



HIGH-LEVEL ERITREAN DELEGATION ON WORKING VISIT TO ITALY

A senior Eritrean delegation, led by Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Presidential Adviser Mr. Yemane Gebreab, conducts a working visit to Italy where they met with high-ranking Italian officials to strengthen bilateral relations.

During their visit, the delegation had a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Antonio Tajaani, with the primary focus on enhancing cooperation in key areas of mutual interest. Education,

health, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, trade, and investment were among the priority sectors discussed.

Both sides expressed their commitment to collaborate in promoting peace, stability, and development in the Horn of Africa, signaling the importance of regional cooperation and partnership.

The delegation also held a productive meeting with Senator

Anna Maria Bernini, the Minister of Universities and Research, to explore opportunities for cooperation in higher education and research. The discussions were aligned with Eritrea's priorities and areas where Italy possesses advanced capabilities.

Mr. Fesehatsion Petros, Eritrea's Ambassador to Italy, was present during the meetings, further reinforcing the importance of the engagements between the two nations.

4TH CONGRESS OF ASMARA BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF ERITREAN WOMEN

The 4th congress of the Asmara branch of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) was held on 20 July, where significant discussions and presentations took place.

Ms. Alem Belai, the head of the union branch, delivered a comprehensive activity report, highlighting both the achievements and challenges faced by the branch.

During the congress, Ms. Selome Gebreselasie, in charge of Political and Organizational Affairs of the union branch, emphasized the branch's relentless efforts to strengthen its organizational capacity at all levels. Additionally, the branch has worked on devising impactful development programs and extending support to members

of the Defense Forces.

In her address, Ms. Tekea Tesfamichael, President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, called for even greater endeavors in reinforcing the organizational capacity of the branch. She stressed the importance of organizing vocational training programs and enhancing the economic capacity of the union.

The 4th congress served as an essential platform for evaluating past achievements, acknowledging existing challenges, and charting a path forward to further empower Eritrean women at the local level. The commitment to foster development and provide opportunities for women across the nation remains at the core of NUEW's mission.



ERITREA'S NATIONAL GOVERNORS CONDUCT SEMINAR FOR UK-BASED NATIONALS



On 20th July, Eritrea's National Governors conducted a seminar for nationals from various UK cities, including New Castle, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, Coventry, Birmingham, and London.

The seminar took place in London and was led by Mr. Habteab Tesfatsion, Governor of the Southern Region. Mr. Habteab provided an extensive briefing on the current situation in Eritrea and emphasized the

crucial role of Diaspora nationals in national affairs.

During the seminar, Mr. Habteab praised the Eritrean people's strong awareness and unity, which has led them to overcome external hostilities, both overt and covert, resulting in significant progress.

Participants at the seminar expressed their commitment to enhancing organizational capacity and active involvement

in national affairs.

In addition to the seminar, the Governors, who are currently partaking in the festivities of Eritrean nationals in European countries, also engaged in productive discussions with leaders of national associations.

The event showcased various artistic and cultural programs, further strengthening the bond among Eritrean nationals in the UK.

YOUTH TRAINING

In a bid to bolster the skills and capabilities of the youth, a vocational training program was organized in the Adi-Quala sub-zone, benefitting 135 young individuals.

The training encompassed various practical disciplines, including the installation of electricity lines, handling still and video cameras, and operating a beauty salon, among other valuable skills.

Mr. Ghirmay Gebru, the head of the union branch in the Southern Region, highlighted that this training initiative is part of an ongoing effort to enhance the overall capacity of the youth. He called upon the public to extend their support and encouragement to the trainees as they embark on their respective career paths.

Eritrean Festivals: A Testament to Unity and Cultural Heritage



Embassy of the State of Eritrea
United Kingdom

Eritrean Festivals have served and continue to serve as cultural links for Eritreans who are residing outside the homeland.

Eritreans have held these festivals since the 1970s and the festivals have played an important part in the Eritrean liberation struggle, by bringing together Eritreans and providing a forum, among other things, from which the Eritrean leadership in the field gave an update on the liberation struggle and the situation in the liberated areas of Eritrea – a tradition that the Eritrean Government has continued to this day in the post-independence period.

These festivals have always been peaceful and joyous family events, where Eritreans and their families have had occasion to come together to discuss the challenges and celebrate all that is good about their homeland.

In many respects, the Eritrean Festivals have come to symbolize the indomitable spirit and unity

of Eritreans. Indeed, the Eritrean Festivals serve as a strong testament of the love, affection, and deep connections that Eritreans harbour in their hearts for their country, wherever they are.

Any student of Eritrean history will be aware of how in the 1940s the British Military Administration in Eritrea sponsored and condoned the violence meted out by outlaws and individuals of ill repute

against Eritreans who were members of the Independence Bloc – who had advocated for independence – in a futile bid to dissuade them from their aspirations for independence.

Sadly, in keeping with the blueprint of the 1940s, authorities in a handful of countries in Europe seem, once again, intent on unleashing a horde of violent gangs against law-abiding Europeans of Eritrean origin and Eritreans residing in Europe, to try and derail Eritrean unity and harmony.

Those who intend to use violence against Eritreans should know that, just as violence did not deter Eritreans in the past, it will not deter them now. Eritrea's rich history is replete with victory over those who wish to sow discord, disunity, and violence amongst them. Eritrea stands tall, as her enemies continue to fall by the wayside.

The Embassy of the State of Eritrea to the UK and Ireland

*London
21 July 2023*

LOCAL NEWS

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF DAMS IN CENTRAL REGION

Eng. Abraham Daniel, head of agricultural infrastructure in the Central Region, highlighted the vital role of the 127 big and small dams in ensuring a steady water supply for both humans and livestock.

With a remarkable capacity of holding over 16.5 million cubic meters of water, these dams have become instrumental in supporting year-round vegetable and fruit farming, facilitating agricultural activities that were once limited by water scarcity.

In addition to the larger dams, micro-dams with a collective capacity of over 1.7 million cubic meters of water play a crucial role in ensuring a consistent water supply for human and livestock consumption, further enhancing the livelihoods of the communities.

Eng. Daniel emphasized the importance of responsible usage of these valuable water resources to ensure their sustainability for the future. The public's judicious use of the dams is essential in maintaining their long-term benefits and preserving the water supply for generations to come.

The success of these dams in the Central Region is a testament to the positive impact of infrastructure development in promoting agriculture, food security, and overall prosperity within the region.



TRAINING PROGRAM ON ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP EMPOWERS ERITREAN YOUTH

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students branch in Anseba Region successfully organized a training program on administration and leadership, benefiting 70 high school students from all sub-zones within the region.

The comprehensive training covered a range of crucial skills, including administration and leadership techniques, the importance of organizational structure, information management, effective communication, and fostering conviction. Moreover, participants delved into the historical background of the union, gaining valuable insights into its roots and significance.

The primary objective of this training initiative was to enhance the political and administrative capacity of the youth, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to become effective leaders and active participants in their communities.

Mr. Saleh Ahmedin, Chairman of the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, conducted a seminar during the event, focusing on the union's objectives and ongoing activities. Encouraging the youth, Mr. Saleh urged them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the union's initiatives and actively engage in their successful implementation.

Recognizing academic excellence, the event concluded with the presentation of awards to 45 outstanding students, acknowledging their dedication and achievements.

The training program serves as a significant step towards empowering Eritrean youth with valuable tools for personal growth, community involvement, and the pursuit of a brighter future for themselves and their nation.

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SpotLight

Eritrea's National Service: A Pillar of Nation-Building, Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity

Hasebela Kafil

As Eritrea commemorates the 29th anniversary of the beginning of its National Service, it is essential to reflect on the significance of this institution in nation-building and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation. The National Service program holds a special place in Eritrea's history and has played a crucial role in shaping the nation's identity, resilience, and readiness to defend its borders. At the heart of this program lies Sawa, the military training center, which has become an emblem of Eritrean unity and determination. This article discusses the importance of Eritrea's National Service and its flagship institution, Sawa.

Following its hard-won independence in 1991, Eritrea embarked on the mission of nation building and sought to achieve it by building institutions. One of the institutions is the National Service, which was introduced as a fundamental approach to nation-building, economic development, and preparedness to defend the nation. The proclamation issued in 1994 to establish the National Service requires all citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 to do their national service, which typically includes military training and services in national



development programs.

Eritrea's National Service has been a driving force in forging a strong sense of unity among its diverse population. By requiring all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds, to partake in the National Service, Eritrea fostered a shared sense of responsibility and ownership for the country's future.

Through the program, participants from different regions live and work together, forging bonds that transcend ethnic boundaries. This sense of unity has been instrumental in fostering a stable and cohesive society, essential for the nation's growth and development.

One of the primary objectives

of Eritrea's National Service is to ensure the nation's security by safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Eritrea's



history is marred by external threats, making a strong defense force indispensable for the country's survival. By promoting the culture of self-reliance and preparedness in defense of the nation, the National Service has been pivotal in maintaining Eritrea's independence and deterring real and potential aggressors. Eritrea has shown resilience and determination in protecting its borders, preserving its territorial integrity, and asserting its sovereignty.

Central to Eritrea's National Service is the Sawa Military Training Center. Established in 1994, Sawa has become an emblem of Eritrean resilience and determination. Located in the Gash Barka region, the center serves as a melting pot of Eritrea's youth, bringing together diverse individuals from all corners of the nation.

Sawa offers comprehensive military training, emphasizing

discipline, physical fitness, and strategic thinking. Additionally, participants receive education in various fields such as science, technology, engineering, and arts. This multifaceted approach ensures that the graduates not only possess military skills but also contribute to the country's development in civilian sectors.

Beyond military training, Sawa plays a crucial role in shaping the character of Eritrea's youth. The rigorous training instills discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance, all of which are essential attributes for nation-building. Graduates of Sawa emerge as resilient and self-confident individuals, ready to face the challenges of life with determination and fortitude.

that contribute to the country's infrastructure development, such as road construction and building schools, hospitals, and other essential facilities.

This aspect of National Service is vital for Eritrea's nation-building process, as it addresses critical development needs while harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of the nation's youth. The construction of vital infrastructure not only enhances the quality of life for Eritreans but also reinforces the citizens' commitment to their country's progress.

As Eritrea celebrates the 29th anniversary of its National Service, it is essential to acknowledge the program's significance in nation-building and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Eritrea. By fostering unity, resilience, and self-reliance among its diverse population, the National Service has played a pivotal role in shaping Eritrea's identity and stability.

Sawa, the emblematic military training center, stands as a testament to the determination of Eritrea's youth and their commitment to the nation's future. Through its multifaceted approach to education and training, Sawa not only produces capable defenders but also cultivates responsible citizens who contribute to the nation's development.



of responsible and engaged citizens who can contribute positively to their communities and the nation as a whole.

The National Service program goes beyond military training; it includes the execution of various national reconstruction projects. During the 12-month period following military training, participants engage in activities

The Eritrean National Service is a source of pride for the nation, demonstrating the people's unwavering dedication to their country's growth and prosperity. As Eritrea continues its journey towards progress, the National Service and Sawa remain indispensable pillars in securing a strong and prosperous future.





This Summer in Eritrea

Tourist attractions, beles, quintessentially lazy summer days, and cinema culture

Natnael Yebio W.

If the seasons were people, fall would be the attractive, clean-cut, sophisticated one. Winter would just be a cold-hearted creature that no one wants to hang out with. Spring would be cute and playful and can be pretty fun. But, summer? Summer would be a laid back who doesn't care about anything.

Recently, during one of our unbearably hot weekend days, my wife and I watched White Lotus all afternoon while eating chocolates. We may have set a couch sitting record, but we didn't feel guilty. We had nothing important to do and nowhere that we had to be. It was the quintessential lazy summer day, and we had a blast.

Typically in the afternoon, the young, dressed in their modern attire, are seen flocking downtown to Harnet Avenue to meet with friends and hang out at some of the most famous pubs around the city, and summer evenings are just heavenly.

Efforts by interested video stores such as Vulcan to revive the cinema culture in Asmara are also yielding positive results as youngsters are flocking to Cinema Roma to watch the latest summer blockbuster movies, John Wick, Fast X, Guardians of the Galaxy, Transformers. Name your pick and you can make a night of it and watch these latest releases from Hollywood on the big screen.

For the Diaspora, this is the season to visit the homeland, tour around the country and get acquainted with all things Eritrean. To those who live in the country it is a time to visit relatives in the village.

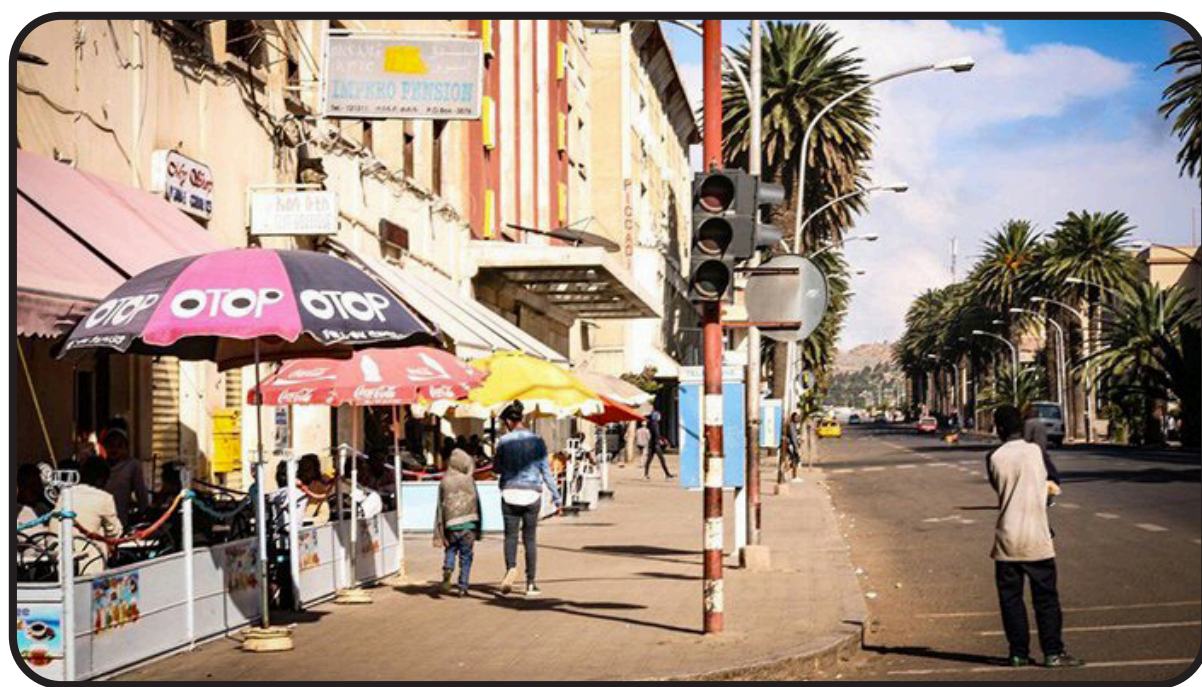
If tourism means going places for pleasure or for adventure, one might as well try one's attic or backyard. The old photo that you had tossed as useless five years ago may now be worth thousands of dollars, and the turf in your backyard could be hiding the skull of a Neanderthal man or the temple of a very ancient civilization.

Long before tourism became

commercialized, people went to their old aunts' houses in villages for a visit and for an informal tour. There they found things that they never thought had existed before and expressed their admiration telling bedridden aunts or crippled uncles that they would come back next Christmas for more stealing.....er..... chatting. Under their coats are hidden precious vases, paintings or even gold coins of the previous century.

When you go to Keren or Massawa, don't always think of visiting the tourist sites that are portrayed in colored post cards or in travel brochures. Open your eyes and take a look at things that people seldom stop to admire. Have you ever seen a sky as blue as the Eritrean sky? What about the tea shops along the road in some places? Get out of the bus or whatever it is you are riding and talk to the children or peanut vendors. Look at the way they dress, their hairdos and watch their manners.

A German tourist was once traveling to Keren with his Eritrean colleague. On the roadway he spotted the hulk of a burned out tank rusting in the sun in the ravine. He told his Eritrean fellow to stop the car, and he took out his camera and began to take shots.



"What's so important about it," asked the Eritrean.

"That is East German tank brought here by the Soviets," he explained.

On the way the Eritrean told him a lot about the liberation struggle that the German never knew before.

"Did the freedom fighters have similar tanks for driving away the enemy?" asked the German.

"Sir," the Eritrean said, "When the East Germans made or assembled the tanks, they did so for the Freedom fighters,"

He laughed.

There are many things to discover if one opens one's eyes wide enough. You can ask about the road itself, when it was built, by whom and for what purpose.'

If people were to open their eyes and minds, they wouldn't have to go further than their own neighborhood to wonder at the hidden things waiting to be discovered and

appreciated.

Once upon a time, a man who happened to walk in the midday sun felt exhausted and strolled into a small teashop, ordered a tea and began to look around. And what did he see? Old mineral-water bottles tucked in a rusty crate. He took out one and examined the label. He couldn't believe what he saw. There in bold letters were printed FORTEMENTE RADIOATIVA. Imagine a label telling you that radioactivity is good for your health. He looked at the date: 1935! That's more like it.

In the early days of the discovery of radium by Madame Curie, people thought mistakenly that radioactivity was good for health and I can imagine Parisian gentlemen getting a lethal dose of the deadly rays in the hope that they would be relieved of their tuberculosis or even syphilis. The Italians who arrived in Eritrea brought the mistaken notion with them and made promotional ad to attract health nuts in the colony.

There are many types of tourism. There is gastronomic tourism, tourism to find oneself, tourism to lose oneself, eco-tourism, and tourism to revive what others have given up for dead.

In ancient times, the seers and sages toured the world to find out and befriend good and virtuous people. They traveled on foot to find God among men. Why not

try it in these modern times. It may take you a life time, but it is worth trying. In such a search for goodness, one can find oneself in the end.

For less spiritually inclined, a simple trip with an open and tolerant heart and mind can result in a wealth of experience and a closer encounter with the mysteries of the past. One day a group of Swiss tourists were on their way to Massawa. Their mission was simple: visit the Red Sea, take pictures, sunbathe, mechanically express admiration of what they see, and finally send pictures home via the gram to relatives and friends, with a view to tormenting them with a series of video or slide shows for the rest of their lives.

But one lady among them seemed to have more discerning eyes and analytical mind than the rest. She was going to a seaside resort, okay, but she developed more interest in the baboons that crossed their path about fifteen kilometers from Asmara.

"These are the Hamadyas baboon of the Egyptians," she said.

"What?" one of her friends asked quizzically.

"They used to be worshipped by ancient Egyptians," she continued.

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Lighter Side

Milka Teklom

According to the book High Fidelity, “making a playlist is a delicate art! It’s like writing a love letter but better in a way. You get to say what you want to say without actually saying it. You get to use someone else’s poetry to express how you feel. Then there are rules, it has to be entertaining as well as tell a story. You can’t be too obvious, but you can’t be too obscure either. You can’t double up on songs by the same artist, unless, of course, that’s your theme. A good compilation, like so many things in life, is hard to accomplish.” That’s what motivated me to be conscious of the songs I choose to be included in my playlist and reminded me not to take that task lightly. I would not say I’ve mastered it but I am getting there.

When it comes to eliciting emotions, rain and music perhaps touch our hearts and minds in ways other stimuli cannot. It is no coincidence that so many songs have been written about rain or that an entire genre of music has been created to evoke the feeling of a storm.

The first song on the playlist is the most important track; it shows the theme and story of the playlist. The first song on the list is by Tekeste Solomon, a modern song. The slow jam with the sincere lyrics would throw anybody back into nostalgia. The first verse of the song gives an insight into the singer’s childhood. The lyrics go like this:

*Oh my dear old friend
My friend the benevolent one*

Playlist for the Rainy Season



*I remember the good old days
The days were school closed
It’s been long since we saw each other
Will there be days we meet and reminisce of the good old days?*

Tekeste, with his soothing voice, goes on to elaborate how he spent his summer with his childhood friend:

*My friend, do you remember the cloudy days
Accompanied by thunder and heavy rain pouring
Do you remember us playing outside after the rain
The sky divided by rainbow and us playing with water*

This song is my most favorite. It reminds me of the rainy season and the fun I had as a kid. When

school was closed for recess, I always went to spend the summer with my grandmother. My cousin, who lives with my grandma, and his friends welcomed me at the gates.

The space outside was heaven for us. We played games like balina, ashekakat alem, salbati, mereat mereat and so many others. Whenever conflicts arose because some of the kids tried to cheat, my cousin and I would team up to fight, but those conflicts would not last long. Once we got stuck indoors because of heavy rains in the afternoon, we would miss one another and the games we had played.

For many people, rain is the sound of sadness. The pitter-patter of raindrops can be a reminder of lost loves, missed opportunities, and unfulfilled dreams. The grey skies and damp conditions make the most optimistic person feel blue. And yet, some find rain to be an opportunity to find their soul mates; many people have met their future partner in life by sharing an umbrella or a shade on the streets while it rains. In the late Tsegay Beraki’s love song, the guy wonders why the girl he loves wouldn’t open the door and let him in when it was raining.

Studies have shown that when the weather gets cold the music we listen to also changes. The upbeat drums tend to fade into the background in favor of that all-important rainy-day playlist, perfect for the gloomy afternoons. Sad ballads seem

to be more in demand in this season. One of such songs that I like to hear during this time is the classic song by Anne Pebbles, I Can’t Stand the Rain. The song, unlike its lyrics, starts with upbeat drums which seem to tell the frustration of the singer. Then the drums fade and the singer comes in with a strong vocal:

I can’t stand the rain against my window

*Bringing back sweet memories
Hey windowpane, do you remember*

*How sweet it used to be?
When we were together
Everything was so grand
Now that we’ve parted
There’s just one sound
That I just can’t stand*

She ends the song on a sound note that pinches your heart every time you hear it:

*I can’t stand the rain against my window
Bringing back sweet memories*

I can’t stand the rain against my window

*It just keeps on haunting me
Hey rain, get off my window
Cause he’s not here with me*

The playlist ends with a song that is my new favorite, a song by Elham Mohammed, Dehayu. The song has this Caribbean laid back melody. Dehayu’s melody and its lyrics both give me warmth inside in this cold weather. The song is written by Elham and the lyrics, loosely translated, read as follows:

*Its sound is the sound of love
A sound that resides in the heart*

Its sound is like a dream that can’t be dreamt again

Its sound is the tune that I can’t get out of my head

Elham’s alto voice and the brilliant music video that demonstrates the beauty of rain, where everything turns green, the costumes and colorful umbrellas, and the hopeful expression on the face of the farmers, are something to look for.

When you hear a great song, your soul gets refreshed just the way rain refreshes the earth. Songs that refer to the rainy season vary but they all have something in common -- they tingle our hearts.





UNICEF ERITREA OFFICE

SALES OF USED ITEMS

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Eritrea intends to sell the following used items through sealed bid on “as is, where is basis” and without recourse or warranties of any kind. The items are located at UN compound and can be viewed on arrangements any day at 10:00 am. – 11:00 a.m. from the date of this announcement through contacting the telephone number provided below or through visiting UNICEF Eritrea Office.

Listed below are details of the items to be sold

S.No.	Category	Type	QTY	Method of Sell	Remark
1	A- Solar Items	O f f i c e equipment’s	66	As a lot	List available
2	B- ICT Items	Office supplies	4	As a lot	List available
3	C- General items	Wood, metal & others	33	As a lot	List available

Bidding and Award requirements:

1. Tender documents (Bid instructions) will be issued to prospective buyers on request.
2. Prospective buyers may bid for all as many items as desired. However, for each item bided for there must be a separate row on the Bid Form to be completed.
3. Each bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope and to be accompanied with payment of Nakfa 5,000.00 as a bid bond for all items bided for. Please do not enclose cash with the bids. UNICEF accepts any cash and/or cheque directly submit to UNICEF cashier whereupon a temporary receipt will be issued.
4. The sealed bid must be put in the box provided for, which is within UNICEF Asmara Office located at Zone 4 Admin -01Haday Street UN compound.
5. The bid will be opened after 5 working days from the date of newspaper announcement in the presence of the prospective bidders and Eritrean Customs Officials.
6. The result of the selection will be posted at UNICEF office and successful bidders will be informed by telephone if they are not presented during opening date.
7. The successful bidders must finalize payment of the balance to UNICEF within 5 days and payment of tax to Customs Office also within the same period.
8. The property must be collected immediately within 5 days period after all payments are made.
9. The property which is not paid for within prescribed period will be offered to the next highest bidder. Please note that UNICEF will not refund any bid bonds deposits to successful bidders who fail to meet the requirements stipulated in point No. 7 above.
10. Refunds to unsuccessful bidders will be made within 5 days after the completion of the exercise

UNICEF Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Contact Person: Mr. Tsegazeab Kiflemariam, Administrative Officer, Tel. 154868 ext. 367

Photographers Corner

Photo: Kibrom Tsehaye

A View of Massawa from the sky



This Summer in Eritrea

Continued from page 4

Earlier on, a visitor to my aunt's house had told me that the cat they kicked around and tormented for not catching mice had once upon a time ruled over Egyptian souls who whenever it died, the entire household had their eyebrows shaved as a sign of respect. Some story that is!

Some of us have probably taken a steaming ride on the Eritrean ride that looks like it has just stepped out of early cowboy films. Were you curious enough to get down from the train and read the letters that spell its origin? Some are from Krup, some from Fiat.

In Asmara, there are many things to see, such as the Mosque, the Cathedral, the Market place, and lots of art deco buildings. But what about Haddish Addi, Akhria, and Geza Banda? Go there and ask the people the way they live. Look at the mud wall building, and you will learn a lot.

As you stroll along the streets of Asmara,

don't just look at the buildings only. Look at the walls and the streets, and you will discover a lot of things; they all have unique stories to tell.

This will increase your wonder at your surroundings and will make your stay in any town very rewarding.

On the other hand, we have the wonderful foods during the summer months. This is the time to enjoy fruits & ice-cream. Hamburgers and pizzas are now basically a common staple among the youth, and for some reason they taste better in summer. But there isn't anything better than eating beles (prickly pear).

It is said that our beles was introduced by Abba Jacobis of Hebo in 1953 when he first settled in Segeneiti. I am not sure for what purpose the Padre brought it to Eritrea, but beles is a very nutritional fruit that can be used to fence fields and guard the soil against erosion. When dry, the stem is used as fuel. Although some livestock eat its hardy stems in time of drought, they don't seem to relish it. I have seen sheep sniffing at it and deciding to leave it alone.

When we were young, our mothers used to warn us about eating large quantities of beles. You don't heed their warning and your intestines simply get clogged and you get a type of constipation that is difficult to explain to even the most experienced of doctors. I remember mothers taking their 'clogged' children to hospital who were then 'douched' and sometimes made to drink water mixed with berbere for fast elimination. Imagine unprocessed berbere passing through on its way to the cesspool.

When my parents were kids they bought four beles for just a single cent. If they had ten cents in their pockets, they could buy 40 beles, enough to feed a family of nine for one day, and if you had ten kirshi you could feed a whole battalion ready to go to war.

Now you have agreed one beles for one Nakfa. The beles vendor unburdens himself of his zembil, and you, of course, don't help him for fear of having thorns, coarse and fine, all over you.

He takes his 'pocket knife' and starts making incisions on the fruit, first length

wise and then sidewise at both ends and 'unwraps' it to reveal the flesh inside. You stretch out your hand and take the seed-studded fruit, put it in your mouth and crush it between your teeth, gently and softly. Unable to separate the seed from the flesh, you have no choice but to swallow the whole content. You enjoy the taste and you feel like eating more and more. Before you know it you are hooked like an addict on heroine. Someone has to tell you when to stop.

And then the weddings, the streets are jammed with traffic congestion because of the more than normal flow of vehicles, most of which are cars accompanying marrying couples. Given that it is summer, rain, as much as it is welcome, is somewhat considered enemy number one. Nobody wants rain on the day that the bride is wearing white and everybody is on their best outfits.

However, regardless of the ruined wedding ceremonies or that one person who doesn't like rain for no reason at all, this summer in Eritrea is something to enjoy.

*"When you make Something with your bare Hands, you are-
Practicing a Combination of Science and Art." - Newal Imam.*

Sona Berhane

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Newal Imam. I was born in 2003 in Asmara. I've just completed 11th grade and graduated top of my class from Halay Technical School. I will soon be going to Sawa for my national service.

*Did you always want to go to
Technical School?*

Yes, that was my plan. But I had initially intended to go to Halay Technical School with the aim of studying in the Electronics department but at the last minute decided to go into Machine Shop. A lot of people were shocked



and emphatically warned me that mechanics was not for girls.

What made you choose Machine Shop?

I'm not sure. It was almost a spur-of-the-moment decision. But during orientation, I was deeply impressed by what the instructor said, and I said to myself, why not? I would be learning something new, and it really did seem interesting to me in the beginning.

What about later on? Did you ever regret your decision?

Never. I believe it was one of the best decisions I've made in my life.

How did your family take the

Our guest today is Newal Imam Mohammed-Seid, a promising young student making waves in the field of Mechanics, a traditionally male-dominated profession.

news?

My parents were quite worried at first. But when they saw how much I loved the courses, they became very supportive, especially my older brother. And even my classmates, almost all of whom were male, were a considerable help. I was completely and utterly new to the profession but most of the boys were familiar with the tools and what they're for and knew almost all the mechanical jargon. I was famous in class for constantly bombarding the teachers with questions like what this tool or that tool was called, and what it's used for. They always answered my questions patiently. The teachers are really dedicated and take the lessons very seriously.

Was it difficult being one of only two girls in your class?

No. Surprisingly, it was only an issue for people outside the school. *(Laughs)*

Because my classmates were very cooperative and never treated us unfairly. The instructors treated us all equally and did not allow anyone to be lazy or miss workshops.

But there was one incident that made me very upset. At the end of the first year, I was ranked 3rd in my class. My name was called out and I went to receive the prize. When I came back to my seat, I overheard a student's father scolding his son because a girl did better than him.

He said it as though it would have been more acceptable if a male student did better than him. I remember the comment made me very angry. I decided I would do even better the next year and rank top of the class. But I was also sad for a while. It is these kinds of conventional, discriminatory views that hold a lot of promising young students back from pursuing the professions they truly want. I was



inspired to be one of the students that challenged and changed these harmful views.

What was your favorite aspect of learning mechanics?

I had no idea we would begin our workshop practice by making the tools from scratch. We had to cut, weld and file every cog, screw, wheel – all sorts of tools. It was tough handwork because we wouldn't start using machines until much later. It was very rough on the hands and took me some getting used to but I enjoyed it immensely. I liked the fact that it was an active, hands-on profession. I'm not a sitter by nature so I appreciated that I would do most of the work on my feet, not sitting at a desk or staring into a screen. Also, when you make something with your bare hands, you are practicing a combination of science and art. You need to take care to be extremely precise with your measurements, but you also need to have some aesthetic sensibility as well.

And what was the most challenging part of studying Mechanical Shop?

There was one class, Mechanical Drawing, which was by far extremely taxing. We learned about preparing a blueprint of whatever tool or machine we intended to build, but it entailed an exacting degree of accuracy in taking measurements. If my measurement was off by as little as a millimeter, I would have to draw the project all over again. It was the most exhausting course.

What did you make for your final project?

The final project was my idea. I proposed we make an easier, safer biscuit maker and my teammates liked the idea. We designed the biscuit maker in such a way that the dough wouldn't have to be placed in the open compartment at the top where it is usually exposed and in danger of contamination. We used aluminum because it's

more versatile than iron and you wouldn't have to worry about rust. And of course, we made every piece of the apparatus ourselves.

Tell me about your graduation photo.

I'm wearing navy overalls. It's my workshop uniform. I've noticed that only medical doctors wear their white lab coats in their graduation photos. For many, the mechanic profession is held in low regard but I think mechanics a complex, interesting science. I wore my working uniform to express my love and respect for the profession. I'm even holding some mechanical tools in my hands.

What do you plan to study in the future?

I would like to get into Mechanical Engineering to continue my studies. This is definitely what I want to do in the future.

