



ETHIO NEWS

Politics

INDIAN PRESIDENT'S STATE VISIT TO ETHIOPIA AND ETHIO-INDIAN BUSINESS FORUM



Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Ethiopian President Dr. Mulatu Teshome. Photo: mfa

On his first overseas trip, India's President Ram Nath Kovind made a three-day state visit to Ethiopia. President Kovind, arrived in Addis Ababa on October 4 from Djibouti and was received at the airport by President Dr. Mulatu Teshome. President Kovind's visit is the first by an Indian President to Ethiopia since President VV Giri came in 1972.

The two Presidents held bilateral talks on October 5. President Mulatu Teshome noted that President Ram Nath Kovind's visit to Ethiopia was a testimony to the historical and longstanding relations between the two countries. President Mulatu emphasized Ethiopia always highly valued its relations with India, particularly in the areas of investment and trade as well as development assistance in the form of soft loans and technical cooperation. He noted India was one of the country's largest sources of Foreign Direct Investment. India is among the top three foreign investors in Ethiopia with an approved investment of US\$4 billion, and to date there have been a total of 435 Indian projects in Ethiopia, in operation and implementation stage. Those projects have already created more than 50,000 employment opportunities for Ethiopian citizens. Last year, India's bilateral trade with Ethiopia was worth nearly US\$1 billion.

President Ram Nath Kovind said he was very pleased that his first overseas visit was to Africa, with which "India shares remarkable common histories and aspirations." Commending the transparency, incentives and encouragement of the Gov-

ernment of Ethiopia to Indian investors, President Kovind stressed the need to explore possibilities and diversify into more areas of cooperation to further bolster ties. According to the World Economic Forum, Ethiopia has been a leader in economic growth in East Africa and is projected to become the fastest growing economy in the world in 2017 recording a growth of 8.3 %. During the talks President Kovind disclosed that India has pledged to provide US\$195 million for the expansion of electric power transmission lines and another US\$2 million for medicines through an extended line of credit facility.

Following the bilateral talks, the two countries signed major cooperation agreements in the areas of bilateral trade, Information, communication and the media as well as a Memorandum of Understanding to set up a Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism and International Crime. These cooperation agreements are expected to provide the two countries with an important framework to further reinforce the strategic partnership and raise it to a new level.

President Kovind also met with members of the Indian community. He told them that their work as teachers and educators, as entrepreneurs, as tech-professionals and workers had been at the centre of India-Ethiopia relations. He also noted both India and Ethiopia had large young populations and emphasized that the youth are the future, and it is from them that new ideas would come. He advised the Indian community to make special efforts to connect with Ethiopia's youth. During his visit, President Kovind inaugurated the Indian Technology and Innovation Exposition taking place from October 5-7 and also visited the National Museum, where he saw the three million year-old remains of Lucy (Dinknesh). He noted that Ethiopia and India shared immense commonalities as cradles of civilization and the origin of human beings and humanity.

On the occasion - and to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the India Business Forum in Addis Ababa - an India-Ethiopia Business Dialogue was held on October 5. It was organized to coincide with the historic visit of President Kovind who attended the event. President Kovind told participants: "It is my pleasure to be here for the India-Ethiopia Business Dialogue and to address a business community that is, really, the legatee of an age-old relationship." The President said "Ethiopia and India are old civilisations with young populations... Ethiopia is the cradle of humankind. Earlier today, at the National Museum in this city, I was privileged to get a glimpse of the remains of Lucy, who is in a sense

our common mother." He added, "It is not without reason that Ethiopia, a steadfast friend and a sister of civilisation for India, is the focus of my first overseas visit since taking charge as President of India."

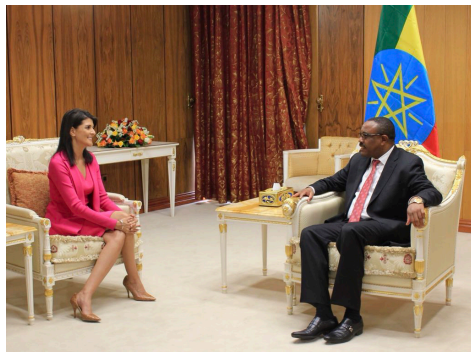
Mentioning the history of trade between the two countries, a history that dates back to the first century of the Christian era, President Kovind noted that in this new century Ethiopia's remarkable economic growth and progress has been an object of global admiration. He expressed his contentment that India was a partner in this growth through trade and commerce, through investments and the sharing of expertise, as well as through the large and vibrant Indian business community present in Ethiopia. He noted the Business dialogue had helped the Indian side in bridging gaps between the business communities. Most importantly, he has identified actions the two governments could take to further facilitate investment and trade, whether in the areas of visa policies, banking procedures and laws, or customs regulations and practices. The President closed his remarks by calling upon Ethiopia and India to work together to push for reform in institutions of international financial and monetary governance, and make these relevant to "our age."

President Dr. Mulatu also spoke at the Dialogue, noting that Ethiopia attached great importance to its relations with India and also stressing the significance of these business dialogues for identifying actions the two governments could take to further facilitate investments and trade.

On the occasion, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Aklilu Hailemichael noted that ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, there had been a steady trend underlining the affinity between them. This was now expanding into a partnership in development. As a result, he said, the relationship had grown into multi-sectoral collaboration, expressed in capacity building, investment, trade and technology transfer as well as cultural ties. He noted that India with its wide range of manufactured goods was now the third most important source of imports for Ethiopia, after China and Saudi Arabia. Bilateral trade in 2016 stood at US\$1.37 billion, of which India's exports to Ethiopia were US\$1.30 billion. The State Minister noted with the bright future for both countries, India would continue to be an important partner in development for Ethiopia. Dr. Aklilu quoted former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi: "India had been remarkably generous in offering its support to Ethiopia even before it has completed efforts to lift its own entire people out of poverty."



US AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS VISITS ETHIOPIA



Ambassador Haley with PM Hailemariam Desalegn

Photo: mfa

Ambassador Haley arrived in Addis Ababa on October 23 at the start of a three-nation tour, taking her to South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Her visit followed US President Donald Trump's expressions of deep concern over the ongoing violence in South Sudan and in the DRC and his plans to engage more effectively with Africa. Before her visit she said US interests in Africa and the region were certainly humanitarian, but they are also economic and strategic. Ambassador Haley held meetings with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Minata Samate Cessouma. She told reporters after her meetings that she hoped this was the beginning of "a stronger relationship with the AU and our African partners."

Ambassador Haley's meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam covered a number of issues, including further strengthening the bilateral cooperation between the US and Ethiopia and expanding economic cooperation between the two countries. Ambassador Haley underlined the importance of further improving operational issues to create a more conducive environment for economic cooperation. The Prime Minister mentioned a number of things that were underway to improve Ethiopia's economic efforts and attract more FDI. Ambassador Haley commended the growth and development of Ethiopia. Their discussion also covered human rights and the importance of Ethiopian youth being involved in the ongoing economic developments.

The main focus of their talks, however, was regional peace and security and particularly developments in South Sudan, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo where they agreed on the importance of holding elections as well as the need to address the root causes of conflict. On South Sudan, Ambassador Haley and Prime Minister Hailemariam exchanged ideas on how to find a lasting solution to the conflict there.

The Prime Minister gave the Ambassador a detailed account of what IGAD has been doing in the past month to revitalize the peace process, and made it clear he appreciated US support for the Revitalization Forum. They agreed the importance of moving South Sudan's peace process forward with High-Level Revitalization Forum to revive the 2015 South Sudan Peace Agreement as soon as possible. They also underlined that solving the situation in South Sudan required sustained engagement and attention from the African Union and others in the region. Ambassador Haley thanked the Prime Minister for Ethiopia's leadership in continuing to receive refugees fleeing conflict in the region.

Following her meeting with Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Ambassador Haley met with AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Minata Samate Cessouma, at African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. They discussed a range of topics of mutual concern on the continent, about peace and security in Africa, including the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the situations in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali, and the need to increase the role of women in peacekeeping operations. Ambassador Haley expressed the United States' appreciation for the African Union's partnership in UN peacekeeping operations, and reaffirmed the indispensable partnership between the AU and both the United States and the United Nations.

At a joint press conference, Ambassador Haley said: "The U.S. very much sees Africa as the important part of the world. We see great opportunities in Africa. We see challenges in Africa. We want to support and help in those situations. But most importantly we want to see how we can partner together, whether that is through economic development, whether it is through strategic practices, whether it is through political solutions." She said she hoped "that this is the beginning of what is going to be a stronger relationship with the AU and our African partners." She said: "We have always been a strong supporter of the AU and we have continued to give to the AU peace funds; we've continued to give bilaterally; we are going to continue to do all of those things. You will continue to see our support to health programs and many other things we have done in the past will continue. We are going to continue to look to the AU for guidance. The US was interested, she underlined, to work together with the AU and IGAD in order to bring lasting solutions to Somalia, and Commissioner Samate stressed her appreciation of continued US support for AMISOM, adding, "We need the support of all African partners, African Union partners and the international community, to support AMISOM". She said they had also discussed South Sudan and DRC and "We agreed to strengthen our relationship to support cooperation and to

find solutions." Before travelling on to Juba, Ambassador Haley visited South Sudanese refugees in Gambella, on October 24 together with the US Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mike Raynor. Ambassador Haley praised Ethiopia's role in hosting one of the largest refugee populations in Africa and reiterated U.S. commitment to support those efforts. She also stressed the need to seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts in the region. Shocked by the stories of the refugees, she told reporters it was "incumbent on the entire international community" to say this must stop. She indicated she would press South Sudan's government for a change. She said: "If you look at the disaster and you look at the families broken apart and you look at the kids that were killed and you just look at the families that were deprived of so much, you must say this must stop." After listening to what the families went through she said it was impossible not to be totally angry at those responsible, adding that: "If people are denied access to humanitarian needs, conflict that is going on, a government ignoring its people, and a situation deteriorate, this also becomes a breeding ground for extremist groups. That is what we don't want."

IRREECHA CELEBRATIONS IN BISHOFTU



Colorful celebrations in Bishoftu

Photo: etv

This year's Irreecha festival was celebrated colorfully and peacefully at Lake Hora Arseddi, in the town of Bishoftu, and throughout the Oromia Regional State in central and southern Ethiopia on October 1. Devotees, dressed in traditional white clothes and the red and black of Oromia, in celebration of the festival, had been arriving at Bishoftu over several days to gather at Lake Hora Arseddi, the site of the festival. Bishoftu is a popular resort town famous for its crater lakes and picturesque landscape.

Led by the Aba Gaadas, leaders of the traditional social structure of the Oromo people, those attending expressed gratitude to Waaqa (God) at the lake side for the ending of the rainy season and the forthcoming



ing harvest. The Aba Gaadas led the ritual prayers, offering thanksgiving for the past year and wishing the best for the future as well as blessing the crowd gathered for the festival. The celebration brought people from all walks of life from across the country as well as thousands of local and international tourists.

According to the elders, Irreecha is celebrated as a thanksgiving celebration twice a year to praise Waaqa for the peace, health, fertility and abundance they have gained. The two celebrations are known to be Irreecha Tulluu and Irreecha Malkaa. Irreecha Tulluu takes place in May at the top of mountains to mark the end of the dry season and the onset of rainy season. This month's celebration is Irreecha Malkaa and it takes place immediately after the end of rainy season. It is celebrated in the middle of the month of Fulbaana when the darkness of rainy season with its foggy days passes and is replaced by the bright season, Birraa.

Irreecha is one of Ethiopia's most important tangible and intangible heritages, holding a unique cultural and spiritual value for the country and for the Oromo people. The celebration has been attracting increasing numbers of people every year including international tourists. As the most important cultural festival for the millions of Oromos, celebrating the wholeness and magnificence of nature and culture, together with its emphasis on promotion of peace, tolerance and forgiveness, the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant bodies have been working to get this celebration of the Oromo people, registered as an intangible world heritage with UNESCO. The process is already in progress to be registered with UNESCO in December. Inscription of the Irreecha as a heritage site will provide a fitting place for the celebration of the festival and its devotees.

THE 10TH NATIONAL FLAG DAY CELEBRATED



Ambassador Kuma Demeksa Tokon hoists the flag in Berlin
Photo: emb

Ethiopians at home and abroad celebrated the 10th National Flag Day on October 17, hoisting the National Flag at schools,

government offices and non-government institutions as well as at all Ethiopian missions abroad. Ambassador Kuma Demeksa Tokon performed the honors at the Ethiopian Embassy in Berlin. The 10th National Flag Day was held under the motto: "We have a clear vision and we are set for greater victory". In Addis Ababa, the day was colorfully observed at the national stadium in the presence of high-level government officials including the Deputy Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Shitaye Minale and the Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, General Samora Yenus. With its blue and gold star emblem surmounting the horizontal tri-color of green, yellow and red, Ethiopia's flag flew high all day on Monday.

The Guest of honor at the event, President Dr. Mulatu Teshome said on the occasion that the National Flag was a symbol of the liberty, strength, courage and unity of the Ethiopian nations and nationalities. Having devised ambitious development plans, the nation has, for the past decade, been striving with sense of urgency to defeat poverty, the president said. Besides placing it among the fastest growing nations globally, the remarkable economic progress it registered in this time had won it international recognition and acclaim. President Mulatu underlined that: "A flag for us Ethiopians has a special meaning. Our flag is emblem of our freedom and sovereignty which we kept intact through generations. It's also the symbol of our democratic unity." He said the efforts made by the government to beat poverty by designing Growth and Transformation Plan had brought about remarkable results in the economic, political and diplomatic sectors. However, he said, challenges had emerged over the past two years, among which must be included corruption. It was in response to this that the government had conducted a renewal program and was taking corrective measures. He called on all Ethiopians to contribute their efforts to the success of the government's efforts.

The Deputy Speaker of the House of People's Representatives, Shitaye Minale said the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia were able to build a federal system founded on equality and their will. This helped the relations and unity of nations and nationalists to deepen, Ethiopia's recognition to increase and Ethiopia's flag to be lifted up globally. Proud Ethiopians across the country sang and cheered for the love of their flag and the country's Flag Day. The nation-wide Flag Day was attended by senior officials, Addis Ababa-based diplomats, and members of the army and police. Thousands of people from different walks of life around the country also participated in the colorful events.

The current national flag of Ethiopia was adopted on 31 October 1996. It conforms to the specifications set forth in Article 3 of the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia. The three traditional colors of green, yellow and red date

back to King Iyasu V (1913-1916), though the current flag and emblem were adopted after the defeat of Ethiopia's Marxist Derg regime (1974 to 1991). The emblem, a blue star with golden rays, is intended to represent both the diversity and unity of the country - blue represents peace, the star represents diversity and unity, and the sun's rays symbolize prosperity.

During the Scramble for Africa, Ethiopia was one of only two African countries to retain its independence and was one of only four African members of the League of Nations. After a brief period of Italian occupation during World War II, Ethiopia became a charter member of the United Nations. Many African countries adopted the colors of the Ethiopian emblem on their own flags when they achieved independence. Green, yellow and red along with black, became known as the Pan-African colors.

Relief

A FRIEND IN NEED



Ethiopian medical supplies being readied for Mogadishu
Photo: mfa

In reaction to the tragic explosion in Mogadishu on October 14 Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia extended his heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences to the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the bereaved families and those injured in the attack on behalf of the people and Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and of himself. He also said the tragedy was an unhappy reminder that the war on terror was not yet over and that radical terrorist organization still continued to pose a threat to Somalia and to the region at large. Foreign Minister Dr., Workneh Gebeyehu, also sent a message of condolence to his Somali Counterpart Yusuf Garaad Omar, reaffirming the commitment of the Ethiopian Government to further strengthen their common fight against terrorism and extremism in the region. He reiterated Ethiopia's unwavering determination to stand with the people and Government of Somalia in this fight. As a tangible token of solidarity, Ethiopian efforts to provide the victims with medical supplies went into action immediately.