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Today's problem in Lasanod is caused by international terrorism, says the President

He launches the implementation of the Somaliland Youth Development Fund, and tops it with remaining fund to kick-start it



By M.A. Egge

The President H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi on Monday said that it was international terrorism that was behind the situation in Laasanood today, as he launched the implementation of the Somaliland Youth Development Fund at an event held at the Presidential Palace.

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President inaugurates Local Government Institute, attends late Adami funeral



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi, has inaugurated the new Local Government Institute (LGI) established in the capital of

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State stresses peaceful stability as key to national prosperity



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The French Senate notes Somaliland-American Cooperation Agreement



The country's Ambassador to France Amb. Abdirahman Yasin Mohamed, who had a meeting with the French Senate Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, explained the importance of the US-Somaliland cooperation agreement whose Act,

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Speaker hopes Customary Convention to end with positive outcomes



By M.A. Egge

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Somaliland Hon. Abdirisaaq Khalif Ahmed has pointed out that he has just returned from Lasanood to update the Head

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City Mayor hails the President as being the key to Local Government Institute establishment



The Mayor of Hargeisa Cllr. Abdikarim Ahmed Moge said that it is the President who has greatly been behind the success of the implementation and establishment of new Local Government Institute (LGI) in Hargeisa.

He gave the sentiments at the ceremony of inaugurating the institution on Saturday by the Head of State, a function that was attended by top government officials.

Mayor Abdikarim thanked the

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Finance ministry honours employees who excelled in their duties



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The military is within their country doing their national obligations, says Major General Tani

As National Armed Forces Commemorate 29th Anniversary since its inception



By M.A. Egge

The Chief of Defense Forces Major General Nuh Ismail Tani said that the National Armed forces in the region are within their country and would not leave

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Police department to step up public rapport in bid to step up efficiency according to research findings



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New Mayor Changes the Face of Hargeisa- Eng Abdikadar Abdilahi

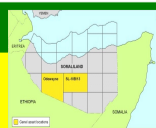


Following many years of neglect and brazen corruption by directors and county officials the city of Hargeisa

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Today's problem in Lasanod is caused by international terrorism, says the President



The meeting was attended by the Speaker of the parliament, several cabinet ministers, youth affair stakeholders, MPs, mayors, government officials, members of youth drawn from different regions of the country, community groups and other honorable guests. The Head of State encouraged all benefactors to eke in support for the youth fund as he contributed \$300,000 to kick-start it with the earmarked 1m dollars needed for the launching. He underscored the importance of bolstering the youth cause in nation building. On the other hand, the President who spoke about the problem in Sool region, said that foreign hands are behind the problem, saying, "Today's problem in Lasanood has

been caused by international terrorism". Talking of the catalyzing factor in the Lasaanod issue, he said that international terrorism has killed 40 people within a period of ten years, in a strategically planned manner to undermine the state and cause mayhem. "The meeting of traditional leaders in Lasaanod is expected to be as customary for every traditional leadership trends, to perpetuate peaceful coexistence, togetherness and unity and to uphold and safeguard security," said the President. He said that he was hopeful that the traditional leaders meetin in Lasaanood would reach decisions for the benefit of the people and the country of Somaliland.

The President said that the government of Somaliland is ready to discuss everything in a peaceful, fraternal and in ood rapport. As for the calls of the armed forces withdrawing from the whole of Sool reion, the president said that it was not feasible since the security apparatus in the country had a solemn duty to do for the nation in securing the country's territorial integrity, ward off forein attacks or combat terrorism. Initially the director of the Somaliland youth development fund Mr. Khadar Ibrahim, explained the different stages of the fund took, updating the audience on the issue at hand. Seeral speakers followed suit in underpinning the need of the implementation of the youth fund. Notable speakers were Sports and Youth Minister Hon. Abdirashid Duale Qambi, Minister of Financial Hon. Dr. Saad Ali Shire, the Mayor of the Capital, Cllr. Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge who spoke on behalf of the Mayors of the country, the Chairman of Sonyo, Mr. Bedri Hassan Muhammad, the Executive Director of Nagaad, Nafisa Yusuf and a UN rep Mr. Simon Strachan. They all emphasized the importance and benefit of the fund for the youth and the nation of Somaliland.

President inaugurates Local Government Institute, attends late Adami funeral



Somaliland, Hargeisa that will train local government workers in the country. This event was attended by the mayors of the country, ministers, the governor of Maaroodi-Jeix, service commanders, governors and general directors and a multitude of members of the public. Various officials who spoke underpinned the importance of the new institutional facility for the local government and the Somaliland nation as a whole. Hargeisa Mayor Cllr. Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge, Chairman of the Public ServiceCommision Mr. Khalid Jama Qodah, Mayor of Berbera City Cllr. Abdishakur Mohamud Hassan (I'din), Executive Director of the Institute of Local Governments lid Muse Muhammed and other officials. The Head of State lauded everyone who participated in the implementation of the institution and noted that the facility would go down well to uplift the knowledge and skills of the local government sector. The President noted that the institution is an example of the right steps taken toward the development of the government. He underscored the results of implementations of progressive policies. He said, "This institution is a good pointer of good governance as per the formulations of progress based policies, delving into their pros and cons, adapting them and implementing them in the long run". He said that it was quite elating and satisfying to see that the people and their administration can be able to come up and implement their own progressive aspects that catalyze their development. The president advised the youth fraternity, especially the educated ones to appreciate and fledge a sense of patriotism by highlighting its importance and perspective to having a strong cohesive national fabric. He said that it was only through such nationhood that tangible development can be realized.

He said that poverty and adversaries can be overcome when there is a sense of patriotic zeal in a nation. He said that it ought to be appreciated that of all the numerous dam constructions going on, only one is foreign-funded while all the rest are publicly funded through the tax collections collated. The President H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi was part of the hundreds of mourners who participated in a state funeral accorded the late Ahmed Haji Ali Addami in the capital of Hargeisa on Saturday. The president eulogized the late Adami and described him as an elder who took part in peace-building of the nation of Somaliland. He said, "We met first in 1991. He continued the national reconciliation and rebuilding work he started in 1991 until his death, and his patriotic mission has kept away from his family". He continued, "I pray to God to reward him for his good deeds in the building of his country Somaliland. The nation of Somaliland owes him a debt of gratitude and memorial reverence, and pray that God rewards him abundantly". The President said that since 1991, the late Adami has been a part of every conference on peace building and pacification, government building, and improvement of administrative governance. The president said that he remembers very much the role he played in the historic National Borama Convention meeting, the Axdii Qarameedka. "He was a veteran who expedited with good acumen and diligence whatever onerous national task bestowed upon him and excelled, hence was never boastful nor sought attention. "He was an elder who had great patience to solve the differences between the warring parties or factions whenever it occurred", said the Head of State. The President prayed to God to grant stronger faith to his family, relatives and the Islamic Ummah during the trying moment.

City Mayor hails the President as being the key to Local Government Institute establishment



president for opening the new government institute for training local councils employees. He revealed that it was the President's words of wisdom and motivation that helped him to complete the construction and refurbishment of the new Local Government Institute. The mayor acknowledged that

upon assumption of office from the former administration of mayor Aideed the president counselled him to ensure the training and skills development of city councils staff needed enhanced to higher levels. He said that since the inception of association of local councils many changes to the positive has been constant, since it opened new avenues for cooperation and sharing of development information and implementation of joint programs. Mayor Abdikarim pledged that he would steer the city council to new higher levels. He said that he hopes in the near future the Local Government Institute would transform to a fully fledged

University. He informed the president that during the Waheen fire disaster the local councils association in the country contributed more than one million dollars to assist the victims of the fire inferno recover from their losses. He said, "Mr. President I'm proud to inform you that the association of local councils contributed a half a million dollars for the construction of this Institute. Hargeisa city council donated the land and also relocated some residents to other environ of the city". He revealed that the local councils association will fund the running of the institutions to a tune of 210 thousand dollars.

Speaker hopes Customary Convention to end with positive outcomes

of State H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi on the situation at ground in Sool region hence was quite hopeful of good tidings ahead. He stated that the government is always ready for unconditional dialogue and that issues should be looked at from a positive point of view. Hon. Abdirizaq praised the President for the move to withdraw the troops from the city of Lasanood to reduce the tension following recent riots, saying that the move brought great calmness. He said that he had high hopes that

the Lasaanod traditional leaders' meeting will not cause any problems for the nation, and that nothing negative was expected to come out of it. Speaking on the issues, he told press over the week, "I went to Lasanood, the capital of Sool region, from Turkey, and we all know the problem that happened. I went there after consulting the president and other leaders of the country with the aim of getting to grips with the situation at hand in Lasaanood city, and to share real information with the president".

He thanked the President for removing the forces out of the town to gain better rapport with the residents and calmness was realized. The Speaker observed that the traditional 'Isimada' conference that opened in the town of Lasanood kicked of peacefully and that calls for peaceful stability were heeded. He pointed out the meeting was on freely without undue pressure from any quarters and that he expected and hoped to fruitfully end soon with positive outcomes.

The French Senate notes Somaliland-American Cooperation Agreement



meeting between Somaliland Ambassador Md. Abdirahman and his purpose are as follows; "In meeting I had in my office with Abdirahman Yassin Mohamed, Somaliland's Ambassador to France, we discussed the approval of the US Congress law that shows the importance of supporting democracy in the Horn of Africa. Vice-Chairman Cadic also said on his Twitter account that he discussed bilateral relations with countries in Somaliland. Ambassador Abdirahman who replaced the former Ambassador Ali Hassan is expected to further develop the cooperative relationship between Somaliland and France.

the Somaliland Partnership Law is now in effect. The Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the French Senate Md. Olivier Cadic said that he had a

meeting with the Somaliland Ambassador about the law approved by the US Parliament. A brief statement that Deputy Governor Cadic posted on his FB page yesterday and talked about the

The military is within their country doing their national obligations, says Major General Tani

the vicinity since it has national obligations.

The top commander stated the fact as he gave a speech on the occasion of the 29th annual commemoration of the establishment of the national army which was held for the first time in the city of Laasanood.

He recalled that the historical national conference in Borama in 1993 was held to establish the second administration government of Somaliland that saw the late president Mohamed Ibrahim Egal take the helm of leadership while deputized by H.E. Abdirahman Aw Ali Farah and the current Head of State H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi became the Minister of Interior.

It is thus the government started establishing the national army to protect the security of the country since there were only militias by then and security order had to be set.

"In 1994, an army of five hundred was established, consisting of all the clans of Somaliland, based on the quota share of the clans in the senate", he said.

"The first battalion was established,



then the second and gradually the sector fledged to where it is presently with efforts made to raise the quality of the army and training it constantly", he added.

Commander Nuh said that the second goal of the government at the time was the expansion of public administration, and to bring security to all regions of the country. While talking about the various pieces of training the National Army received in the last five years, he said that seven thousand soldiers graduated from different schools and joined the National Army.

He noted that the Harag-Wafi military academy has since seen 700 junior officers graduate while the Abdilahi Askar Officers College has so far trained five hundred officers.

Regarding training abroad, he said

that there are thirty officers, including engineers and technicians, who would complete their training next year.

On the capacity of the National Army, he said that they have received two hundred and fifty new vehicles Commander Nuh said that in consultation they have reformed five artillery units in the field, which are now working and serviceable, and that two artillery units have undergone repairs and are similarly working.

In terms of construction, he said that sixty-two new assorted buildings have been built, including hangars, offices, dormitories and others.

Commander Nuh said that the National Army has made a lot of progress in recent times, and their duties are not limited to defending the borders of the country, but they also participate in social welfare services when called upon.

In the field of sports, the military has been highly excelling given that in the latest national championships, they triumphantly bagged both top and runners-up positions in soccer and also won the basketball trophy.

State stresses peaceful stability as key to national prosperity



The Minister of Interior Hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed has stated that the key to prosperity is peaceful stability.

Hon. Kahin gave the sentiments on the auspicious occasion of the 29th Anniversary of the founding of Somaliland National Armed Forces celebrated annually every 2nd of February which was held for the first time in Lasanood in Sool region.

While recalling the destruction and sinking of the former country called Somalia, he gave a recap of Somaliland's re-assertion of her independence that had to re-emerge from ruins through concerted efforts of its intellectuals, the elders and the wisdom of Somaliland's culture, which led to the country's recovery.

"The elders and intellectuals of the Sool community were the co-hosts of the gathering of the Somaliland community, and they took leading roles in the deliberations that took place", said the minister.

Minister Kahin highlighted the history of the pioneers of the Sool community such as Garad Abdiqani, Fagade, Baashe Ali Jama, etc hence noted that the Dulbahante community was consulted and also gave impactful advisories and directions.

He cautioned that the people who bore the brunt in incidences are only those vulnerable women and children whereas perpetrators have their own cushioned abroad from casualties.

"The day Somaliland was reconciled, Garad Abdiqani reigned supreme, and today the son of Garad Ali is perpetrating conflict and instability", he observed.

Defense Minister Hon. Abdiqani Mohamud Aateeye (Farid) who spoke on the occasion said that the Somaliland Army is not a tribe, but a National Army that includes all of Somaliland.

Hon. Abdiqani said that the reasons for the anarchic protests in Lasanood were to obstruct the registration of voters exercise to disenfranchise the people.

"It was predicted that two hundred thousand would register, but only a few people registered", said the Defense Minister.

He lamented that the skirmishes had brought normal life to a halt and forces the students not to attend schools bringing untold suffering to the residents.

Minister of Information Hon. Suleiman Ali Koore said that the people of the area had also roots in Hargeisa and are interrelated.

Hon. Koore reminded the audience the history of the nation of Somaliland noting that the people have been together for eight centuries inter-marrying and living together while sharing livelihood together.

He said that they have always had their kinship, coexistence, sharing of drinking water and pastures, and had their fair share of both good and bad times.

He recalled the magnificent history of the Dervishes that is also enshrined in the constitution as a monumental legacy left for the nation.

On the same note, concerning the more recent history of the re-assertion of the country's sovereignty, Minister Koore said that many representatives of the Sool community were present at the Buraao convention meeting, the most noteworthy being Garad Abdiqani, Garad Jama, Garad Salebaan, Garad Mohamed amongst others.

"The independence of Somaliland was signed by many people, including Garad Abdiqani, Chief Ahmed Hirsi and Aw Dahir. They were all in it."

He said that there may be differences of opinion and that the position of the government is to deliberate on the differences.

"On behalf of the President, the government is ready to discuss any concerns, in any place and at any time", he said.

He hoped to fruitfully end soon with positive outcomes.

Police department to step up public rapport in bid to step up efficiency according to research findings

By M.A. Egge

The Somaliland National Police Services Command was presented with a research study on how to improve the relationship between the police and the citizens of the country at a forum on Thursday.

This is in essence for the Police department to step up public rapport in bid to step up efficiency.

The research, which was carried out by experts from the police force presented yesterday morning at the general command of the police force headquarters.

The Chief of Police Major General Mohamed Aden Saqadi (Dabagale) was present with the findings of the research related on how to strengthen the cooperation between the police and the community, given that the police has to be perceived



as a friend and servant of the members of the public.

He praised the experts who made the research for a job well done.

The experts said that it was agreed that the relationship between the community and the police would be mutually fruitful and that each official should play a prominent role.

The findings focused on the need for diligence and to forge swift

dispensation of daily duties and services to the community and the people at the basic police stations. It also calls for accountability geared towards proficiency acumen hence facilitating assessment and evaluation to prop up good governance as per management articulation and thereby acknowledge top performers and stations.

Finance ministry honours employees who excelled in their duties



By M.A. Egge

The Minister of Finance Hon. Dr. Saad Ali Shire flanked by his deputy Hon. Rooda Jama Ilmi and the Director General of the Ministry Mr. Mohamed Hussein Osman yesterday closed a two-day senior staff evaluation meeting on the performance of the treasury and awarded honours to staffers that excelled in the dispensation of their duties.

The consisted of all the Revenue Departments (C/Foreign & Customs) performances for the previous year, 2022.

The meeting of this nature is usually held by the ministry bi-annually. It draws the coordinators of the regions and districts country-wide who present the performance reports of their departments and sections.

Pros and cons associated, challenges and pending issues are comprehensively reported as per the stipulations of good governance procedural guidelines.

The senior officials of the ministry and the administrators of the regions and districts likewise share in the meeting any suggestions and examples to be faced in the next six months.

The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Financial Development, Ambassador Rooda Jama Ilmi, Director General Mr. Mohamed Hussein Osman (Mu'adinka), Directors of the Departments of Revenue, Inland Taxes, Customs, Public Relations, Human Resources and Finance and other senior officials of the ministry.

The Directors of Revenue of Inland Revenue and Customs urged their officers to redouble their efforts in carrying out the duties of revenue generation.

"The Department of Inland Revenue has generated more than the target envisioned, thanks to the credibility of taxpayers in the country," said the Director of Inland Revenue.

"The Department of Customs last year did not reach its goal due to the economic situation in the world," said the Director of Customs.

Director General of Finance Mr. Mohamed Hussein Osman (Mu'adinka) who made a speech urged the revenue department officials to step up their efforts even further.

"I hope that you will excel as you execute the plans for 2023, and I

am ready to work with you on anything that will make it easier for you to fulfill your duties."

He called for the exercising of good rapport and humbleness as they deal with the tax-payers.

The Deputy Minister Hon. Ambassador Rooda Jama Ilmi, on her part, urged the revenue department officials double their efforts and keep up the momentum such that the ministry's goals may be fully achieved.

She reminded the officials that all staffers would be held accountable and their diligence would be acknowledged.

Hon. Dr. Saad Ali Shire echoed similar sentiments and urged for more diligence and the stepping up of efforts.

He thanked and lauded the staffers who surpassed expectations.

"I thank again everyone who worked hard and reached the desired goal, I thank again everyone who exceeded the expected goals and plan", said the minister.

Dr. Saad noted that the obligations can only be dispensed and achievements realized if the whole institution worked as a unit in togetherness.

Somaliland finds oil- Michael Walls

Here is how this could reset the regional balance

The presence of oil in Somaliland has been confirmed by a recent exploration. The discovery has raised the stakes in Somaliland's claim for independence from Somalia as it holds the potential for a new stream of revenue for the semi-autonomous state. But the oil exploration is deepening the rift with Somalia, which claims sovereignty over the region. Michael Walls, a Professor of Development Politics and Economy & DPU Director, Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL, answers five key questions. What is Somaliland's hydrocarbon potential?

In 2020, Norwegian seismic survey company, TGS, estimated that the Somali basin as a whole likely holds offshore reserves of about 30 billion barrels, with additional onshore reserves, although land estimates are considerably less consistent. Assessments generally include Somaliland and would place Somalia reserves at about the same level as Kazakhstan, which would give the area the 18th or 19th largest reserve globally, as assessed in 2016.

Geological conditions seem to support the view that there are likely to be commercially viable deposits in the region. Whether they prove

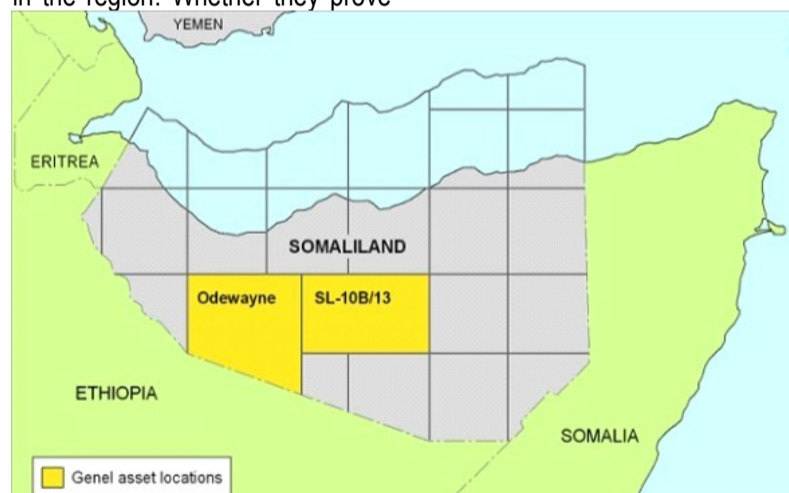
indicate the presence of commercially viable quantities or accessibility.

Genel Energy, the UK oil exploration firm on whose concession this discovery occurred, has held rights to explore in Somaliland since 2012. So the find isn't quite the sudden and unexpected bonus that's been implied by some reports.

Progress has been slow because Somaliland's lack of international sovereign recognition creates an uncertain context for significant investment. Somalia still claims sovereignty over Somaliland even though the region has operated as a fully if informally independent state since 1991.

This creates a vacuum. The Somali federal authorities cannot enter into meaningful agreements over exploration or extraction in Somaliland. Somaliland is limited by investment risk. And Somalia's threats and complaints emphasise that risk.

This has not stopped Somaliland from entering into agreements, but it has slowed activities taking place under them. In addition, there have been disputes within Somaliland over how the proceeds of hydrocarbon exploitation would be



close to estimates remains unknown at this stage.

There is also evidence of offshore (undersea) reserves in the region, as well as onshore (beneath the land) in the Somali region of the neighbouring Ethiopia. Bordering Somalia, and located next to Oromia Regional State, the Somali Regional State (also Ogaden) is Ethiopia's second largest federal region.

Why has it taken so long to make an oil find?

This find is being billed as the first discovery in Somaliland but in fact there have been several instances of oil seepage. An oil seep occurs when geological or unrelated human activity results in oil "seeping" into the ocean or onto land. In such cases, the physical appearance of oil occurs unexpectedly rather than as a result of deliberate exploration. It is unsurprisingly taken as evidence of a substantial reserve that is close to the surface, but doesn't always

shared.

One of the areas with significant potential is the Nugaal Valley, which stretches across the border of eastern Somaliland into Puntland. Genel Energy was already exploring in that zone a decade ago. It withdrew for a time in 2013, citing security concerns. In the same time period, Africa Oil secured rights from the Puntland administration that overlapped with those issued by Somaliland to explore in the Nugaal Valley. A 2014 UN report expressed concern that hydrocarbon exploration in the Nugaal Valley risked fuelling violent conflict. Africa Oil ceased active operation in the area a year later.

The most recent find is in a different area of Somaliland: Salaxley in the Maroodi Jeex region, which is less politically volatile. This makes it more likely that Genel Energy will be able to advance its work. What challenges lie ahead?

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New Mayor Changes the Face of Hargeisa- Eng Abdikadar Abdilahi

status had deteriorated and most of its infrastructure was in shambles. Not until the election of a new mayor, has the city acquired a semblance of sanity.

As the adage goes new broom sweep clean, the city of Hargeisa is experiencing tremendous face lift thanks to Mayor Abdikarim Ahmed Moge.

Immediately upon taking the mantle of office the new youthful Mayor sprung into action to stop the culture of endemic corruption and land grabbing by public officials.

Norms of council staff and directors stealing tax payers monies have been curtailed.

The new Mayor has put systems in place to counter misappropriation of funds by corrupt and overzealous council employees.

He has paved many depalitated roads and constructed new ones. Mayor Abdikarim has also renovated old council buildings and constructed modern state of the art office blocks for the city council. He has equipped and furnished new



offices with state of the art equipment.

The new Mayor has also sacked many corrupt city officials.

The city of Hargeisa, infrastructure was in ruins, potholes and decay of important amenities was the order of the day.

Hargeisa was an eyesore following many years of neglect

Since Somaliland regained back her independence from Somalia the country capital has had four mayors, of all the incumbent is unique in many ways. A man of a few words and action

Abdikarim Ahmed Moge, is the son of a former freedom fighter Ahmed Moge.

Adored by the electorate and loathed by foes of progress the mayor has asserted his power for the development of the city.

From the outset of his tenure Mr. Abdikarim has formulated new concepts of how the city ought to be run.

He has appointed experts to survey and map the city 8boroughs for current and future urban plans.

A master plan to decongest the central business district is already being implemented.

Small scale traders encroaching the city streets and thoroughfares have been relocated to new modern markets.

To sum it up, the new Mayor is an inspiration to youths and his accomplishment are outstanding. He has simply become a monumental example for our generation to emulate.

By: Senior Engineer Abdikadar Abdillahi Ali Noor

House ousts Ilhan Omar from foreign affairs panel as G.O.P. exacts revenge

WASHINGTON — A bitterly divided House on Thursday ousted Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota from the Foreign Affairs Committee over past comments about Israel that were widely condemned as antisemitic, as Republicans moved to cater to the demands of right-wing members and mete out punishment to a Democrat their party has demonized for years.

The 218-to-211 party-line vote, with one member voting “present,” settled a partisan score that has been festering since 2021, when the House, then controlled by Democrats, stripped Representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Paul Gosar of Arizona of their committee assignments for social media posts in which they endorsed violence against Democrats.

The removal of Ms. Omar delivered on a threat that Speaker Kevin McCarthy of California made at the time to retaliate if his party took the House majority by removing Democrats whom Republicans regarded as unfit to serve on committees. Last week, he unilaterally removed Representatives Adam B. Schiff and Eric Swalwell, both of California, from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where membership is appointed and thus not subject to a vote.

Mr. McCarthy’s decision to force the removal of Ms. Omar, a step that some of his rank-and-file members resisted, in the earliest days of his new majority demonstrated his determination to ingratiate himself with the hard-right Republican base, which has made the Somali-born Ms. Omar a target for some of its most vicious attacks. Former President Donald J. Trump famously said in 2019 that Ms. Omar and three other progressive women of color should “go back” to their countries, though she was the only one not born in the United States. The vote on Thursday was also a bid by Mr. McCarthy to curry favor with pro-Israel groups and evangelical voters and to drive a wedge among Democrats, many of whom had condemned Ms. Omar’s statements about Israel.

In 2019, Ms. Omar drew criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike for tweeting that certain pro-Israel groups were “all about the Benjamins, baby,” appearing to refer to hundred-dollar bills in what was seen as invoking an antisemitic trope about Jews and money. She later apologized for the comment. Two years later, Ms. Omar seemingly equated “atrocities” carried out by the U.S. military to those committed by terrorist groups like the Taliban and Hamas; she

later said she had not meant to compare them.

Yet during an unusually raw debate on the House floor on Thursday, prominent Democrats, including many Jewish members, stood alongside Ms. Omar’s closest friends in Congress to defend her in passionate and at times emotional speeches. They accused Republicans of hypocrisy, xenophobia and racism for targeting her while saying nothing about antisemitic remarks by members of their own party, some of whom have associated with Holocaust deniers. “A blatant double standard is being applied here,” said Representative Gregory W. Meeks of New York, the top Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee. “Something just doesn’t add up. And what is the difference between Representative Omar and these members? Could it be the way that she looks? Could it be her religious practices?”

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, was more direct about the exiling of Ms. Omar, who is Black and one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress. “This is about targeting women of color in the United States of America,” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said.

Republicans were comparatively sober as they made the case for removing Ms. Omar.

“Individuals who hold such hateful views should rightly be barred from that type of committee,” said Representative Mike Lawler of New York. “Words matter. Rhetoric matters. It leads to harm, and so the congresswoman is being held accountable for her words and her actions.”

Mr. McCarthy and the members of his leadership team were nowhere to be seen during the floor debate, during which the number of Democrats speaking on behalf of Ms. Omar outnumbered Republicans two to one. After the vote, Mr. McCarthy defended the decision to remove Ms. Omar, telling reporters that it was “not fit for tat,” but based on her statements. “I’m not removing people from all committees,” Mr. McCarthy said, pointing out that Ms. Omar had been excised from just one panel, unlike Ms. Greene and Mr. Gosar.

But his effort to oust Ms. Omar stalled and nearly faltered in recent weeks, highlighting the challenges Mr. McCarthy faces as he tries to make good on his promised agenda with a razor-thin majority that has already proved to be unruly. Some Republicans were concerned about being seen as hypocritical after they had railed against the removals of Ms. Greene and Mr. Gosar, and about the precedent set by expelling a lawmaker for her



views and statements, particularly by a party that routinely condemns “cancel culture.”

In the end, after days of haggling by Mr. McCarthy, all but one Republican fell in line, with Representative David Joyce of Ohio voting “present,” as he did on Democrats’ resolution to expel Mr. Gosar.

Debate over the move turned raucous, particularly after Ms. Omar made a defiant speech defending herself. She drew cheers and applause from her colleagues as she declared, “Take your vote or not — I am here to stay.”

Shortly before members cast their ballots, Ms. Omar charged that the move to expel her was an inevitable extension of the false “birther” conspiracy theory, promoted by Mr. Trump, that former President Barack Obama, the first Black occupant of the Oval Office, was secretly an African-born Muslim.

“I am Muslim. I am an immigrant. And interestingly, from Africa,” Ms. Omar said on the House floor. “Is anyone surprised that I am being targeted? Is anyone surprised that I am somehow deemed unworthy to speak about American foreign policy?”

Ms. Omar’s ouster capped off an opening month in the House that has been defined by political jockeying and messaging far more than serious policy ventures. During a history-making struggle to claim the speaker’s gavel, Mr. McCarthy provided a raft of concessions to his hard-right detractors to win their votes. He has spent the weeks since paying off those debts, including by placing ultraconservative members on powerful committees and forming a new panel to investigate the “weaponization of government.” The House has also passed an array of legislation — all doomed in the Senate — that would defund I.R.S. enforcement against tax cheats, prosecute some abortion providers and end federal coronavirus vaccine mandates and precautions.

The stage was set this week for Ms. Omar’s expulsion when Representative George Santos of New York — the embattled Republican freshman who has admitted to having misrepresented his background and is facing multiple fraud investigations — announced that he would temporarily remove himself from his House committees until his name was cleared. Mr. Santos had

become a lightning rod for accusations of a double standard, as Democrats scorned Mr. McCarthy for protecting him while targeting Ms. Omar, Mr. Schiff and Mr. Swalwell.

But some Republicans were still uncomfortable with the move, holding out until Mr. McCarthy agreed to add language to the measure citing lawmakers’ right to appeal such decisions to the Ethics Committee, a mechanism that was already available to them.

“He added explicitly to this resolution to make sure that we

apply the same standard not just to Democrats, but to Republicans,” Representative Victoria Spartz of Indiana said of Mr. McCarthy during the floor debate, explaining her decision to back the measure.

That gesture was not enough for some other Republicans. Representative Ken Buck of Colorado, one of the more conservative naysayers, exacted a pledge from Mr. McCarthy to strengthen the appeals process for members facing punitive actions in the future, a commitment that won over most of the remaining holdouts.

Somaliland finds oil-Michael Walls

The uncertainty created by a lack of international recognition makes it difficult to mobilise sufficient investment. And there is little doubt that Somalia will continue to remain hostile to both exploration and extraction.

Similarly, local sensitivities around the sharing of financial rewards will need to be managed with care and deep local engagement.

Some commentaries have suggested that the newly discovered oil could be abundant. But the reserves could also prove limited and may present technical challenges in extraction. It is therefore possible that extractive plans will operate at the margin of financial feasibility.

The latest find was the result of an accidental release of oil during drilling for water rather than from deliberate exploration. This may be evidence of a significant and easily accessed reserve, but seepages and strikes like this have happened in the past in Somaliland. A more extensive geo-seismic surveying will be needed before the full extent of the reserve is confirmed.

What would be the political implications of oil wealth in Somaliland?

I had previously studied the place of oil in Somalia and its breakaway states. Somali society is kinship-based. Specific groups identify with particular geographic areas. This means that the political implications vary sharply depending on the location of any oil discovery. Previous experience of exploration in the Nugaal Valley showed how socially and politically volatile the exercise could be.

The area of the latest find, around Salaxley, is likely to prove less volatile. Unlike the Nugaal Valley, Salaxley has not customarily been subject to the same inter-clan and political disputes. But there will still need to be significant negotiation over sharing of the proceeds of exploration. The government will be

keen to ensure that the windfall advantages those in power. Local clan groups will be keen to ensure there is a clear benefit accruing to their communities. Other clans will equally want a say in how increased wealth benefits Somaliland as a whole.

Depending on how negotiations conclude, there is potential for this clan-based process to mitigate the “resource curse” effect. In other words, the system of inter-group negotiation that underpins Somali society might provide some protection from the narrow economic impact of oil wealth that has been felt elsewhere. However, that is by no means certain and the process of negotiation itself has the potential to fuel violence, just as the UN worried in 2014.

Either way, the Somaliland economy remains tiny. Any influx of significant new wealth, even on a fairly modest scale, will create new social, economic and therefore political tensions.

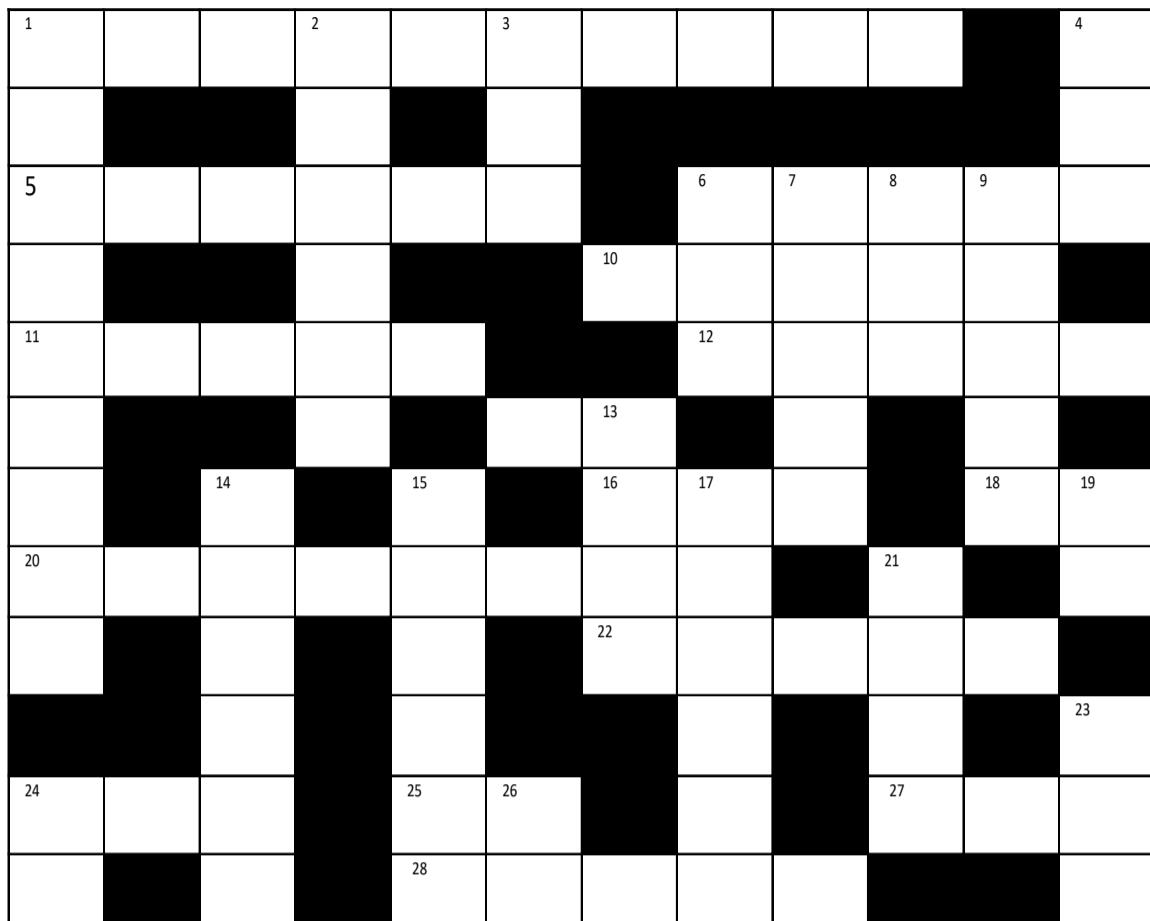
What are the implications for regional dynamics?

The regional impact will depend on the extent of the discovery. Somalia has consistently objected to hydrocarbon exploration in Somaliland as all concessions have been granted under Somaliland legislation. It would object even more strongly to commercial extraction.

Ethiopia’s interest is likely to be more equivocal. Salaxley is close to the Ethiopian border, and not far from active hydrocarbon exploration concessions in Ethiopia’s Somali region. If the Somaliland reserves prove to be extensive after a technical appraisal, it would suggest that those in the adjacent Ogaden Basin are also significant. In this case Somaliland and Ethiopia would hold a mutual interest in ensuring sufficient regional security to enable extraction.

THT Buzzle

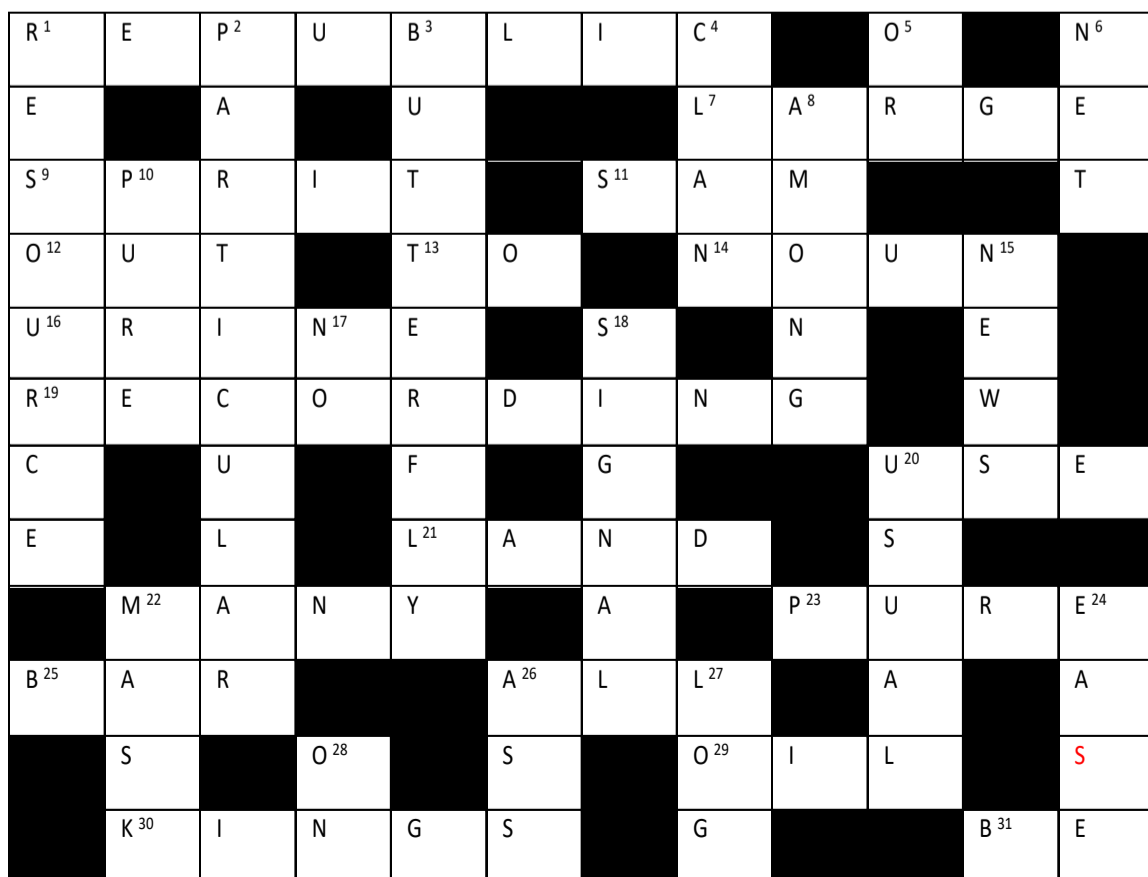
By: Abdillahi Said



- DOWN**
- 1 Personal assistant
 - 2 Province or region
 - 3 Tell/say
 - 4 To some extent
 - 6 Sum of money
 - 7 Over again
 - 8 Schoolboy/ fella "lady"
 - 9 Night train/school
 - 13 Field
 - 14 Amount of money
 - 15 Aggregate
 - 17 Imperative/crucial
 - 19 On top of
 - 21 number below ten
 - 23 Swallowed
 - 24 Get to
 - 26 Or else

- ACROSS**
- 1 Winning
 - 5 overcast.
 - 8 Salt
 - 10 Sweetener
 - 11 Meaningless
 - 12 Lady
 - 16 Gone
 - 18 By no means
 - 20 Bring to mind.
 - 22 Over again
 - 24 Weapon
 - 25 Not at all
 - 27 Breakfast
 - 28 Honesty

Previous Answer



Ethiopian PM meets Tigray region leaders for first time since peace deal



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met senior leaders of the Tigray region forces on Friday for the first time since they signed a peace deal with the national government ending two years of war, the state-run broadcaster said. "PM Abiy ... and other officials met today and held a discussion with the TPLF delegation regarding the progress of the peace process," the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation said on its Twitter account. "As a result, PM Abiy passed decisions about increasing flights, banking and other issues that would boost trust and ease the lives of civilians."

The Addis Ababa government and forces of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed agreements in November to permanently cease hostilities, ending fighting that killed tens thousands and displaced millions. Friday's meeting was Abiy's first with senior administrators of the northern Tigray region since the fighting broke out. The war was rooted in old territorial and other grievances between the political elites of Tigray and other regions, built up over decades of turmoil, violent regime change and long periods of authoritarian rule. Reporting by Dawit Endeshaw; writing by George Obulutsa; editing by Mark Heinrich

Kenya to reopen first Somali border post after 10-year shutdown



Kenya has announced plans to re-open its Manderla border crossing with Somalia as part of efforts to improve border security and crack down on smuggled goods. Kenya says plans to re-open the Manderla border post with Somalia are nearing conclusion, after high-level consultations between the two countries. Speaking after a visit to the town of Manderla, Kenya's Internal Security Minister Kithure Kindiki said reopening the crossing point will improve border security and stem the tide of smuggled goods used to fund terrorist activities. "I have directed the county security teams to sit down with the agencies of government that are represented here, including customs, immigrations, and asses the requirements and provide information within one week to enable us to renovate the border post and re-start our border," said Kindiki. Kenya closed all of its official border crossings with Somalia in 2012 in a bid to stop incursions by al-Shabab insurgents operating from the Somali side. The border points closed included the Manderla crossing, as well as those in Lamu,

Wajir and Garissa. The shutdowns have not stopped people from crossing the border illegally or smuggling goods. Kindiki tasked the county security team with identifying armed militants operating in the border region. "I therefore direct the county security team to sit down with the political leaders and the elders in a plan that will be guided by the community leaders and elders, so as to flush-out armed militants from Manderla and Northeastern," said Kindiki. Kindiki addressed elected leaders and community elders Friday during a security tour in Manderla and Wajir counties, and he reiterated the need for elders to partake in security operations. In the last five years, Kenya's northeast has experienced a long series of attacks by al-Shabab fighters. In the deadliest attack, the Islamist militant group killed nearly 150 people at Garissa University College in 2015. Somalia-based al-Shabab has been active in Kenya since 2011, when Kenya first contributed troops to the African Union-led peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

Infected blood inquiry: Five things we have learned



A long-running public inquiry into what has been called the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS will hear its final evidence on Friday.

It is thought tens of thousands were infected with HIV and hepatitis between 1970 and 1991 after being given a contaminated drug or blood transfusion.

The inquiry, which started in 2018, has reviewed thousands of documents and heard testimony from 370 witnesses.

It will publish its formal conclusions and recommendations in the summer.

Here are five important things that have been revealed by the inquiry over the past five years.

1. How big the contaminated blood scandal is

A group of academics hired by the inquiry produced detailed estimates of the numbers infected in the 1970s and 80s.

A total of 1,250 people with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders contracted HIV after being given a protein made from blood plasma known as Factor VIII.

About half of that group later died of an Aids-related illness.

At the time, the UK was not self-sufficient in Factor VIII, so it was often imported from the United States - where prisoners and other at-risk groups were paid to donate.

Another 30,000 NHS patients probably contracted a different virus - hepatitis C - through the same contaminated treatment, or a blood transfusion after surgery or childbirth.

It is thought about 2,050 of that group later died of liver failure or cancer caused by hepatitis C, before an effective treatment became widely available.

How many children were infected Researchers found that 380 of those infected with HIV - about one in three - were children, including some very young toddlers.

When that figure was read out at the public inquiry, there was an audible gasp from survivors and relatives in the room.

At Treloar's College, a state-run boarding school in Hampshire, 72 pupils - all haemophiliacs - later died after being given the contaminated treatment.

The inquiry heard devastating testimony from survivors in a week of **special hearings about the school.**

"I often just think, why me? Why am I still here?" said Richard Warwick, a former pupil who was infected with HIV as a young boy in 1978.

"It's just the guilt of losing all those friends. I can name 10 that I know who are just gone. It's horrific."

3. Who knew what and when?

One of the key questions the inquiry will now have to answer is whether more could and should have been done to prevent those infections and deaths

Former Prime Minister Sir John Major gave evidence at the inquiry Former Prime Minister Sir John Major drew more gasps from families watching his testimony when he **described the scandal as "bad luck".**

He later apologised for his choice of language.

The inquiry was shown a letter written in **May 1983 by Dr Spence Galbraith**, then director of the UK's Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, to the Department of Health.

It warned that haemophiliacs were being infected with Aids and

concluded that "all products made from blood donated in the USA... should be withdrawn".

There was no evidence the letter was acted on at the time.

In his testimony, Lord John Patten, a junior health minister from 1983 to 1985, said he "unequivocally" believed ministers should have been told about the warning and said - if he had - he "would have pressed the panic button".

4. A 'failure of democracy'

There was detailed questioning of ministers and civil servants about the internal workings of government. Former Conservative health secretary Jeremy Hunt - now chancellor - was asked about official briefings he received as recently as 2012 suggesting the scandal had been an "unavoidable problem".

He **described how state institutions can "close ranks around a lie"** and said it was a

"huge failure of democracy" that it has taken so long to get to the truth. Another ex-health secretary Andy Burnham, now the Labour mayor of Manchester, said successive governments had "comprehensively failed" the victims over five decades and suggested there may be a case for charges of corporate manslaughter in the future.

5. How people will be compensated Hundreds of victims of the scandal have received annual support payments but - before this inquiry - no formal compensation had ever been awarded for loss of earnings, care costs and other lifetime losses. Many of those infected had had to give up jobs and live on benefits because of a series of health problems.

In July 2022, inquiry chairman Sir Brian Langstaff made his first formal recommendation - an unusual move in the middle of a public inquiry.

He said there was a "compelling case" to quickly make some interim compensation payments of £100,000 each.

The government agreed and - in October 2022 - the first payments were made to about 4,000 surviving victims and widows.

But many children, siblings and

parents of those who had died have missed out.

That included Laura Palmer, 39, who lost both her parents to HIV/Aids in August 1993, when she was nine years old.

"There are still a lot of bereaved

families excluded, so there is more work for us to do," she told the BBC.

Further recommendations on compensation are expected when the inquiry publishes its final report, which is likely to be around the middle of the year.

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