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Year 28, No. 1449 Sunday September 13 , 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

EDIF weighs shift to 'target fund' model amid T-bill yield drops

By Eyasu Zekarias

The Ethiopian Deposit Insurance Fund (EDIF), the statutory body established to protect retail depositors and bolster financial stability across the banking and microfinance sectors, is weighing a fundamental reform in how it assesses member contributions. Fund officials are exploring a transition from the current flat annual rate of 0.3 percent to a dynamic "target fund" model that factors in the specific risk profiles and liabilities of individual financial institutions.

The proposal comes as the fund accumulates tens of billions of birr in reserves while navigating yield compression on government securities, notably a sharp drop in Treasury bill (T-bill) yields alongside limited domestic investment outlets.

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Air quality crisis

In global climate discourse, carbon dioxide (CO2) commands almost every headline, summit agenda, and policy white paper. International climate diplomacy consistently frames environmental virtue through the lens of long-term decarbonization. Yet for cities like Addis Ababa, this singular focus on CO2 obscures a far more immediate, domestic public health emergency unfolding at street level: the silent crisis of black carbon.

Recent research conducted in collaboration with NASA's Multi-Angle Imager for Aerosols (MAIA) mission provides an empirical wake-up call. Ground-monitoring data collected across Addis Ababa reveals that local concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) average 30 micrograms per cubic meter—triple the annual health-based threshold set by international environmental benchmarks. More alarming still, average black carbon levels in the capital are four to nine times higher than those measured in major U.S. metropolitan centers such as Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Boston.

Black carbon is not an abstract climate metric to be addressed in decades-long cycles; it is toxic, inhalable soot born from incomplete combustion. Medical science is unequivocal about its physiological toll. When inhaled, these microscopic particles penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, triggering acute respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular disease, impaired cognitive development in children, and elevated risks of premature mortality. As environmental health researchers aptly observe, the continuous inhalation of this urban haze carries a physiological burden akin to chronic exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke.

Why must our policy orientation change? The distinction between carbon dioxide and black carbon is fundamental to crafting effective national policy. Ethiopia contributes less than a fraction of one percent to global CO2 emissions. While national afforestation and renewable energy initiatives remain admirable contributions to global stewardship, cutting domestic CO2 will not cleanse the air inhaled daily by millions of residents across our urban centers. Carbon dioxide lingers in the global atmosphere for centuries, meaning its climate benefits are diffuse and slow to materialize.

Black carbon, by contrast, possesses an atmospheric lifespan of merely one to two weeks. This brief duration represents a tremendous policy opportunity: aggressive, targeted local interventions can yield dramatic, measurable improvements in urban air quality almost immediately. The health dividends of reducing soot are entirely captured by the local population that enacts the reforms.

To seize this opportunity, municipal authorities and federal regulators must direct their regulatory firepower at the primary domestic culprits identified by ground-level sensors: aging diesel transport and household biomass combustion.

The MAIA ground network confirms that vehicular traffic generates severe pollution spikes during morning and evening rush hours, with diesel engines alone accounting for nearly 30 percent of urban PM 2.5. While the federal government took a forward-looking step by restricting the importation of internal combustion engine passenger vehicles, the commercial backbone of urban transit—heavy diesel trucks, construction machinery, and aging public minibuses—continues to operate with minimal emissions oversight. Stricter tailpipe emission standards, mandatory vehicle inspection regimes, and incentives for fleet renewal must be enforced without compromise.

Equally urgent is the domestic energy equation. Data shows that even after daytime traffic subsides, particulate pollution remains persistently high well into the evening. This secondary surge is driven by widespread household reliance on charcoal, wood, and other solid fuels for daily cooking. Traditional biomass combustion is both an indoor health hazard and a major outdoor pollutant. Municipal environmental strategies cannot succeed without accelerated investments in clean cooking technologies, including subsidized electric induction stoves, expanded urban power distribution, and accessible modern cooking alternatives.

Cultural celebrations and seasonal activities also produce intense particulate spikes. Ground monitors recorded black carbon concentrations during holiday bonfires that exceeded World Health Organization guidelines by more than eight times. While cultural traditions remain vital to national identity, public health authorities can introduce awareness campaigns and cleaner combustion practices to minimize toxic smoke exposure in dense residential areas.

Treating air quality solely as a climate change portfolio managed through global pledges misses the mark. Clean air is essential public infrastructure, as critical to economic productivity and social well-being as clean water, reliable electricity, or paved roads. Respiratory illnesses place an immense, preventable burden on healthcare facilities and erode national labor productivity.

As Ethiopia prepares for major international climate milestones, policymakers must distinguish between global climate diplomacy and urban environmental survival. Decarbonization is a global imperative, but eliminating black carbon is our domestic responsibility. By shifting focus from global CO2 abstractions to practical, localized interventions targeting diesel exhaust and household biomass, municipal leaders can deliver what citizens need most: breathable, healthy urban air.

By Brahma Chellaney

COMMENT

The BRICS at 20

Twenty years ago this month, the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, and China held the first meeting of the BRICs. Since then, the grouping has been formalized—the first BRIC summit took place in June 2009—and expanded, with South Africa joining in 2011 and several more countries later coming on board, either as full members or official partners. Today, the BRICS represents a highly consequential experiment in international cooperation, which epitomizes the gradual rebalancing of global power away from the West and the emergence of a multipolar order.

Few acronyms have undergone as dramatic an evolution as the BRICS. Coined by Jim O'Neill, then of Goldman Sachs, in 2001 to encapsulate four fast-growing emerging markets, the "BRICs" grouping has developed into the BRICS, an 11-country political and economic coalition and an increasingly influential voice for the Global South.

Since adding Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates to its ranks in 2024-25, the BRICS accounts for nearly half of the world's population and about 40% of global GDP (in purchasing-power-parity terms). By contrast, the G7 accounts for less than 10% of the global population and less than 30% of world GDP. And whereas the BRICS' share of the global economy continues to grow, the pace of productivity and economic growth in advanced economies has been declining steadily since the 1990s.

This economic reversal is increasingly matched in the geopolitical domain, with Western global dominance giving way to a more diffuse distribution of power and influence. Amid this transformation—the likes of which occur only once every 50–100 years—the BRICS has challenged the assumption that global governance should remain centered on the Western-led institutions established after World War II.

For non-Western countries, the BRICS represents a hedge against rising economic and geopolitical uncertainty—generated, not least, by a United States seemingly bent on withdrawing from global leadership—and an institutional platform for advancing strategic autonomy and broadening economic cooperation. Small wonder there has been such enthusiasm for joining: more than three dozen countries have formally applied or expressed interest in becoming members, including Turkey, a NATO member, and Bahrain, the primary operational hub for US naval forces in the Middle East.

The BRICS also has ten "partner countries"—Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam—which can participate in summits. This framework helps to expand the BRICS' network for cooperation and strengthen its ability to represent the Global South, without jeopardizing cohesion.

The BRICS is much more than a symbolic grouping—merely a message to the world that the era of Western dominance is coming to an end. The grouping has made tangible progress on institution-building. The New Development Bank (NDB) is the first multilateral development bank with global scope conceived and led solely by emerging economies, with the founding BRICS members holding equal shares and voting rights. By contrast, the United States is the largest shareholder at both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, where it holds effective veto power. Unlike these US-led institutions, the NDB does not attach political conditions to its infrastructure financing, allowing borrowers to retain greater policy autonomy.

The BRICS has also been working to reduce vulnerabilities within the international financial system. Contrary to speculation, a single BRICS currency akin to the euro is not on the agenda. Instead, the upcoming summit will focus on expanding trade settlement in national currencies, improving interoperability among members' digital-payment systems, linking central-bank digital currencies, and developing alternative cross-border payment infrastructure. The goal is not to upend the global financial system and supplant the US dollar, which still accounts for about 57% of foreign-exchange reserves held by central banks worldwide, but rather to strengthen resilience against external financial shocks.

As much progress as the BRICS has made over the last 20 years, however, the grouping also faces significant headwinds, rooted not least in its exceptional internal diversity. The BRICS includes liberal democracies and authoritarian states, leading energy exporters and major energy importers, manufacturing powers and commodity economies. The grouping also includes geopolitical rivals: China and India, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and Egypt and Ethiopia. Divisions exist even among its founding members, with Brazil and India generally advocating reform of existing international institutions, while China and Russia seek to challenge the US-led world order.

Diversity brings different ideas and advantages to the table, and ideological uniformity and close strategic alignment are not necessarily prerequisites to cooperation. But a highly diverse grouping, with sharply divergent priorities and geopolitical concerns, will always struggle to forge consensus. Every round of enlargement compounds the challenge, even as it raises the BRICS' profile as a broadly representative international coalition.

As the group convenes in New Delhi for its 18th summit, one might ask whether it has lived up to its original promise. If that promise was to establish a monetary union, a single market, or a tightly integrated political alliance, the answer is plainly no. But if it was to reshape international relations, broaden the space available to emerging economies on the world stage, strengthen South-South cooperation, and increase pressure for reform of existing international institutions, the BRICS has exceeded expectations.

More fundamentally, the BRICS has normalized an idea that once seemed impossible: that emerging economies can cooperate with one another, build their own institutions, and change how the international order is organized. That is no small feat.

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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

AI threatens traditional legal frameworks and intellectual property rights

By our staff reporter

As artificial intelligence accelerates across global markets, developing nations find themselves caught in a complex struggle between adopting breakthrough technologies and preserving legacy legal frameworks. In Ethiopia, this tension is acutely visible across intellectual property (IP), data governance, and national development strategies.

Experts caution that the widespread deployment of advanced AI systems directly challenges long-established legal principles, threatens traditional protections for creators, and exposes deep structural gaps in domestic data infrastructure.

Teshager Dagne, an Associate Professor and the Ontario Research Chair in Governing Artificial Intelligence at York University in Canada, told Capital that modern AI architecture fundamentally threatens the foundation of copyright, patents, and trademarks.

"Throughout the history of technology, how society controlled and steered new technologies determined their utility and direction," he noted. "Today, AI is challenging established legal frameworks. Copyright and patent laws are being dismantled by artificial intelligence."

Elaborating on the issue, he explained that an author publishing a book today might find that work ingested into AI training datasets without permission, attribution, or compensation. The system can then generate content mirroring the original work, rendering the author's copyright ineffective. A similar dynamic applies to patented innovations and trademarks, creating a legal gap where creators and innovators have limited recourse.

As the global AI race accelerates, African nations, particularly Ethiopia, face distinct structural hurdles. According to Teshager, the "data deficit" stands out as the most urgent challenge. While public sector institutions, hospitals, schools, and government agencies hold substantial volumes of valuable data, researchers and domestic AI developers struggle to access it.

"There is plenty of data in the public sector, but there is an infrastructural challenge and no direct pathway for researchers to utilize it," he explained. "Legally speaking, older statutes remain tied to legacy technologies. When approached, institutions often claim exclusive copyright over public records, which unintentionally curtails and constrains the growth of artificial intelligence."

This barrier is compounded by the fact that most commercial AI systems are trained primarily on foreign data. When Ethiopian users rely on these tools, the outputs reflect external knowledge frameworks that lack local context, cultural nuances, and linguistic accuracy. Teshager warned that relying excessively on foreign AI outputs rather than localized sources risks eroding credibility and information integrity.

"At the policy and strategy level, the country has an AI roadmap aimed at leveraging technology to solve societal problems at a micro level," the professor said. "However, realizing this vision requires investing heavily in compute infrastructure and reforming bottleneck laws across intellectual property, data access, and technological development."

Furthermore, AI development demands significant computing capacity, including specialized Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), secure data storage, and scalable cloud systems—resources that remain financially out of reach for many independent Ethiopian researchers. This constraint extends across the continent, where technological talent is often limited not by skill, but by insufficient access to high-performance computing environments.

While cloud infrastructure is expanding within Ethiopia, broader regional accessibility remains a work in progress. Nevertheless, the country has made tangible investments in foundational infrastructure.

In February 2026, the Ethiopian Artificial Intelligence Institute, in partnership with the UNDP and Addis Ababa University, inaugurated the AI UniPod—a modern facility equipped with specialized laboratories, robotics equipment, high-performance computing systems, and collaborative learning spaces designed to accelerate Ethiopia's digital transition.

"You cannot isolate AI as a single technology," Teshager noted. "It relies on an entire ecosystem of information infrastructure, storage, GPUs, and raw computing power. Because these assets are capital-intensive, they remain difficult to access for the majority of local researchers."

Technological infrastructure alone is insufficient, according to Teshager. Ethiopia must actively cultivate a specialized workforce capable of building models, conducting advanced research, driving commercial applications, and establishing regulatory guardrails. This requires embedding foundational digital literacy and AI concepts throughout the educational system, from primary schooling through university curricula.

Drawing international comparisons, Teshager pointed to Canada, which launched the world's first national AI strategy in 2017. Canada's policy emphasizes proactive workforce transition, supporting industry adoption, and mitigating labor displacement through structured retraining programs.

However, international experience shows that commercial integration takes time. By 2024, only 4.7 percent of Canadian enterprises had formally adopted AI technologies, reflecting broader global challenges surrounding specialized talent shortages and implementation costs.

"If there is viable commercial demand, businesses will adapt," the researcher stated. "When governments invest in developing a highly skilled technical workforce, enterprises are better positioned to integrate AI productively rather than resorting to workforce reductions. Strategic government direction is essential."

Assessing Ethiopia's broader readiness, Teshager noted that while a complete evaluation requires continuous benchmarking, regional technology indices consistently highlight areas for improvement. Regional indices such as the Africa Technology Index place Ethiopia behind continental leaders like Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria in digital infrastructure and readiness.

In government AI readiness assessments across the region, Egypt ranks among the leading African nations (51st globally in Oxford Insights' 2025 index with a score of 57.5), followed by Kenya (65th), South Africa (67th), Mauritius (71st), and Nigeria (72nd). Overall, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to navigate infrastructural bottlenecks alongside steady digital expansion.

"Ultimately, the pace of technology adoption is directly determined by domestic infrastructural capacity," Teshager concluded.

Romanian Foreign Ministry hosts 4th edition of international programme on countering disinformation

Romania, Bucharest

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, in partnership with Romania's International Development Cooperation Agency (RoAid), is hosting the fourth edition of the training programme titled "Building Resilience to Disinformation in a Changing Communication Environment" in Bucharest from September 7 to 11, 2026.

The week-long programme brings together international participants, diplomats, strategic communication experts, government officials, media professionals, and civil society representatives to exchange best practices and strengthen institutional responses to foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).

The opening session at the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs featured welcome addresses by Clara Staicu, State Secretary for European Affairs, Middle East and Africa at the Romanian MFA, and Director of Public Diplomacy of RoAid.

Addressing delegates during the opening, the leadership of the Ministry emphasized that combating disinformation and information manipulation has become a critical shared challenge for governments, institutions, and citizens worldwide. The initiative aims to provide a collaborative roundtable format where participants can share operational experience, practical tools, and whole-of-society strategies to safeguard information integrity and public trust.

The training curriculum covers key institutional policies and frameworks, including briefings on Romanian development cooperation, European Union initiatives, and NATO security communication strategies delivered by senior foreign affairs and defence officials.

Participants are examining diverse case studies on foreign information manipulation across regions, featuring presentations and insights from the European External Action Service Stratcom Africa Task Force, France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland's Department for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation, and Moldova's Center for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation.

Practical components of the programme focus on practical debunking methods, media education, and the crucial role of fact-checking in safeguarding information integrity.

The schedule also incorporates direct study visits and institutional exchanges, including sessions at Radio France International Romania, the Cotroceni Presidential Palace, and the Dimitrie Gusti National Village Museum.

The programme concludes on Friday, September 11, with an official certificate awarding ceremony led by representatives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Daniela Dobre, Director General of RoAid.

The event underscores Romania's sustained commitment to fostering international partnerships, technical capacity-building, and democratic resilience against modern information threats.

Banks' birr liquidity crunch, not structural shift, drives undersubscribed NBE FX auction

By Eyasu Zekarias

For the first time since the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) began publishing auction results, commercial banks have failed to fully absorb the foreign exchange supply offered by the central bank. While some observers quickly interpreted the outcome as a sign of waning hard currency demand, financial sector analysts and macroeconomists reject that view, arguing that the undersubscription reflects temporary birr liquidity constraints across the banking system rather than a structural decline in Ethiopia's demand for foreign exchange.

During the foreign currency auction held on September 9, 2026, the central bank offered 125 million US dollars to commercial banks. Departing from earlier auctions where demand consistently outpaced supply, the 20 participating banks submitted total bids of only 120 million US dollars, leaving 5 million dollars unallocated. All participating institutions received their requested allocations in full at a weighted average exchange rate of 160.5357 birr per US dollar, with the marginal rate settling at 158.3500 birr—reflecting a 1.16 percent appreciation of the birr at the cutoff point.

The undersubscription marks a sharp contrast to Auction No. 27 held on August 26, 2026, when five participating banks submitted bids totaling 170.51 million US dollars against a 125 million dollar supply, creating an oversubscription of 45.51 million US dollars. Similarly, the auction on August 11, 2026, attracted demand nearly four times the available allocation.

Financial analysts emphasize that the undersubscription does not signal a collapse in dollar demand, but rather highlights a tight birr liquidity position among commercial banks. Having approached regulatory liquidity ratios, banks faced constrained capacity to deploy additional local currency for foreign exchange purchases.

Yisehak Teka, a banking and macroeconomic analyst, noted that Ethiopia's fundamental demand for foreign exchange remains deeply rooted in an economy heavily reliant on imported consumer goods, intermediate industrial inputs, and capital equipment. Import-substitution manufacturing is still developing, and export revenues continue to trail import bills and total remittance inflows.

External indicators reflect ongoing structural adjustments. Although Ethiopia's gross foreign exchange reserves improved to 5.5 billion US dollars by the first quarter of fiscal year 2026—covering roughly 3.5 months of imports—assessments by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlight that external sustainability remains vulnerable to external shocks and dependent on external financing. Central bank data indicates that while the current account deficit narrowed from 6.2 billion US dollars to 1.8 billion US dollars, underlying trade imbalances persist.

Market psychology and liquidity distribution also played a key role in recent auction dynamics. When the central bank conducted a special auction on August 19, 2025, injecting 500 million US dollars—four times its standard offering—it cleared significant pent-up demand among large commercial banks. Lenders that absorbed large allocations during that intervention temporarily satisfied their clients' immediate import financing backlogs, moderating their demand in subsequent rounds.

According to Yisehak, the slight appreciation of the birr at the marginal rate helps stabilize market sentiment and dampens speculative behavior among importers who historically hoarded inventory anticipating currency depreciation. Businesses expecting the birr to weaken steadily against the dollar face inventory holding costs as the exchange rate stabilizes.

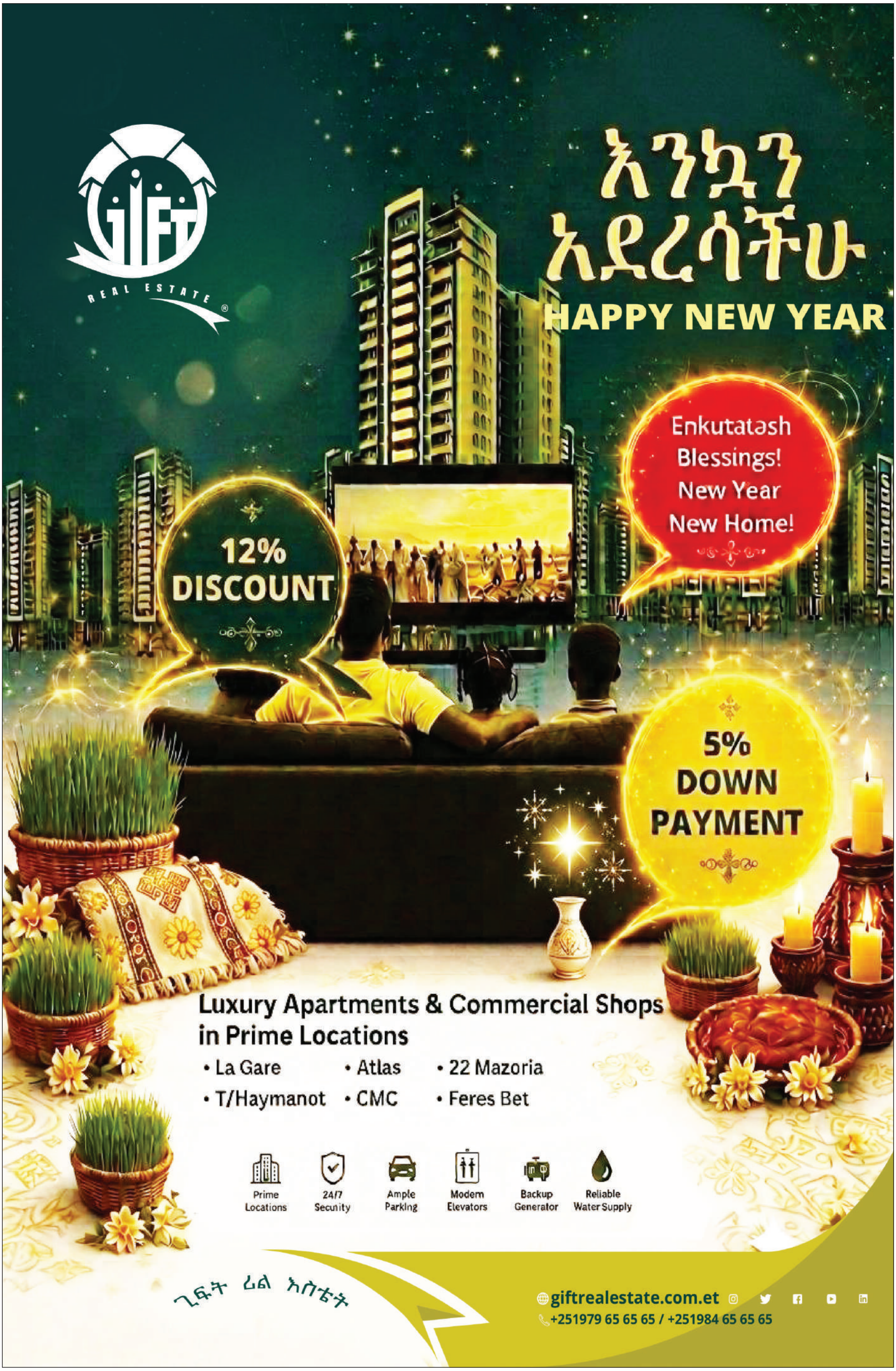
"When depreciation expectations subside, market participants hold birr more willingly, which dampens artificial dollar demand and supports convergence between the official and parallel market rates," Yisehak told Capital.

Since transitioning to a market-based foreign exchange framework in July 2024, the NBE has replaced administrative currency allocations with regular bi-weekly auctions. The reform program, backed by the IMF and the World Bank, aims to establish a transparent exchange rate system, strengthen monetary policy transmission, and build foreign exchange reserves.

Complementary monetary measures have included lifting credit ceilings, establishing an interest-rate-based monetary policy framework, adjusting foreign exchange commission guidelines, and refining export proceeds surrender requirements.

Financial specialists caution against interpreting a single undersubscribed auction as definitive evidence of permanently reduced foreign exchange demand. Instead, they argue, it demonstrates that regular, market-priced foreign currency supply reduces artificial demand driven by panic buying and currency speculation.

Experts stress that maintaining a predictable and steady supply of foreign exchange remains essential to keeping the parallel market premium low. However, Yisehak emphasized that structural exchange rate reforms must be accompanied by vigilant monetary policy, rigorous monitoring, and reinforced anti-money laundering controls as financial markets continue to mature.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Digital logistics overhaul aims to boost regional trade competitiveness

By our staff reporter

Ethiopia is overhauling its national logistics ecosystem with the rollout of integrated digital platforms designed to eliminate administrative delays, improve cargo tracking, and strengthen the country's standing in global trade.

State logistics giants Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics (ESL) and the Ethio-Djibouti Railway Share Company (EDR) have introduced customer-facing self-service portals to streamline cargo booking, location tracking, and payment processing. Industry analysts describe the transition as a decisive step toward aligning domestic supply chains with international benchmarks.

On September 4, 2026, ESL launched an all-in-one digital self-service platform accessible via web and mobile interfaces. The system allows consignees and commercial clients to place shipment orders, monitor cargo status, verify storage locations, process freight payments, and manage documentation within a single online portal.

By removing the requirement for physical visits to multiple branch offices, the platform digitizes paper-heavy workflows, shortens transaction turnaround times, and reduces operational overhead. The portal also features automated, AI-assisted customer support tools to provide continuous operational guidance.

Similarly, the Ethio-Djibouti Railway has formally operationalized its digital freight booking portal following initial rollouts. The platform centralizes commercial cargo booking, route planning, payment clearance, and consignment tracking across the primary Addis Ababa–Djibouti trade corridor.

Both software platforms were designed and developed by domestic software engineers, highlighting Ethiopia's growing internal capacity for specialized digital enterprise solutions.

Dawit Woubishet, President of the Ethiopian Freight Forwarders and Shipping Agents Association (EFFSAA), told Capital that modernizing logistics systems is vital to eliminating repetitive document handling, minimizing manual data errors, and establishing reliable end-to-end supply chains.

The digitalization drive arrives as Ethiopia works to overcome longstanding efficiency bottlenecks in regional and international commerce. In the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI), Ethiopia ranked 126th out of 139 nations, reflecting structural hurdles in customs clearance speeds, transport infrastructure, and supply chain tracking reliability.

Trade specialists note that transitioning from paper-based procedures to automated digital tracking directly addresses the core indicators that historically weighed down Ethiopia's global rankings. Enhanced visibility and automated processing are also expected to support Ethiopia's ongoing accession process to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and advance key milestones under the Digital Ethiopia 2030 strategy.

Abdulber Shemsu, CEO of ESL, emphasized during the unveiling that the new digital system forms part of a comprehensive enterprise modernization agenda aimed at supporting national economic expansion. Modernizing state logistics operations, he noted, improves domestic service delivery while enhancing Ethiopia's competitiveness as a regional transport hub.

While the deployment of digital portals marks a major milestone, industry stakeholders emphasize that end-to-end efficiency requires comprehensive training and ecosystem-wide integration.

Freight forwarders, customs brokers, and commercial shippers must adapt their internal operating procedures to interface smoothly with the state platforms. Sector leaders point out that smaller logistics intermediaries will need technical support and clear API standards to integrate their existing management systems with the primary national logistics gateways.

Industry observers conclude that the long-term impact of the digital transition will depend on continuous platform maintenance, robust digital connectivity along transit routes, and sustained collaboration between regulatory authorities and private freight operators.

AviAssist launches specialized drone risk assessment course in Africa

By our staff reporter

The AviAssist Foundation has launched a specialized risk assessment course designed to help drone operators, regulators, and aviation professionals navigate complex unmanned flight operations across Africa.

Developed at the request of one of the continent's largest drone operators, the program teaches the internationally recognized Specific Operations Risk Assessment (SORA 2.5) framework established by the Joint Authorities for Rulemaking on Unmanned Systems (JARUS).

The course addresses the rising demand for standardized safety procedures in advanced operations, including Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) missions, urban air mobility, and critical infrastructure inspections.

Africa's commercial drone sector continues to expand rapidly across logistics, agriculture, and infrastructure monitoring, with civil aviation authorities in Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa adopting SORA as the benchmark for compliance and safety. However, aviation experts note that the region still faces a shortage of certified professionals capable of performing comprehensive risk evaluations for complex operations.

Lead instructor and drone safety expert Tom Rehwinkel emphasized that the four-day practical course equips participants to identify operational hazards, design mitigation strategies, and secure regulatory authorizations while maintaining high safety standards.

The curriculum targets Civil Aviation Authority personnel, drone training leaders, and flight operations and compliance managers. Through case studies, practical group exercises, and formal examination, attendees learn to assess ground and air risks, evaluate concepts of operations (ConOps), and compile formal risk assessments.

AviAssist Director Tom Kok highlighted that delivering international best practices tailored to regional realities is vital as the continent shapes its aviation future alongside industry forums like Aviation Africa and the African Drone Forum.

The inaugural edition of the training will take place in Rwanda from November 26 to 29, 2026. Registration details and promotional rates are available through

EDIF weighs shift to 'target fund' . . .

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Currently, 31 commercial banks and 44 microfinance institutions operating in Ethiopia pay an annual premium of 0.3 percent calculated on their average total deposits.

"Since the EDIF began operations in 2023, member institutions have been required to pay an annual contribution of 0.3 percent of their average total deposits, alongside an initial contribution paid upon joining," said Merga Wakweya, Director of Operations at the EDIF. He noted that the 0.3 percent rate was drawn from international benchmarks to build a financial safety net quickly.

However, fund leadership argues that a more sophisticated methodology is needed over the long term, moving away from a flat rate toward an actuarially determined target size.

"Right now, we simply calculate and collect 0.3 percent of the existing deposit pool," Merga explained. "Our long-term objective is to transition to a structured, scientifically modeled target fund approach."

Under the proposed model, the EDIF would establish a specific target reserve ratio relative to the banking sector's aggregate insured liabilities. Once the reserve reaches the determined threshold, the fund could pause collections, issue pro-rata rebates, or adjust premiums based on institutional risk ratings.

A central operational challenge facing the fund is the sharp drop in T-bill yields. When the fund commenced operations, government securities offered returns of up to 18 percent, generating robust revenue on reserves. Yields have since decreased substantially.

Data from the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) shows that weighted-average yields on government securities fell from 15.59 percent in September 2025 to 5.79 percent in September 2026. Results from the central bank auction held on September 2, 2026, reflected high market liquidity, with total bids reaching 74.18 billion birr against an offering of 43 billion birr, compared to 44.11 billion birr in bids recorded during the September 2025 auction. The downward trend across 28-day, 91-day, 182-day, and 364-day tenors has directly reduced the fund's investment income.

"Where do we place the funds we continuously collect from institutions?" Merga noted. "We invest primarily in Treasury bills, effectively lending to the government. With yields dropping to roughly 6.87 percent, fund revenue is directly affected."

Despite lower yields, fund leadership reiterated that investment decisions strictly prioritize safety and liquidity over aggressive returns.

Beyond T-bills, the fund holds roughly 2.36 billion birr collected from interest-free and Mudarabah deposits in accounts with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE). Officials acknowledged that holding significant reserves directly within commercial banks is a temporary arrangement, as deposit insurers generally avoid redepositing funds into institutions they insure to prevent circular exposure.

To diversify its holdings, the fund is actively tracking the development of Sukuk (sharia-compliant securities) in Ethiopia, which could offer alternative fixed-income vehicles for its interest-free reserves.

Despite macroeconomic adjustments, the EDIF's financial standing remains solid, with accumulated reserve balances reaching 45.57 billion birr by late 2026. The fund currently guarantees deposits up to 100,000 birr per depositor per institution, covering the vast majority of retail accounts.

The fund recently initiated its first statutory payout process following the liquidation of a microfinance institution whose operating license was revoked by the central bank. Beneficiary verifications and disbursements are underway for affected depositors in Addis Ababa and the Dilla area.

Under prevailing regulations, insured payouts must be executed within 90 days of a declared institutional failure, while depositors retain the legal right to claim entitlements for up to five years.

To enhance public understanding, the EDIF is drafting directives requiring commercial banks and microfinance institutions to actively disclose deposit insurance coverage in their customer communications and savings campaigns.

Established under Council of Ministers Regulation No. 482/2021, the Ethiopian Deposit Insurance Fund operates under the regulatory oversight of the National Bank of Ethiopia, with its Board of Directors chaired by the NBE Governor.

CCDA-14 calls for African climate agency ahead of COP31 and COP32

By our staff reporter

The Fourteenth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-14) concluded today in Addis Ababa with a comprehensive set of key messages urging the continent to move from climate participation to climate agency, and from pledges to implementation, as it prepares for COP31 in Antalya and an African-hosted COP32 in Addis Ababa in 2027.

Convened under the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme — a joint initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), in partnership with the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) — the three-day conference brought together policymakers, negotiators, financial institutions, researchers, civil society, youth, women and the private sector under the theme "From Pledges to Implementation: The Belém–Antalya–Addis Roadmap."

Closing the conference, ECA Deputy Executive Secretary Hanan Morsy said CCDA-14 called for a coherent African climate agenda anchored in equity, sustainable development, accountability and African ownership. She urged Africa to strengthen its climate agency by shaping global governance, mobilizing transformative finance, and advancing science, technology and innovation. The conference called for Africa's road to COP31 and COP32 to prioritize predictable, adequate, accessible and non-debt-creating climate finance; stronger institutions; enhanced data and innovation capacities; and scaled investment in adaptation and early warning that benefits cities, local governments and vulnerable communities. It emphasized that climate action must drive economic transformation through regional integration, industrialization, critical-minerals management, circular and bioeconomy approaches, food security, peace and resilient urban development — underpinned by just, inclusive and gender-responsive transition pathways.

Earlier in the week, ECA Executive Secretary Claver Gatete said Africa's climate story "should not be defined by vulnerability alone," urging the continent to "press for climate justice and greater international support, while harnessing Africa's assets to help shape the rules, investments and solutions driving global climate action." AUC Commissioner Moses Vilakati said the conference "asks us to move beyond the question of what Africa should seek from COP31… to what Africa should propose to the world."

AfDB's James Kinyangi said "Africa is not merely a victim of climate change. We are a source of solutions," while Afreximbank's Olubunmi Obasanjo-Williams told delegates "vulnerability is not the full African story." For his part, Mithika Mwenda of PACJA urged delegates to move "from declaration to delivery."

Delegates were told Africa contributes less than 4 per cent of global emissions yet needs about $277 billion a year to implement its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) through 2030, with current flows covering only around 11 per cent of that need.

The conference adopted a wide-ranging agenda covering climate finance, governance, science and innovation, just transitions, circular economy, adaptation, agriculture, and climate, peace and security.

On climate finance, delegates called on developed countries to honour obligations under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement to provide predictable, adequate and accessible climate finance. Financing must be structurally transformational, move beyond project-centric approaches, and strengthen domestic fiscal institutions and African-owned financing mechanisms. Adaptation was framed as an investment, not a cost, with returns embedded in national planning, budgets and multilateral development bank decisions.

On global climate governance, CCDA-14 said Africa needs a coherent position grounded in equity, development priorities and the right to development, safeguarding its policy space and natural-resource use. While the UNFCCC remains indispensable, African climate diplomacy must also engage international financial institutions, trade and technology regimes, and standard-setting processes.

On carbon pricing and Article 6, the conference said carbon pricing can support climate and development goals when tailored to national circumstances and backed by rigorous cost-benefit analysis and strong monitoring, reporting and verification. Africa should shift from capacity-building toward functional, high-integrity carbon markets that mobilize private capital and deliver tangible community benefits.

On science, innovation and data, delegates said Africa must move from climate data generation to integrated, decision-ready climate-risk intelligence linked to bankable investment and stronger finance accountability. Indigenous and local knowledge, and gender-responsive science, must be embedded, with stronger science-policy linkages to inform decision-making.

On early warning, CCDA-14 called for an integrated early-warning value chain connecting observation, forecasting, communication, anticipatory action, financing and response. The Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) should be expanded to all countries in need, with resources ring-fenced for National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.

On just transitions and critical minerals, the conference said African agency is essential to ensure critical minerals and the energy transition deliver industrialization, energy security and inclusive growth. A just energy transition must deliver a just minerals transition, with mineral-producing countries capturing a fair share of value, technology, revenues and jobs through local processing and beneficiation.

On circular economy, delegates said the approach should be pursued as a competitiveness, development and transformation agenda, advancing resilience, green industrialization and job creation. National development and climate frameworks, including NDCs and NAPs, should systematically integrate circular economy approaches.

On adaptation and urban leadership, cities must be recognized as primary receiving systems for climate-related mobility and displacement, with secure land, housing and services treated as adaptation infrastructure. Climate mobility, housing and urban resilience should be integrated into NDCs and NAPs, with direct, predictable finance for cities and local governments.

On agriculture and food systems, the conference said agriculture should be redefined as a climate-resilient agrifood system and a central pillar of climate negotiations, with food security a non-negotiable outcome of climate action.

On climate, peace and security, delegates said climate change is a risk multiplier for peace, security and social cohesion. The African Union and Member States should finalize, adopt and operationalize the Common African Position on Climate, Peace and Security.

To carry the agenda forward, CCDA-14 established six working committees — on climate finance and carbon markets, agriculture and food systems, just transition and critical minerals, circular economy, and adaptation and climate change and development — each composed of a Chair, Alternate Chair, Secretary and six to ten technical experts representing Africa's diverse regions. Coordinated by the ClimDev-Africa Secretariat, the committees will integrate outcomes from COP31, including the Belém–Antalya–Addis Roadmap, and prepare a consolidated report for CCDA-XV, assessing the state of climate finance delivery in Africa and recommending priority actions on the road to COP32, which Ethiopia will host in Addis Ababa in November 2027.

Africa faces critical labor market transition to capability economy

By our staff reporter

As global employment structures face disruption from artificial intelligence, shifting skills demands, and the fragmentation of traditional jobs, African economies confront an urgent imperative to reform labor market governance, according to a policy paper published by Takamol Holding.

The research paper, titled "Policy Priorities for the Global Labor Market Transition to the Capability Economy," warns that the historic standard employment model—defined by permanent wage contracts, degree-based hiring, and employer-linked social security—is breaking down worldwide and was never fully operative in developing regions.

The report highlights that the breakdown of inherited labor models is especially pronounced across Sub-Saharan Africa, where the vast majority of the workforce operates in informal, casual, or day-based arrangements without institutional protections such as pensions, health coverage, or unemployment insurance. Informal employment in low-income economies has expanded faster than formal employment, demonstrating that headline economic growth has failed to generate formal wage jobs at scale.

This structural challenge coincides with rapid demographic expansion across youth-surplus economies, where a large share of young people remains outside formal employment, education, or training. Multiple working-age individuals enter the labor market for every single formal wage job created, intensifying pressure on domestic institutions.

The paper argues that economic value is fundamentally shifting toward demonstrated human capability rather than traditional degrees, creating what it terms the "Capability Economy"—a paradigm where productivity is driven by verified skills, augmented by artificial intelligence, and mediated through data-rich, flexible labor platforms.

To manage this transition and foster inclusive growth, the study outlines a comprehensive framework of interdependent policy priorities for national governments and international partners.

Governments must first establish skills as primary economic signals by transitioning from static academic credentials toward verifiable, granular skills taxonomies and digital passports that recognize competencies acquired across diverse learning pathways.

In parallel, policymakers need to treat workforce capacity as strategic infrastructure, elevating human capital development from isolated ministerial budgets to a strategic national asset backed by sustainable funding and outcome-driven accountability.

The framework also calls on authorities to govern artificial intelligence as a core labor market institution, ensuring training curricula integrate collaborative human-machine tools while institutions actively monitor broader employment impacts.

To support displaced workers and finance continuous reskilling, fiscal systems must align with capability-based economies by shifting revenue bases from narrow payroll taxation toward value-creation levies and mandatory platform contributions.

At the same time, social safety nets must be redesigned into portable and adaptive systems that attach directly to individual workers through prorated benefit accounts that persist across different gigs, platforms, and career transitions.

Finally, nations need to build computational labor intelligence systems, deploying integrated, real-time data platforms to forecast emerging skill needs, match talent effectively, and inform national economic planning.

The report stresses that these policy priorities are structurally interdependent and require coordinated leadership across ministries of labor, finance, education, and digital affairs.

For African nations seeking to harness their demographic potential and accelerate regional industrialization under the African Continental Free Trade Area, researchers conclude that delaying institutional reform will deepen labor market mismatches, leaving expanding youth populations without adequate social protection or recognized economic capabilities.

Capital NEWS IN BRIEF

Rosatom showcases advanced 3D printing that could help Ethiopia produce complex industrial parts in hours instead of months

On 27 August 2026, during a visit to Russia, Egypt's Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy Dr. Mahmoud Esmat toured Rosatom's Moscow Additive Technologies Centre, where he saw how industrial 3D printing can help countries produce complex components and spare parts locally, shorten supply chains and reduce dependence on imports.

The visit highlighted a model that could be relevant well beyond Egypt: fully operational additive technology centres combining production, engineering expertise, training and, eventually, local equipment manufacturing.

The technology has already been used to produce components for demanding industrial applications. Among the products previously demonstrated by Rosatom is a spacer grid for a nuclear fuel assembly: a highly complex structure traditionally requiring months of manual work can be 3D-printed in just 10–11 hours. Rosatom has also demonstrated a one-piece anti-debris filter for a next-generation fuel assembly, replacing a conventional design made up of 55 separate parts with a single seamless component.

(Press Release)

Trove of Documents Reveals Alleged Chemical Weapons Stockpile in Sudan

Sudan's authoritarian government built a secret stockpile of chemical weapons that senior military officials sought to conceal after chlorine bombs were used against rebel forces, according to internal videos, documents, text messages and other materials reviewed by The Washington Post. The materials indicate that Sudan's chemical weapons effort involved diverting shipments of chlorine meant to provide safe drinking water, hiding warhead production sites on military bases, testing bombs in remote desert locations and drawing up lists of targets where toxic gas could penetrate enemy defenses. ... Any stockpiling and use of chemical weapons would violate long-standing international bans aimed at eradicating a notoriously inhumane form of warfare, and put Sudan in the company of Syria and Iraq as states that have been condemned in recent decades for deploying chemical agents against their own people. ... The files include documents allegedly prepared by Sudanese military officials that refer to "dual-effect" munitions filled with "choking gas," videos that show weapons tests producing plumes of green-yellow vapor, and messages between Sudanese military officials indicating that the country's security forces had stockpiled as many as 290 chemical munitions. ... The files also indicate that SAF officers were focused on covering their tracks. The same document includes Arabic text saying that "the main purpose of the new design is to conceal any evidence of the use of chemicals and to release the gas from the tank directly in a perfect way," according to a Washington Post translation.

(The Washington Post)

Hijacking Pirates Exploit Regional Chaos to Return to Seas off Somalia

The scourge of Somali piracy targeting cargo ships and smaller dhows off the Horn of Africa has returned to levels not seen in a decade, driven by a convergence of factors including disruptions to the shipping industry caused by the US-Israeli war against Iran and a resurgence of political instability in Somalia. ... Insufficient patrol vessels and an inability to regularly pay salaries to those involved in coastal patrols are among the reasons why Somalia has long-struggled to secure its coastline. Piracy has historically thrived during periods of increasing instability and political, factional and regional competition. Observers say the recent rise in incidents has been exacerbated by a domestic and international focus on arms smuggling to Yemen by networks acting on behalf of Iran. Analysts suggest some of these networks have become increasingly associated with Somalia's Islamist al-Shabaab group as it once again expands its territorial control in central and southern Somalia and seeks to build ties with the Houthis in Yemen. ... Officials say the recent attacks have also been marked by increased technological sophistication on the part of pirate groups, including the use of SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service to facilitate the tracking of potential targets and for high-speed communications between pirates.

(The Guardian)

Ethiopia Boosts Drone Production to Fight Rebels

Ethiopia has been manufacturing drones at two factories since last year and is now thought to have a fleet of thousands, analysts say, giving the government an edge against its multiple insurgent enemies. Turkish drones were decisive during the country's devastating civil war of 2020 to 2022, when the federal army used them to push back rebels from the northern Tigray region who had come within 200 kilometres of the capital, Addis Ababa. Only the federal army has military drones in the country of 130 million people, and they have been deployed repeatedly against insurgents operating in several regions. Increasingly, they are made domestically. In March 2025, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed inaugurated the SkyWin Aeronautics Industries factory in the capital, manufacturing "unmanned aerial vehicles for both civilian and military use", according to the state's Ethiopian News Agency, which said they were "designed and built by our own young professionals". Abiy said the aim was not "not to fuel conflict, but to prevent it" through "deterrence". But much of Ethiopia's capability remains a mystery, and the authorities have refused access to the site for foreign media. ... Ethiopia has bought Turkey's top-end Akinci drones and the more basic Bayraktar TB2 models, as well as the cheaper Wing Loong from China and Mohajer-6 from Iran.

(AFP)

Term of the Day

EXCHANGE-TRADED FUND (ETF)

Definition

An exchange-traded fund (ETF) pools a group of securities into a fund and can be traded like an individual stock on an exchange.

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

Africa's economic momentum is building as savings and cross-border trade activity accelerate

Rising savings, increasing cross-border payment activity and growing participation in formal financial systems are emerging as some of the clearest indicators yet of substantial pent-up demand for economic activity across the continent.

The latest numbers from Standard Bank show a buildup of deposits by 12% to R2.5 trillion, while the value of domestic electronic payments grew by 11% and cross-border payment values increased by 7%. Serving 19.5 million active clients across 21 African countries, the bank says these trends point to a continent where households are saving more, businesses are transacting more and trade corridors are becoming increasingly active.

As the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) gathers momentum and digital connectivity continues to expand, payment flows and savings behaviour are increasingly reflecting the emergence of deeper and more integrated African economies.

Safaricom surpasses 15 million subscribers as it marks five years

Safaricom is marking five years since it received a full-service unified telecom operating license from the Government of Ethiopia on 9 July 2021, with the company having surpassed 15 million 90 days active subscribers during this period.

The milestone comes less than four years after we began commercial operations in October 2022, following an initial period focused on establishing the business, building our network, and putting in place our sales and distribution infrastructure.

We have surpassed 15 million 90 days active subscribers within four years of commercial operations, marking one of the fastest customer growth journeys among new telecom operators that have built their network and customer base from the ground up.

Since receiving our license, we have built more than 3,500 network sites, with our network now reaching around 60% of the country's population. All of our sites are 4G-enabled and 5G ready, making our network state-of-the-art. That makes our expansion one of the fastest network rollouts by a greenfield telecom operator in Africa, and one of the fastest globally for a new entrant building a nationwide network from scratch.

Heart to Heart Children’s Aid successfully treats 60 children with free heart surgeries in Jimma

Heart to Heart Children’s Aid has announced the successful completion of its first round of free pediatric cardiac surgeries, providing life-saving operations to 60 children at Jimma University Hospital.

The milestone marks the initial phase of an ambitious national campaign to deliver free heart surgeries to 1,000 children within a single year. Prior to the operations, over 200 children underwent comprehensive cardiac ultrasound (Echo) screenings at the facility based on an established queue system. Beyond providing critical medical relief to vulnerable families and easing the heavy emotional and financial toll on mothers, the initiative focuses heavily on local capacity building and knowledge transfer, empowering regional public hospitals and medical professionals to independently sustain cardiac care services.

Founder and Board Chairman Birhan Tedla outlined that the initiative will expand throughout the upcoming year to 10 regional public hospitals across various regional cities to reach the remaining 940 children. The program aims to bridge healthcare disparities by bringing specialized treatment directly to patients who cannot afford the journey or transport to Addis Ababa.

BANANA OVERLOAD

STICK ARCHITECT

THIRSTY PONY

U.S. Assistant Secretary visits Ethiopia to boost trade and peace

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Frank Garcia visited Ethiopia from September 2 to 6, 2026, to advance U.S. commercial diplomacy, security cooperation and regional stability.

In Addis Ababa, Garcia met Foreign Minister Gedion Timothewos to discuss de-escalating conflicts in the Horn of Africa, implementing the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and supporting regional peace efforts. He also met African Union Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf and UN Secretary-General’s Personal Envoy Pekka Haavisto to promote peace, humanitarian access and a truce in Sudan.

At the Bishoftu International Airport construction site, Garcia and Ethiopian Airlines CEO Mesfin Tasew Bekele discussed fleet modernization with U.S. aircraft and services. Garcia emphasized American investment and technology as central to the airport’s development, with the U.S. Development Finance Corporation planning significant financing for small and medium enterprises around the project.

In Oromia, Garcia toured modern farms and a John Deere partner in Shashemene, highlighting demand for U.S. agricultural technology and job creation. He also met the American Chamber of Commerce to expand cooperation in aviation and critical minerals.

Star Alliance, Incheon International Airport Corporation sign MOU for cooperation on lounge operations

Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) and Star Alliance, the world’s largest airline alliance, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a Star Alliance lounge at Terminal 1 of Incheon International Airport.

The MOU will ensure continued premium lounge access for eligible passengers travelling with Star Alliance member airlines at Incheon International Airport after Asiana Airlines departs from Star Alliance on December 16, 2026, as part of its integration with Korean Air. Eligible passengers of Star Alliance member airlines currently enjoy access to Asiana Airlines lounges at Incheon International Airport.

Under the MOU, the existing Asiana Airlines Business Lounge (West) in Terminal 1 will transition to a Star Alliance lounge. The lounge is expected to begin operations in 4Q 2026, in conjunction with Asiana Airlines’ departure from the Alliance. Accordingly, eligible passengers of Star Alliance member airlines at Incheon International Airport will be able to continue enjoying seamless premium lounge services following the transition.

Aviation Africa Nairobi: "Time to Break the Mould"

Aviation Africa opened today in Nairobi #Kenya with a call for the continent's aviation sector to be transformed from a fragmented industry into a genuine engine of economic integration, as leaders from across Africa's air transport sector gathered for two days of discussion co-located with the Africa Drone Forum.

In his opening address, Alan Peaford, MBE, chairman of Times Aerospace Events, said Africa "cannot, and will not, realise the full promise of its economic integration, without a stronger aviation sector." Despite being home to 1.4 billion people, 55 countries and some of the world's fastest-growing economies, he noted that travelling between African countries remains difficult, expensive and time-consuming — a constraint not just on passengers, but on trade, tourism and investment.

Peaford highlighted Kenya as an example of progress, pointing to World Bank findings that the country's connectivity index rose 34% within Africa and 30% internationally, with 81 scheduled airlines now operating in the market. He also referenced ongoing regional cooperation, including efforts toward an East African Upper Flight Information Region, as evidence that cross-border coordination can move from ambition to operational reality.

ВЫБОРЫ ДЕПУТАТОВ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ ДУМЫ

2026 20 СЕНТЯБРЯ

ТВОЙ ГОЛОС – СИЛА РОССИИ!

О проведении голосования в Посольстве России в Аддис-Абебе

Уважаемые граждане Российской Федерации!

Приглашаем Вас на выборы депутатов Государственной Думы Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации девятого созыва.

Для проведения выборов на территории Эфиопии образован избирательный участок №8351 в Посольстве России по адресу: г. Аддис-Абеба, Йека Кыфле Катема, Кебеле 08, ул. Коморос. Голосование состоится 20 сентября с 8:00 до 20:00.

Кто может принять участие в голосовании?

ВСЕ граждане Российской Федерации, постоянно проживающие или временно находящиеся на территории Эфиопии.

Какие понадобятся документы?

Нужно иметь при себе действующий паспорт, удостоверяющий личность гражданина Российской Федерации за пределами ее территории
(т.е. обыкновенный загранпаспорт, служебный паспорт, дипломатический паспорт).

В случае утраты паспорта допускается предъявление участником голосования свидетельства на въезд (возвращение) в Российскую Федерацию, выданного дипломатическим представительством или консульским учреждением Российской Федерации.

Как проходит голосование?

Если Вы не внесены заранее в список избирателей, то Вас могут включить в него по предъявлению паспорта члену избирательной комиссии, после чего Вам выдадут под роспись бюллетень для голосования. Заполните его и опустите в урну для голосования.

Информационные материалы

Федеральный закон от 22 февраля 2014 г. №20-ФЗ «О выборах депутатов Государственной Думы Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации»

Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 16 июня 2026 г. №428 «О назначении выборов депутатов Государственной Думы Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации нового созыва»

С актуальными сведениями по выборам можно ознакомиться на официальном сайте ЦИК России: www.cikrf.ru.

Твой голос – сила России!

Ждем вас на избирательном участке!

Voting at the Russian Embassy in Addis Ababa

Dear citizens of the Russian Federation!

We invite you to the elections for deputies to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the ninth convocation.

Polling station No. 8351 has been established for the elections in Ethiopia
at the Russian Embassy, located at: Komoros Street, Yeka Kifle Ketema, Kebele 08, Addis Ababa. Voting will take place on September 20 from 8 AM to 8 PM.

Who can vote?

All citizens of the Russian Federation permanently residing

or temporarily residing in Ethiopia.

What documents are required?

You must have a valid passport that certifies your identity as a citizen
of the Russian Federation outside its territory (i.e., an ordinary passport, service passport, or diplomatic passport).

If a passport is lost, voters may present a certificate of entry (return) to the Russian Federation issued by a diplomatic mission or consular office
of the Russian Federation.

How does voting work?

If you are not previously included on the voter list, you may be added to it
by presenting your passport to a member of the election commission, after which you will be given a ballot paper to sign. Complete it and drop it in the ballot box.

Information Materials

Federal Law of February 22, 2014 No. 20-FZ "On Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation"

Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of June 16, 2026 No. 428 "On the Appointment of Elections of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the New Convocation"

Up-to-date election information is available on the official website of the Central Election Commission of Russia: www.cikrf.ru.

Your vote is the power of Russia!

We look forward to seeing you at the polling station!

TURNING NUTRITION INTO PLAY

Adolescents in Ethiopia are often overlooked in food systems work, even though they are at a formative age for building lifelong eating habits. A new game-based toolkit, including the card and board game Gursha, aims to change that by turning Ethiopia's food-based dietary guidelines into something young people choose to engage with, rather than something delivered at them.

Yared Endale, Co-Founder and Chief Communication Officer of Efuyegela Consultants, explains how the team behind Gursha is using gamification, co-creation with students and rigorous evaluation to make nutrition education more relevant, enjoyable and effective in Addis Ababa secondary schools. Excerpts;

Capital: What inspired the development of Gursha and the wider serious-game toolkit focused on Ethiopia's food-based dietary guidelines?

Yared Endale: The starting point was a simple but persistent problem: Ethiopia has comprehensive, scientifically sound food-based dietary guidelines, and school feeding policy has even been aligned to them ; but getting those messages to actually land with adolescents is a different challenge entirely. Young people are often the group most overlooked in food systems work, even though they're at a formative age for building lifelong habits. We wanted to close that gap by turning static guidance into something adolescents would choose to engage with, not something delivered at them.

Capital: Why did the team choose a game-based approach, rather than conventional classroom lessons, to engage adolescents on nutrition and healthy eating?

Yared: Nutrition education often struggles because it's information-heavy and one-directional. Games flip that. They create a space where a student has to apply a concept; matching foods to food groups, collecting servings, making decisions in a simulated food environment; rather than just memorizing it. That's the core belief behind our approach at Efuye Gela: gamification isn't decoration on top of a lesson, it's a different learning mechanism entirely, built on tension, competition, surprise, and repetition, which happen to be exactly the things adolescents already respond to.

Capital: How were Addis Ababa secondary-school students involved in designing, testing and refining the game?

Yared: They were there from day one, not brought in at the end to react to a finished product. Through co-creation workshops in September 2025, students played and ranked existing games to tell us what already worked for them, mapped out their real versus aspirational diets, learned the dietary guidelines and basics of game design, and then built and playtested their own game concepts with peers. That process repeated across multiple rounds of prototyping and refinement before we arrived at the final toolkit.

Capital: What important feedback from students changed the game's rules, design, food choices or learning messages?

Yared: The clearest signal from students was around what makes a game worth playing again: elements of speed, tension, surprise, physical engagement, and rules simple enough to pick up quickly. That preference shaped how mechanics like collecting food-group servings or navigating the urban food environment were built into gameplay, rather than being left as flat, quiz-style content.

Capital: What key nutrition lessons does Gursha aim to teach, and how are these woven into the gameplay without making the experience feel like a lecture?

Yared: Across the toolkit, the games cover food groups, dietary diversity, recommended servings, sugar and salt limits, water intake, physical activity, and food safety. In Gursha specifically, the cultural practice of giving gursha ; feeding someone a mouthful of food as a gesture of love and care ; is built into the experience itself, so the lesson is carried through a familiar cultural act rather than stated outright.

Capital: How did the developers ensure that the game reflects Ethiopia's food-based dietary guidelines while remaining relevant to what young people actually eat and encounter in Addis Ababa?

Yared: That balance came from combining three kinds of expertise at once: the nutrition science behind the guidelines, game design craft, and the adolescents' own lived knowledge of their diets and city. Context-specific elements; like decision-making within the urban food environment; were included precisely so the guidelines wouldn't feel abstract or imported, but grounded in choices students actually face.

Capital: The toolkit is being tested in six secondary schools. What is the trial measuring, and what would count as evidence that the game is working?

Yared: The randomised control trial is looking at the effect of three months of weekly gameplay on adolescents' knowledge, awareness, and behaviour related to healthy diets. Results will be shared over the coming year.

Capital: What early reactions have you received from students, teachers and school leaders who have played or observed Gursha?

Yared: Evaluation with the workshop participants showed high satisfaction in terms of enjoyment. One student summed it up well: "I learned that games can be more than just entertaining – they can also be educational" (Boy, Age 17, Grade 11). Beyond enjoyment, participants also reported gains that went past nutrition knowledge; new friendships, stronger communication and collaboration skills, more confidence, and a sense of their own capacity to create something.

Capital: If the trial shows positive results, what would be needed to expand Gursha to more schools in Addis Ababa and across Ethiopia?

Yared: The long-term ambition already points that way; the games are intended for eventual use by the Ministry of Education, the Addis Ababa City Education Bureau, the Ministry of Health, and EPHI, to support integrating the food-based dietary guidelines into the national curriculum. Scaling would build on that institutional partnership.

Capital: Could Gursha be adapted into a mobile or digital game, translated into additional Ethiopian languages, or expanded to address other issues such as food safety, climate-resilient diets and adolescent health?

Yared: Yes, on both fronts. A digital version of the game is currently being built, which will let us extend the reach of the toolkit well beyond the physical card and board formats. On language, Gursha already exists in Amharic and English, and we're now working to adapt it into Oromiffa and Tigrigna, so the game can speak to adolescents in more of the languages they actually use day to day. That multilingual approach matters a lot to us; a game only works as a behaviour-change tool if it feels like it belongs to the player, and language is a big part of that. As for further thematic expansion ; into areas like climate-resilient diets or broader adolescent health ; the toolkit already touches on food safety alongside diet and physical activity, so there's a solid foundation to build on as the trial results come in and we understand more about what resonates.

A Living Legacy of Friendship: H.E Adut Salva Kiir Plants Trees at President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy, in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — In a powerful gesture symbolizing friendship, solidarity, and the enduring bonds between the peoples of South Sudan and Ethiopia, Hon. Adut Salva Kiir, Senior Presidential Envoy on Special Programs, has planted tree seedlings at the allocated land designated for President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy in Addis Ababa.

Her Excellency Adut Salva Kiir, alongside Hon. Ambassador Dr. James Piti Morgan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan, participated in the tree-planting initiative, planting guava tree seedlings as a lasting symbol of hope, peace, cooperation, and shared responsibility for the environment.The tree-planting activity was conducted under Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative, championed by H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which has emerged as a significant national environmental campaign promoting tree planting, environmental protection, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

Planting Trees, Planting Friendship

The participation of South Sudanese leaders in Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative carries a meaning that extends far beyond the planting of trees. Each seedling planted at President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy represents a living connection between two neighboring nations whose histories, cultures, and peoples have been linked for generations.

The trees planted today are intended to grow alongside the relationship between South Sudan and Ethiopia—deepening their roots, expanding their branches, and providing future generations with a tangible reminder of the friendship and solidarity shared by the two sisterly nations.

Hon. Adut Salva Kiir and Ambassador Dr. James Piti Morgan expressed their commitment to protecting and caring for the trees planted at the site, ensuring that this contribution becomes a lasting green legacy of friendship and cooperation.

President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy

The designated site for President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy is envisioned not simply as a physical location, but as a place where the history, sacrifices, culture, traditions, and aspirations of South Sudan can be preserved and shared with future generations.

The vision includes the establishment of a Library and Cultural Heritage Centre dedicated to documenting, preserving, and showcasing the history and cultural heritage of South Sudan, while also highlighting the longstanding historical and people-to-people connections between South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Such a center could become an important platform for education, cultural exchange, historical research, knowledge sharing, and youth engagement. It would also provide an opportunity for visitors, scholars, students, diplomats, researchers, and members of the wider international community to learn about South Sudan's journey, its rich cultural traditions, and its relationship with Ethiopia.

A Bridge Between Two Sisterly Nations

The Village of Legacy can become more than a monument to history. It can serve as a bridge between generations and between nations. The planting of the guava seedlings provides a particularly meaningful beginning. A tree starts as a small seedling, yet with care, time, and commitment, it becomes strong enough to provide shade, fruit, and shelter. In much the same way, the friendship between South Sudan and Ethiopia requires continuous nurturing, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to a peaceful and prosperous future.

The initiative therefore carries a message that resonates beyond national borders: when nations plant together, they create something that future generations can inherit together.

A Legacy for Future Generations

For Hon. Adut Salva Kiir, the tree-planting ceremony represents a personal and national contribution to a legacy that will outlive the present generation. For Ethiopia, the participation of South Sudanese leaders in the Green Legacy Initiative reflects the inclusive and regional spirit of an environmental campaign whose significance extends beyond Ethiopia's borders.

And for South Sudan, the Village of Legacy offers an opportunity to preserve the story of a nation and to celebrate the bonds that connect its people with their Ethiopian neighbors.

As these newly planted guava trees grow in the soil of Addis Ababa, they will stand as living witnesses to a moment of cooperation between two sisterly countries.

The trees are not merely planted in the ground; they are planted in history.

Their roots will symbolize friendship.

Their branches will symbolize cooperation.

Their growth will symbolize hope.

And their enduring presence will remind future generations that the strongest legacies are those built together.

The vision of President Salva Kiir's Village of Legacy is therefore one that looks simultaneously to the past, present, and future—honoring history, strengthening friendship today, and creating a lasting foundation for generations yet to come.

From South Sudan to Ethiopia, a tree has been planted. From friendship to legacy, a new chapter has begun.

Casablanca Amazigh Theatre Festival unveils highlights of 8th edition

Theaters across the Casablanca-Settat region will host the 8th edition of the Casablanca Amazigh Theatre Festival from September 30 to October 4, 2026, under the high patronage of King Mohammed VI.

Organized by the Tafoukt Space for Creation in partnership with the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) and the Regional Council of Casablanca-Settat, this edition commemorates the 25th anniversary of the 2001 Royal Speech of Ajdir, which launched decisive efforts to promote Amazigh language and culture, culminating in its constitutional recognition as an official language in 2011.

The festival will feature productions and participants from Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and Tunisia. A major Moroccan-Emirati cooperation program includes an exhibition of Arab Theatre Authority publications and an academic symposium on documenting Moroccan theatrical heritage.

Highlights include an Amazigh book exhibition showcasing IRCAM publications, a fine arts exhibition, tributes to educator and playwright El Safi Moumen Ali, journalist Dr. Amina Ben Cheikh and artist Haj Mohamed Bougassen (Smouken), and the competition for the National Prize for Amazigh Culture in the theatre category.

Four troupes will compete with 2025 productions: Amziane Theatre Troupe (Nador), Kunstamz Troupe (Tiznit), Khemis'Art Troupe (Khémisset) and Agadir Arts Workshop (Agadir). Additional performances, academic symposia, book signings and specialized workshops in Tifinagh script, media documentation, Amazigh theatrical lexicon, storytelling and body physics will round out the program.

The edition is dedicated to the memory of the late artist Abou Ali Abdelali.

Should the Press 'Run Toward' AI?

By Jem Bartholomew

Since it was first published, in 2001, The Elements of Journalism, by Tom Rosenstiel and Bill Kovach, has schooled fledgling reporters in their craft by advocating that journalists adhere to a series of core principles—including that journalism's first obligation is to the truth; that it is, in essence, a discipline of verification; and that journalists must serve as a monitor of power. In Rosenstiel's new book, The Next Journalism: How the Press Must Change to Serve Democracy, released last week by Crown, he argues that his intention is to deepen these principles, not to replace them.

But his new recommendations tilt in a different direction. Rosenstiel, a professor at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, argues that journalism is "failing democracy" and should "become more focused on helping people live their lives than on merely getting their attention."

To achieve this aim, he suggests we reframe our traditional understanding of newsgathering, such that professional journalists, the public, and "machines" all have "distinct, essential, and complementary—not competing—roles." Notably, he writes that "journalism must run toward Artificial Intelligence, not away from it, to make journalism stronger." As he explained to me last week: "We should be using AI in journalism to make our journalism better, not primarily to make it cheaper." And, he acknowledged, "it will be a point of friction in the book."

But what exactly would it look like to "run toward" AI? One of his suggestions in The Next Journalism is that news organizations, with the help of AI systems, serve their audiences by assembling "the vast array of public data about community life into a new and easily usable Civic Internet." In other words, instead of using datasets for one-off enterprise stories, journalists should work to combine multiple streams of information into a single, constantly updating hub—taking on the role of data wranglers, one might say—and then enable audiences to navigate that resource themselves, for instance with an AI chatbot. This, he argues, could help put newsrooms back at the center of their communities. The idea is about "extending the reach of human journalism using technology as a tool," he told me. "I'm not advocating having AI write stories."

Rosenstiel gives other use cases for AI systems: auditing reporting to ensure under-covered communities are well-represented; identifying false claims from politicians that could then be fact-checked; collecting and analyzing data about audience needs and preferences. "AI is going to happen. It's the next digital revolution," Rosenstiel told me. He acknowledges problems around hallucinations, bias, environmental concerns, and so on. Even so, he argued, models are getting better all the time. And: "If we say, 'AI is bad, I don't want to use it,' it will happen to us." Without serious journalists getting involved, he said, bad practitioners will move into the space, promising news without the professional ethics or standards of serious journalistic organizations. "That's why we have to run at it, and run at it with the concept of: How do you make it better?"

Some news organizations are headed in that direction. The Washington Post (Ask the Post AI) and Financial Times (Ask FT) have made chatbots

from their journalism, and Jim VandeHei, the cofounder and CEO of Axios, talked to Issie Lapowsky for a recent CJR story about Axios's partnership with OpenAI and what he views as its potential to "save local news." Many big publishers are cutting licensing deals with tech firms.

But the idea of embracing AI is harder to swallow for others. In March, Emily Bell wrote for CJR about how a group of news organizations—some from opposite ends of the political spectrum, like The Guardian and Telegraph—have formed the Standards for Publisher Usage Rights, or SPUR, to advocate for guardrails around responsible AI use, among other things. It was encouraging to see an American company, the Associated Press, join SPUR in July, particularly in the absence of political will in the United States for a conversation about meaningful regulation (as in the European Union's landmark AI Act). Meanwhile, where journalists feel their companies are not taking the troubling aspects of AI seriously enough, as Riddhi Setty reported for CJR in April, unionized employees are fighting for contracts that set terms for its use.

Newsroom opposition to hasty AI adoption comes amid high-profile inaccuracies and citation problems from large language models (LLMs)—which surely break Rosenstiel and Kovach's rule about journalism's first obligation being to the truth—as well as a litany of disputes with tech companies over copyright infringement. (These are helpfully collated in the Tow Center's AI Deals and Disputes Tracker.)

"I do not understand this idea that journalism should rush toward AI, particularly in the editorial process," Courtney C. Radsch, the director of the Center for Media and Digital Governance at the Open Markets Institute, told me. She pointed out that "now you have information operations targeting LLMs" from state actors such as Russia, as Wired has reported, as well as "ideological biases embedded in the LLM," the impacts of which are difficult to identify. "I mean, sure, do it in your admin functions," Radsch said. "But the idea that we can use it in the creation and production of journalism, I think, is very problematic—because then what differentiates journalism from anyone else who uses an LLM to create content?"

Felix M. Simon, a research fellow in AI and digital news at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, found, in a report for Aspen Digital in March of last year, that there is now a premium on distinctive, human-made reporting that cannot easily be made or replicated by AI systems, such as original investigative reporting, nuanced analysis, and stories that come from long-term relationships with communities. Simon told me that some publishers are now thinking, "We have to provide something that is unique, that people cannot easily get elsewhere, and that people are willing to pay for."

Simon also looked at how European news organizations are approaching the implementation of AI systems, concluding that there is "incremental" adoption rather than "revolutionary transformation." (The report grew out of a gathering of about eighty UK and European media leaders who discussed their companies' approaches to AI.) Most news organizations have focused on efficiency, the report found, and "on automating routine tasks like transcription, translation, and headline creation." Simon characterizes their attitude toward AI as "a mixture of caution and excitement, with the latter seemingly more pronounced at the senior leadership level."

Overall, Rosenstiel's book contains interesting ideas about equipping journalists for the twenty-first century. He calls on news organizations to better understand the role their reporting plays in the daily lives of the communities they cover, as well as to collaborate much more intentionally with audiences. That is all very welcome. But the most sensible approach to AI tools for news organizations may be the one they're already taking—not running toward shiny objects but walking around them, cautiously, and verifying whether they're worth it.

This piece was produced with support from the Craig Newmark Center for Journalism Ethics and Security.

China's economic significance for the world: Stabilizing the present and sharing the future

By Ambassador Jiang Feng

The Wall Street Journal recently commented that China had supported the global economy by reducing its oil imports, while Le Figaro maintained that, following the 2008 global financial crisis, China had once again "saved the world economy" at a critical moment. The wording used by the two Western media outlets may differ, but they point to the same reality: in a world fraught with risks, rising protectionism, and accelerating technological change, the Chinese economy has once again served as a stabilizing force for the global economy.

For many years, China's contribution to global economic growth has remained at around 30%, making it the undisputed "number-one engine" of global growth. At another critical moment when the global economy faces mounting shocks, China is providing a stabilizing force for global markets, creating new development opportunities for countries around the world through continued expansion of opening-up, and enabling more countries to share in development opportunities by promoting greater openness in technology.

In response to current challenges, China has upheld its responsibility as a major power to maintain stability in the global economy. Since late February of this year, the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict has disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, causing shortages of international crude oil and key raw materials, and presenting the global economy with new and severe challenges.

Leveraging its strong position in the new-energy sector, China has actively responded by reducing crude oil imports, thereby significantly alleviating upward pressure on international oil prices. China's industrial sector has maintained efficient and stable production, helping offset supply gaps caused by production stoppages and logistics disruptions in some regions.

In recent years, China has accelerated its green transition across the economy and society, greatly enhancing the economy's resilience and capacity for adjustment. Currently, nearly four out of every ten kilowatt-hours of electricity consumed across the country comes from green power, while the retail penetration rate of new energy vehicles has continued to rise, reaching a cumulative 54.1% in the first half of the year. China's advanced and practical technologies—such as solar power, wind power, and energy storage—along with high-quality products such as electric vehicles, are turning the energy transition from a dream into reality for many developing countries. Distributed solar and microgrid projects implemented by Chinese companies in sub-Saharan Africa are steadily bringing light to more and more communities across the continent.

Committed to shared development, China is expanding opportunities for global growth through greater openness. In today's world, markets have become one of the scarcest resources. With annual imports exceeding 20 trillion yuan, China is a major export destination for nearly 80 countries. At a time when some countries are turning toward protectionism, China has remained committed to expanding openness. By lowering import tariffs, hosting the China International Import Expo, and launching the "Export to China" series of events, China has continued to provide a vast market for goods and services from around the world.

Effective May 1st this year, China fully implemented zero tariffs on imports from 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, without requiring reciprocal market access or attaching any conditions. In just over 100 days since the policy took effect, a growing range of African products has entered the Chinese market at an accelerated pace. Fresh apples and wines from South Africa, avocados from Kenya, oranges from Egypt, and blueberries from Zimbabwe have all begun making their way onto the dining tables of ordinary Chinese consumers.

From May to June, China's imports from Africa rose by 23.5% year on year, while imports of African aquatic products and textile raw materials both recorded double-digit growth. African trading partners have welcomed those measures, noting that zero tariffs have not only expanded the scale of African exports to China, but also created more favorable market conditions for African countries to strengthen their processing capabilities, extend industrial value chains, and increase the value added of their products.

Looking toward the transformations of the future, China is promoting technological openness to prevent new historical injustices. At the opening ceremony of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized that we must carry out extensive international cooperation and help Global South countries with capacity building to bridge the AI and digital divides, promote sustainable development, and prevent the creation of new historical injustices in AI. Africa is home to thousands of languages and faces distinctive needs in agriculture, education, healthcare, and public services that differ from those of other regions.

Against this backdrop, a growing number of African developers are turning to Chinese open-source AI models for customized development, enabling AI to better meet local needs. Technological openness lowers not only the cost of using AI, but also the barriers to participating in this technological revolution. It enables more developing countries with relatively limited financial and technological resources to avoid becoming completely dependent on the expensive, closed-source products offered by a handful of technology giants. More importantly, it gives them an opportunity to move beyond the role of perpetual consumers and passive recipients of technology and build the capacity to accelerate their progress in this technological revolution.

From addressing the oil crisis by proactive adjustment of demand, to actively expanding market openness, and to promoting open-source technology in the field of artificial intelligence, China's contributions to the global economy are grounded in the present amid crises, serve the needs of development today, and look toward a shared future. The global economy has never been a zero-sum game. On the contrary, when a super-large economy is willing to use its own market to absorb more goods, adjust its own demand to stabilize global markets, and utilize its own technological capabilities to help more countries bridge the technological divide, what it creates is not merely wealth for itself, but can also become a source of additional growth for the shared development of the world economy. Through its actions, China is demonstrating that a super-large economy can indeed serve as a stabilizing force for the world economy, for openness in global development, and for inclusive scientific and technological progress.

Ambassador Jiang Feng is the Head of the Mission of the People's Republic of China to the African Union

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.

Entrepreneur PROFILE:

RESUME

Name: Tsegenet Amare

Education: Diploma

Company name: Tesfa Tsegenet Delivery

Title: Founder and Manager

Founded in: 2024

What it does: Preparing Enjera and various traditional dishes and delivering them

Hq: Addis Ababa

Number of Employees: 5

STARTUP CAPITAL

35,000 BIRR

CURRENT CAPITAL

Growing

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting the Business: Meeting the growing urban demand for fast food ordering and traditional cuisine

Biggest perk of ownership: Being the owner of my own business

Biggest strength: Strong work ethic

Biggest challenge: Lack of awareness

Plan: Expanding the service to open our own large cloud kitchen

First career: Assistant food preparer

PERSONAL

Most interested in meeting: Successful female entrepreneurs in the food business sector

Most admired person: None

Stress reducer: Prayer

Favorite pastime: Spending time with family

Favorite book: None

Favorite destination: Dubai

Favorite automobile: Toyota RAV4

DAILY EXCHANGE RATE

Sep. 12, 2026

የኢትዮጵያ ንግድ ባንክ
Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CURRENCY	BUYING	SELLING
US DOLLAR	160.23	163.43
POUND STERLING	214.55	218.84
EURO	186.99	190.73
SWISS FRANK	196.01	199.93
SWEDISH KRONER	16.56	16.89
CHINESE YUAN	23.39	23.86
UAE DIRHAM	43.62	44.50
JAPANIS YEN	0.98	1.00

Capital

Year 28, No. 1449 Sunday Sep 13, 2026

Society

The departure of artistic imagination: From the divine sacred dome of the Sistine Chapel to the gruesome horror movies of Netflix

By Gezahegn Anbelu

Artistic expressions—whether in the form of literary fiction like a novel or poetry, performing arts like drama or opera, or visual arts such as painting and sculpture—embody and represent the cultural, philosophical, and political stage into which a society is ushered. However, a rampant debate persists: Does a work of art merely reflect the society in which it was produced, or do artists, using their powerful imaginations, create the world they believe society ought to be ushered into?

Artists are undoubtedly influenced by personal experiences, as well as theoretical and intellectual forces that shape their thinking and creative work. Yet, their personal convictions and intellectual formation serve as the inner drive that leaves an indelible print on their art. It is very difficult to imagine an artistic work that does not reflect the personal philosophy or convictions of its creator. At the same time, some critics of this theory argue for the agency of the consumers, emphasizing the role that the audience plays in interpreting and influencing art.

In my humble opinion, the most modest approach to this debate is to consider both the external environment in which the artwork is produced and the inner personal philosophy of the artist together to gain a proper understanding of the topic.

From Divine Order to Human-Centric Art

One of the most brilliant Italian Renaissance artists and scientists of his time, Michelangelo, is primarily known for his work in sculpture, painting, architecture, and poetry. His creations predominantly reflect a medieval, Christian-dominated society. As a product of that era, much of his premodern work is religious, focusing primarily on characters from the Bible.

For instance, the marble sculpture of David represents the biblical hero before his battle with Goliath, symbolizing human strength, courage, and ideal beauty. Similarly, his other works—including marble sculptures of the Virgin Mary and Moses, as well as ceiling paintings in the Sistine Chapel—exhibit both the deeply religious imagination of the artist and the broader social climate. It would have been unthinkable for the artist to imagine differently, as the Church would have sanctioned and discouraged such intellectual or artistic autonomy.

Because Michelangelo lived in a deeply Christian Renaissance society, his works predominantly reflected Christian values. Even when he produced art that was not explicitly biblical, he still dwelt on themes with strong spiritual connections. For example, some of his poems explored love, beauty, aging, mortality, and spirituality rather than simply retelling biblical stories.

Christian values were so deeply entrenched that when Michelangelo painted The Last Judgment on the Sistine Chapel altar wall, it contained many nude figures, drawing strong criticism from church officials. There were even calls to remove or alter the work, and after his death, another artist was hired to add drapery to cover the nudity. Even though Michelangelo did not always operate exclusively under strict Christian underpinnings, his art operated at the intersection of Christian theology, Renaissance humanism, and classical Greek and Roman aesthetics.

This controversy highlights a fundamental truth: art in the medieval period was expected to strictly portray Christian values and philosophical underpinnings to instill virtues such as truth, morality, spirituality, and mortality. These elements were considered essential to bring the medieval person closer to God and to aid in spiritual formation and devotion.

The Shift Toward Modernity and Postmodern Relativism

The intellectual evolutions that followed—such as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment—dismantled the old social structure where religion sat at the center, allowing alternative worldviews to compete for the artistic mind. This later fostered artistic works that defied traditional order, taking humanity itself as the center of artistic curiosity instead of theological themes. As philosophy changed, art changed.

By the 19th century, modernity embraced scientific explanations of reality, and religion was increasingly confined to the private sphere. Consequently, art began to follow suit: the mundane, daily life, and the regular person became objects of interest. The art world left the sacred setting of the church, wandering out to capture the ordinary member of society.

This departure became complete when postmodernism turned long-established philosophical and religious notions of truth upside down by proposing that truth is relative. The notion that art should reflect grander themes like objective truth, sacredness, and love was cast aside; instead, art was expected simply to allow the artist to express subjective beauty, truth, and individuality. The era was marked by a retreat from absolutism.

As the well-known American philosopher Francis Schaeffer wrote, under the backdrop of Renaissance humanism, enlightenment rationalism, and modern skepticism culminating in postmodern relativism, the Western mind, culture, and civilization gradually retreated from truth, moving away from the idea of objective, knowable reality. The art world has since been the battlefield where these opposing minds clash for the heart and soul of the masses.

The Evolution of Ethiopian Art and Modernity

When tracing the trajectory of Ethiopian art and literature, the narrative reveals a profound tension between deep-rooted indigenous traditions and successive waves of external ideologies. For centuries, Ethiopian artistic and cultural expression was heavily dominated by Oriental Christianity—so much so that some European observers historically mischaracterized Ethiopia as merely a periphery of the Byzantine civilization, overlooking its distinct autonomy and internal depth. The nation's experiment with modernity, which began in the early years of Emperor Menelik II and intensified during the early 1960s, initiated a decisive shift toward modernist philosophies.

However, this evolution was abruptly fractured by the Marxist-Leninist government, which radically overhauled the existing intellectual currency and steered the nation headlong into the unchartered waters of socialist ideology. As prominent Ethiopian critics and philosophers—most notably Mesay Kebede—have argued, this massive departure and dislocation from local, indigenous, religious, and cultural foundations permanently damaged the psyche of the masses and fundamentally altered the natural course of Ethiopian history.

Operating within the shadow of these shifting philosophical underpinnings, modernist writers and artists navigated this turbulent landscape with distinct approaches. Figures like Bealu Girma engaged critically with the sociopolitical realities and power structures of the era, while Sebhat Gebre-Egziabher emerged as perhaps the most radical among them. Pushing stylistic and thematic boundaries through a unique fusion of realism and surrealism, Sebhat captured the raw, unconventional texture of modern urban existence in sharp defiance of rigid orthodoxies.

The Global Spread of Modern Media and Cultural Impact

This trend has been consistent: a movement from the noble to the ignoble, from the sacred to the profane, and from the elegant to the vulgar—often marketed as marks of modernity and sophistication. Consequently, the art world has become saturated with works in the form of novels, movies, and paintings that reflect the moral bankruptcy and regression into which society has descended.

This continuous assault on the human mind—driven by "modern" education and secularization, and exacerbated by technological expansion and globalization—is no longer confined to small pockets of Western nations. Instead, it is served on the "golden plate" of the internet, social media, and global telecommunication companies operating under market-expansion models that promulgate values and lifestyles eerily unconfirmed by the rest of the world.

While this global expansion might be acceptable if it promoted healthy social interactions and local values that enhance social harmony, its aggressive spread is negatively impacting the youth, particularly in regions where media literacy is limited, such as Ethiopia. The widespread portrayal of gruesome violence in horror movies, ritualistic content, and sexual perversion—which completely misaligns with local cultures—acts as a subtle and indirect control over the minds of the young and innocent. Without broader media control mechanisms to check these influences, external media reigns freely to push its own agenda.

Art is a powerful tool. It can easily access the hearts and minds of people. When used to promote socially positive values, it can be a force for good. But if it falls into the wrong hands, artists risk being manipulated by individuals who will not back down from using God-given talents to exploit and manipulate the public.

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

The Hydra effect in the production process

Alazar Kebede

In Greek mythology, the Hydra was a terrifying creature with multiple heads. The most disturbing feature of the beast was not simply its strength, but its ability to regenerate itself. When one head was cut off, two more grew in its place. The metaphor has become increasingly relevant to modern production processes. In manufacturing, supply chains and organisational operations, managers often discover that solving one operational problem can unexpectedly generate several new ones. This phenomenon may be described as the Hydra Effect which is an intervention intended to eliminate a bottleneck, or inefficiency produces unintended consequences that multiply complexity elsewhere in the system.

The Hydra Effect matters because modern production systems are rarely simple. A factory is not merely a collection of machines performing independent tasks. It is an interconnected system involving labour, technology, suppliers, inventory, quality control, transportation and customer demand. Improving one part of this system without understanding its relationship with the others can create new constraints. As Goldratt and Cox in their 2014 published book entitled "The Goal: A Process of Ongoing Improvement" famously argued in their Theory of Constraints, every system contains limiting factors that determine overall performance. Removing one constraint does not necessarily solve the wider problem; it may simply expose another.

Consider a manufacturer experiencing delays because its assembly department cannot process enough components. Management invests in faster machinery, automation and additional labour. Initially, productivity appears to improve. Output from the assembly line increases dramatically. However, the next department may now be unable to cope with the additional volume. Inventory begins accumulating between production stages, warehouse space becomes limited, quality inspectors face greater workloads and delivery schedules become increasingly difficult to manage. The original bottleneck has disappeared, but several new operational problems have emerged.

This is the Hydra Effect in action. The mistake lies in assuming that local efficiency automatically creates system-wide efficiency. The obsession with productivity metrics can make this problem worse. Managers are often rewarded for improving measurable performance indicators such as units produced per hour, machine utilisation or labour productivity. Yet an increase in one metric may conceal a deterioration elsewhere. A machine operating at maximum capacity, for example, may produce more inventory than downstream processes require. Excess inventory ties up capital, increases storage costs and creates a greater risk of waste or obsolescence. Lean production emerged partly as a response to this type of inefficiency. However, even well-intentioned efficiency programmes can themselves produce a Hydra Effect. Cost-cutting initiatives, for example, frequently appear attractive in the short term. A company may reduce its supplier base to obtain lower prices through larger contracts. The immediate result is lower procurement expenditure and a simplified purchasing process. Yet dependence on fewer suppliers may increase vulnerability to disruption. If a major supplier experiences a strike, financial failure or transportation delay, the entire production process may be affected.

The global supply-chain disruptions of recent years have demonstrated the dangers of excessive efficiency. For decades, many organisations adopted just-in-time production systems designed to minimise inventory and reduce waste. These systems can be highly effective when supply networks are stable. However, when unexpected disruptions occur, organisations with minimal inventory buffers may struggle to continue production. A solution to the problem of excessive stock can therefore create a new problem: reduced resilience.

This does not mean that efficiency is undesirable. Rather, it demonstrates that efficiency must be balanced against resilience. Christopher and Peck in 2004 published book entitled "Building the resilient supply chain" argue that supply chains must be designed with vulnerability and risk in mind. In other words, a production system should not be judged solely by how efficiently it operates under normal conditions, but also by how effectively it responds when conditions change.

Technology provides another important example. Digital automation, artificial intelligence and advanced production software are frequently presented as solutions to human error and operational inefficiency. Automation can undoubtedly improve consistency, speed and productivity. Nevertheless, introducing new technology can create additional layers of complexity. Employees require training, systems must be maintained, cybersecurity risks increase and organisations may become dependent on specialised software providers.

Furthermore, automation can shift rather than eliminate human involvement. A company may reduce the number of workers performing repetitive tasks, but it may simultaneously require more engineers, data analysts and technical specialists. The nature of the problem changes. Instead of managing routine labour, the organisation must manage technical expertise, software failures and digital infrastructure. Cutting off one head creates another.

The Hydra Effect also raises important questions about managerial decision-making. Too often, organisations respond to visible symptoms rather than underlying causes. When delivery performance deteriorates, management may demand overtime. When quality declines, additional inspection may be introduced. When employees become overwhelmed, more reporting systems may be implemented. Each response may temporarily address the immediate problem, but it can also add new pressures to the organisation.

Systems thinking offers a more sustainable alternative. A decision made in procurement can influence production. A production decision can influence inventory. Inventory decisions can influence customer service. These relationships mean that isolated solutions are often inadequate.

The practical challenge, therefore, is not simply to solve problems faster. It is to understand what the solution itself will do to the wider production system. Before investing in additional machinery, managers should ask whether downstream capacity can absorb the increased output. Before reducing inventory, they should examine supply-chain risk. Before automating a process, they should consider the skills, maintenance and security requirements that will follow.

This requires a shift in managerial culture. Organisations must become less interested in celebrating quick fixes and more willing to examine second- and third-order consequences. Short-term solutions can be politically attractive because their benefits are visible immediately, while their costs may emerge months later in another department. Yet transferring a problem is not the same as solving it.

Ultimately, the Hydra Effect should serve as a warning against simplistic approaches to production management. Modern organisations operate in systems characterised by interdependence, uncertainty and feedback. Removing a bottleneck, reducing a cost or automating a task may create genuine benefits, but these benefits should always be evaluated against possible consequences elsewhere.

The lesson from the Hydra is therefore surprisingly relevant to the factory floor. The challenge is not merely to cut off the head of the problem in front of us. It is to understand the entire organism. Production managers who adopt a systems perspective are more likely to identify hidden constraints, anticipate unintended consequences and design processes that are both efficient and resilient.

In an increasingly complex industrial environment, the best solution is rarely the fastest or most obvious one. Real operational improvement requires organisations to look beyond individual problems and recognise the connections between them. Otherwise, managers may proudly eliminate one production difficulty, only to discover that two more have appeared in its place.

Every map lies. Even the one on the UN's Flag

A UN vote just tried to fix the shape of the world. It's a worthy correction — and proof that every map ever drawn is, in its own way, a beautiful lie.

By Daniel Kassahun

The map on your classroom wall is a magnificent lie. It shows Greenland and Africa as roughly the same size. In reality, Africa is fourteen times larger — Greenland would fit inside it nearly a dozen times over. Yet generations of us were trained to see them as equals.

This week, the world took a step toward correcting that fib. At the United Nations General Assembly, a resolution to "Correct the Map" — tabled by the African Union as part of a wider push to decolonize knowledge — passed by an overwhelming margin: 164 nations in favor, six abstentions, and a single dissenting vote from the United States.

The resolution is non-binding, but its symbolic weight is real. It nudges schools, institutions, and tech companies away from the familiar Mercator projection and toward alternatives like Equal Earth, which preserve the true relative size of continents.

It's a powerful line. But as a geographer, I want to add one unshakeable truth to the celebration: there has never been, and never will be, a perfectly accurate flat map of a round planet.

The geometry of an impossible dream

Try peeling an orange and flattening the peel into a neat rectangle without tearing it. You can't — and the same geometry that keeps an orange round makes a perfectly flat, perfectly accurate map impossible. It isn't a design flaw. It's a law of the universe, as fixed as gravity.

Every time a sphere is pressed onto a flat plane, something has to give. Preserve true shapes, and you sacrifice true sizes. Preserve true sizes, and shapes warp instead. This is the cartographer's Faustian bargain: Mercator chose to keep angles honest, which is why sailors loved it. Equal Earth chooses to keep areas honest instead. Neither can do both. So the real question a map should raise isn't does this distort reality — it always does — but what does it distort, and for whom?

How a sailor's tool became a political weapon

None of this makes Mercator villainous. When Gerardus Mercator drew his projection in 1569, he was solving a life-or-death problem: distorted charts were getting sailors killed at sea, because straight compass bearings didn't stay straight on other projections. His map let a captain draw one straight line and follow it. It was a triumph of applied geometry, not an act of bias.

The trouble started later, when a tool built for coast-hugging navigation was handed a much bigger job: answering what the whole world looks like. That's the moment the map left captains' desks and settled onto classroom walls, where its distortions quietly became everyone's mental picture of the planet.

On that map, Africa — 30.4 million square kilometers — appears about the same size as Greenland, which is only 2.2 million. There's no conspiracy in the mathematics; the distortion grows automatically the farther a landmass sits from the equator. But because maps carry the authority of fact, most of us absorb the illusion without question. Africa shrinks in the mind's eye. Europe and North America inflate.

Equal Earth corrects that: Africa returns to its true, continent-swallowing scale, and Greenland shrinks to the sliver it actually is. It can feel jarring at first — that jarring feeling is just the sensation of unlearning a lifetime of visual conditioning.

When maps stop being mistakes and start being weapons

Mathematical distortion is a matter of geometry. Deliberate distortion is a matter of mischief — and that's what should worry us more. A 2022 study by Daniel in the journal Cartographica examined how maps circulate inside Ethiopian political discourse, and found that many of the maps shared on social media weren't neutral depictions of terrain at all. They were built to reinforce one-sided territorial narratives.

A confidently drawn border, a legend, a caption — packaged together, they can look like verified history even when they're an argument dressed up as evidence. A single well-made map can move public opinion faster than a thousand speeches, and social media has made that kind of manipulation cheaper and faster to spread than ever. A distorted world map warps how we picture the planet. A distorted political map can put land, livelihoods, and lives directly at risk — which is exactly why reading maps critically isn't a niche academic skill. It's a civic one.

Why is north always on top?

There's no law of physics requiring it — just centuries of convention. Flip the map, and Australia suddenly dominates the upper half of the globe. Nothing about the Earth has changed, but something in our sense of who and what matters shifts instantly. Even the prime meridian's home in Greenwich was a historical and political choice, not a geographic inevitability — the French anchored their own meridian in Paris for decades before conceding.

Even the United Nations isn't exempt. Its own emblem uses an azimuthal equidistant projection, which stretches landmasses as they radiate outward from the pole. That's not hypocrisy — it's just geometry refusing to negotiate. You cannot put a sphere on a flat page without a trade-off, and not even the UN can escape it.

The beautiful lie we agree to

For generations, millions of people grew up with equatorial nations shrunk and northern ones inflated on the map in front of them. This week's resolution is an admission that our maps have been quietly telling a story of inequality — and a decision that we can tell a different one.

But the deeper lesson isn't that humanity has finally found the perfect map. We haven't, and we won't. The lesson is to ask sharper questions of every map we meet: Who made this? For what purpose? What did it preserve, and what did it sacrifice? What does it want me to believe?

We will never capture the Earth's true shape on a flat page. The goal was never a perfect map. It's becoming a smarter reader of the imperfect ones we'll always be handed.

Daniel Kassahun, PHD, is a geospatial educator and researcher. He can be reached via daniel.kassahun@gmail.com


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Heat death and the grammar of endings

By Gzachew Wolde

Every civilization that has looked up at the sky has also asked, in one form or another, how the story ends. Physics answers with heat death: the slow, silent flattening of every temperature difference in the universe until no work, no motion, and no light remain possible. Religion answers with judgment, resurrection, or dissolution, where an ending is rarely just an ending, but a hinge into something else.

The two visions rarely speak to each other directly, yet they arrive, however differently, at the same hushed conclusion: that struggle does not go on forever. What follows is an attempt to walk that convergence honestly. The differences are stark: a universe that does not judge at its end, and a cosmos that, in most faiths, still brings judgment after death. But both sit with the fact, trying to answer the same question in their own registers.

The heat death of the universe, also known as the Big Freeze, is a scientific hypothesis about how the universe could end. It follows from the second law of thermodynamics, according to which entropy tends to increase in an isolated system. In this scenario, the universe grows so large and old that all energy spreads out evenly. No hot or cold spots remain. Without temperature differences, no physical work can occur.

Stars form when gas clouds, mostly hydrogen in nebulae, collapse under gravity. Gravity pulls molecules closer together, increasing density until fusion ignites. So during star formation, gas actually becomes less dispersed, not more; it concentrates. The dispersal happens on the other end of a star's life, and this connects directly to entropy and heat death.

Over immense periods of time, stars would exhaust their fuel, star formation would decline and eventually cease, and galaxies would become increasingly isolated by cosmic expansion. The universe would grow colder, darker, and more dilute. The expansion of space would continue to separate matter, while the number of structures capable of producing light and sustaining complex processes would steadily diminish.

Normally, stars constantly lose mass through stellar winds: streams of charged particles, mostly protons and electrons, blown off the star's outer atmosphere by its own radiation and heat. Our Sun does this too (it is called the "solar wind"), though it loses only a tiny fraction of its mass this way over its lifetime. More massive, hotter stars have much stronger winds and lose material far more aggressively.

But in heat death, temperature differences fade away. Stars burn out, and no physical work and no movement can happen. The result is a cold, dark, near-absolute-zero, maximally disordered universe. No motion occurs in any useful sense. Space keeps expanding faster. There is no natural light because, if star-forming gas runs out, there will be no new stars and thus no light from stars.

Particles drift far apart in a cold vacuum, leaving a dark, uniform temperature. At high temperatures, gas molecules move too fast for weak attractive forces between molecules (van der Waals forces, hydrogen bonds, etc.) to matter; the molecules just bounce off each other and stay spread out. But as they cool and slow down, those attractive forces can finally "win" and pull molecules into a liquid, then a solid. This only works because the molecules are already reasonably close together and confined, either by a container, by pressure, or by gravity (like Earth's atmosphere). In heat death, maximum disorder likely prevails. The death of the universe happens when all energy spreads out evenly. In physics, the crucial point is the disappearance of usable free energy and large-scale gradients.

There is no natural light because, if star-forming gas runs out, there are no stars to emit light. Total blackout may prevail. Dark energy accelerates the drift. Particles drift far apart in a cold vacuum. Scientists estimate the Sun will die in about 5 billion years, and other star formation will end in the universe within trillions of years. When gas-forming particles go away, there is no scenario for light in the heat death era. There would be no matter left in a state capable of generating it, and certainly no humans.

Yet, this is not a settled fact. It is the leading extrapolation from current cosmological knowledge. It seems there is a hypothesized fate that converges with the religious idea of doom or the end of the world. Both involve an eventual stilling, or end of any activity, struggle, and change ceasing. Except for the thought of the Lord coming, the judgment, purpose, or transformation—a new heaven, reincarnation, resurrection, etc.—the time frame of prediction for this happening in both seems similar.

Both predict a grand ending of the world. The heat death of the universe can be compared philosophically with religious visions of the end of the world, respecting their differences in some perspectives.

All the same, it is worth pulling the parallel while respecting important limits for a better understanding of the divergence. When the debt is paid, there is no more "hot" and no more "cold," and without such difference nothing can happen, because all physical work requires an imbalance to draw on.

Religious thought, for all its variety, keeps circling back to a similar rhythm: a period of striving, conflict, and moral weather, followed by a resolution after which the striving stops. Judgment ends the negotiation.

On the contrary, heat death carries no verdict. Entropy does not care whether a civilization was cruel or kind; it does not weigh anything. That is one of the stark differences between the two. Nonetheless, religious endings, by contrast, are almost never morally neutral. Judgment implies a judge. Resurrection implies a purpose worth restoring someone for. Reincarnation, dissolution, and re-emergence treat the ending as meaningful within a larger design, not as thermodynamic bookkeeping.

There is also an obvious temporal divergence between the two. Yet, interestingly, each ending converges in what comes afterwards. In the heat death idea, there is no longer any matter arranged in a way capable of sustaining light or thought the way it used to. Religious endings, almost without exception, refuse to be terminal in that way. The last day is rarely the last of anything; instead, it is a hinge to a new existence: a soul, a renewed creation, a next turn of the wheel.

Both pictures, in their own records, are trying to answer the same question: Does the story end, and if so, how? That physics and faith should converge, even loosely, on "yes, and it ends in stillness" suggests something about the human, and perhaps the cosmic, difficulty of imagining an infinite continuation of struggle.

It is also worth saying plainly: heat death is not a gospel preaching. It currently stands as the leading extrapolation from what we know of thermodynamics and cosmic expansion, with dark energy accelerating the drift of everything away from everything else. Nonetheless, it is not a settled fact immune to revision. By and large, religious thought stands still as of today on this particular issue.

In reality, cosmology has been wrong about the universe's fate before. It may yet find some overlooked term in the equation, some final act the current model may not account for. In that sense, there may be further revision or scientific discovery, which may create more convergence or otherwise.

Heat death shares one more thing with religious prophecy. Both are held with confidence by their adherents and believers, and both remain, technically, unconfirmed in when they will happen until the day arrives.

This is the description of two ways of looking down the same long corridor: one through a telescope, one through a text of scripture. Both say everything winds down, but neither fixes the date nor gives the specific time openly.

Come what may, on the long cooling and the last day, physics and faith share comparable concepts and likely convergence when they teach the End. But the two belong to fundamentally different explanatory frameworks. Science describes a physical extrapolation; religion usually describes a meaningful, purposive, and often transformative event with a new wheel. This appears to be the grammar of ending in two phases.

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Freight forwarders are buying more than software. They are entrusting control

By Amit Maheshwari

Technology buying decisions in freight forwarding have changed.

Forwarders are no longer comparing only features, pricing, implementation timelines or basic system capability. The conversation now includes automation, integrations, cloud access, AI capabilities, customer portals, ecosystem connectivity and the ability to support increasingly digital freight operations.

That shift is necessary. But it also changes the risk a forwarder accepts when choosing a technology platform.

A modern freight platform is no longer sitting at the edge of the business. It sits at the centre of operations. It can hold shipment records, customer information, commercial documents, freight rates, customs data, financial transactions, invoices, credit exposure, approvals and years of operational history.

It also connects employees, customers, overseas agents, carriers, customs partners, banks, finance teams and external systems across multiple locations.

In practical terms, the system is carrying the working memory of the business.

That is why security should no longer be treated as a technical checklist at the end of a software evaluation. It has to be part of the platform decision from the beginning.

A cyber incident in freight is not simply an IT disruption. It can affect live shipments, delay documentation, expose commercial information, interrupt billing, weaken customer confidence and create financial and reputational damage. When hundreds or thousands of shipments and transactions move through a platform every day, even temporary loss of access or trust can put pressure on operations, finance and customer service at the same time.

The issue is becoming more important as cloud platforms, APIs, automation and connected logistics ecosystems become the norm. A forwarder's digital environment now extends well beyond its own organisation. Customers, agents, carriers, customs platforms, finance systems and external applications all touch the operating environment in some form.

That means the security standard of a technology provider becomes part of the forwarder's own risk profile.

This should change the questions forwarders ask during technology evaluation.

How is data stored and encrypted?

How is user access governed, reviewed and removed?

Can sensitive actions be controlled through roles and permissions?

Is multi-factor authentication supported?

How are vulnerabilities, patches and platform updates managed?

What safeguards exist around APIs and third-party integrations?

Who, including the technology provider and its subcontractors, can access customer data, and under what controls?

If AI is used, is customer data used to train models, and how is that data isolated and governed?

How resilient is the platform when freight operations depend on it every day?

What backup, recovery and continuity measures exist if access is disrupted?

These are not back-office IT questions. They are business continuity questions.

Security is still a shared responsibility. Forwarders must maintain discipline around passwords, permissions, employee awareness, access reviews and user behaviour. But internal discipline works only when the platform itself is built with strong controls.

The same applies to AI. Freight platforms are beginning to use AI capabilities to read documents, support users, automate decisions and analyse operational data. That can create real value, but it also introduces a new question: what happens to the data that is being processed? Forwarders should know whether their data is retained, reused, shared with external model providers or used for training. They should also understand what controls exist to prevent one customer's information from becoming visible to another.

The responsibility of the technology provider therefore goes beyond keeping servers available. It includes protecting access, limiting exposure, managing integrations carefully, maintaining recovery capability and being clear about how customer data is handled.

"When a freight forwarder selects a technology platform, it is not simply choosing software. It is entrusting years of shipment history, customer information, financial data and commercial intelligence to that provider. Protecting that information is therefore not another software feature. It is one of the basic responsibilities of the technology partner."

Amit Maheshwari, Founder & CEO, Softlink Global

For forwarders, the technology decision is therefore changing.

It is no longer enough to ask what a platform can automate, how quickly it can be implemented or what AI capabilities it offers. They also need to understand who can access their data, how that access is controlled, what happens when systems fail, how integrations are protected and what responsibility the technology provider accepts for protecting the environment.

As freight operations become more digital, the technology provider increasingly becomes part of the forwarder's own risk chain.

The system does not just hold data.

It holds control.

Amit Maheshwari is Founder & CEO, Softlink Global

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Kenya rebuilds the cotton chain from field to fabric

By Finley Maranga, bird story agency

In the small coastal town of Mpeketoni in Lamu County, cotton is once again becoming a crop worth growing.

Farmers are returning to their fields, Bt cotton seed is being distributed and a new ginnery is bringing processing closer to where the crop is grown. The cotton produced here is transported to Thika Cloth Mills (TCM), one of Kenya's few surviving integrated textile manufacturers.

The revival aims to create jobs, strengthen manufacturing, reduce dependence on imports and enable Kenya to capture more value from its own raw materials. Cotton and textiles are identified as a strategic value chain under Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and the Fourth Medium Term Plan, which runs from 2023 to 2027. The government's Draft National Cotton, Textile and Apparel Policy of 2024 seeks to increase cotton production, local value addition, employment, skills and market access.

Interviews with people across the value chain suggest that the revival is showing progress as Kenya rebuilds a system weakened over decades.

Kenya was once a major player in cotton and textiles. The draft Cotton, Textile and Apparel (CTA) policy says the sector declined following trade liberalisation and the introduction of second-hand clothing, which weakened local manufacturing and demand.

Dr Concepta Sitati, a lecturer at Mount Kenya University who grew up in western Kenya when cotton was an important cash crop, remembers a more connected system.

Cotton was collected through cooperatives and moved from farms to processing industries, she says. When factories closed, farmers lost reliable markets and stopped growing cotton.

The result was a cycle of decline. Fewer farmers meant less cotton for ginneries and less raw material for textile mills. As factories shut down, workers also lost jobs and technical expertise.

The government hopes to reverse that cycle by rebuilding the value chain from farm to fashion. The CTA policy identifies production, ginning, manufacturing, employment, market access, sustainability and innovation as areas requiring coordinated intervention.

Rebuilding the value chain

For Dominic Ngugi, the operations manager of Thika Cloth Mills, Mpeketoni Ginnery, the change is visible in the fields.

The ginnery works through four cotton cooperatives in Lamu: Lake Kenyatta, Hindi, Witu and Lamu Cotton. Ngugi says Lake Kenyatta alone has more than 7,000 farmers.

Last season, the area produced about 3.5 million kilogrammes of seed cotton, with a current target of 5 million kilogrammes.

The arrangement links farmers directly to Thika Cloth Mills. Ngugi says TCM provides funding to the cooperatives, which then buy cotton from farmers. The ginnery processes the crop, separating the seed from the lint, with the lint ultimately going to TCM.

The model is intended to restore a reliable connection between farmers and processors.

But challenges remain. Ngugi identifies seed availability, pests, transport costs and cash-flow delays. The Ministry of Industry and the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) help provide seed and other inputs, but farmers still need to produce enough cotton at the right quality, and manufacturers must be able to absorb it.

Joyce Njogu, head of Consulting and Business Development at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), says the revival is already producing results.

She says cotton production has risen from about 1,300 tonnes in 2021 to roughly 8,800 tonnes in 2025.

But that remains far below manufacturers' needs.

Njogu estimates that Kenya currently produces about 25,000 bales of cotton against demand of roughly 200,000 bales. She says the country therefore continues to import cotton from countries including Tanzania and Uganda.

Official figures also show how much manufacturing capacity remains underused. The 2024 draft CTA policy says Kenya had 52 textile mills, but only 15 were operational, with mills working at about 45% capacity. Sitati argues that restarting factories will also require rebuilding the technical workforce that disappeared when many mills closed.

AFA figures provide a clearer measure of the raw-material gap facing textile manufacturers. In 2024, Kenya produced 11,268 bales of cotton lint from 16,477 hectares, up from 7,006 bales in 2023. This was well below AFA's estimated national demand of 48,000 bales and even further below Njogu's estimate of 200,000 bales. AFA reported that seven ginneries were operating during the year.

An integrated approach

At the centre of that effort is Thika Cloth Mills (TCM).

Tejal Dodhia, the company's managing director, describes TCM as a fully integrated textile manufacturer, taking cotton through spinning, weaving and processing to produce fabric. The factory employs about 650 people.

For James Njagi, who joined the company in 2001 and now heads the spinning department, the industry is personal.

"Cotton means everything to me," he says. His work has enabled him to educate his children and meet his household's needs.

When he joined, the factory was struggling. Njagi says production has since risen from less than 50 tonnes of yarn a month to about 100 tonnes. The factory has also moved from periods of operating one shift to running two or three shifts, while its machinery and technology have been modernised.

Dodhia says TCM has invested in green energy. Its one-megawatt solar installation, she says, has reduced electricity costs by about 25%. Biomass boilers using materials such as coffee husks and nut shells have also reduced the cost of generating steam.

The company supplies fabric to government institutions, the disciplined forces, shoe manufacturers and smaller garment producers.

Dodhia says TCM has increasingly been able to source cotton locally and did not import cotton last year, after previously relying on supplies from Uganda and Tanzania.

But, she says, the next challenge is finding enough markets to sustain further expansion.

That challenge is visible at the other end of the chain.

Jamin Sitandi Mwenje, a tailor and fashion designer at Thika Market, says imported fabric still dominates his work.

Some of the materials he needs are unavailable from Kenyan manufacturers, he says. Other fabrics imported from abroad offer qualities that he believes local producers do not consistently match.

Kenyan fabric can be cheaper, making it useful for uniforms and other garments where affordability matters. But Sitandi says quality remains a concern.

He also points to a practical issue. Some Kenyan manufacturers require minimum orders of about 30 metres, he says, which can be difficult for small tailors who need much smaller quantities.

His message to manufacturers is simple: talk to the people who use the fabric.

If producers understood the materials, quantities, quality and prices that designers and tailors need, Sitandi believes more buyers would choose Kenyan products.

That exposes one of the biggest challenges in rebuilding the sector. Growing cotton is only the beginning. Kenya must also produce fabric that businesses and consumers want to buy.

Rebuilding more than factories

For Sitati, restarting the sector requires more than factories.

The industry also lost skilled workers and technical expertise when factories closed, she says. Machinery that remained idle deteriorated, while training systems for textile technology weakened.

She argues that farmers, cooperatives, ginneries, manufacturers and skilled workers must be rebuilt together.

The government's strategy recognises many of the same problems. The CTA policy calls for increased cotton production, modernised ginneries and textile mills, skills development, greater value addition and improved market access.

The policy also places cotton within the wider economic transformation agenda. Under the Fourth Medium Term Plan, the government aims to strengthen productivity, create 1.2 million jobs annually, expand markets and improve Kenya's competitiveness.

There are encouraging signs. Cotton production has risen from the low recorded in 2021. Farmers in areas such as Lamu are returning to the crop, a local ginnery is strengthening the connection with processors, and TCM says its use of Kenyan cotton has expanded.

KAM also sees traction in the revival. Njogu says the combination of seed distribution, support for processors and stronger value-chain linkages is beginning to show results.

But the recovery remains incomplete.

Kenya still produces far less cotton than manufacturers require. Buyers continue to cite gaps in quality, product variety and pricing. Much of the country's manufacturing capacity remains unused, while local producers face competition from imports and international manufacturers.

The real test, therefore, is not simply whether Kenya can grow more cotton. It is whether the country can make the entire chain work: from the farmer planting cotton in Mpeketoni, to the ginnery separating seed from lint, to the spinner turning fibre into yarn, the weaver producing fabric and, finally, the tailor deciding whether that fabric is good enough to sell.

Kenya is reconnecting some of those links. The bigger question is whether it can reconnect all of them and turn a promising revival into a sustainable cotton and textile industry.

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AHADU BANK S.C. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR INDEPENDENT BOARD DIRECTORS

Ahadu Bank S.C. will elect members of its Board of Directors for the next three-year term at its 5th Ordinary General Meeting of Shareholders. Under the applicable National Bank of Ethiopia directives, one-third of the Board seats must be held by independent directors, who are nominated by the existing Board and elected by shareholders. The Bank therefore invites qualified persons who wish to serve as independent directors to apply through the online portal stated below.

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR INDEPENDENT-DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

1. Hold a master's degree or equivalent professional qualification from a recognized higher-learning institution in banking, accounting, auditing, finance, business management, risk management, economics, law, Information technology, digital banking, or a related field.
2. Have at least ten (10) years of professional experience in the financial sector; teaching or consulting in relation to the financial sector; auditing; risk management; or another relevant field.
3. An applicant with a foreign bank/ private equity firm/ financial sector exposure is highly encouraged.
4. Be a non-executive person who is neither a member of senior management nor involved in the Bank's day-to-day operations, and be free from internal, external, political, or ownership influence that could impair objective judgment.
5. Not be a direct or indirect shareholder, director, chief executive officer, or senior executive officer of the Bank, nor the spouse, child, or parent of any such person.
6. Not be a shareholder, director, chief executive officer, or senior executive officer of a company that has a contractual obligation toward the Bank.
7. Not be involved, directly or indirectly, in legal proceedings or out-of-court disputes against the Bank, its parent undertaking, or its subsidiaries.
8. Have had no business, professional, or commercial relationship with the Bank during the preceding two years.

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9. Have no cumulative financial obligation toward the Bank exceeding Birr 50 million.
10. Meet the NBE's integrity and financial-soundness standards. The assessment considers all relevant matters, including convictions involving dishonesty or fraud, false submissions, regulatory or professional sanctions, bankruptcy, credit or tax defaults, non-performing loans during the preceding two years, and an account closed and not reinstated for drawing cheques without sufficient funds.
11. Be able to exercise independent judgment and devote sufficient time to Board duties, and not serve as a director in more than four other organizations or entities.
12. Be willing to provide the documents and declarations required for the fit-and-proper assessment. Any election remains subject to the NBE's approval.
13. May be an Ethiopian or non-Ethiopian national.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Applications must be submitted within ten (10) consecutive days from the date of this notice. Applicants should upload their educational credentials, evidence of professional experience, and other relevant supporting documents only in PDF format through the online portal http://apply-ibod.ahadubank.com
2. Only applicants who pass the preliminary screening will be contacted for the next stage using their registered contact details.
3. Female Applicants are highly encouraged.
4. Applications in person can be made at the head office of the bank, company secretary office Monday to Friday from 9:30- 11:00 am.

AHADU BANK S.C.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SOMALI REGIONAL STATE EDUCATION BUREAU

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

National Competitive Bidding (NCB)

1. Invitation to Bid

The Somali Regional State Education Bureau invites sealed bids from qualified and eligible bidders for the procurement of the goods / service and works listed below.

LOT	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE NUMBER	BID TYPE
1	Procurement, installation, configuration and commissioning of network infrastructure	SREB/NCB/EICT/S/0010/2019	NCB
2	Procurement of antivirus and firewall soft wares	SREB/NCB/EICT/S/0011/2019	NCB
3	Procurement of completion maintenance of SRS education bureau building	SREB/NCB/ENG/W/0012/2019	NCB
4	Procurement of Printing assessment and Grading certificates	SREB/NCB/INSP/0013/2019	NCB

2. Procurement Method and Bid Security

Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) and is open to all interested and eligible bidders. Bid evaluation shall be determined in accordance with the provisions indicated in the Bid Documents.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security equivalent to **2% (Two Percent)** of the bid price, in the form of a **CPO or bank guarantee**. Insurance bonds are not acceptable. The bid security shall remain valid for **60 days after bid opening**.

3. Submission of Bids

Bids shall be submitted to the address of the Somali Regional State Education Bureau indicated in this Invitation for Bids. Bidders shall submit separate technical/original and financial/original and copy offers in accordance with the instructions provided in the Bidding Documents.

4. Eligibility and Required Documents

Bidders are required to submit an official application letter, a renewed Trade License valid for **2019 E.C.**, Taxpayer Registration Certificate, valid tax clearance/tax payment documents, VAT Registration Certificate, and Supplier Registration Certificate, together with any other documents required in the Bidding Documents.

5. Deadline for Submission and Bid Opening

Bids must be delivered to the Somali Regional State Education Bureau on or before **9:30 A.M. (East Africa Time), 15 calendar days from the date of publication/announcement in the Ethiopian newspapers.** Late bids will be rejected.

Bids must be opened on the same day at 10:00 A.M (East Africa Time) at the place specified in the Bidding documents.

6. Bidding Documents

A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased directly from the Somali Regional State Education Bureau, Procurement and Logistics Department, Room No. 04, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ETB 1,000.00 (One Thousand Birr) by interested bidders and submission of a written application.

7. Acceptance and Delivery Address

Somali Regional State Education Bureau reserves the right to accept or reject any bid. Delivery address for Bid Documents: Somali Regional State Education Bureau, Procurement and Logistics Department, Room 04, Tel No. +251257753853, Fax No. +251257753524, P.O. Box 210, Jigjiga, Somali Region, Ethiopia.

Official Invitation for Bids (IFB) — 2019 E.C.

unicef

UNICEF ETHIOPIA COUNTRY OFFICE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

REGISTRATION AND PREQUALIFICATION OF SUPPLIERS

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Ethiopia Country Office invites legally established organizations to express interest in registration and prequalification for the provision of goods, institutional, professional and operational services, and construction, rehabilitation and associated works throughout Ethiopia.

The EOI covers three applicant streams:

1. Goods, programme supplies and non-food items.
2. Institutional, professional and operational services.
3. Construction, rehabilitation and associated works.

Eligible applicants may include manufacturers, assemblers, authorized distributors, agents, importers, wholesalers, traders, retailers, consulting and research firms, logistics and transport companies, communication and media agencies, human-resource firms, security and facility-support providers, engineering firms, contractors, cooperatives, civil society organizations, joint ventures and consortiums, as applicable.

Applicants should select only the category or categories for which they hold valid legal authorization and can demonstrate the relevant technical, operational, quality-assurance and financial capacity. Applicants may apply under one or more streams through the same online EOI portal.

To be considered as a potential bidder, interested organizations should submit the online EOI form. Additional verification of any information submitted may be requested. Physical due diligence will be conducted as part of the EOI evaluation.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Interested organizations shall provide:

1. Valid business registration certificate and trade license for the selected goods.
2. Valid TIN and VAT registration.
3. Relevant product-specific licenses, regulatory approvals or manufacturer authorizations, where applicable.
4. Audited financial statements or other acceptable financial records.

SUBMISSION OF EOI

Interested companies are encouraged to visit our website link Unicef-ethiopia-suppliers.com to view this advert.

The EOI including accompanying documents must be received by UNICEF not later than 10th October 2026; 5PM EAT

Interested organizations should complete the prescribed online EOI form and upload the required supporting documents through: Unicef-ethiopia-suppliers.com

Large files should be compressed, with each attachment not exceeding 10 MB when submitting the EOI. Any queries about this EOI should be submitted to e-mail: ethiopiasupply@athenainfonomics.com

SPECIAL NOTES

1. The EOI does not constitute a solicitation. A bid or proposal is not required at this stage; we only seek your expression of interest to participate in a potential future tender.
2. A response to this request for Expression of Interest does not automatically ensure that you will be selected to participate in the tender.
3. UNICEF reserves the rights to change or cancel the requirement at any time during the EOI or tender process. UNICEF also reserves the rights to require compliance with additional conditions as and when issuing the final tender document.
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Expression of Interest for Registration and Prequalification of Institutional Service Providers

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When will Africa get its next Ballon d'Or winner?

Africa has only ever had one Ballon d'Or winner, and the wait for someone to emulate George Weah is likely to be extended further after this year's nominations were revealed.

Morocco captain Achraf Hakimi and Senegal forward Sadio Mane are the continent's two names on the 30-strong list.

Both players have previously recorded top-six Ballon d'Or finishes but, after a year in which Spain lifted the Fifa World Cup and Kylian Mbappe netted 10 goals to become the tournament's all-time top scorer, the chances of the Paris St-Germain right-back or the Al-Nassr winger lifting the coveted trophy appear slim.

And it is not the first time that Africa has failed to make a big impact.

Part of the reason for the historic lack of success is down to the fact the award, which was first handed out by France Football magazine in 1956, was not open to players representing non-European nations until 1995.

That was the year that Liberian striker Weah scooped the prize after his impressive form for PSG and AC Milan.

Yet, for all the stars the continent has produced, the only other time an African player registered a top-three finish came in 2022, when Mane was second behind France striker Karim Benzema.

Of course, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have dominated proceedings for most of this century, scooping 13 of the 15 available Ballons d'Or between 2008 and 2023.

Journalists from the top 100 nations in the Fifa rankings will vote for the prize, with the recipient of the 2026 trophy announced at a ceremony in London on 26 October.

The "symbolic choice of venue" for the 70th anniversary of the award is in tribute to the inaugural winner, England winger Sir Stanley Matthews.

But how do the historic Ballon d'Or numbers stack up for Africa?

Weah claims the crown

The high point of Africa's Ballon d'Or history clearly came in the very first year the continent's stars became eligible, with Weah topping the vote in 1995 ahead of Germany's Jurgen Klinsmann and Finland's Jari Litmanen.

Five more Africans made that year's 50-player list.

But only once since, in 2007, has the continent had as many as six nominations. On that occasion Didier Drogba was the highest-ranked finisher, with the Ivorian coming fourth.

The pool has narrowed since then, with 30 players in contention since 2008 and just 23 in the running when the Ballon d'Or was combined with the Fifa's world player of the year award between 2010 and 2015.

One other stand-out year for Africa came in 2019, when three men finished in the top 10. Mane came fourth, Egypt's Mohamed Salah was fifth, and Riyad Mahrez of Algeria tenth.

Which African nation has the most Ballon d'Or nominations?

In total, Africa has received 76 nominations for the Ballon d'Or since 1995.

That makes up just 6.62% of the overall hopefuls.

Cameroon legend Samuel Eto'o has the most nominations, having been in the running nine times in a row from 2003 to 2011. His best finish came in 2009 when he was fifth.

Drogba follows with eight nominations, with Salah on six.

Five-time nominee Mane has the greatest longevity of any African, with the 34-year-old's first and most recent appearances on the list coming 10 years apart.

Nigeria has had the most individual players listed for the award, with eight in total. Victor Osimhen's eighth-place finish in 2023 is the best performance by a Super Eagles player.

Room for improvement

Thirty-nine African countries are still awaiting their first nominee, although Chad is surprisingly not among them after striker Japhet N'Doram was part of the 1995 list alongside Weah.

DR Congo and South Africa, ranked 43rd and 54th in the world respectively, are the highest-ranked nations still waiting to make the cut, while no player representing a club side on the continent has ever been nominated.

There have been nine years since 1995 when only one African was among the nominees.

The most recent of those instances was 2024, when Nigeria's Ademola Lookman finished 14th after scoring a hat-trick in the Europa League final for Atalanta.

African contenders have failed to pick up any votes on four occasions after being shortlisted: 1998 (Sunday Oliseh), 2000 (Geremi and Patrick Mboma), 2001 (Samuel Kuffour) and 2003 (Eto'o and Hatem Trabelsi).

Ballon d'Or nominations by African country

Ivory Coast - 15 (Didier Drogba 8, Yaya Toure 5, Kolo Toure, Sebastien Haller)
Cameroon - 12 (Samuel Eto'o 9, Geremi, Patrick Mboma, Andre Onana)
Nigeria - 10 (Jay-Jay Okocha 2, Nwankwo Kanu 2, Finidi George, Daniel Amokachi, Victor Ikpeba, Sunday Oliseh, Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman)
Senegal - 8 (Sadio Mane 5, Papa Bouba Diop, El Hadji Diouf, Kalidou Koulibaly)
Ghana - 6 (Michael Essien 3, Tony Yeboah, Samuel Kuffour, Asamoah Gyan)
Egypt - 6 (all Mohamed Salah)
Algeria - 4 (all Riyad Mahrez)
Mali - 3 (Mahamadou Diarra 2, Frederic Kanoute)
Gabon - 3 (all Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang)
Morocco - 3 (Achraf Hakimi 2, Yassine Bounou)
Liberia - 2 (both George Weah)
Chad - 1 (Japhet N'Doram)
Tunisia - 1 (Hatem Trabelsi)
Togo - 1 (Emmanuel Adebayor)
Guinea - 1 (Serhou Guirassy)

Similar story for Africa's women

Since the women's Ballon d'Or was first awarded in 2018, only four African players have been nominated.

Nigeria forward Asisat Oshoala was the first, making the 20- and 30-name shortlists in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Zambia skipper Barbra Banda has been nominated in every year since, joined by Tabitha Chawinga of Malawi in 2024 and then her sister Temwa Chawinga in 2025 and 2026.

It means no more than two players from Africa have ever been listed for the prize in any one year.

The continent has had a total of 10 nominations from the 195 players nominated overall.

Ballon d'Or Feminin nominations by African country

Zambia - 3 (all Barbra Banda)
Malawi - 3 (Temwa Chawinga 2, Tabitha Chawinga)
Nigeria - 2 (both Asisat Oshoala)

African Women's Volleyball: A new era of competition

African women’s volleyball is expanding its reach. More countries are taking part in competitions, new teams are making progress and the hierarchy is becoming less predictable. The 2026 African Women’s Volleyball Championship in Nairobi offered another illustration of this shift.

Egypt won the title by beating Kenya 3 sets to 0 (25-22, 25-15, 25-15) in the final. It was a convincing victory against the host nation, defending champions and ten-time African champions.

Egypt went through the entire tournament without dropping a single set. Seven matches, seven victories and 21 sets won. The fourth continental title in their history, following victories in 1976, 1989 and 2003, also puts them on the road to the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. They have also qualified for the 2027 FIVB Women’s World Championship.

For Mariam Metwally, named MVP of the tournament, the title also rewards an ambition that goes beyond the continent.

“My only dream is to reach the Olympic Games. I’m very happy to have been named MVP and, for the first time in my career, best receiver-attacker. And above all, yes, we are African champions!”, Mariam Metwally said.

Fifteen teams in Nairobi

Egypt’s success also tells another story: that of African women’s volleyball, where competition is expanding.

Fifteen teams took part in Nairobi. It is one of the clearest signs of this evolution. Previous editions brought together far fewer nations.

Today, more federations are building women’s teams capable of competing at continental level.

And the hierarchy is beginning to shift.

Kenya and Cameroon remain major forces. Kenya have ten African titles. Cameroon won three consecutive editions, in 2017, 2019 and 2021. But behind these two nations, other teams are making progress.

Egypt have just reclaimed the title. Rwanda reached the semi-finals. Algeria, Tunisia, Ghana and Uganda have also shown that more teams must now be taken seriously.

For Yende Tiadjoué Lavoisier, coach of Cameroon’s women’s team, this evolution is likely to continue.

According to him, “women’s volleyball is really moving forward.”

“I believe it can go even further. We have to recognise the work of the Confederation, with the support of the International Federation, as well as the media, who report on what is happening. I believe that at the next edition, we will discover many more surprises,” he added.

Raising the bar

Progress is not measured only by the number of teams.

The profile of the players is also changing. The strongest national teams increasingly have athletes accustomed to demanding high-level competition. Some are pursuing their careers with professional clubs outside the continent, where they benefit from more regular leagues, professional structures and more high-level competition.

When they return to their national teams, that experience benefits the squads.

Matches are becoming more competitive. Coaching staffs have to prepare their teams more thoroughly. And the established powers can no longer take their position for granted.

This evolution does not depend solely on the players.

Coach education, the development of national leagues, work across the different CAVB zones and the strengthening of national federations all play a role.

Technical coaching is evolving. Competitions are becoming better organised, while technology is playing a greater part. In Nairobi, video challenges, live statistics and the e-score sheet were among the tools used during the tournament.

For Bouchra Hajij, President of the African Volleyball Confederation, this evolution is the result of collective work.

“I am really proud of the work that has been accomplished. Today, I have a big family that is united, supportive and moving towards the same goals: raising the level of volleyball,” Bouchra Hajij said.

World stage

Nairobi 2026 delivered several clear signals: more countries, broader competition, more experienced players and increasingly structured national teams.

But the real measure of progress will come when these teams face the best sides from other continents.

Egypt, Kenya and Cameroon will have that opportunity at the 2027 FIVB Women’s World Championship. Egypt will go one step further with the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

The progress of African women’s volleyball will therefore not be measured only by its ability to make the African Championship more competitive. It will also be measured by its ability to close the gap with the rest of the world.

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