

➤ Important Vocab for the Editorial

- **transition (noun)** – change, transformation, conversion.
- **succession (noun)** – accession, elevation.
- **autocratic (adjective)** – domineering, draconian, oppressive.
- **treason (noun)** – disloyalty, betrayal (of one's country); mutiny/rebellion.
- **reconciliation (noun)** – reunion, appeasement, settlement/compromise.
- **usher in (verb)** – start, initiate, inaugurate.
- **unrest (noun)** – disruption, disturbance/disorder, turmoil.
- **unleash (verb)** – let loose, release, set free.
- **repression (noun)** – suppression, domination, oppression.
- **quell (verb)** – put an end to, get rid of, curb/thwart.
- **underlie (verb)** – be the fundamental / basic /essential.
- **discontent (noun)** – disappointment, dissatisfaction, unhappiness/displeasure.
- **simmering (adjective)** – furious, enraged, angry.
- **jostling (noun)** – battle, struggle, scramble.
- **pushback (noun)** – negative/unfavourable reaction, response.
- **disproportionate (adjective)** – out of proportion to; inordinate, excessive.
- **ethnic (adjective)** – relating to a population subgroup (cultural, national, traditional/folk) with a comm conquer, gain, win. on national or cultural tradition.
- **speculation (noun)** – prediction, conjecture/guesswork, opinion/surmise.
- **spell (noun)** – period, session, term.
- **mobilisation (noun)** – the act of bringing people together for a particular cause.
- **empower (verb)** – authorize, allow, entitle.
- **inhibit (verb)** – prevent, impede, hinder.
- **entrenched (adjective)** – ingrained, established, embedded.
- **self-seeking (adjective)** – self-interested, egoistic, selfish.
- **squander (verb)** – waste, misspend, misuse.
- **bent (noun)** – inclination, instinct, leaning, tendency.
- **have one's work/task cut out (phrase)** – be dealt with a difficult task.

Transition trouble: on the emergency in Ethiopia

The ruling front in Ethiopia should make political succession less autocratic

The [state of emergency](#) reimposed after [Hailemariam Desalegn's resignation as Prime Minister](#) in mid-February marks a reversal in Addis Ababa. It was in August last year that the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front government had lifted an emergency clamped in 2016. In January, it released thousands of protesters, including top politicians and journalists. Most of those imprisoned had been accused of treason, terrorism and other criminal acts, charges that drew wide international condemnation. Together,

these moves were regarded as an attempt at national reconciliation showing a willingness to usher in a more open and participatory political process after nearly three years of political unrest. But recent events suggest that the state is prepared to unleash further repression when it fails to quell protests. Underlying the discontent is the uneven nature of distribution of the benefits of economic growth in Ethiopia, one of the best-performing economies in Africa in recent years. Besides the simmering popular protests, instability also derives from a jostling within the EPRDF, which has ruled since 1991. There appears to be a pushback against the disproportionate dominance in the ruling coalition of ethnic Tigrayans, who account for a small fraction of the country's population. There is speculation, therefore, that bringing in a Prime Minister from the Oromo community, which makes up more than a third of Ethiopia's population, could calm sentiments in the streets.

There is some talk that the new spell of emergency may be aimed to ensure a smooth transition to the next Prime Minister. Besides keeping a check on anti-government mobilisation, a state of emergency empowers the authorities to ensure that public services are not disrupted and businesses don't shut down as a mark of protest. However, the ban on protests and curbs on media freedom will inhibit a frank debate between the government and the opposition. The Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe and the ANC in South Africa have in recent months demonstrated how entrenched political parties can regain public credibility that some of their self-seeking leaders have squandered away, by ensuring political succession in a relatively open and transparent manner. Although of an autocratic bent, the EPRDF should use this opportunity of charting a post-Desalegn future to restore stability after years of political turmoil. The Front, which enjoys absolute control in parliament, could make a modest beginning by respecting the rule of law and giving Ethiopia's diverse ethnic communities a sense of political representation. That may be the lone guarantee to sustain the impressive economic growth the country has registered in recent years. Ethiopia's new Prime Minister has his or her task cut out.