Ethiopia - Eritrea War Ends

What is the issue?

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- Ethiopia and Eritrea have recently announced the end of the deadly “20-year war” between them, which killed over 80,000 people.
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- The future looks bright, with both countries announcing the resumption of trade, diplomatic, and travel ties between them.
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What is the history of the conflict?

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- Eritrea broke from its federation with Ethiopia in April 1993.
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- It became an independent country located strategically at the mouth of the Red Sea on the Horn of Africa, bordering crucial shipping lanes.
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- **War -** In 1999, war broke out between the two countries over the control of Badme, a border town of no apparent significance.
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- Massive displacements of population followed, families were torn apart, and the local trading economy was utterly destroyed.
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- **Detente -** In 2000, “Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities” was signed, and later a Boundary Commission was established to settle the dispute.
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- The Commission gave its ruling in 2002, awarding Badme to Eritrea, but Ethiopia demanded certain pre-conditions to accept the ruling.
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- In this backdrop, Badme continued to remain under Ethiopian control and there was an effective stalemate with intermittent border classes.
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- **Peace -** Ethiopia’s ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) had recently indicated its desire to end hostilities with Eritrea.
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- From then on, things have moved rapidly and Ethiopia has also announced that it would fully comply with the peace agreement of 2000.
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What is the likely impact of peace?

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- Ethiopia is landlocked, and through the years of the war with Eritrea, it has been dependent heavily on Djibouti for access to the sea.
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- The current peace deal will likely give Ethiopia access to Eritrean ports, which will help in counter balancing the dependence on Djibouti.
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- For Eritrea too, peace is likely to work to its benefit, as it can divert scarce resources away from the military to other productive avenues.
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- Notably, the government of President Afwerki in Eritrea has also come under international pressure for its authoritarian streak and violent means.
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- Accepting peace would ease international pressure and also solve the 2015-16 refugee crisis that was precipitated due to Eritrean regime’s oppressive ways.
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Source: Indian Express

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