than half are children.

The Ministry of Health together with UNICEF and WHO is preparing a long-term country roadmap to ensure hand hygiene practices are sustained beyond Global Handwashing Day.

## LOCAL NEWS

# PM Abiy responds to Trump's comments on the GERD

*The GERD is an affirmation of Ethiopia's commitment to equitable and reasonable utilisation of the Abbay River*

During a televised announcement confirming that Sudan and Israel had normalised relations on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, President Trump suggested that "They'll [Egypt] blow up that dam [Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam], and they have to do something...They should have stopped it long before it was started."



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks on the phone with leaders of Israel and Sudan in the Oval Office

In the call, President Trump also reiterated that he is holding up U.S. assistance to Ethiopia to pressure the Ethiopian government to agree to his administration's preferred deal.

In a statement released shortly after President Trump's remarks, the Prime Minister's Office said, Ethiopia "will not cave in to aggressions of any kind."

The statement goes on to say:

"From its very inception, the GERD has been an attempt to answer what has been our generation's quest for an equitable and reasonable utilisation of the Abbay and other rivers contributing to Nile from Ethiopia. 85% of the Nile flow originates from Ethiopia. It is an inflection point where a nation and its proud people stopped lamenting the past and toiled to achieve what once seemed impossible. A great milestone was reached last August 2020 when the first phase of the water filling was completed before the end of Ethiopia's winter rainy season."

"Parallel to this construction work, Ethiopia has expressed its abiding commitment to cooperation on the Nile, based on mutual trust and the principles of equitable and reasonable utilization of the River. The negotiation with the lower riparian states has shown significant progress since the AU was seized of the matter, a manifestation of Africa's capability to respond to its own problems. Nonetheless, belligerent threats to have Ethiopia succumb to unfair terms still abound but affronts to Ethiopian sovereignty are misguided, unproductive, and clear violations of international law."

**As a developing nation, Ethiopia may be confronted with poverty, but we are rich with history, patriotic citizens whose commitment to defend their country's sovereignty is unparalleled and an ambition and a well-articulated plan for prosperity. Ethiopia will not cave in to aggressions of any kind, nor do we give recognition to a right that is entirely based on colonial treaties.**

We still wish to reiterate our commitment to a peaceful resolution of the GERD matter based on cooperation, non-interference, mutual trust and the principle of equitable and reasonable utilisation.

### ...US Ambassador to Ethiopia summoned

On 24<sup>th</sup> October, H.E. Gedu Andargachew, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs summoned the US Ambassador H.E. Mike Raynor to seek clarifications on the remarks made by President Trump regarding the GERD.





Minister Gedu underscored that President Trump’s statement on the GERD and the negotiation process was misleading and wrong, as the GERD does not stop the flow of the Nile waters.

Minister Gedu added that:

**“the incitement of war between Ethiopia and Egypt from a sitting US president neither reflects the longstanding partnership and strategic alliance between Ethiopia and the United States nor is acceptable in International Law governing interstate relations.”**

“Ethiopia has never, and will not in the future, succumb to threats to its sovereignty and will be committed to continue the trilateral negotiations under the framework of the African Union,” the Minister added.

### **...EU support for the negotiation process**

A statement released by the High Representative, Josep Borrell, said: “Over 250 million citizens of the Blue Nile Basin stand to benefit from a predictable agreement based on a negotiated arrangement for the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and are expecting investments in water security, irrigation, agricultural production and electricity generation.”

“An agreement on the filling of the GERD is within the reach of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. Now is the time for action and not for increasing tensions. The efforts of South Africa, current Chair of the African Union, to bring the parties to a negotiated solution have the full support of the European Union which looks forward to the imminent resumption and successful conclusion of the talks.”

### **...Resumption of trilateral negotiations**

The trilateral negotiations on the filling and operation of the GERD resumed on 27<sup>th</sup> October, when a virtual meeting was held between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Water Affairs of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, under the chairmanship of the African Union.



Resumption of the talks follows extensive consultations with the Heads of State of the GERD negotiation parties, which include Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, the President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi; and Sudan Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chair of the African Union, welcomed the commitment by the parties to pursue negotiations guided by the spirit of cooperation, goodwill and compromise, with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November, a week-long negotiation was taking place between the three countries and representatives from the African Union, the European Union and World Bank.

### **...GERD 76% complete**

The Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) said that the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project is 76.35% complete.

Briefing journalists, Dr Seleshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy said performance of the project increased by 2.5% to 76.35% in the first quarter owing to efforts made to enable the dam to start generating power with two turbines, which will begin generating power this fiscal year (2020/2021).

## **Koysha Hydropower Project to be completed in three years**

The Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) said the construction of Koysha hydropower project will be completed in three years.

With 2,160MW generating capacity, Koysha will be the second largest hydropower project in Ethiopia, after the GERD. Koysha, which is under construction on the Omo River, has reached 39%.

Dr Seleshi said more works are underway to complete the project in three years to achieve Ethiopia's plan to reach universal access to electricity by 2025. More than 65% of Ethiopians do not have access to electricity.

## **UK pledges continued support to Ethiopia's education sector**

Ethiopia's Minister of Education, Dr Getahun Mekuria, held a video conference meeting with Baroness Sugg, UK's Minister for Foreign Development Affairs and Special Envoy for Girls' Education.



During the meeting, Baroness Sugg pledged the UK's continued support to inclusive education in Ethiopia, particularly for girls in rural areas and at refugee camps.

Dr Getahun said works are underway to launch adult education in a new system and urged the UK Government to support the special English language course that Ethiopia has been providing for regular students of grades 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to improve their language capacity.

The UK is the largest donor to Ethiopia's education sector.

## **Election Board proposes holding elections in May or June 2021**

The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) has proposed holding the sixth general elections in late May or early June 2021. The government postponed the elections, which were scheduled to take place in August 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The board's remarks came on 30<sup>th</sup> October during a consultative meeting organised for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media to discuss precautionary measures against COVID-19 during voting.

The board requested an additional 1.1 billion birr (approximately £22 million) for COVID-19 precautionary measures and deployment of more manpower at polling centres.

The board also proposed:

- providing training for poll workers from mid-December to mid-January
- conducting voters' registration from mid-January to the third week of February.
- registering candidates beginning from early to mid-February, and
- holding election campaign from mid-February till the election's last week

### **...a free and fair election**

In a speech to a joint session of both houses of parliament, President Sahle-Work Zewde vowed that the upcoming election will be free, fair and credible, and that the government would ensure peace, stability and security.

The president said, "We managed to restructure the country's electoral board in a way it can function independently."



## **Ethiopia's economy grows by 6.1% despite COVID-19 pandemic**

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addressed the 6<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the House of Peoples' Representatives (HPR) in the final week of October 2020. The session approved a motion in support of the 2020/21 government's plan presented by President Sahle-Work Zewde during the joint session of the two Houses early in October.

In his address, Prime Minister Abiy described 2020 as a tough year which severely affected the global economy, disrupting the normal way of life and communications as well as causing a rise in unemployment.



Despite these challenges, the Prime Minister said Ethiopia has managed to register 6.1% economic growth which, he says, is a result of the government's measures to save the economy from the severe effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contrary to the measures taken in many parts of the world and some parts of Africa, the Prime Minister added that "the practical realities and contexts in Ethiopia entail that we could not enforce lockdown in our country in a bid to stem the adverse effects of the pandemic." This he said, has helped save the economy. Ethiopia's measures taken in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, while at the same time putting in place efforts to save the economy, brought forth encouraging results.

In addition, the Prime Minister said encouraging results have been registered in terms of the concerted campaign on debt relief and loan restructuring. He also took note of the support from the Jack Ma Foundation dedicated to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the PM highlighted Ethiopia's leading role and its service as Africa's hub and of the commendable contributions of Ethiopian Airlines, which demonstrated its Pan-African commitment in distributing medical supplies and medical equipment to African nations.

The Prime Minister also said Ethiopia managed to register a record \$107.4 billion GDP and a per capita income of more than \$1,000 in the past Ethiopian year. "If we can sustain these growth trajectories over the coming years, we will be able to ensure Ethiopia's prosperity," he added.

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### **Ambassador Teferi meets new Ethiopia Trade Envoy, Lord Bates**

As part of his on-going engagements as the new Ethiopian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Ambassador Teferi officially met with the newly-appointed Trade Envoy to Ethiopia, Lord Bates. Discussions between the two focused on bilateral issues, trade and investment, and the need to further strengthen Ethio-UK relations.

Wishing him a fruitful tenure in his new role, Ambassador Teferi briefed Lord Bates on Ethiopia's investment climate, the new Home Grown Economic Reform and priority sectors for British investment.

Lord Bates said he looks forward to learning more about investment opportunities in Ethiopia, strengthening bilateral ties and increasing trade and investment between the two countries, adding that he looks forward to visiting the country as soon as possible.

Ambassador Teferi presented Lord Bates with an Ethiopian tie, which has imprints of the ancient Aksum Obelisk.



**“It is a great honour to have been appointed as the Prime Minister’s Trade Envoy to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world – Ethiopia”**

Lord Bates

Trade Envoys are British Parliamentarians appointed by the British Prime Minister to develop the bilateral trade and investment relationship with emerging countries with substantial trade and investment potential.

Lord Bates was previously Minister of State at the Department for International Development between October 2016 and July 2019 and a Minister of State at the Home Office from May 2015 until March 2016.

Ambassador Teferi thanked the Chamber and spoke on “Doing Business and Investing in Ethiopia”, highlighting the vast investment opportunities available in Ethiopia - in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, tourism, and infrastructure development.

**“Ethiopia is ready and open! I call upon UK businesses to focus on investment opportunities that Ethiopia and Africa are offering. Our doors are wide open.”**

~ Ambassador Teferi Melesse Desta



He also outlined the reforms spearheaded by Prime Minister Abiy's government as part of efforts to liberalise the economy and create a strong private sector and concluded by calling upon UK businesses to invest in Ethiopia and Africa, to create wealth and a brighter future for the people of the continent.

**...UK-East Africa trade and investment conference held**

Similarly, on 14<sup>th</sup> October, the Business Diplomacy Department took part in the Eastern Africa Association’s virtual conference for UK and Eastern African countries.

Ethiopia was represented by Mr Sehul Truesaw, Principal Advisor at the Ethiopian Investment Commission, who highlighted Ethiopia’s vast potential in trade and investment for the UK, especially after Brexit. The Ethiopian Embassy in London, he said, is open and ready to assist the business community.

**Ambassador Teferi takes part in UK-Africa Investment Conference**



On 7<sup>th</sup> October, Ambassador Teferi was a panellist at the African Business Chamber's **UK-Africa Trade**

**and Investment Conference**, which was held under the theme, *“Boosting Trade Linkages and Value Chains Between the UK and Africa – Unlocking and Capturing New Business Growth Opportunities.”*

Mr Truesaw provided an overview of Ethiopia's economic indicators and key features of the economy such as:

- the strategic location
- a business-friendly government with strong reform agenda
- ease of doing business
- major tariff concessions,
- the high potential consumer market due to increasing disposable income

To discover the many opportunities for your business in Ethiopia, please visit our website at [www.ethioembassy.org.uk/trade-investment](http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/trade-investment) and book an appointment with our Business Team.

## **Phase I of Bahir Dar Industrial Park inaugurated**

Prime Minister Abiy inaugurated the Bahir Dar Industry Park on 7<sup>th</sup> October. The first phase of the development lies on 75 hectares of land with 8 active sheds.

The Park, constructed with an outlay of more than \$53million, will catalyse Bahir Dar's endeavours and create sustainable jobs for young people - more than 10,000 jobs once fully operational.

Prime Minister Abiy said, "the expansion of such parks will facilitate our industrial development goals together with the enabling environment we are working to create."

### **...Dire Dawa Industrial Park inaugurated**

In October, Prime Minister Abiy also inaugurated the Dire Dawa Industrial Park.

Constructed with an outlay of \$150 million, it has so far created jobs for around 1,000 people in its garment and textile factories within four companies in fifteen working sheds.

Once fully operational it will offer 20,000 additional jobs.

### **...Aim to become a light manufacturing hub and lower-middle-income economy**

Ethiopia has been working to expand industrial parks as part of its efforts to make the country a light manufacturing hub and lower-middle-income economy.

It has so far constructed 13 industrial parks in several parts of the country where Textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment are being manufactured.

## **Landmark fund launched to protect textile industry jobs**

The UK and Germany, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, have established a landmark \$6.5 million fund aimed at saving thousands of jobs in Ethiopia's textile and garment manufacturing industry, while helping to support the country's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Through the fund, textile factories in Ethiopia's industrial parks can apply for wage subsidies – similar to the furlough schemes operating in many countries and incentives to reward businesses that are able to adapt in response to COVID-19.

The partnership may further expand its reach through additional support in the coming months.

Ethiopia's textile and garment industry is a leading provider of jobs in the country's manufacturing sector.

Nigussu Tilahun, commissioner of Ethiopia's Jobs Creation Commission said: This facility and other similar programmes are crucial as they will support the factories being affected by the pandemic and help protect jobs in industrial parks, while slowing down the harsh economic impact."

The wage subsidy will cover a portion of total employment costs and protect jobs, enable textile factories to keep running and support factories to build back better.



## TRAVEL AND TOURISM



### COVID-19: Entry Requirements for Travellers to Ethiopia

Amid the on-going global coronavirus pandemic, new health guidelines have been put in place for all travellers entering Ethiopia.

As per Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Directive 30/2020 issued for the *“Prevention and Control of the COVID-19 Pandemic”*:

- **All travellers**, over the age of ten, are required to **provide a certificate of negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test, taken no later than five days (120 hours) prior to arrival in Ethiopia**. After temperature and other possible COVID-19 symptoms have been checked by the Airport’s health control desk, travellers are required register their addresses with authorities and self-quarantine at home or at a hotel for seven days.
- Travellers showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be taken to one of the temporary government-designated isolation centres for further checks, in accordance with the COVID-19 medical manual prepared by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute.
- Any person who is positive with COVID-19 is prohibited from entering the country.
- **Short-stay transit passengers** will neither be allowed to leave the airport nor enter the city.
- Passengers transiting for more than 24 hours can opt to self-quarantine at a transit hotel designated by Ethiopian Airlines. During this period, transit passengers are not permitted to leave the hotel nor mix with the general public.
- Land border travellers with a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test, taken no later than five days (120 hours) prior to arrival in Ethiopia, not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will have their temperatures taken and are required to self-quarantine at home for seven days.
- Land border travellers with no COVID-19 RT-PCR test will be screened on arrival for any COVID-19 symptoms. If the traveller shows no symptoms, they will be required to self-quarantine at home for **fourteen days**. Travellers showing any symptoms of COVID-19 will be taken to one of the temporary government-designated isolation centres for further checks and follow-up care in accordance with the COVID-19 medical manual.

For detailed guidance, including information for Ethiopian returnees, please visit our website at <https://bit.ly/TravelUpdateET>.

## Ethiopian Airlines named Best African Airline

Ethiopian Airlines has won the 2020 Business Traveller Award for “Best African Airline”.

The award was announced on 27<sup>th</sup> October by the publishers of Business Traveller magazine, Panacea Media. The awards are voted for by readers of the magazine, based on a survey which took place from April to July 2020.



Ethiopian Airlines beat other leading African carriers, South African Airways, Royal Air Maroc and Kenya Airways.

Commenting on the award, Michael Yohannes, Ethiopian Airlines, UK and Ireland Director said:

**“It has been a tough year for all aviation and to end the year with an award gives us a great sense of pride in what we have achieved”.**

## ...Captain Kalkidan Becomes First Ethiopian Female Captain Of Airbus A350

Captain Kalkidan Girma has become the first Ethiopian female Captain of Airbus A350. Ethiopian Airlines congratulated Captain Kalkidan on her achievement. Prior to her current promotion, she was a Captain on the Boeing 737.

## Entoto Natural Park inaugurated

On 10<sup>th</sup> October, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated the landmark Entoto Natural Park on the northern outskirts of Addis Ababa.



The PM expressed his gratitude to those who have contributed to the construction of the park, which is part of the Beautifying Sheger Project, and took about one year to complete and is equipped with sport centres, restaurants, horse-riding, an artificial lake, among others.

Entoto Park has already provided employment opportunities for 463 local low-income mothers and will create employment opportunities for thousands of others once at full capacity.

**LONGING TO TAKE YOU  
TO YOUR DREAM DESTINATION!**





## Ride the Rift to re-energise Ethiopia's tourism industry

The 'Ride the Rift' charity bike ride is scheduled to take place in Ethiopia on 21<sup>st</sup> November to support those individuals and families working in tourism across Ethiopia who have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bike ride will start from the Afar border to Ankober Palace and is a collaborative effort by four Ethiopian tour operators – Tesfa Tours, Ethio Cycling Holidays, Simien Eco Tours and Dynasty Ethiopia Tours - who are keen to support this vital cause and encourage travellers to return to Ethiopia to re-energise the tourism industry.

The organisers are looking to raise 600,000 Birr for 60 families across the country and to have 60 participating cyclists.



In addition to supporting families, the ride will demonstrate that Ethiopia is open for travel once again and that the coming year will be an ideal time to visit some of the fascinating landscapes and historical sites that can be found across the country. It will motivate people to “travel out to help out”, giving employment to individuals and businesses across the country.

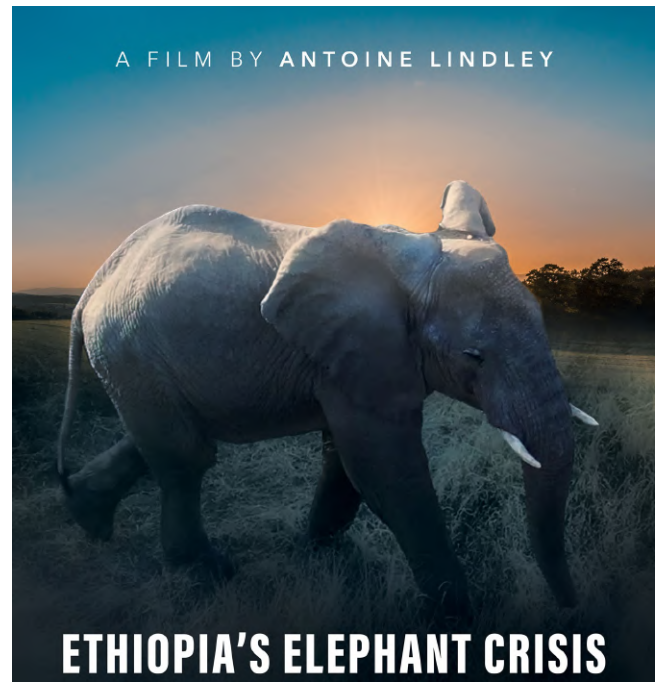
Tourism Ethiopia's CEO, Mr Sileshi Girma, who is also supporting the event, will take part in the ride and present awards at the post ride lunch at Ankober Lodge.

For more information about the bike ride, visit <https://bit.ly/3dYxOJs> or email [ridetherift2020@gmail.com](mailto:ridetherift2020@gmail.com).

## Wildlife Conservation Authority launches new film to save Ethiopia's elephants

The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) released a powerful documentary on 'Ethiopia's Elephant Crisis', as part of efforts to save its endangered elephants.

Since the 1980s, Ethiopia has lost a considerable amount of its elephants, which today are estimated to number less than 1,900.



In '*Ethiopia's Elephant Crisis*', award-winning filmmaker Antoine Lindley travels to some of the most remote and beautiful corners of Ethiopia to find the few surviving elephants, and to highlight the challenges confronting the brave conservationists struggling to protect them.



Antoine Lindley (centre) at the Chebera Churchura National Park with park staff during filming



**“I made this film to give a voice to Ethiopia’s endangered elephants...this film is a powerful visual tool that I hope will bring more awareness and solutions.”**

Antoine Lindley

The Elephant Protection Initiative’s (EPI) Regional Lead for the Horn of Africa, Greta Iori, said ‘from the southern border with Kenya to the northern border with Eritrea, this documentary provides a glimpse into the magnificent landscapes of our country, the devastating threats facing Ethiopia’s elephants, as well as the frontline heroes and community members protecting them, and risking their lives every day...we owe it to our children to save the last elephants’.

***“It is every Ethiopian’s responsibility to save wildlife”***

In October, Ambassador Teferi met with Ms Iori, who is of Ethiopian heritage. Discussions focused on wildlife conservation and sustainable development, ending illegal wildlife crime, human-wildlife conflict and the EPI’s activities in Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa region.



Ambassador Teferi commended the inspirational work Greta is doing in Ethiopia and vowed to work together with EPI and partners to further support Ethiopia’s wildlife conservation.

The EPI is an alliance of 21 African countries with common policies on elephant conservation. Ethiopia, as a founding member of the EPI in 2014, has a zero-tolerance policy towards poaching and illegal trafficking.

*‘Ethiopia’s Elephant Crisis’* will be officially launched later this year in Addis Ababa, but is already available online and free to view at [https://youtu.be/fighiaX\\_2UI](https://youtu.be/fighiaX_2UI). The film was made with the support of the UNDP and Global Environment Facility (GEF).



## SPORTS

### Letesenbet Gidey sets new women's 5,000m world record

On 7<sup>th</sup> October, Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey set a new women's 5,000m world record of 14 minutes 6.62 seconds in Valencia.



The 22-year-old lowered the previous mark of 14min 11.15 held by compatriot Tirunesh Dibaba since 2008 by over four seconds, a year after taking the 10,000m silver at the world athletics championships in Doha.

**“I'm happy...This has been a long-time dream. It is very big for me.”**

#### ...World Athletics Moment of the Month

On 31<sup>st</sup> October, World Athletics named Letesenbet Gidey's win at Valencia as October's "Moment of the Month".

The competition was based on nominations on Twitter by World Athletics, which saw Letesenbet's post getting more than 3,000 retweets to win Moment of the Month.

#### ...Female World Athlete of the Year nomination

Letesenbet Gidey is among nominees for the 2020 female World Athlete of the Year. The nominations were announced on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, marking the opening of the voting process, ahead of the World Athletics Awards 2020 to be held virtually on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December.

## ETHIOPIA IN THE NEWS

### Shura Kitata on what it took to beat Kipchoge in the London Marathon

Breakfast is often described as the most important meal of the day. So when BBC Sport asked London Marathon champion Shura Kitata what it takes to beat Eliud Kipchoge, the only man to ever run a marathon in under two hours, Kitata said a good breakfast!



Last year, Kitata finished fourth, later saying that he only had fruit for breakfast and was running on empty. This year, having learned from his mistake, he fuelled up before the race.

"I ate everything...I had soup, bread, eggs and yogurt – everything that I could to boost my energy and it helped me keep my energy up and I was able to win the battle."

**“I told myself that I will prove to the world that there is another champion and this feeling is what made me able to sprint to the end with full confidence and energy.”**

Shura Kitata

And the next aim for Kitata is simple - ending Ethiopia's two-decade drought in the Olympics' men's marathon.

"I will try to bring a gold medal for my country and also for my children to have as a memory - so they can one day say, 'my father was an Olympic medallist'."

Read more: <https://bbc.in/3j857uM>.



# Abebe Bikila wins marathon gold 40 days after appendicitis surgery



In October 1964, Tokyo hosted their first Olympic Games. To celebrate, Tokyo 2020 is highlighting some of the most incredible and historic moments that took place 56 years ago, among them is Abebe Bikila, the Ethiopian marathon runner who glided through the streets to claim gold.



Abebe Bikila breaks the tape as he crosses the finishing line to win the Men's Marathon race on 21 October 1964 during the Olympic Games at the National Stadium in Kasumigaoka, Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan.

## The background

Nobody outside of Ethiopia had heard of Abebe Bikila when he arrived at the Rome 1960 Olympic Games. He hadn't even been the first choice entrant for his country, who until that point had never won an Olympic gold medal.

In fact, in 1960 no athlete from an East African nation had won gold - and it seemed unlikely that Bikila, a soldier in the Ethiopian army and last-minute replacement for an injured teammate, would be the person to buck that trend.

Bikila had purchased new running shoes for the marathon in Rome that year, but having found they gave him blisters, decided to run - as he had many times in the plains of his home country - barefoot over the 26.2 mile course that wound around the streets of the Italian capital. But the marathon course was nothing like the softer ground of an athletics track or even the cushioned earth of a cross country race. Many of the streets the marathon runners would pass through that year

were cobbled and uneven, and the race took place at night - lit only by members of the Italian armed forces holding torches at the side of the roads.

But to the shock of the world, Bikila triumphed that evening in Rome, finishing the race in 2:15:16 and breaking the world record by a full eight seconds.

## The moment

By the time Tokyo 1964 was about to begin, everybody in the running world now knew who Bikila was. He was now among the favourites for gold, but Tokyo would prove to be a completely different prospect for the Ethiopian long-distance king.

For one, the weather in Tokyo was intimidating, with 90 per cent humidity. Something else that would have been noticed by anyone who had watched his race in Rome was that Bikila was wearing shoes.

But perhaps the most important difference for Bikila was the build-up to the event. Just 40 days prior to the marathon competition, he had been diagnosed with acute appendicitis, spending a week in hospital following an emergency appendectomy. But nothing would stop Bikila from making history that year in Tokyo.

In a gruelling race that took a devastating toll on many of the runners competing in it (of the 68 starters, 10 didn't make it to the finish line), Bikila was composure personified. Utilising his relaxed, highly efficient running style, the Ethiopian glided through the streets of Tokyo.

When he passed through the tape at the end of the race in a new Olympic record of 2:12:11.2, he looked like he had barely broken a sweat.

In a race where many of the competition collapsed across the finish line, Bikila celebrated by doing gymnastic exercises on his back at the edge of the track.





For the second time in as many Games, Bikila received Ethiopia's only gold medal - and with it became the only athlete to win two marathon gold medals.

Bikila returned home a hero...[and] the legend - and legacy - of East Africa's first Olympic gold medallist continues to live on today.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/Tokyo2020AbebeBikila>.

## My life in food: Romesh Ranganathan on Ethiopian cuisine, bizarre food experiences and his mum's top-secret spice blend



British comedian, Romesh Ranganathan, talks all things culinary, from falling in love with coconut sambal in Sri Lanka to why he will never take photographs of his dinner.



On Ethiopian food, he said:

"The vegan selection in Ethiopia is incredible. They have a fasting period where there's no meat, dairy or anything like that, so it's essentially vegan. It means every

restaurant has a fasting menu, and the food is amazing. The injera — oh my god. I love it, man. Wherever we went [filming for The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan], there was an incredible vegan meal available. I was really surprised.

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

## Ethiopia's top amazing places to visit

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Ethiopia, located at the horn of Africa, is a magical country that boasts the most World Heritage Sites (UNESCO), as compared to any other African country.

With its rich cultural and religious ancestries, natural exquisiteness, and archaeological pedigree, Ethiopia is a hidden gem that is often overlooked by many tourists. Here are some of the top places that you should visit while in Ethiopia.



### Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia and the fourth largest city in Africa. Sitting atop the Entoto mountains, Addis Ababa is a lively city with beautiful museums and orthodox churches that you can explore.

### Harar

Harar is among Ethiopia's most impressive historical sites. Harar reflects the long and colourful history of the country and is located in the East of Ethiopia. With its many fascinating sites, Harar is one of the prominent Muslim pilgrimage sites.

### Lalibela

Lalibela is a small town adjacent to eleven ancient churches that were built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. These churches were carved out of gigantic lumps of volcanic rock under the directive of King Lalibela. Being one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Lalibela is still a popular pilgrimage site for Christians.

### Danakil Depression

The Danakil depression is situated in northern Ethiopia bordering Eritrea and Djibouti. Danakil is

one of the lowest places (parts are over 100 meters below sea level) on earth, and it is also one of the hottest with an average of 94F. If you are not much worried about the temperatures, then this is a must-visit site.

Fondly referred to as the “land of thirteen months,” Ethiopia is a great tourist destination.

Read more: [http://bit.ly/VisitEthiopia\\_20](http://bit.ly/VisitEthiopia_20)

## Ethiopia further opens up sectors to diaspora and foreign nationals



As part of Ethiopia’s plan to liberalise its economy and boost investment, sectors that were once reserved for domestic investors are set to open up. The new regulation is an extension of the country's new investment proclamation, which came into effect earlier this year and offers an equal playing field to Ethiopian-born foreign nationals and foreign investors.

**“[There are] more opportunities for us as the economy opens up to invest our resources in our birth country.”**

Addis Alemayehu

### Diaspora contribution

In the last two years, the contribution via the diaspora in Ethiopia’s economy has shown a significant growth. Two commercial banks with an aggregate capital of \$400m are under formation by Ethiopian-born foreign nationals living abroad.

Annual remittance inflow also averaged \$5.5bn over the last years; a significant growth from the \$4bn average registered over five years before 2018.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/ETH-Diaspora-Invest>

## How the controversial Nile dam might fix Sudan's floods



Zeinab Mohammed Salih looks at what Sudan makes of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Unprecedented flooding in Sudan this year led to the deaths of more than 100 people and affected 875,000 others, with entire residential neighbourhoods destroyed while power and water supplies were disrupted when the River Nile recorded its highest level in living memory.

Some experts said that if the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, upstream on the Blue Nile tributary, had been fully operational, the effect on Sudan would have been less disastrous.

Salman Mohamed, a Sudanese expert on international water law and policy, says Egypt's Aswan dam shows how flood waters can be regulated effectively on The Nile.

“We lost people, and properties of billions of pounds, but look at Egypt - they haven't lost a single seedling because they normally keep the flood water in their high dam and we don't have one like that, so the Ethiopian dam could have saved all that,” he said. The dam will also enable Sudan's own dams to generate more electricity as well as offering cheap and clean electricity from Ethiopia, he added.

He says it will also allow for three growing seasons - at the moment crops are harvested around October or November - but if the flow is regulated, farmers will be able to plant and irrigate more often as in years of drought, the dam would ensure a supply.

Given that the UN says about 10 million people in Sudan are facing food shortages this year, [Mohamed] can only see the long-term benefits of the mega dam project.

Read more: <https://bbc.in/2JPRAfk>

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