Capital
THE PAPER THAT PROMOTES FREE ENTERPRISE
Year 28, No. 1444 Sunday August 9 , 2026 / Tel: +251-11 618 3253 | 11 661 0976 / Mob: +251-944 73 2300 / P.O. Box: 95/1110 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia / Price 100.00

NBE defends stance amid banks' liquidity concerns

By Muluken Yewondwossen

The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) is pushing back against calls for increased intervention in managing banks' liquidity challenges. The central bank asserts that commercial banks are responsible for their own financial management, while its role is limited to providing regulatory frameworks and liquidity instruments.

This debate has arisen following concerns from financial sector experts about growing liquidity pressures on banks. These pressures include sudden deposit withdrawals and increased competition for savings from non-bank financial institutions, such as Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs).

Some experts advocate for the central bank to expand its oversight to identify potential risks to banks' liquidity and implement preventive measures to safeguard financial system stability. They point to recent challenges faced by some

Fikadu Digafe, NBE Chief Economist and Vice Governor

Tesfaye Boru, former Global Bank of Ethiopia CEO

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Beyond borders: Why people keep leaving

The images have become painfully familiar: overcrowded boats drifting across the Mediterranean, exhausted migrants stranded at fortified borders, and grieving families waiting for news that too often never comes. After each tragedy, the response is predictable—calls for tighter border controls, tougher immigration laws and stronger enforcement.

But behind every headline lies a more uncomfortable truth: no wall, however high or technologically advanced, can eliminate the desperation that drives people from their homes.

The deaths of migrants attempting to reach Europe through Spain's North African border are not isolated accidents. They are symptoms of a global system in which life chances continue to be shaped less by talent or determination than by the accident of birthplace. Where a person is born still determines access to quality education, decent employment, personal security and economic opportunity.

Few countries understand this reality better than Ethiopia.

For decades, thousands of Ethiopians have undertaken dangerous journeys along the Eastern Route through Djibouti and across the Red Sea to the Gulf. Others travel through Sudan, Libya and the Mediterranean in search of opportunities in Europe. Many never reach their destination. Some perish in deserts or at sea. Others fall into the hands of traffickers or endure exploitation that rarely receives sustained international attention.

These journeys are rarely driven by adventure. They are driven by economic hardship, insecurity and the desire for a more dignified future.

Ethiopia has undertaken important economic reforms and made progress toward modernization. Yet high youth unemployment, inflation, limited formal-sector job creation and the continuing effects of conflict, displacement and climate-related shocks continue to shape the choices of young people.

For many, the prospect of building a stable life at home appears increasingly uncertain. Insecurity—whether caused by conflict, local violence or anxiety about the future—reinforces the belief that remaining may be more dangerous than leaving. Migration therefore becomes more than an economic decision. It becomes a survival strategy.

The wider Horn of Africa context adds to these pressures. Djibouti, a major transit point for migrants and a critical trade hub, illustrates the difficult choices facing developing economies. Large infrastructure projects have stimulated growth, but they have also contributed to debt burdens and placed pressure on governments' ability to expand social services and create sufficient employment.

Across the region, fiscal constraints limit the capacity of governments to meet the expectations of rapidly growing youth populations. Young people are told that the future belongs to them, yet many cannot find work, access affordable training or participate meaningfully in the formal economy.

Digital connectivity has also transformed expectations. Young Ethiopians can instantly see the educational opportunities, employment prospects and living standards available elsewhere. They are constantly exposed to images of a life that appears more secure and prosperous.

This creates a painful contradiction. The world encourages people to use legal channels to migrate, yet those channels are often narrow, expensive and difficult to access. Visa systems are restrictive, application procedures are lengthy, and lawful routes for study and employment remain limited.

When legal mobility becomes increasingly inaccessible, irregular migration becomes more attractive—not because it is safe, but because it appears to be the only option left.

Border management is legitimate and necessary. Every sovereign state has the right to secure its borders, regulate entry and combat human trafficking. But enforcement alone cannot solve what is fundamentally a crisis of inequality, insecurity and uneven development.

Stronger fences may redirect migration routes, but they rarely eliminate the forces driving migration. Instead, they often increase the power and profits of smugglers while making journeys more dangerous. When official routes close, migrants do not necessarily stop moving. They are pushed into more remote deserts, more dangerous seas and more exploitative arrangements.

A policy based almost entirely on deterrence risks treating migrants as the problem rather than recognizing the conditions that compel them to leave.

The question should not simply be: How do we stop people from crossing borders? It should also be: What has made leaving appear preferable to staying?

For Ethiopia, the long-term response must begin at home. The country needs sustained job creation, particularly in sectors capable of absorbing its growing youth population. Manufacturing, agriculture, digital services, tourism, logistics and renewable energy can all create employment if supported by stable policies, infrastructure and access to finance.

Entrepreneurship should also be treated as an economic strategy rather than a slogan. Young people need more than motivational speeches. They need affordable credit, reliable electricity, practical business training, predictable regulation and access to markets.

Vocational education must be linked directly to employment opportunities. Training young people for jobs that do not exist only deepens frustration. Technical colleges, employers and government institutions should work together to identify skills shortages and build programs that lead to real careers.

None of these measures will succeed without peace and accountable governance. Conflict destroys livelihoods, displaces families and diverts public resources away from development. It also creates the fear and uncertainty that make migration appear to be the safest available choice.

A young person who cannot predict whether a business will remain open, whether a job will survive or whether their community will remain secure will naturally look beyond the country's borders.

Ethiopia cannot confront this challenge alone. Wealthier countries that benefit from global trade, international labour and the movement of capital also have a responsibility to address the inequalities that fuel irregular migration.

Expanding legal labour mobility would be more effective than simply telling people to stay home. Seasonal work programs, transparent recruitment systems, student pathways and skills-based migration agreements could provide safer alternatives to smugglers.

Fairer trade and productive investment are equally important. Development assistance should focus not only on emergency relief but also on supporting industries, local businesses, infrastructure and institutions that create sustainable livelihoods.

The international community must also examine the way migration policies are designed. It is contradictory to demand that people migrate legally while steadily narrowing the legal routes available to them.

Migration debates often focus on fences, visas, patrols and deportations. These measures address visible symptoms, but not the causes.

As long as opportunity, security and hope remain so unevenly distributed across the world, people will continue to risk their lives in pursuit of a better future. No government can enforce away the desire for dignity.

The real challenge is not how high borders can be built, but how effectively governments can expand opportunity and security on both sides of them.

People leave when home no longer offers a credible future. The most effective migration policy, therefore, is not simply to make departure more difficult. It is to make staying more possible, more secure and more worthwhile.

By Rachel Marsden

COMMENT

Who benefits from the migrant chaos in Spain?

What happened in the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta last week was tragic for everyone involved. So let's make it a regular thing, the EU apparently decided – at least judging by its actions.

I'm not saying that anybody overtly wants migrants from all over Africa to routinely storm the borders of some far-flung part of the EU in an attempt to get a foothold on a shuttle from a migrant center into mainland Europe. In fact, Ursula von der Leyen has said that she wants more barriers and watchful eyes on the borders. By barriers, presumably she means walls or fences. And by eyes, she probably means nightclub-style bouncers with biceps the size of my thighs and not neighborhood block watch grannies. Not that she's going to say that. Although she should. If only to counter all the virtue signaling that Spain did that contributed to the problem in the first place.

All these new measures are supposed to keep migrants out of Europe. But at the same time, the EU is doing its usual routine of mitigating its common-sense measures with self-defeating idiocy. Because what better way to encourage Morocco or any other nation bordering the EU to fumble the migration situation at home than to give them even more financial incentive.

Because that's worked out well so far. How much EU taxpayer cash is actually needed under this racket for Morocco to do the job that it's being paid for? From 2014 to 2022, the EU paid Rabat €2.1 billion to stem migration to the EU, plus another €631 million in 2021/2022 alone. Losing total control – or pretending to – seems to be a convenient way to get a raise. It's like a lifeguard who lets everyone drown and then goes and asks for a performance bonus. Or a security company that gets paid more for a spike in break-ins. Or a firefighter who bills extra for every house that catches fire on their watch.

Türkiye already did this hostage routine with Brussels. In the wake of conflicts in Syria and Libya, the EU paid Ankara to hold back migrants from Europe's borders. And what do you know – it never turned out to be enough. The tsunami seemed to ebb and flow in rhythm with the ink spilled in Brussels on checks to Team Erdogan.

Speaking of Libya – it's been paid for the EU's border outsourcing, too. As have Egypt, Tunisia, Mauritania, Jordan, Lebanon, and parts of the Horn of Africa, like Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

Wouldn't it be cheaper to just have doors with actual locks on them at home, like the average common-sense person does? But no, Europe can't do that because then it can't say how open and free it is. Better to pay for the iron fist to be wielded elsewhere by someone with the financial motivation to do so. Even if their enthusiasm for the job seems to be like a carnival game where the prize appears only after the operator gets another handful of tokens.

Meanwhile, Spain is being treated like the sole author of this mess, as if this entire surge just spontaneously generated the moment a legal ruling changed deportation procedures. And yes, that ruling mattered because it altered incentives. As did Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's amnesty offer – with a reported million applicants showing interest so far.

But who else has been incentivized? As if thousands of migrants were reading EU policy briefings over breakfast. Instead, they were on social media and apparently saw a sudden onslaught of online content convincing them to drop the Doritos and make a run for the border. Who made that happen? And with all the disinformation fighting tools that the EU boasts about, how did this massive whale actually succeed in beaching itself onto a piece of Europe while the EU's entire anti-disinformation fleet was patrolling the waters? Guess it's a pretty good sign that the whale wasn't Russian, huh? Because the world's most sophisticated whale-watchers would have already mapped its migration patterns.

It raises a question that no one in official statements really seems too keen to ask aloud: who benefits from the chaos? Not Spain, clearly. Not the EU, judging from how unenthusiastic it sounds about it. But Israel and the US sure have been upset with Spain's position opposing Israel's genocide in Gaza and war in Iran. But upset enough to have funded NGOs to "give away" Spain's enclave in North Africa, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son once threatened on social media back in 2019?

In any case, now Spain is relegated to begging nation-states to control their own citizens. Not exactly a position of strength. But once that amnesty signal is out there, then unfortunately you don't get to choose who accepts it, which hidden powers could decide to exploit it in an attempt to pressure you, or how many show up to camp out in your tranquil EU garden and flatten your flowerbeds. Including those caught between the EU and the countries it keeps paying to roleplay as its contracted security guards.

Rachel Marsden is a columnist, political strategist, and host of independently produced talk-shows in French and English.

Capital
THE PAPER THAT PROMOTES FREE ENTERPRISE

CAPITAL is a weekly business newspaper published and distributed every Sunday by CROWN PUBLISHING PLC.

CAPITAL is a registered newspaper with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Trade license number **14/673/21142/2004**.

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CROWN PUBLISHING is a private limited company registered with the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Broadcasting Authority under registration no. **34/2001** and with Addis Ababa City Administration Trade and Industry Development office under registration number **14/673/21142/2004**.

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CAPITAL is printed by **Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise** since December 1998.
Address: Addis Ababa, Arada Sub-city Wereda 9 H.No. 984
Tel. 011 155 3233

EEU targets smart grid transformation to deliver reliable power supply in Addis

By Muluken Yewondwossen

The Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) is embarking on a 25-year modernization initiative to transform its electricity distribution system into a digitally managed smart grid. This ambitious roadmap aims to enhance reliability, reduce outages, and prepare the network for rapidly increasing power demand in Addis Ababa.

Through its Smart Grid Transformation Program, slated for 2026–2035, EEU plans to evolve from a traditional utility into a modern, data-driven, and customer-focused power company. The utility's goal is to achieve at least Level Three of the Smart Grid Maturity Model (SGMM) within ten years, a significant leap from its current Level One status.

This smart grid initiative is projected to require an investment of up to USD 640 million. It will introduce advanced digital technologies, real-time network monitoring, automated fault detection, improved customer services, and stronger grid management capabilities.

"The transformation is about creating a smarter, more resilient, and digitally integrated distribution network that can respond to increasing electricity demand and operational challenges," stated EEU officials.

The Smart Grid Maturity Model is an international framework utilities use to measure progress in modernizing electricity networks. Level One signifies the early stages of smart grid development, characterized by exploration and pilot projects. In contrast, Level Three indicates that smart grid solutions are integrated across operations to enhance efficiency and performance.

As part of this transformation, EEU plans to deploy Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), digital customer platforms, improved billing systems, and data-based decision-making tools. The utility will also introduce demand-side management programs, including time-of-use tariffs, demand response systems, electric vehicle integration, distributed energy resources, and microgrid development.

Key components of the smart grid roadmap also include cybersecurity enhancements, stronger telecommunications systems, and workforce development, as EEU prepares for a more complex energy sector.

The smart grid transformation is closely linked with EEU's broader 25-year Electricity Distribution Master Plan, which aims for substantial improvements in electricity reliability, particularly in Addis Ababa.

Under the first phase of the master plan, EEU targets a 99.9 percent reliable electricity supply in the capital within four years. This short-term program requires an estimated USD 1.33 billion investment and will focus on upgrading overloaded feeders, expanding network capacity, improving redundancy, and strengthening distribution infrastructure.

"The primary objective of the short-term implementation is to establish a reliable electricity supply in Addis Ababa," Chala Aman, project manager of the master plan, told Capital. "The city faces significant supply constraints, including frequent interruptions, unmet demand, and customers who remain without electricity access despite being located within the capital."

He stated that a significant portion of Addis Ababa's distribution network operates beyond its original design capacity, leading to frequent interruptions and hindering the utility's ability to connect new customers.

"To achieve reliability, we must reduce the frequency of power interruptions. We will upgrade feeders to standard operating capacity," Chala explained.

The broader 25-year distribution roadmap estimates that Ethiopia will need USD 30.6 billion to expand and modernize its electricity network by 2049. Electricity demand is projected to increase almost ninefold, from approximately 4,300 MW currently to about 39,327 MW.

The first phase of this plan involves constructing 16,500 kilometers of new medium-voltage distribution lines, rehabilitating 9,700 kilometers of existing lines, undertaking over 21,800 distribution transformer interventions, and installing an additional 6,945 MVA transformer capacity.

Addis Ababa is slated to receive the largest share of the initial investment, with USD 575 million allocated for upgrading the capital's distribution network, while Oromia will receive approximately USD 478 million.

The master plan was developed after a detailed assessment of the existing network, which scrutinized around 1,100 medium-voltage feeders, 183 primary substations, and nearly 79,000 kilometers of mapped distribution lines.

The assessment revealed 271 feeders with unacceptable voltage levels and 182 feeders experiencing thermal overloading. Additional challenges identified included aging infrastructure, overloaded transformers, limited switching capacity, insufficient load transfer capability, and high technical losses.

The EEU anticipates that the modernization program will increase medium-voltage feeders from approximately 1,100 to over 1,400, improve the average minimum network voltage from 0.838 per unit to 0.925 per unit, and reduce active power losses by about 38 percent.

EEU Chief Executive Officer Getu Geremu commented that the master plan signifies a major stride toward modernizing Ethiopia's electricity distribution system through digitalization, enhanced efficiency, and improved customer service.

The utility expects this roadmap to bolster Ethiopia's industrial growth, urban expansion, and the National Electrification Program (NEP 3.0), which aims to achieve universal, reliable, and sustainable electricity access by 2035.

EthSwitch opens international settlement account to support global card services

By Eyasu Zekarias

EthSwitch S.C., the operator of Ethiopia's national payment infrastructure, has opened an International Settlement Account in partnership with Bank of Abyssinia, marking a major step toward connecting Ethiopia's payment system with global card networks.

The account is expected to support cross-border card transactions and strengthen Ethiopia's participation in the international digital-payments ecosystem.

The arrangement follows recent foreign-exchange reforms introduced by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), which allow eligible institutions to establish and maintain foreign-currency accounts.

EthSwitch has opened a dedicated multi-currency US dollar settlement account in its own name at Bank of Abyssinia. The local bank maintains a correspondent banking relationship with Citibank, enabling the settlement arrangement to connect with international financial infrastructure.

Abenezer Wondwossen, Chief Portfolio Officer at EthSwitch, told Capital that EthSwitch does not have a direct relationship with Citibank.

"We do not have a direct relationship with Citibank; we work exclusively with the Bank of Abyssinia," he said. "We have opened our dollar account with the Bank of Abyssinia and are utilizing it as our settlement account."

EthSwitch officials said the account is operational, although formal contractual procedures are still being finalized.

The new account is part of a project that has been under development for more than a year. The implementation plan consists of two phases.

The first phase focuses on accepting international payment cards in Ethiopia. Once fully launched, visitors, tourists and other international cardholders will be able to use cards issued in nearly 200 participating countries at ATMs and point-of-sale terminals connected to the Ethiopian payment network.

Abenezer said technical preparations for the first phase had been completed and regression testing concluded. The service is expected to go live within one to two months.

"The new settlement account enables cross-border payments—whether through cards or other payment methods—to be accepted and settled directly into a foreign-currency account," EthSwitch CEO Yilbes Addis said in December 2025.

At the time, Yilbes said the arrangement represented a new settlement model for Ethiopia's payment system and was being evaluated by the National Bank.

The second phase will allow Ethiopian customers to use locally issued cards abroad. Once implemented, cardholders will be able to make purchases, withdraw cash and conduct online transactions in participating countries.

The timing of the second phase will depend on regulatory approval, technical preparations and agreements with international payment networks.

The initiative follows a series of foreign-exchange and digital-payment reforms by the National Bank.

In July 2024, the central bank issued Foreign Exchange Directive No. FXD/01/2024, introducing a more competitive and market-based exchange-rate system. The directive also eased restrictions on foreign-currency accounts and gave exporters and commercial banks greater flexibility to hold foreign currency.

EthSwitch said the reforms created the conditions needed to establish an international settlement structure.

For decades, strict foreign-exchange controls and restrictions on foreign-currency accounts limited the ability of Ethiopian financial institutions to participate in international payment systems.

The new settlement account is expected to address some of those limitations by providing a dedicated mechanism for settling international card transactions.

Abenezer said EthSwitch had also submitted a request to the National Bank and was continuing to work through the approval process while partnering with Bank of Abyssinia.

EthSwitch's initiative forms part of a broader effort to integrate Ethiopia's payment infrastructure with regional and international systems.

The company has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Payments Corporation of India to explore payment interoperability through platforms including India's Unified Payments Interface and instant-payment systems.

The planned cooperation could enable Ethiopian and Indian customers to make purchases and withdraw cash through participating payment networks.

EthSwitch is also developing a national payment gateway designed to connect bank accounts, debit and credit cards and mobile-money services.

The gateway is intended to improve interoperability between financial institutions and payment platforms.

The international settlement account will further support the transfer of foreign-currency funds into Ethiopian accounts through cards and other digital channels.

The services could benefit tourism, trade and investment by reducing reliance on cash and making payments more convenient for foreign visitors and international businesses.

The initiative is also aligned with Ethiopia's National Digital Payments Strategy for 2026–2030, launched in December 2025 alongside EthioPay, the country's instant-payment system.

The strategy focuses on expanding affordable, accessible and reliable digital financial services, while promoting innovation, trust and low-cost cross-border transfers through cards, mobile wallets and digital banking.

EthSwitch's expansion comes as digital-payment activity in Ethiopia continues to grow.

The company reported a gross profit before tax of 2.6 billion birr during the 2025/26 fiscal year. It processed 387 million transactions during the period, with a combined value of 1.26 trillion birr.

Person-to-person transfers accounted for 242.6 million transactions valued at 1.06 trillion birr. ATM transactions reached 131.5 million, valued at 189.2 billion birr.

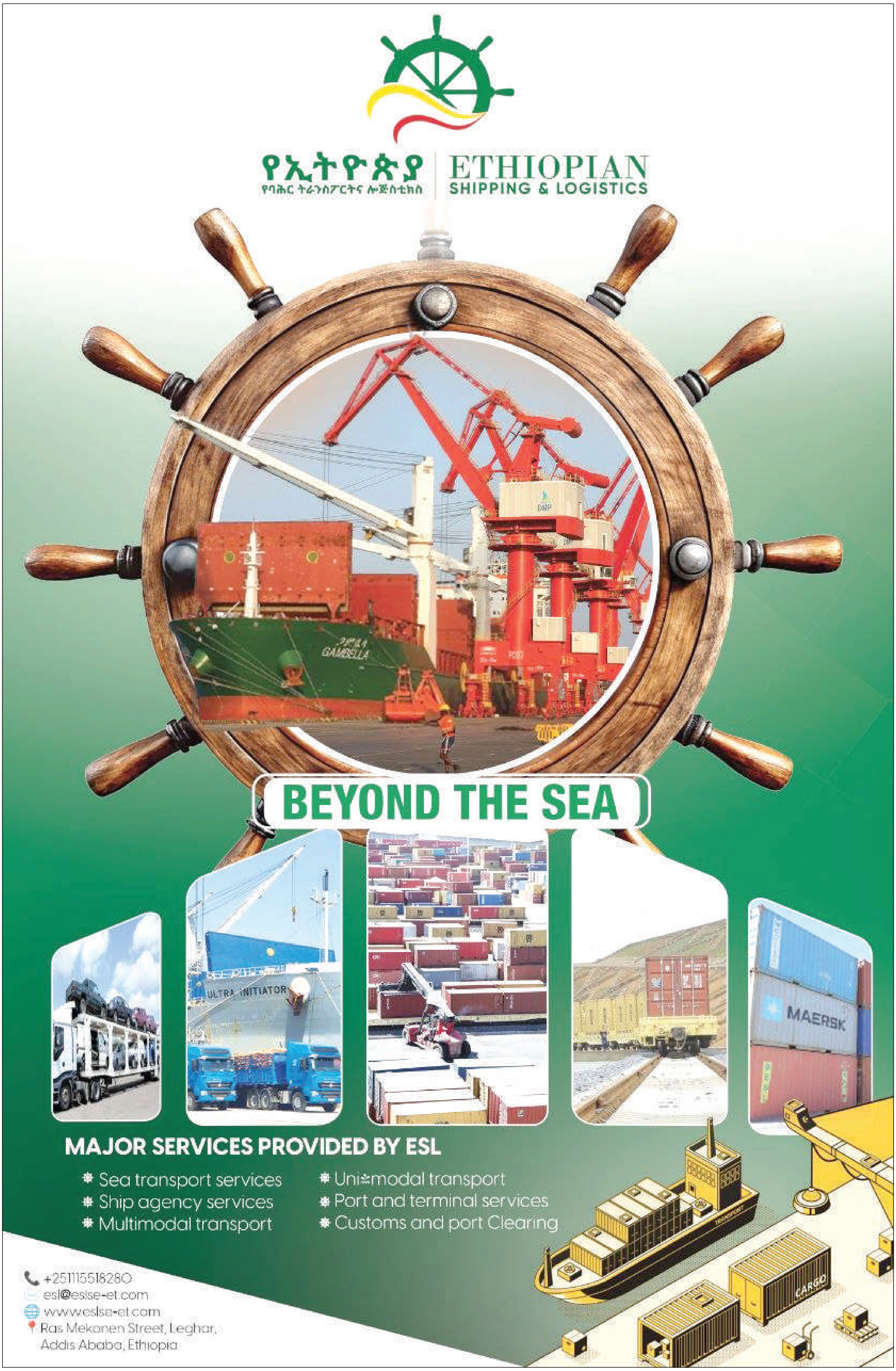
Point-of-sale transactions totaled 3.9 million, with a value of 10.7 billion birr, while ETHQR transactions reached 551,500, valued at 6.8 billion birr.

The introduction of international card services could make payments easier for foreign visitors and support businesses in tourism, hospitality, retail and aviation.

For Ethiopian customers, the second phase could improve access to international online services and allow them to make purchases abroad using locally issued cards.

The expansion will also require strong cybersecurity, fraud prevention, consumer protection and foreign-exchange oversight. Issues such as transaction fees, exchange-rate transparency and dispute resolution will need to be clearly addressed.

EthSwitch said it would continue working with the National Bank, local banks and other stakeholders as it moves toward full implementation.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NBE defends stance . . .

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banks, including Global Bank of Ethiopia (GBE), as evidence of vulnerabilities in deposit mobilization and liquidity management, particularly among small and medium-sized financial institutions.

While details of GBE's recent difficulties remain largely undisclosed, sector sources indicate that sudden erosion of deposits, especially time deposits, was a significant factor. Although governance issues were also identified at GBE, liquidity management has become a broader concern for several emerging banks.

However, NBE Chief Economist and Vice Governor Fikadu Digafe stated that the central bank already provides several support mechanisms and expects institutions to manage their liquidity based on their capacity and business strategies.

"As a basic principle, banks are established by shareholders with the objective of making profits while operating under the rules and regulations set by the central bank. They know their responsibilities and what is expected from them," Fikadu told Capital.

He highlighted that the NBE has introduced various liquidity management tools, including the interbank money market, standing facilities, and emergency liquidity support mechanisms.

"We have put instruments, codes of conduct, directives, and standing facilities that banks can use to fill their liquidity needs. There are also liquidity and reserve requirements," he explained.

According to Fikadu, managing deposits, interest rates, and daily operations remains the responsibility of bank management and boards of directors.

"The question is what a bank will do regarding the rise of deposit interest rates and how it will manage its business. The responsibility of running the bank remains with the institution itself," he emphasized.

This discussion comes shortly after the NBE removed former Global Bank of Ethiopia CEO Tesfaye Boru following a special inspection that uncovered regulatory violations.

The central bank reported that the inspection covered corporate governance, lending practices, human resource management, foreign exchange operations, and overall financial management.

The findings revealed deficiencies and breaches of regulatory requirements and internal policies.

The NBE stated that the bank's board and senior management acknowledged the findings and submitted a corrective action plan. However, the regulator deemed the issues sufficiently serious, especially considering previous warnings issued to Tesfaye, to necessitate stronger action.

Consequently, Tesfaye was removed from his position, effective July 28, 2026, and banned for five years from holding senior executive or board positions in any Ethiopian financial institution.

On Friday, August 7, GBE announced it had implemented administrative measures but did not provide further details.

Meanwhile, experts have expressed concerns about the competition between SACCOs and banks for attracting deposits.

Industry sources indicate that some SACCOs are offering interest rates as high as 35 percent on certain savings products, significantly exceeding the approximately 26 percent offered by commercial banks on time deposits.

While acknowledging the crucial role SACCOs play in expanding financial access and serving communities underserved by traditional banks, experts argued that aggressive deposit mobilization by SACCOs could put additional pressure on banks, particularly smaller ones.

They also questioned whether the current regulatory framework for SACCOs adequately addresses their impact on the broader financial sector.

Fikadu explained that SACCOs are not regulated by the NBE because they are not classified as deposit-taking financial institutions under the central bank's mandate.

"SACCOs have never been under NBE regulation, so the central bank has no role in regulating them," he stated.

He maintained that liquidity within the banking system remains under the central bank's supervision and that monetary policy tools enable the regulator to manage inflationary pressures.

"We can monitor liquidity at banks, and inflationary behavior is fully controlled through the monetary system. Since currency circulation occurs either within or outside banks, controlling these channels allows us to manage liquidity," he explained.

Nevertheless, experts contend that as Ethiopia's financial sector expands and competition intensifies, enhanced coordination among financial regulators will be essential to safeguard financial stability and maintain public confidence in the banking system.

Djibouti urged to tighten debt controls

By Muluken Yewondwossen

A new economic assessment recommends that Djibouti implement tighter debt controls, strengthen state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and improve domestic revenue collection to sustain its infrastructure-led growth.

The Investment Bank of Africa (IBA) describes Djibouti as a strategically vital gateway for Red Sea trade and commerce linked to Ethiopia. However, the bank warns that years of significant infrastructure investment have increased the nation's debt exposure and reduced the government's fiscal flexibility.

Public debt reached approximately 64 percent of GDP in 2025, according to the assessment. Citing IMF projections, the report indicates that the debt ratio is expected to decrease from 67.2 percent in 2025 to 62.3 percent in 2026, and further to 38.5 percent by 2030.

Despite this projected improvement, debt sustainability remains a primary concern. The report notes that both the IMF and the African Development Bank have called for ongoing debt reduction, SOE reform, and engagement with creditors.

IBA suggests broadening Djibouti's domestic revenue base by standardizing tax exemptions and enhancing VAT collection. It also recommends allocating additional revenues towards debt servicing and essential social infrastructure.

State-owned enterprises are another significant concern. The report advises implementing enforceable dividend policies, strengthening financial disclosure, and setting debt ceilings for profitable strategic SOEs. Weaker enterprises, conversely, should undergo balance-sheet restructuring.

The government is also urged to align fiscal consolidation efforts with initiatives to rebuild foreign-exchange reserves and limit quasi-fiscal liabilities.

Reducing electricity costs is identified as another priority. The assessment recommends increased reliance on renewable-energy independent power producers, reduced system losses, and stronger payment discipline from public institutions.

The report also cautions Djibouti against pursuing infrastructure projects without clear economic and financial returns. It advocates for greater use of public-private partnerships, blended finance, development-finance guarantees, and project-based financing, particularly for water, renewable energy, logistics, and digital infrastructure.

Potential investment needs are estimated at approximately $2.5 billion for logistics corridors, $1.8 billion for renewable energy, and $1.2 billion for water infrastructure. However, the report emphasizes that these are preliminary estimates requiring detailed project-level due diligence.

Despite the debt risks, the assessment assigns Djibouti a BBB investment rating with a positive outlook, citing its strategic location and role in regional trade as key advantages.

It recommends focusing future investment on transport and logistics, renewable energy, water resilience, digital infrastructure, and structured trade finance.

The central challenge for Djibouti, the report suggests, is no longer merely attracting more capital, but ensuring that new investment does not replicate the debt pressures generated by previous infrastructure expansion.

The assessment calls for stronger debt-sustainability safeguards, tighter SOE discipline, adequate foreign-exchange reserves, environmental and social safeguards, and contingency plans for maritime disruptions.

National ID program to expand digital wallet and credential verification

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia's National ID program is transitioning from a project-based initiative into a state-owned enterprise under the name 'Faydaverse', with plans to expand digital wallet and credential-verification services across public and private sectors.

The National ID program, widely known as Fayda, has been placed under the Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH) portfolio. Officials say the restructuring will reduce reliance on donor funding and create a financially sustainable and commercially driven institution.

Saminas Seyfu, Director of Stakeholder Engagement and Communication at the Ethiopia National ID Program, said the transition would provide greater operational flexibility and help the institution attract and retain specialized technology professionals.

"Agility is paramount, requiring us to move beyond the rigid confines of a traditional government agency," Saminas told Capital. "As an autonomous, innovation-driven entity, we require a dynamic operating environment."

He said operating as a state-owned enterprise would allow Faydaverse to compete more effectively for skilled professionals in the technology sector.

"We are competing directly with major global tech ecosystems. When evaluating our talent pool, retention is critical," he added.

A central part of Faydaverse's strategy is the expansion of Ethiopia's digital wallet and credential-management infrastructure. The system currently supports verification of educational credentials, civil-service records and core government documents.

Officials plan to expand the platform to include academic transcripts, professional licenses, healthcare records, property titles, certified asset documents and financial compliance information, including Know Your Customer requirements.

The proposed digital wallet would allow citizens to securely store, manage and authorize verified credentials through an interoperable platform. Institutions could then verify information electronically, reducing administrative costs, document fraud and delays in service delivery.

The system is also being integrated with tax administration, according to officials. Saminas said improved identity verification could help broaden the tax base, reduce evasion and support the formalization of emerging sectors such as private transportation and small-scale commerce.

Beyond Ethiopia, Faydaverse is seeking to provide digital identity services to other African countries. The program has established an operational presence as an implementation partner in Mozambique and Zambia.

"We are leveraging South-South collaboration to export digital public infrastructure as a service," Saminas said, adding that the services include system deployment, legal and policy development, procurement advice and technical consultancy.

Officials say the transition will allow Faydaverse to generate independent commercial revenue while continuing to support national development priorities.

The initiative's success will depend on institutional participation, data accuracy, cybersecurity and public trust. Authorities will also need to ensure that citizens without smartphones, reliable internet access or digital skills are not excluded from essential services.

The restructuring marks a new phase for Ethiopia's National ID program, which is now expected to serve not only as an identification system but also as a foundation for digital public services, financial inclusion, tax administration and economic formalization.

ESX founding CEO Tilahun steps down

By our staff reporter

The Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX) has announced a leadership transition following the departure of its founding Chief Executive Officer, Tilahun Esmael Kassahun, after four and a half years at the helm.

The ESX Board of Directors has appointed Yodit Kassa as the exchange's new chief executive officer. She is expected to lead the institution through its next phase of growth and market expansion.

Tilahun played a central role in transforming the securities exchange from an initial concept into a functioning institution. His tenure began with the establishment of the ESX Project Office in partnership with Ethiopian Investment Holdings and FSD Africa.

Under his leadership, the exchange achieved several milestones, including a major capital raise, the formation of key public-private partnerships, and the development of its regulatory, governance and technology frameworks.

The outgoing CEO described his time at ESX as a once-in-a-generation institution-building experience and the greatest privilege of his professional career.

"Building ESX from an idea into a functioning institution has been an extraordinary journey," Tilahun said, reflecting on his departure. He expressed confidence in the exchange's foundation and its future contribution to Ethiopia's financial sector.

Yodit brings extensive institutional knowledge to the role. She has been involved with ESX since its early project phase and previously served as Chief Business Officer and Chief Operating Officer.

In those positions, she contributed to the exchange's strategic development, business planning and operational framework. Her appointment is expected to provide continuity as ESX moves from institution-building into broader market development.

As CEO, Yodit will focus on expanding the exchange's issuer and investor base, increasing participation in the capital market and introducing new products and market segments.

Her priorities will also include strengthening ESX's core market infrastructure and positioning the exchange as a catalyst for investment, innovation and economic transformation.

The leadership change comes as Ethiopia seeks to deepen its financial markets and expand access to long-term capital. A functioning securities exchange is expected to provide companies with additional financing options while offering investors new avenues for investment and portfolio diversification.

ESX said Tilahun's contribution had been instrumental in laying the groundwork for the exchange's operations and long-term development. The board expressed appreciation for his leadership and service during the institution's formative years.

Childcare seen as economic infrastructure, not just welfare

By Eyasu Zekarias

Childcare should be treated as a core economic investment rather than a narrow social welfare expense, according to a new study presented at the 14th Africa Evidence Summit.

The study, led by Dessalegn Anshiso of the Policy Studies Institute, argues that early childhood care and development has the power to boost productivity, support women's employment and improve household welfare, especially in countries like Ethiopia where women still carry most unpaid care work.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, women spend more than three times as many hours on unpaid caregiving as men, the study notes. In Ethiopia, women spend an average of 26 hours a week on unpaid care work, compared with about six hours for men.

Researchers say this imbalance limits women's participation in paid work and keeps many confined to low-income informal jobs. It also slows progress in reducing poverty across generations.

The study, titled Childcare as Economic Infrastructure: Women Economic Empowerment, Household Welfare, and Children Outcomes in Addis Ababa, was conducted under the Scaling Care Innovations in Africa initiative, with support from Canada's International Development Research Centre and in partnership with the Addis Ababa City Administration and ActionAid.

The findings come as Addis Ababa tries to expand public daycare services. Municipal authorities have set a target of 1,000 daycare centers by 2026, but existing facilities remain overstretched, leaving many low-income families on waiting lists.

According to the researchers, that shortage has turned what should be a broad productivity-enhancing service into a narrowly targeted safety net for only the most vulnerable households.

The study also points to social and cultural barriers that continue to limit the benefits of childcare services. Even when daycare is available, traditional gender expectations and household power dynamics can create conflict at home and discourage women from taking up paid work.

Dessalegn said childcare should be viewed in the same way as roads, electricity and transport infrastructure because it frees labor, expands economic participation and supports long-term development.

The research team carried out what it described as the first longitudinal difference-in-differences evaluation of public daycare in Ethiopia. It tracked 1,975 low-income households in two rounds of data collection between 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The study compared 769 beneficiary households using 29 municipal daycare centers with 1,206 similar households that remained on waiting lists.

The results show that access to public daycare reduced women's daily unpaid care burden by an average of 2.5 hours and increased their paid work time by 6.8 hours a day.

The impact also extended to older children. Unpaid housework among older girls fell by 8.5 hours a week, while boys' unpaid work dropped by three hours. Girls' primary school enrollment increased from 94.09 percent to 95.91 percent.

The researchers also found that maternal stress declined significantly, as measured by standard wellbeing indicators. However, the study found no statistically significant short-term reduction in clinical depression, suggesting that childcare alone may not be enough and may need to be paired with psychosocial support.

As women's earnings increased, the study found a modest rise in joint household decision-making, including greater shared decisions on major household purchases.

Dessalegn said the findings support a shift in policy thinking, with childcare financing moved out of welfare budgets and into national development and capital expenditure frameworks.

He said accessible, quality childcare should be treated as productive public infrastructure that supports women, children and the wider economy.

Djibouti rejects unilateral taxation proposal for Bab el Mandeb Strait

By Muluken Yewondwossen

Djibouti has firmly rejected any attempt to impose unilateral taxes or transit fees on vessels passing through the Bab el Mandeb Strait, warning that such a move would violate international law and threaten one of the world's most important maritime routes.

In a statement issued Wednesday evening, the government said it opposes any effort by a single party to levy charges on ships using the strategic waterway, which is shared between the Horn of Africa and Yemen's western coast.

The statement followed reports earlier in the day suggesting that Yemen's Houthi movement was considering introducing transit fees for vessels navigating the Bab el Mandeb Strait.

The narrow passage connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean and serves as a critical gateway for global trade and energy shipments.

Djibouti said it remains fully committed to the principle of freedom of navigation and to the international legal framework governing straits used for international navigation under the law of the sea.

"The Bab el Mandeb Strait is a maritime passage of global interest, shared between the African and Asian shores. Any initiative seeking to impose, from a single shore, a toll or taxation system on ships transiting through this strait would be contrary to international law, would undermine the sovereignty of the riparian States, and would threaten the security of maritime routes essential to global trade and energy supply," the statement said.

As a riparian state bordering the strait, Djibouti said any such measure would amount to a unilateral challenge to the international status of the waterway and would further heighten tensions in an already fragile region.

The government added that it reserves the right to pursue diplomatic, legal and security measures—either independently or in coordination with regional and international partners—to safeguard its sovereign rights, protect freedom of navigation and preserve stability in the Red Sea.

Djibouti also called on the international community, relevant international organizations and countries that rely on the strait to ensure the Bab el Mandeb remains a safe and open maritime corridor governed by international law, rather than becoming a tool for advancing particular interests.

The Bab el Mandeb Strait is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, carrying a substantial share of international trade and energy supplies between Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

According to experts for Ethiopia, the issue carries particular significance. As a landlocked country, it depends overwhelmingly on Djibouti's ports and the uninterrupted flow of cargo through the Red Sea corridor for its international trade.

Parents challenge private-school fee increases in Addis Ababa

By Eyasu Zekarias

Parents at the British International School (BIS) in Addis Ababa have taken the institution to court, challenging tuition fee increases they say were introduced without adequate consultation and have placed an unsustainable burden on families.

The dispute has brought renewed attention to the cost of private and international education in Ethiopia, where inflation, currency depreciation and rising living expenses are putting pressure on household finances.

Parents allege that BIS increased tuition fees by as much as 36 percent for the 2026/27 academic year. They argue that the increases were implemented without sufficient advance notice or meaningful consultation with parent representatives, as required under education regulations and guidelines.

The case is now before the Federal First Instance Court, Bole Bench.

Rising costs

BIS was established in Addis Ababa in 2005 and provides full-time education from kindergarten through Sixth Form. The school initially operated as a study centre offering language and professional development courses before expanding into formal education in response to demand from parents seeking international curricula.

According to the school's official profile, BIS provides a British-style education and prepares students for International General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations and A-Levels. Its campus, qualified teaching staff and emphasis on academic and personal development have made it a popular choice among expatriate and Ethiopian families.

However, parents say the school's reputation comes with increasingly unaffordable costs.

One parent told Capital that annual tuition for a child rose from approximately 26,000 birr during the 2025/26 academic year to more than 60,000 birr for 2026/27. The parent described the increase as exceeding 100 percent over two years and said it had disrupted the family's financial planning.

Another parent with three children at the school said the increases varied according to grade level. The parent cited a 36 percent increase for Early Years through Grade 2, increases ranging from 30 to 34 percent for middle grades, and a 25 percent increase for Grade 9.

According to the parent, the changes resulted in an additional quarterly payment of between 11,000 and 12,000 birr per child.

Parents said many families had made significant financial sacrifices to provide their children with an internationally recognized education. They argue that sudden increases make it difficult for middle- and fixed-income households to plan for tuition, transportation, meals, uniforms and other school-related expenses.

Consultation dispute

Under education regulations and draft guidelines governing private and international schools, institutions are expected to consult parent associations before revising tuition fees. The guidelines also call for schools to provide advance notice, reportedly three months before the end of the academic year, before implementing new charges.

The guidelines further require schools to disclose tuition and registration fees publicly through notice boards and websites.

Schools that fail to display fees clearly may face fines of up to 500,000 birr, while institutions that raise fees without consulting parents may be subject to penalties of up to 200,000 birr, according to the regulations cited by the parents.

Parents at BIS claim that the school did not follow these procedures. They say the administration failed to provide adequate notice before the end of the previous academic year and did not engage in meaningful negotiations before applying the new fees.

After discussions failed to resolve the matter, parents turned to the courts.

Following an order from the Federal First Instance Court, the school administration held negotiations with a 15-member parents' committee representing families from eight branches.

The talks ended without an agreement. Parents said the school maintained that the revised fees were necessary to cover rising operational costs and preserve educational quality. They also said the administration refused to offer discounts or reconsider the increases.

Parents propose phased increases

One member of the parents' negotiating team told Capital that parents presented two alternatives.

Under the first proposal, the total increase would be limited to 20 percent and introduced over two academic years—10 percent during the current 2026/27 academic year and another 10 percent in 2027/28.

The second proposal involved a total cash-payment increase of 15 percent, also spread over two years.

Parents said the phased approach would give families time to adjust their finances while still allowing the school to respond to rising costs.

The school administration rejected both proposals, according to the negotiating parent.

"Because the school administration maintained a firm stance in rejecting these two proposed options and completely halted negotiation efforts, we are moving forward with the next legal process," the parent said.

The court is expected to issue a decision following the conclusion of the proceedings.

Quality versus affordability

The dispute reflects a wider tension affecting private education in Ethiopia. Schools say they face rising expenses related to salaries, imported educational materials, utilities, maintenance, technology and other operating costs.

Parents, however, argue that increased fees should be accompanied by clear evidence of improved services and educational quality.

They say annual price increases should not be treated as automatic adjustments without transparent explanations. For many parents, the central question is whether the money is being used primarily to improve learning or whether tuition increases are driven mainly by institutional profitability.

The dispute also raises broader questions about the regulation of international schools. While parents accept that schools need to remain financially viable, they want greater transparency and predictability in how tuition fees are set.

They also argue that families should have a meaningful role in decisions that directly affect their children's education and household finances.

Broader sector concerns

Parents involved in the case say the dispute at BIS is part of a wider problem in Ethiopia's education sector. Private schools across the country are facing increased costs as inflation and currency pressures raise the price of imported materials, equipment and services.

At the same time, many families are experiencing declining purchasing power and rising costs for food, housing, transportation and healthcare.

International schools are particularly affected because they often rely on foreign curricula, imported textbooks, international examinations and highly qualified teachers. These costs can be reflected in tuition fees, but parents say schools should still provide clear documentation and proper consultation before making changes.

The conflict has also exposed a gap between regulation and enforcement. Although guidelines outline consultation and disclosure requirements, parents say they are uncertain about how consistently these rules are implemented and enforced.

Capital made repeated attempts to obtain comment from officials at the Ministry of Education but received no response.

The British International School administration was also contacted for comment, but had not responded by the time of publication.

The Education and Training Authority told Capital that it had responded to the matter in writing and advised that the school and parents should reach a consensus regarding the dispute.

A test for private education

The BIS case is now being closely watched by parents, schools and education-sector observers. Its outcome could influence how private and international schools handle future tuition increases and how parents challenge decisions they believe were made without adequate consultation.

For parents, the issue is not simply the size of the increase. It is also about process, transparency and trust.

They say families should not be presented with major financial changes after decisions have already been made. Schools, they argue, should explain the reasons for increases, disclose relevant fees, consult parents in advance and consider phased options where sudden increases would cause serious hardship.

For schools, the challenge is how to maintain quality in an increasingly expensive operating environment without pricing families out of the education they have chosen.

The court's decision may therefore have implications beyond BIS. It could help clarify the responsibilities of private schools, the rights of parents and the role of education authorities in regulating fees.

Until then, the dispute remains a visible example of the growing pressure on Ethiopia's private education sector, where the pursuit of international standards is colliding with the financial realities facing families.


Life Fitness
WHAT WE LIVE FOR
BEKELE ABSHIRO PLC
PREMIUM COMFORT
TIMELESS ELEGANCE
ALAXANDER
ROSE
FURNITURE
Crafted for Comfort.
Designed to Impress.
SAN MARINO
CURVED ARMCHAIR W.C
Elegant curves. Superior comfort.
Perfect for any space.
CLEARANCE
SALES
5% OFF
SAN MARINO
CLUB ARMCHAIR W.C
Contemporary design.
Relax in style.
Built to last.
Handwoven All-Weather Rattan
Comfortable Cushion Included
Durable & Long Lasting
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ethio telecom™
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DATA OVERTAKES VOICE

Ethio telecom's Milestone Signals a New Digital Era

The Global Paradigm Shift

In the modern telecommunications landscape, a profound structural transformation has swept across the globe, fundamentally altering how operators generate revenue and how societies communicate. Traditional voice calling, once the undisputed cornerstone of telecom business models, has steadily retreated as mobile data consumption takes center stage. According to industry analyses from Ericsson and GSMA Intelligence, global mobile data traffic has continued to expand at approximately **20%–30%** annually over recent years, while traditional voice revenues have experienced a sustained long-term decline due to the widespread adoption of **over-the-top (OTT)** communication platforms and changing consumer behavior. Driven by the proliferation of smartphones, social media integration, cloud services, and an insatiable appetite for digital applications, the modern digital economy increasingly operates on a **"data-first"** paradigm.

The strategic trajectories of leading international and regional telecommunications operators vividly illustrate this global phenomenon. Vodafone Group, one of the early pioneers of digital transformation across Europe and Asia, has significantly expanded its broadband and digital service portfolios, reflecting the industry's transition beyond traditional voice services. Similarly, in East Africa, Safaricom PLC has witnessed rapid growth in mobile data and M-PESA, with non-voice services accounting for many service revenues in recent years. Across the continent, MTN Group reported strong double-digit growth in data revenue, with data and fintech services emerging as the primary drivers of overall business performance. Meanwhile, operators such as Airtel Africa and India's Bharti Airtel—where average data consumption now exceeds **21 GB** per user per month—demonstrate how voice has effectively become a bundled utility, with monetization increasingly concentrated around data packages, digital ecosystems, and value-added services.

Perhaps no operator better exemplifies the industry's evolution than Reliance Jio in India. Jio revolutionized the telecommunications market by adopting a "data-first" strategy, making voice calls effectively free over Voice over LTE **(VoLTE)** while monetizing connectivity through high-speed data plans and digital content services. Its success fundamentally reshaped consumer expectations and provided a blueprint for operators worldwide seeking to transition from voice-centric business models to digitally driven ecosystems.

Regional Application & The Ethiopian Context

Bringing this global paradigm shift to the Horn of Africa, the Ethiopian telecommunications market has undergone a dramatic transformation. Following the liberalization of the sector and the entry of Safaricom Ethiopia, alongside the continued market leadership of Ethio telecom, the nation has rapidly progressed beyond the traditional voice-dominated era. In its most recent fiscal year performance, Ethio telecom announced a historic milestone: for the first time in the company's history, mobile data and internet revenue reached **31.1%** of total revenue, surpassing mobile voice revenue, which stood at **23.5%**. This crossover signals that Ethiopia's telecommunications sector is increasingly aligning with the global transition from voice-centric to data-centric business models, reflecting significant changes in consumer behavior and operator monetization strategies.

Drivers of Transformation

The foundational driver behind this historic shift has been the aggressive expansion of national digital infrastructure, particularly through the deployment of **4G and 5G** networks. Ethio telecom's strategic investments extended **4G** services to approximately **1,200 cities**, achieving more than **82%** population coverage, while **5G** services expanded to **33 cities.** Complementing these efforts is an extensive fiber-optic backbone spanning more than **23,000 kilometers** and the establishment of internationally certified data center capabilities. Collectively, these investments have significantly reduced connectivity barriers for both urban and rural populations, creating the foundation for widespread digital adoption across the country.

In parallel with infrastructure expansion, Ethiopia has experienced a notable cultural and economic shift toward digital lifestyles. Citizens increasingly rely on digital platforms not only for communication, but also for information access, financial transactions, e-commerce, education, and interactions with public services such as the Fayda National Digital ID initiative. As streaming platforms, social networks, and cloud-based applications become deeply integrated into daily life, data consumption has evolved from a supplementary service into an essential socio-economic utility.

Crucially, this operational and revenue transformation has been supported by Ethio telecom's long-term strategic vision, particularly its **"Next Horizon: Digital and Beyond 2028 Strategy"** Through its deliberate transition from a conventional telecommunications provider to a technology-driven enterprise (**"Telco-to-TechCo"**), the organization has embraced data analytics, artificial intelligence, and customer-centric innovation. During the latest fiscal year, the company introduced hundreds of digital products and services tailored to evolving market demands, reinforcing its ambition to serve as a catalyst for Ethiopia's broader digital transformation agenda.

Another significant catalyst accelerating the **"Data over Voice"** transition has been the growing accessibility of smartphones and connected devices. Historically, device affordability represented a major barrier to digital inclusion. However, smartphone financing initiatives, strategic partnerships, and declining handset costs have enabled a broader segment of the population to access internet-enabled services. As smartphone penetration expands, so too does demand for mobile broadband, creating a sustainable cycle of increased data consumption and deeper digital engagement.

In a nutshell, Ethio telecom's achievement of generating greater revenue from mobile data and internet services than from traditional voice services represents more than a financial milestone, it reflects Ethiopia's entry into the global digital era. Supported by extensive infrastructure investments, strategic foresight, and changing societal behaviors, the company generated ETB **215.82 billion** in total revenue during its latest fiscal year while strengthening its position as a key enabler of the nation's digital economy. By maintaining operational excellence, expanding digital financial services, and continuing its transition toward a technology-centric enterprise, Ethio telecom is increasingly positioning itself not merely as a telecommunications operator, but as a future-ready digital platform driving sustainable national development.

Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

Sudan Army Receives Pakistani Armoured Vehicles and Drones, Military Sources Say

The Sudanese army received Pakistani-made Mohafiz armoured vehicles last month, military sources told Sudan Tribune. Over the past two years, the Sudanese army has expanded its arsenal through various deals to meet the requirements of its ongoing war against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), sources said. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been named in several reports as potential backers of a Pakistani arms deal for the Sudanese Armed Forces, though neither country has commented on the claims. Military sources stated that the latest shipment included a number of lightweight, fast-moving Mohafiz armoured vehicles produced by Pakistan Ordnance Factories. Two Sudanese military officers told Sudan Tribune that the army received 100 of the vehicles in successive batches. The heavy-duty vehicles are suited to the terrain in Kordofan and Darfur, offering high mobility and simple maintenance in the field, the officers said. ... The army also acquired reconnaissance and attack drones through separate deals, including Pakistani Shahpar models, military sources added. ... Military experts say the Mohafiz vehicles provide a tactical counter to the RSF's reliance on highly mobile, open-top four-wheel-drive pick-up trucks during urban operations and state highway patrols.

(Sudan Tribune)

Addis Standard Editor-in-Chief Abducted, Offices Raided, Equipment Seized

JAKENN Publishing PLC, publisher of Addis Standard tri-lingual publications, says its Editor-in-Chief, Yonas Kedir, was abducted, physically assaulted and held for approximately 24 hours by security personnel, followed by a raid on the publication's offices and a forced eviction notice issued against its premises. In a statement issued on 06 August, JAKENN said the incidents occurred over three consecutive days, beginning on Saturday, 01 August 2026, when Yonas was reportedly taken by security personnel and subjected to what the company described as "prolonged interrogation." ... JAKENN said the alleged abduction was followed the next day, Sunday 02 August, by a raid on its offices by "a heavily armed team of security and intelligence personnel," who entered the premises "without due process" and confiscated equipment from the publication's multimedia production studio. ... "The inspection also confirmed a disturbing pattern of deliberate destruction to studio lighting systems, light stands, microphone stands, power accessories, and related production equipment," JAKENN said, adding that a complete inventory and valuation had been preserved as evidence for legal proceedings.

(Addis Standard)

Death Row Inmates Desperate to Escape Execution in Saudi Arabia Call the BBC

[The number of Ethiopians in Saudi prisons who face the prospect of execution for drug-smuggling offences is growing]. ... Other foreigners, including Pakistanis, Sudanese and Jordanians, are in a similar position, but in the first seven months of this year 17 Ethiopians have been executed - the highest number among non-Saudis. Five of those executions happened [in a single day last week]. Two years ago, according to research by Amnesty International, just two Ethiopians were executed, but 35 were put to death in 2025. It is not clear exactly why there has been an uptick, but it could be linked to more people leaving the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray, where a brutal two-year civil war in Tigray ended in late 2022, leaving devastation in its wake. "It may also be linked to Saudi Arabia's expanding use of the death penalty for drug-related offences in recent years," Amnesty International researcher Dana Ahmed tells the BBC. ... After surviving the dangerous journey to Saudi Arabia in 2021, Habtom [a man from Tigray] found low-paid work as a goatherder, but his employers offered him and others a chance to earn more money. They were asked to deliver a package but were stopped by police on the way and were found with the narcotic leaf known as khat - a natural stimulant that is widely used in the Horn of Africa. ... "I did not know what we were carrying. But later I was told it was khat. I don't even know what khat is," Habtom said, admitting that he was tempted into the work by the sum of money on offer.

(BBC)

MPs Warn Insecurity Could Jeopardize Elections

South Sudanese lawmakers warned on Wednesday that worsening insecurity could jeopardize preparations for elections planned for December, saying persistent violence has prevented many legislators from visiting their constituencies and raised concerns over whether candidates and voters will be able to move freely ahead of the polls. The concerns were raised during a parliamentary debate on the deteriorating security situation in Tonj, Warrap State, where legislators said violence, poor access to conflict-affected areas and weak law enforcement threaten campaigning and voter participation. Ketura Yola Ambara, an SPLM lawmaker representing the Western Equatoria Women's List, said insecurity had left many lawmakers unable to travel to the areas they represent, questioning how elections could proceed if candidates could not safely reach voters. ... Bol Toby Madut, a lawmaker representing Warrap State under the SANU Party, said insecurity was a nationwide challenge and argued that military operations alone would not end recurring communal violence. ... He urged the government to invest in development, employment and community-based peacebuilding, saying idle young people were more vulnerable to cycles of revenge killings and communal conflict.

(Radio Tamazuj)

Term of the Day

KITING

Definition

Kiting involves fraudulently using financial instruments, such as checks, to obtain unauthorized credit. This practice targets banks and retailers, exploiting float times to facilitate illegal withdrawals.

Beyond the paycheck: Redefining motivation in the Ethiopian workplace

By Samson Worku Teshome

“People are not coin-operated. Human beings have more sophisticated needs.”—Daniel H. PinkIn an era where the economies are characterized by high competition, the challenge for business leaders is no longer just finding talent—it is keeping that talent inspired, engaged, and anchored to a shared vision of the company.

Walking through the bustling corridors of Addis Ababa’s business districts, one can feel the pulse of a nation in transition. From tech startups in Bole to established manufacturing hubs on the outskirts of the city, there is a common thread that binds these diverse entities: the human element. For a long time, the prevailing wisdom was that a paycheck, delivered on time, was the ultimate lever for employee motivation. While financial stability is undeniably the foundation of any employment relationship, it is increasingly clear that money alone does not fuel innovation, loyalty, or sustained high performance.

The Shift in DynamicsThe contemporary Ethiopian employee is looking for more than just a means of survival. Employees are seeking meaning. They are looking for environments where their contributions are visible, their voices are heard, and their professional growth is actively nurtured. When we ignore these deeper needs, we face the silent crisis of disengagement: employees who are physically present but mentally absent.

Tapping into the Ethiopian SpiritEthiopia is a culture deeply rooted in community, collective effort, and deep-seated respect for elders and peers. Our professional environments can leverage this. The concept of 'Edir' or 'Equb'—though traditional—speaks to a fundamental truth about us: we are wired to thrive when we belong to something larger than ourselves. Managers who treat their teams with the same respect and community-orientation found in these traditional structures often see a remarkable shift in morale.

Empowerment over Micromanagement One of the fastest ways to kill motivation is the shadow of micromanagement. In our hierarchy-heavy work culture, it is easy for leaders to fall into the trap of controlling every detail. But true motivation grows in the soil of trust. When you empower an employee to own a project—to make decisions and even occasionally stumble—you are sending a powerful message: "I trust you." This trust is perhaps the most potent currency a leader can spend.

The Power of Recognition We often underestimate the impact of a simple "thank you." In the rush of daily deadlines, it is easy to overlook the effort behind a task well done. However, public or private recognition for a job well done acts as a force multiplier for morale. It validates the individual's effort and sets a standard for the rest of the team.

Investing in Growth Finally, the most motivated employees are those who feel they are growing. Whether it is through mentorship programs, training, or exposure to new challenges, providing a clear path for advancement is essential. When an employee sees a future for themselves within your organization, they don't just work for you—they invest in the organization's collective success.

Motivation is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires consistency, empathy, and a genuine interest in the people who power our businesses. The leaders who will truly succeed are those who realize that their most valuable asset isn't their capital, their machinery, building, infrastructure or their technology—it’s the human spirit behind it all.

The writer is instructor of Business, Accounting, Management, Curriculum, Instruction, and Economics at different capacities since 1998 G. C in public and private higher education institutions. He also served as a department head, registrar, researcher office in those institutions. He also has a teaching experience at international school. He prepared a lot of journal articles on higher education exit exam, human resource management, management skills, higher education quality assurance, expected leadership qualities etc. in reputable journals around the world.

He can be reached via bedlusamson@yahoo.com/ bsamsonworku@gmail.com.

Entrepreneur PROFILE:

RESUME

Name: Fetiya Mohammed

Education: BA in Sociology

Company name: Liyu Liquid Soap Manufacturing and Chemical Supplier

Title: Owner

Founded in: 2025

What it does: Providing soap-making training and manufacturing liquid soap

Hq: Addis Ababa

Number of Employees: 2

STARTUP CAPITAL
50,000 BIRR

CURRENT CAPITAL
Growing

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the Business: Being unable to find a satisfactory job that could change my life in my field of study

Biggest perk of ownership: Being your own boss

Biggest strength: Creating strong business networks

Biggest challenge: Rising cost of raw materials

Plan: Opening a training center

First career: None

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: Successful people in this sector, especially women

Most admired person: My mother

Stress reducer: Walking long distances in silence

Favorite pastime: Watching movies

Favorite book: Qur'an

Favorite destination: Dubai

Favorite automobile: None

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

Aug. 8, 2026

የኢትዮጵያ ንግድ ባንክ
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	159.83	163.02
POUND STERLING	211.71	215.95
EURO	184.94	188.64
SWISS FRANK	194.38	198.27
SWEDISH KRONER	16.59	16.92
CHINESE YUAN	23.24	23.71
UAE DIRHAM	43.51	44.38
JAPANIS YEN	0.99	1.01

INTERVIEW

INSIDE BEHAGERLIJ'S ANIMATION SUCCESS

Minasie Terefe is an award-winning animation director and Co-Founder of Behagerlij Studio, Ethiopia's premier animation studio. With over 10 years of experience and a background in Architecture and Theology, his work blends structure, emotion, and culturally grounded storytelling. He has directed visually rich shorts including "Zarem Arbegna" and "Endegena", which have won multiple awards and screened globally. In 2026, he made African history with a continent-first double win at Annecy Festival MIFA Pitches—taking the Disney and AGrAF (Association des Auteurs Groupement de l'Animation Française) Prizes—for his preschool animated series "Sunday Morning". He currently leads creative vision for original IPs and is committed to strengthening Ethiopia's animation ecosystem while contributing to Africa's effort to tell and sell its own stories.

Capital: How did your principle of blending Ethiopian culture with modern digital art transition you from a startup studio to international recognition?

Minasie Terefe: From the beginning, our goal was never simply to make animation. We wanted to prove that stories from Ethiopia could stand confidently on the world stage without pretending to be from somewhere else. Many people think international success comes from making your work look or feel Western. I have always believed the opposite. The more honest and specific you are, the more universal your work becomes.

When Behagerlij started, we were a small studio with limited resources but a clear conviction. We focused on developing our artistic voice instead of chasing trends. Whether we were designing brands, producing short films, or developing original stories, we kept asking the same question: "What can only come from here?"

That philosophy gradually opened doors. Projects like Endegena, Zarem Arbegna, and now Sunday Morning became stepping stones. Being selected for Annecy MIFA and receiving prestigious recognition from Disney and AGrAF wasn't something we planned for from day one. It was the result of years of consistently investing in originality. Those awards didn't change who we are. They confirmed that authenticity can travel.

Capital: Your work is very diverse, ranging from short animations like "Endegena" and "Zarem Arbegna" to cultural children's books like "Hasset's House" and brand designs. How has it been possible to maintain a consistent artistic identity across these different mediums?

Minasie: The medium changes, but the questions we ask never do.

Whether we are making a children's book, an animated film, or designing a visual identity for a company, we begin by understanding people. What makes them laugh? What gives them hope? What memories do they carry? Design and art are simply different ways of expressing the same curiosity.

> **'Sunday Morning' –** 3D Preschool Animation Series
> - **Winner of** two prestigious international awards:
>   - Disney Television Animation Prize
>   - AGrAF Prize for Best TV Series or Special Project
> - **Directed by:** Minasie Terefe
> - **Artwork by:** Ermias Assefa, Milkias Yitref, and Ephrem Terefe
> - **Music by:** renowned Ethiopian composer Michael Asrat

I also come from an architecture background, and I think that shaped the way I see creative work. Architecture teaches you that every decision should serve a purpose. I try to approach storytelling the same way. Every color, every movement, every character design should contribute to the emotional experience.

If someone looks at our work and says, "This feels like Behagerlij," even before they see our logo, then we've done our job.

Capital: What do you think are the main institutional, financial, and technical challenges local artists face when trying to transition to their own Intellectual Property (IP) works?

Minasie: The biggest challenge isn't talent. Ethiopia has incredible artists. The challenge is the ecosystem around them.

Most creative businesses survive by doing client work because that pays today's bills; and there is absolutely no shame in that. But original IP is different. You invest for years before seeing any financial return, and that requires patience and capital, strong institutions, and people who understand the value of intellectual property; which is almost non-existent in Ethiopia.

Ironically, we often place a higher value on fixed assets like houses and cars than on intellectual property, even though a well-developed IP can continue generating revenue for decades through

INTERVIEW

licensing, distribution, publishing, merchandising, and countless other opportunities. Until we begin to see intellectual property as a long-term asset rather than just a creative idea, it will remain difficult for more creators to make that transition.

Animation also requires long development cycles. You need writers, artists, producers, sound designers, technical directors, and many other specialists working together. Building that pipeline is difficult when training opportunities are limited and financing is scarce.

But I think the biggest shift is psychological. We need to move from thinking of ourselves as service providers to becoming creators and owners of original worlds. Once we begin building valuable IP instead of only delivering projects for others, we create assets that can continue generating value for years.

Capital: While ensuring that your content is deeply rooted in local Ethiopian culture, psychology, and humor, how do you manage to balance this so that it remains appealing to an international audience?

Minasie: I don't think culture and universality are opposites. The emotions are universal. The expression is local.

In Sunday Morning, the setting is unmistakably Ethiopian. The neighborhood, the rhythm of family life, the little details all come from our experiences. But the story isn't about Ethiopia. It's about childhood. And childhood is universal. Every child has wanted to play when adults wanted peace. Every parent has wanted just a few quiet moments.

That's why we chose to make the series without dialogue. It wasn't a marketing decision. It was a storytelling decision. In our world, silence is the rule and imagination is the tool. Visual comedy, music, and performance allow families from different languages and cultures to experience the same story together.

The more truthful we are to our own experiences, the more it has a sense of place and the less we have to explain them.

Capital: Animation and digital storytelling require high-level technical training, specialized software, and strong computing infrastructure. How are you managing the tasks of cultivating a skilled workforce and overcoming resource limitations while based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

Minasie: Resource limitations are real, but they have also forced us to become intentional.

Instead of trying to compete by having the biggest team or the most expensive technology, we've focused on developing strong artistic foundations. Software changes every few years. Good storytelling doesn't.

We've also been fortunate to benefit from the equipment and creative space provided through Habesha Creative Lab at Alliance Ethio-Française, which has been invaluable as we've continued to grow. At the same time, we've invested a lot in mentoring young artists, building workflows that fit our reality, and creating an environment where people can keep growing. Every project becomes a classroom.

Sometimes working in Ethiopia means finding creative solutions that larger studios never have to think about. But constraints can also sharpen innovation. You become disciplined. You learn to solve problems instead of waiting for perfect conditions.

Ultimately, we're not just building projects. We're trying to build people. If the industry is going to grow, we need more artists, more producers, more technical specialists, and more studios succeeding together.

"Those awards didn't change who we are. They confirmed that authenticity can travel."

Capital: It is known that representing Ethiopia at international animation festivals and winning Disney and AGrAF awards for "Sunday Morning" took place. What does this recognition mean for the studio and for promoting East African animation?

Minasie: Personally, the awards were encouraging. But I think their greatest value is symbolic.

For the first time in Annecy Festival's 66-year history, an Ethiopian project was officially selected to pitch at the MIFA Pitches. Sunday Morning then went on to receive both the Disney and the AGrAF Awards, making it not only Ethiopia's first win at the festival, but also the first project from Africa to comeback with a double-win. That matters because representation changes expectations.

I hope it sends a message that world-class animation can come from East Africa. Not someday, but today.

It’s true that for Behagerlij, it creates opportunities to build meaningful partnerships with broadcasters, distributors, and producers who may never have looked toward Ethiopia before. But what excites me even more is what it could mean for those coming after us. If our journey makes it a little easier for the next generation of Ethiopian and East African animators to be taken seriously, to access opportunities, and to dream a little bigger, then that will be our greatest achievement. Success is most meaningful when it opens doors for others.

Capital: "Sunday Morning" portrays a universal childhood aspect where four children turn Sunday into an adventure so as not to disturb their resting mother. How much of this comedic content is drawn from your own childhood memories?

Minasie: Quite a lot, actually. I grew up in a home where Sundays had their own rhythm. After church, everyone slowed down. Our parents wanted to rest, but my siblings and I had only one thing on our minds: play, play, and more play! That fun little tension was always there. And looking back now, I realize just how many funny and beautiful moments came out of it.

The series isn't based on one specific memory. It's based on a feeling that I think many of us recognize. Whether it's an Ethiopian toddler or a French mom, any household with children can relate to that dynamic.

As children, ordinary places became extraordinary because our imagination transformed them. Terepezas became trains. Koba sheguts became AK 47s. We had this incredible superpower of turning the ordinary and mundane into something wild and magical.

That spirit is really the heart of Sunday Morning. The children don't have extraordinary toys or magical powers. Their greatest resource is imagination. In many ways, the show is a celebration of something we all had as children but often lose as adults: the ability to create entire worlds out of almost nothing.

Capital: What is the future plan for Behagerlij? Where do you think the overall Ethiopian animation sector currently stands?

Minasie: Our ambition has never been to make one successful project.

We want Behagerlij to become a studio known for creating original stories that travel globally while remaining unmistakably Ethio-African. Sunday Morning is an important milestone, but hopefully it's only the beginning.

We're interested in building long-term IPs, training new talent, advocating authentic storytelling and showing that sustainable animation businesses can emerge from Ethiopia.

As for the industry, I think we're at an early but still very exciting stage. We may not yet have the infrastructure of more established markets, but we have something equally important: fresh voices that haven't been overdeveloped into sounding the same.

The next decade will depend on whether we can build stronger partnerships between artists, investors, educational institutions, and policymakers. If we do that, I genuinely believe Ethiopia can become one of the creative centers of African animation.

We're no longer asking whether Ethiopian animation belongs on the global stage. The conversation now is about what kind of stories we want to contribute to it.

Spotlight

Ever catch the perfect picture with your digital camera or camera phone and wish you could find a way for others to experience it? Here is your chance. If you find yourself at the right place at the right time and happen to catch an amazing scene you believe someone else should see, send us your news pictures with no more than 30 words to spotlight@capitalethiopia.com and we will publish it.

PHOTO: Anteneh Aklilu

ECA strengthens national implementing committees to expand Central Africa's participation in preferential trade

In Central Africa, commitments under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) have yet to translate into commercial reality at scale. To date, Cameroon remains the only country in the subregion to have traded under the AfCFTA's preferential terms through the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI), a gap that underscores the urgency of accelerating institutional and operational readiness across the subregion, so that more businesses can access the continental single market.

To address this challenge, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through its Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa, the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) will convene representatives of National AfCFTA Implementing Committees from the subregion's eight countries, regional economic communities, private sector and key institutional partners in Yaoundé from 4 to 7 August 2026. Held under the theme "Accelerating AfCFTA Operationalization in Central Africa: Strengthening the Technical Capacity of National Implementation Committees," the seminar aims to enhance the effectiveness of these committees, the essential mechanisms tasked with translating the Agreement into practice through reforms, services to economic operators, and concrete trade-facilitating action. The seminar is organized in partnership with the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and in consultation with the AfCFTA Secretariat.

MSF expands support to Alamata general hospital to strengthen critical care for local communities

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has expanded its support to Alamata general hospital to help restore and strengthen life-saving healthcare services

The hospital, which serves as the main healthcare facility for an estimated 300,000 people in Alamata town and surrounding areas, has been facing severe operational challenges. These include prolonged supply chain disruptions, damaged infrastructure, limited referral capacity and a critical shortage of healthcare workers in addition to the limited resources. As a result, the quality of care has declined sharply, putting many patients – especially mothers, newborns and patients with life-threatening conditions at serious risk.

MSF began supporting Alamata general hospital in March 2026 and later expanded its comprehensive targeted support to the maternity and emergency departments as well as the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). This scaled-up intervention aims to restore essential life-saving services and strengthen healthcare access for communities in Alamata town and the surrounding areas.

CANAL+ secures exclusive rights to all UEFA men's club competitions

CANAL+ announces the acquisition of the exclusive rights, in all languages, to all UEFA Men's Club competitions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Starting in mid-2027, the Group will exclusively bring the biggest matches from the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Conference League to its subscribers across more than 40 countries in the region until 2031.

The most exciting European clashes, the best English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese clubs, Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Serhou Guirassy, Amad Diallo, Bryan Mbeumo, Antoine Semenyo, Nicolas Jackson, Kylian Mbappé, Ousmane Dembélé, Lamine Yamal, Erling Haaland, Michael Olise, Achraf Hakimi, Harry Kane and many more. All of them will meet up on CANAL+ channels.

In English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Africa, SuperSport, the long-standing broadcaster of UEFA competitions, further strengthens its position as the leading sports platform and will continue to offer exclusive coverage of UEFA Men's Club competitions to its subscribers. In French-speaking Africa, this new agreement marks the return of a full coverage of the UEFA Champions League on CANAL+ Sport channels and, for the first time, of the UEFA Europa League and UEFA Conference League, on an exclusive basis in French language much to the delight of our subscribers.

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East Africa's legislators step up on AfCFTA implementation

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), convened a four-day Capacity-Building Workshop for the East African Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The workshop is taking place from 28 to 31 July 2026 at the Trademark Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

The workshop aims to strengthen Committee members' understanding of the objectives of the AfCFTA Agreement, its Protocols, institutional architecture and operational instruments, and to deepen their appreciation of the relationship between the AfCFTA and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), particularly the East African Community (EAC). It is designed to enhance the Committee's capacity to provide informed legislative and oversight support for the domestication and effective implementation of the Agreement in the EAC region.

As the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement advances, the interface between continental integration efforts and existing regional integration frameworks has become increasingly important. The Agreement recognizes RECs as building blocks for the continental integration project spearheaded by the AfCFTA.

Local entrepreneurs present innovative solutions to strengthen food systems and resilience

Iceaddis, in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), today hosted the IGNITE Food Systems Innovation Challenge Ethiopia 2.0 Demonstration Day, celebrating seven Ethiopian ventures developing innovative and scalable solutions to strengthen food security, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience.

Held at Capital Hotel in Addis Ababa, the event brought together government representatives, development partners, investors, entrepreneurs, civil society organizations, and media to spotlight locally led innovations that are helping transform Ethiopia's food systems and create economic opportunities for communities.

The event showcased seven innovative agrifood ventures from the Somali and Tigray regions that have completed the second round of the IGNITE Food Systems Innovation Challenge, a programme designed to support entrepreneurs developing solutions that strengthen food security, improve agricultural productivity, create livelihoods, and build resilience to climate-related shocks.

Diaspora couple opens digital libraries in Harar

An Ethiopian couple based in Ohio, United States, has expanded its education support in Ethiopia with the inauguration of two digital libraries in Harar.

Lemma Getachew and Dr. Guenet Endale, through the Lemma and Dr. Guenet Foundation, opened the facilities at Harar Secondary (Junior) School and Ras Mekonnen Elementary School. The libraries contain more than 6,000 books and are expected to give thousands of students greater access to digital learning resources.

The inauguration brought together Harari Regional Government officials, education leaders and community representatives.

Edmond Tesfaye, the foundation's Project and Strategic Planning Advisor, said the founders believe sustainable development starts with investing in young people. Dr. Guenet is among the pioneering female engineering lecturers at Addis Ababa University, while Lemma is a pharmacist, entrepreneur and real estate investor.

The foundation has previously donated more than 85 computers to the two schools, as well as supported clean water, sanitation and learning materials. It has also provided school supplies to more than 200 students.

Historical novel exploring Bete Israel heritage launched in Addis Ababa

A new historical novel exploring the identity, heritage and social experiences of Ethiopia's Beta Israel community was launched Tuesday at the Stay Easy Plus Hotel in Addis Ababa.

Titled 'Behind the Synagogue' (Kemukrabu Bestjerba), the book was written by Eyosias Esundale and draws on his doctoral research.

It combines historical research with narrative fiction to examine the community's origins, cultural resilience and the social hardships associated with discrimination and exclusion.

The launch also provided a personal occasion for Eyosias, who honored his parents' 55th wedding anniversary during the event by dressing them in ceremonial robes.

The novel follows Abate, a young scholar pursuing a doctorate in finance who begins a journey of personal and historical discovery. The story moves between the Kechene and Gulele neighborhoods of Addis Ababa and the towns of Merhabete and Debre Berhan.

Through Abate's experiences, the book explores questions of identity, belonging and the psychological effects of historical discrimination. It also examines the ways in which family, faith and community traditions help people preserve their dignity and cultural identity.

The novel incorporates research into the ancient origin stories of the Beta Israel community, including narratives connected to the destruction of the Second Temple. It also refers to the community's clandestine migrations during Operation Moses in 1984 and Operation Solomon in 1991.

Zelalem Girma, a language consultant on the project, said the novel captures the atmosphere and linguistic character of historic Addis Ababa. He said the work also helps explain terms such as "Falasha" and "Kayla," which were historically used as derogatory labels against members of the community.

According to Girma, the novel goes beyond documenting hardship. It also highlights cultural resilience, traditional communal values and the strength of family relationships.

The story features the enduring marriage of Abba Bitew and his wife, whose six-decade relationship serves as a symbol of family commitment and continuity. It also follows the developing romance between Abate and Selam, a clinical nurse.

The launch brought together scholars, faith leaders, authors and community advocates who have worked to document Beta Israel history and support community members in Ethiopia and abroad.

Among those recognized at the event were Dr. Pastor Seleshi Kebede, who has researched anti-stigma efforts in Kechene; Aba Eshetu, an elder who has documented Beta Israel history in Ethiopia and Israel; and W/ro Zenebech, who leads annual medical outreach programs.

Community advocates Solomon Assefa and Pastor Demis Mamo, local author Kebelew Zelelew, and youth leader Mikiyas Legesse, founder of the Selihom relief initiative, were also acknowledged during the gathering.

The novel presents a measured reflection on social exclusion and calls for unity, education and mutual respect. It rejects identity-based division and encourages greater understanding among Ethiopia's diverse communities.

By translating academic research into an accessible literary form, 'Behind the Synagogue' aims to preserve cultural history while encouraging dialogue and social reconciliation.

The author said the book was intended not only to recount the challenges faced by the Beta Israel community, but also to present its resilience, traditions and contributions to Ethiopia's broader social history.

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BIG NEWS!

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The National Bank of Ethiopia launched the 2025/2026 Second Annual **Gender Scorecard 2026 11/07/2026 G.c.**

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Society

Purpose's search for man: Reclaiming meaning in an age of materialism

By Gezahegn Anbelu

Martin Luther King Jr. once famously said, "If a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." This powerful quote underscores an important virtue that can guide life. A life devoid of the meaning that drives people to live for a cause is impoverished, even if it is glittering with material success. Purpose drives human beings to live for something greater than life itself. The meaning of life that we attribute to things has a strong influence on how we see life, humanity, our jobs, and the people we relate to.

As Viktor Frankl observed in Man's Search for Meaning, humanity's main concern is not merely gaining pleasure or avoiding pain, but finding meaning in life. Frankl argued that a human being is not driven by the satisfaction of basic needs alone, but fundamentally by a "will to meaning" — an innate drive to find purpose even in times of difficulty and suffering. When individuals lack this anchor, no amount of material comfort can fill the void. Indeed, without a clear sense of why we exist, life becomes a series of busy events without a destination, reducing our existence to mere survival rather than intentional living.

We cannot deny the reality that modern life, with all its incessant demands, calls for pragmatism and pushes us toward the allure of a stable life. This stability often seems to come not through pursuing elusive goals or larger-than-life purposes, but from realistically adjusting our expectations and shrewdly dealing with the environment around us, including our jobs, relationships, and money.

Ideally, surrendering our realistic instincts to some form of ideal or utopian expectation — grounded in the fairness of life and the hope of leaving a legacy that transcends time and space — is sometimes seen as mere naïveté and, at best, Quixotism. This view dismisses such thinking as impractical idealism driven by romantic notions, lofty goals, or grand chivalrous actions without regard for practical reality.

But losing purpose in our lives, professions, and relationships comes at a heavy cost. Modern humanity has been driven to accumulate wealth, status, and fame at the expense of so-called "ideal goals" such as purpose and commitment, even when the reward does not come immediately. This creates a generation in which purpose and sacrifice are seen as a lack of understanding of "real life." Real life, in this view, becomes an existence bound by short-term, myopic, and immediate gratification rather than long-term, generational legacy.

In this context, what holds the community together is not trust, love for one's profession, or a genuine desire to improve things, but a formal legal statute. The calculating modern mind may view this as a bizarre and unrealistic adulation of old-fashioned tradition — perhaps even a religion-induced false consciousness, as described in the Marxist tradition. Indeed, Marx argued that in a materialist system, where material ownership ultimately defines one's worth, noble ideas of living for something that transcends materialism might be dismissed as farce.

Furthermore, Maslow, in his famous theory of the hierarchy of needs, originally argued that one cannot satisfy higher-order needs, such as self-actualization or contributing to society without monetary reward, until lower needs are met. However, in his later life, Maslow revised this view, stating that one can — and perhaps even should — not be confined by such strict hierarchies, and that it is possible to achieve self-actualization even when lower-level needs are not fully satisfied.

Despite this, the spirit of the age has vigorously hunted down any remnant of such notions. Everyone seems to be struggling just to get by, viewing others as competitors. This predatory perception is weakening social cohesion, as relationships — even among relatives — are increasingly defined by financial or material success. Marriage risks becoming a careful calculation of a potential partner's financial and material status rather than a union shaped by love, compatibility, and shared purpose. Are we creating social zombies, where people place less value on spiritual and communal values and elevate material success as the supreme feature of life?

The pressure is real, driven not only by cultural messaging but also by systemic financial demands, skyrocketing costs of living, and the scarcity of stable, high-paying jobs. These harsh economic factors create genuine survival anxiety that deeply strains social bonds, making the scramble for security feel like necessity rather than greed. Yet compounding this pressure is the alluring image of a luxurious lifestyle promoted on social media, which intensifies the competitive spirit by making people feel they are missing out on "the good life." As a result, people are driven to replicate and experience that good life for themselves, often sacrificing moral convictions and, at times, their decency for immediate financial gain and fame. They fail to critically question whether the enchanted and glamorized life represented on social media actually provides depth or enriches a person holistically.

Yes, travel to exotic destinations may have recreational value and may even deepen our experience by exposing us to a different world and making us more aware of livelihoods beyond our own background. However, does that mean everybody should do it? Is it worth it if it comes at the expense of your savings or your future? Few stop to consider the environmental damage it may cause. Bewitched and enchanted by the allure of social expectations and uncritically absorbed notions of a glamorous life, people continually strive to repeat the experience.

At the core of this cultural disposition is a lack of purpose. Cultivating purpose in an age that discourages it requires intentional inward reflection — a deliberate choice to step off the treadmill of external validation and reconnect with what truly sustains the human spirit. Discovering our purpose requires looking beyond the immediate pressures of the world and aligning our daily actions with enduring values. Without it, culture slowly degrades toward materialism, and losing oneself in the process becomes deeply costly.

A purpose-driven life has a long-term orientation. It sees life as a seed and envisions a life of contributing to and nourishing individuals and organizations. A purpose-driven life can endure pain and inconvenience for the sake of the greater good, seeing each day as an opportunity to build something of greater value for future generations. A generation that forgets or becomes indifferent to future generations is a lost generation; it forgets the price that was paid to bring us here. The purpose-driven individual discerns whether organizations and people place the long-term well-being of society at the center of their drive, aligns with that purpose, and rejects anything that goes against it. For such a person, the monetary value a company offers is not the sole standard.

Companies with cost-oriented marketing may have a short-term advantage over purpose-driven organizations. However, when it comes to earning loyal, long-term customers and sustainable profits, success is tied to having a larger purpose that justifies existence. People buy a company's story before they buy the commodities it sells. If they connect with that purpose, they know that every penny they spend not only fulfills a physical need but also satisfies higher-order needs, such as contributing to a cause and promoting values they hold dear. This model is now widely considered one of the best marketing strategies for attracting support from diverse stakeholders, including the government, the broader society, and customers invested in the product.

Similarly, companies are looking for recruits who possess not only relevant skills and knowledge but also a bold personal and organizational vision that can harmonize with the company's mission. The old days when a relevant degree and work experience were enough are fading, as employers now pay close attention to individuals who think differently and have the audacity to shape their industries innovatively.

This mutual, purpose-driven interaction among diverse stakeholders is more human and serene. It aligns with the social, personal, and spiritual dimensions of society by focusing on our true selves and communal instincts. This approach also brings sound economic prosperity, ensuring that individuals never lose themselves in the process of making a living.

Ultimately, reclaiming our destiny requires an awakening of the soul. When we dare to anchor our lives to something enduring, we transform mere existence into a legacy of significance, proving that a life measured by deep conviction will always outlive the transient glitter of the material world. Indeed, purpose is actively searching for man, calling us back from the brink of superficiality and reminding us that a life anchored in profound meaning is the true measure of human achievement.

Gezahegn Anbelu is a communication expert specializing in multiculturalism, the synthesis of diverse perspectives, and the promotion of peace, human flourishing. He can be reached at gezuanbelu@gmail.com.

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ሽያጩ ከሰኔ 24 ቀን 2018 ዓ.ም. ጀምሮ እስከ መስከረም 25 ቀን 2019 ዓ.ም. ድረስ የሚቆይ ሲሆን፣ በደንበኛ ሳቢ መግለጫው በተደነገጉት ሁኔታዎች መሠረት የሽያጩ ጊዜ ከተወሰነው ጊዜ በፊት ሊዘጋ ወይም ሊራዘም ይችላል።

የአዲስ አክሲዮኖችን አደላደል በተመለከተ፡

በደንበኛ ሳቢ መግለጫው (Prospectus) መሠረት፣ አዲስ አክሲዮኖች ለነባር ባለአክሲዮኖች በያዙት ነባር የአክሲዮን ድርሻ መጠን ልክ በተመጣጣኝ ድርሻ (pro-rata basis) ይደለደላሉ። በዚህ ድልድል መሠረት ገዢ/ፍላጎት ያልተገኘላቸው ትርፍ አክሲዮኖች፣ ተጨማሪ አክሲዮን ለመግዛት ፍላጎት ላሳዩ ነባር ባለአክሲዮኖች ለመሸጥ አቅዷል።

የአዲስ አክሲዮኖችን ግዢ ሂደት በተመለከተ፡

ነባር ባለአክሲዮኖች የግብይት ሂሳብ (Trading Account) ለመክፈትና የግዢ ትዕዛዝ ለማስተላለፍ በኢትዮጵያ ካፒታል ገበያ ባለሥልጣን ፈቃድ የተሰጣቸውን የካፒታል ገበያ አገልግሎት ሰጪዎች ማነጋገር አለባቸው። ነባር ባለአክሲዮኖች የሚከተሉትን አስፈላጊ ሰነዶች ማቅረብ ይጠበቅባቸዋል፡- (1) መታወቂያ (ፋይዳ መታወቂያ)፣ (2) የግብር ከፋይ መለያ ቁጥር (TIN)፣ (3) የኢሜይል አድራሻ፣ (4) በህጋዊ ወኪል በኩል ከሆነ የውክልና ማስረጃ ፣ (5) ባለአክሲዮኑ ሕጋዊ ሰውነት ያለው ድርጅት ከሆነ የታክስ መለያ ቁጥር (TIN) እና የድርጅቱ ወኪል ሙሉ መረጃ።

ማሳሰቢያ

እባክዎ የደንበኛ ሳቢ መግለጫውን (Prospectus) በሙሉ ያንብቡት። ምን ማድረግ እንዳለብዎት ግራ ከተጋቡ የሰነደ ሙዓለ ንዋይ ግዢ ከመፈጸምዎ በፊት ተገቢው ፍቃድ ያለውን ገለልተኛ የፋይናንስ አማካሪ ምክር ይጠይቁ። የደንበኛ ሳቢ መግለጫው በባለሥልጣኑ መጽደቁ ለሽያጭ የቀረቡትን ሰነደ ሙዓለ ንዋዮች እንዲገዙ የተሰጠ ምክር ወይም ድጋፍ አይደለም።

ይህ ማስታወቂያ በኢትዮጵያ ካፒታል ገበያ ባለሥልጣን ፈቃድ አግኝቷል።

ለበለጠ መረጃ፣

ለበለጠ መረጃ፣ ፍላጎት ያላቸው ባለአክሲዮኖች በአዲስ አበባ በቴዎድሮስ አደባባይ አካባቢ በሚገኘው የሕብረት ኢንሹራንስ አ.ማ. ዋና መሥሪያ ቤት በአካል በመቅረብ፣ በድረ ገጽ **www.hibretinsurance.com** ወይም በስልክ ቁጥር **+251 11 126 34 34** በመደወል ተጨማሪ መረጃ ማግኘት ይችላሉ።

ሕብረት ኢንሹራንስ አ.ማ.

To: All Hibret Insurance S.C
Existing Shareholders

Pursuant to the Prospectus of Hibret Insurance S.C. ("the Company"), approved by the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority ("ECMA" or "the Authority") on 29 June 2026, and under the authorization granted thereunder, the Company hereby announces a Rights Offering of 476,190 (Four Hundred Seventy-Six Thousand One Hundred Ninety) ordinary shares at a subscription price of Birr 1,050 (One Thousand and Fifty Birr) per share.

The offer period commences on June 30, 2026 G.C., and shall remain open until October 5, 2026, unless extended or closed earlier in accordance with the terms of the Prospectus.

Basis of Allotment:

In accordance with the Prospectus, the new shares shall be allotted to existing shareholders of record on a pro-rata (proportional entitlement) basis, relative to their existing shareholding. Any shares not subscribed for by the shareholders to whom they were allotted (the "Unsubscribed Shares") shall be made available for purchase by existing shareholders who have expressed interest in acquiring additional shares, subject to availability and the allocation procedure set out in the Prospectus.

Procedure for Subscription

Existing shareholders wishing to exercise their rights or apply for additional shares must contact a Capital Market Service Provider duly licensed by the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority to open a trading account and place a purchase (subscription) order. Shareholders shall be required to submit the following documentation in support of their application: a National Digital ID (Fayda ID); a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN); a valid email address; a duly executed Power of Attorney, where the application is submitted through a legal representative or authorized agent; and, if the shareholder is a legal entity, the entity's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and full details of its authorized representatives.

Note:

Please read the Prospectus in full and, where in doubt as to the action you should take, consult a licensed financial adviser for guidance before investing in securities. The approval of the Prospectus by the Authority is not an endorsement or recommendation to purchase the securities offered.

This advertisement has been approved by the Ethiopian Capital Market Authority.

For more information,

For further information, interested shareholders may visit Hibret Insurance S.C.'s Head Office, located at the Hibret Insurance Head Office Building near Tewodros Square, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; visit the Company's website at www.hibretinsurance.com; or contact the Company by telephone at +251 11 1 26 34 34.

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Email: ethiopiaproject8@gmail.com
Mobile: +91 8130994522 (WhatsApp)

The Commercialization of Hope

Alazar Kebede

Hope has always occupied a unique place in human society. It motivates individuals to persevere through adversity, inspires innovation, and sustains communities during times of uncertainty. Traditionally regarded as a moral and psychological resource, hope is increasingly being transformed into a commercial commodity. Across healthcare, education, finance, technology, and self-improvement industries, organizations have discovered that hope can be packaged, marketed, and sold.

While the commercialization of hope has undoubtedly expanded access to opportunities and solutions, it has also created ethical dilemmas, encouraging unrealistic expectations and exploiting vulnerability for profit. Although commercial markets can legitimately cultivate hope by offering genuine value, the unchecked commercialization of hope risks undermining trust, widening social inequalities, and reducing human aspirations to market transactions.

The commercialization of hope is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, merchants have sold products promising health, happiness, or prosperity. However, digital technologies, globalization, and sophisticated marketing strategies have amplified this trend. Modern advertising rarely sells products alone; instead, it sells visions of transformed lives. Consumers are encouraged to believe that purchasing a fitness programme will guarantee confidence, enrolling in an online course will secure financial freedom, or investing in the latest technology will ensure future success. In this sense, hope has become an intangible product embedded within tangible goods and services.

Healthcare provides one of the most striking examples of this phenomenon. Pharmaceutical companies, private hospitals, and biotechnology firms often market cutting-edge treatments by emphasising hope for recovery or extended life. While medical innovation undoubtedly improves health outcomes, ethical concerns arise when hope is overstated or detached from scientific evidence. Patients suffering from terminal illnesses may spend significant financial resources on experimental treatments with limited probability of success.

The promise of hope can therefore become a powerful commercial tool that exploits emotional vulnerability rather than empowering informed decision-making. Harvard scholars have frequently argued that ethical healthcare communication should balance optimism with transparency, ensuring that patients understand both the possibilities and limitations of medical interventions.

Similarly, the education industry increasingly markets hope as a pathway to economic mobility. Universities, private colleges, and online learning platforms advertise qualifications as guaranteed routes to successful careers. Higher education undoubtedly enhances knowledge and employability, yet labour markets remain uncertain and highly competitive. Students frequently accumulate substantial debt based on optimistic promises of future prosperity that may never materialise. When educational institutions prioritise enrolment targets over realistic career guidance, hope becomes a commercial asset rather than an educational value. Such practices risk undermining public trust in educational systems and contribute to growing dissatisfaction among graduates facing underemployment.

The rapid expansion of the self-help and personal development industry further illustrates how hope has become monetised. Motivational speakers, life coaches, productivity applications, and wellness influencers generate billions of dollars by promising personal transformation. Many of these services provide genuine psychological benefits by encouraging resilience, discipline, and positive thinking. However, others rely on exaggerated claims that suggest success depends solely on individual mindset while ignoring structural inequalities such as poverty, discrimination, or limited access to opportunity. This narrative shifts responsibility from institutions to individuals, allowing commercial enterprises to profit from people's aspirations without addressing the broader social conditions that shape outcomes.

Social media has significantly accelerated the commercialization of hope. Digital platforms use sophisticated algorithms to personalise advertisements that appeal directly to users' ambitions and insecurities. Influencers frequently promote lifestyles that appear effortlessly attainable through purchasing recommended products or services. Carefully curated online identities create the illusion that happiness, beauty, or financial success is only one purchase away. Consequently, consumers often equate consumption with self-improvement. This cycle reinforces materialistic values while generating continuous demand for products that promise emotional fulfilment rather than practical utility.

The commercialization of hope also extends into financial markets. Investment firms, cryptocurrency promoters, and wealth management companies frequently appeal to consumers' dreams of financial independence. During periods of economic uncertainty, speculative investment opportunities often flourish because they offer hope for rapid wealth creation. The collapse of numerous financial bubbles demonstrates how commercial narratives built upon unrealistic optimism can produce devastating consequences for ordinary investors. Ethical financial communication requires balancing opportunity with honest discussion of risk, yet competitive markets often reward firms that present the most optimistic narratives.

Despite these criticisms, it would be inaccurate to argue that commercialising hope is inherently unethical. Markets frequently create products and services that genuinely improve people's lives. Medical research, educational technologies, renewable energy solutions, and entrepreneurial innovation all depend on investment motivated by hope for a better future. Businesses succeed by identifying problems and offering solutions that consumers value. In this sense, hope functions as a catalyst for innovation, encouraging both producers and consumers to pursue progress. Commercial activity can therefore generate positive social outcomes when it is grounded in honesty, accountability, and measurable effectiveness.

The central ethical challenge lies not in selling hope itself but in selling false hope. False hope emerges when commercial actors deliberately exaggerate benefits, conceal risks, or exploit desperation. Such practices weaken consumer trust and distort informed choice. Governments, regulators, and professional organisations therefore have an important responsibility to establish standards that protect vulnerable consumers from deceptive marketing. Transparent advertising, evidence-based claims, and effective consumer protection legislation can help ensure that hope remains connected to realistic expectations rather than manipulation.

Consumers also share responsibility for critically evaluating commercial promises. Media literacy, financial education, and scientific understanding enable individuals to distinguish credible opportunities from unrealistic claims. Educational institutions should therefore cultivate critical thinking skills that empower citizens to question persuasive marketing messages rather than accepting them uncritically. In an increasingly digital economy where emotional appeals dominate commercial communication, critical literacy becomes an essential democratic competence.

Ultimately, hope should remain a public good rather than merely a private commodity. Healthy societies cultivate hope through strong institutions, equitable opportunities, accessible education, effective healthcare, and social trust. Commercial enterprises can complement these foundations by delivering valuable innovations, but they should not replace them. When hope becomes primarily something to be purchased, those with greater financial resources gain disproportionate access to opportunity while disadvantaged groups face increasing exclusion. Such inequality undermines both economic efficiency and social cohesion.

In conclusion, the commercialization of hope reflects broader transformations within contemporary capitalist societies, where emotions, aspirations, and identities increasingly possess market value. Although businesses can legitimately inspire hope through meaningful innovation and responsible entrepreneurship, ethical boundaries must prevent hope from becoming an instrument of exploitation. Policymakers, corporations, educators, and consumers all have roles to play in ensuring that commercial success remains aligned with honesty, transparency, and social responsibility. Hope is among humanity's most valuable resources. It should inspire markets to serve society, rather than allowing markets to determine the value of hope itself.

Capital features a variety of independent voices; the opinions articulated in this column are the author's own and operate independently of our corporate viewpoint.

The missing link: From classroom to boardroom

By Gzachew Wolde

There is a need to address the missing link between the level of responsibility entrusted to people and the failures they often exhibit. What metrics should be used to assess whether someone is truly fit for a role? It is clear that corrupt assignment practices based on social relations, ethnic ties, godfatherly favors, and nepotism—forms of identity-based patronage—seriously undermine fairness and narrow the space for merit and healthy competition. This impedes meaningful progress and weakens useful institutional practice. How can we create a rational space that allows capable and skilled individuals to emerge, discharge their responsibilities effectively, and contribute to the betterment of the system?

Many people say the answer is simple: merit-based competency frameworks and transparent track-record verification, supported by oversight and qualification documents that testify to an individual's experience. But the challenge is that most credential letters from different organizations have become routine instruments of politeness. They often provide warm exit statements, glowing testimonials, and flattering language that wish departing employees well, regardless of actual performance. This creates a weak link between real competence and the documents that are supposed to prove it.

Many organizations default to issuing sanitized exit letters to avoid conflict or to show undue favor. If hiring or promotion decisions rely heavily on such credential letters, the system becomes merit-based in name but patronage-based in practice, because the verification layer is soft and easily manipulated.

This is one of the most frustrating and pervasive challenges in organizational governance. Credential inflation is not a problem limited to one department or one institution. It is a systemic issue that contributes to the failure of many institutions.

To create a rational space where truly capable people can emerge, organizations must stop relying on proxy metrics to evaluate quality. Genuine mechanisms must be developed to bypass soft verification layers and accurately assess a person's fitness for a role.

To reduce the influence of nepotism and generic recommendation letters, assessment metrics must be observable, quantifiable, and difficult to fake. Instead of simply asking candidates whether they can do a job, give them a real slice of the work. This might mean presenting them with a current, anonymized crisis the organization is facing and asking them to draft a turnaround strategy or complete a similar practical test as a gate exam.

An effective assessment should examine how an individual responds to high-stakes, ethically complex, or ambiguous situations. This helps test judgment and character, not just technical knowledge. During the assessment, candidates should also be required to provide verifiable metrics from a project that failed under their watch, along with the structural changes they implemented to fix it. If they can offer only vague or generic explanations, that should be treated as a warning sign rather than as proof of capability.

Subordinates and peers often know a leader's true capability better than the executives who hired them. That is why incorporating blind evaluations from a candidate's former peers—not just their superiors—can help pierce the veil of favoritism in the assessment process. This would reduce the flaws in traditional verification.

It is also possible to conduct background checks by reaching out to shared connections, former clients, or external stakeholders who worked with the candidate, in order to obtain supporting evidence. Going deeper into claimed achievements by asking how they were accomplished, what the budget was, and who else was on the team can help expose exaggerated credit and provide stronger evidence of competence.

Unless fair metrics are established, capable people will continue to be blocked by a traditional evaluation system that relies too heavily on flattering credential letters. There is a serious need to build firewalls against identity-based patronage.

Removing names, gender markers, ethnic identifiers, and even the names of specific universities from the first round of application screening can help evaluators assess candidates more objectively, based purely on their answers to technical or situational questions. This immediately reduces the advantage of social connection at the starting line.

There is also a need for panel-based decisions rather than solo hires. Otherwise, nepotism thrives in the dark, especially when one powerful individual has unilateral hiring and firing power. Decisions for critical roles should be made by a diverse panel that includes stakeholders from outside the immediate department. Each panel member should use a strict, pre-agreed scoring rubric so that subjective "gut feelings" are minimized.

In addition, the best way to counter inflated resumes is to enforce rigorous probationary periods and make the first phase of employment a genuine test. Clear, objective Key Performance Indicators should be set from day one. If the employee fails to meet them because they lack the competence their resume claimed, the contract should be terminated. Probation must stop being a rubber stamp and become the final, most rigorous phase of the hiring process.

A committee or process that automatically approves decisions without real review, critical thinking, or oversight—or a board that simply agrees with whatever the CEO or senior official wants—creates a fatal flaw in the hiring system.

When an employee is hired on probation or a trial period, management has a chance to decide on permanent employment based on actual performance. This may also help address the wider problem of poor educational outcomes that have long gone unnoticed in our country.

This approach can help diagnose persistent problems of nepotism, credential inflation, and rubber-stamp oversight with concrete, observable solutions. It can serve as a comprehensive and effective blueprint for institutional reform.

The recent reality in the national education system, where exam pass rates reportedly dropped to around 3 percent after strict anti-cheating and standardized verification measures were enforced, mirrors this institutional crisis. For years, the education system suffered from its own version of credential inflation. Students advanced, grades were awarded, and certificates were printed, but the verification layer was weak. In that sense, the existence of such a problem is no surprise.

If the credentialing layer that is supposed to certify competence is itself inflated, then every downstream mechanism that relies on "checking the qualification document" is inheriting a corrupted signal from the very beginning. The exit-letter problem described earlier is not an isolated organizational failure; it is the same soft-verification pathology recurring at an earlier stage of the pipeline.

A student who advances through a system with weak grading standards becomes a job candidate with an inflated transcript, who then enters a workplace that hires partly on transcript strength and warm credential letters that serve as testimony for evaluators. Sometimes, someone who was never rigorously tested later sits on a committee to judge whether others meet a standard they themselves never had to clear. In that way, each layer normalizes the next.

Verification is not a single checkpoint; it is a chain. A weak link anywhere upstream propagates forward. A 3 percent pass rate under strict verification, compared with the pass rate under the old regime, is itself a measurement of how much slack had built up in the system. That gap reveals the scale of the inflation problem for the first time.

This matters because "fixing the missing link" and "making up for the fact that it has been missing" are two different projects. You cannot simply restore rigorous verification going forward and call the problem solved. You are left with a large existing population of graduates, credential holders, and evaluators whose paper trail was produced under a broken system.

I believe this reveals a structural failure and the need to rebuild meritocracy from education to employment. We must address the whole missing link in the system and fix the problem through competency-based frameworks.

The writer can be reached via gzachewwolde@gmail.com

Capital features a variety of independent voices; the opinions articulated in this column are the author's own and operate independently of our corporate viewpoint.


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Emirates

United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Title of the EOI:

Procurement of Spare Parts to Reinstate the Electrical Systems of Africa Hall Building - LTA for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Date of this EOI: 6 July 2026	**Closing Date for Receipt of EOI:** 14 August 2026
EOI Number: EOIUNECA24536	**E-mail Address:** gebreegziabhers@un.org;
Address EOI response by fax for the Attention of: Solomon Gebreegziabher	
Fax Number:	
UNSPSC Code: 39000000 - Electrical Systems and Lighting and Components and Accessories and Supplies 39110000 - Lighting Fixtures and Accessorie	

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) seeks interested and qualified vendors to supply Spare Parts to reinstate the Electrical Systems of Africa Hall Building. The Commission seeks to enter three (3) years LTA Contract with the successful supplier.

Interested firms will be invited to the tender in "Invitation to Bid'' (ITB) at a later stage. This tender envisages selection of a single or more firm/s to supply Spare Parts for Electrical Systems.

A detailed SPECIFICATIONS will be included in the upcoming solicitation documents issued after this EOI closes.

Please note that the UNECA is precluded from entering into a contract with a firm that is not fully registered with UNGM. Firms interested in responding to this invitation but not currently fully registered as vendors with UNGM are encouraged to register before submission of the bid. Further details may be obtained by visiting **https://www.ungm.org/Vendor/Registration**.

Please use the link for the details and descriptions below.

Firms should submit their "expression of interest" electronically through the link before the deadline of 14 August 2026.

https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org.Depts.ptd/files/pdf/eoi24536.pdf

PLEASE NOTE: You should express your interest in this EOI electronically at: https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/306489

In case you have difficulties submitting your interest electronically, please contact gebreegziabhers@un.orgdirectly for instructions.

INVITATION TO BID

Sale of Unserviceable Printers, Scrap Carpets and Scrap Metals

REF. PRO32-3-PMU/26-5-1

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) invites interested bidders to participate in a closed bid exercise for the Sale of unserviceable Printers, Scrap Carpets and Scrap Metals.

The bid is to be sold "as is, where is" without recourse to warranties of any kind. Bid with some information will be available from **29 July 2026 – 19 August 2026 on UN working hours and days from Monday to Thursday morning time between 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM afternoon time 15:00 PM to 17:00 PM and on Friday 9:00 AM to 13:00 PM.**

For any queries regarding this bid, please contact the Bid Officer, Tel. 0115445779 extension (35779).

For physical inspection purposes, please contact the Inventory Control Unit of ECA in person or by telephone at 0115-443115, extension 33115.

Physical inspections will be conducted on **July 31, August 3,5,7,10,12,14,17 and 19 between 9:00 AM and 12:30 PM.**

Interested bidders may collect the bid document from the Procurement Unit, in Room no. NG.4S.03 of its Secretariat Building (Niger) 4th floor in the ECA compound at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during working hours, starting from 30 Julu 2026 – 19 August 2026 from Monday to Thursday morning time between 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM afternoon time 15:00 PM to 17:00 PM and on Friday 9:00 AM to 13:00 PM on UN working hours and days only.

The closing date of the bid submission will be **19 August 2026 at 16:00 PM, and the opening will be on 20 August 2026 at 10:00AM. No Proposal shall be received after this deadline.**

Please deposit Birr 200 in United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) account No. 1000090977858 and collect bid document from Supply Chain Management Section Procurement unit 4th floor Room No. NG.4S.03.

Bidders will be expected to submit a bid bond of 10% of the total bid amount in the form of CPO as a guarantee to participate in closed bid exercise. The 10% Bid bond will not be returned to the awarded bidder who failed to collect his/her award. Submission of bid on the basis of another bid is strictly prohibited.

The Economic Commission for Africa reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received whenever such rejection is in the interest of the organization.