



Political instability heading Pakistan towards default: Sh Rasheed

Former Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed on Sunday warned that political instability is heading the country towards 'default'. The Awami Muslim League chief called the present financial condition of the country the greatest economic crisis. He said 'important' decisions have to be taken before August 30, if not, no one will be available to run the government.



SBP fully capable to manage all regulatory functions: Dr. Murtaza

Acting Governor of SBP, Dr. Murtaza Syed assured the nation that the current leadership at SBP is fully capable and fully authorized to manage all the regulatory functions. It is fully engaged with global institutions to overcome the present adversities in the international economic environment. The nation should reject the negative fake news circulating on the social-media, as a new SBP Board has also been appointed now. (Report on Page 6)

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Enhancing Regional Coop

LAHORE: Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ambassador Zhang Ming called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Sunday.



Photo: PID

'Shanghai Spirit'

PM reaffirms Pakistan's full support to SCO's charter

SCO secretary general lauds Pakistan's constructive contributions to SCO's work and activities

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday assured Pakistan's full support in the fulfillment of the purposes and objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), under his stewardship.

He hoped that all SCO members would continue to work together for building peace, enhancing international solidarity and cooperation.

The prime minister was talking to Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ambassador Zhang Ming who called on him.

The prime minister also reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to the principles of the SCO Charter and the "Shanghai Spirit."

He highlighted the current global challenges manifested

in the high fuel and food prices and the resultant food insecurity as well as economic and financial difficulties for a large number of countries including SCO members.

Appreciating the comprehensive development agenda of SCO, the prime minister emphasized that the core purpose of the Organization remained the growth and prosperity of the SCO region and how well the SCO leaders were responding to the aspirations and ambitions of their people to have better standards of living.

He underlined Pakistan's priorities and national development goals as well as important areas of interest within the SCO framework of cooperation — including trade and economy; connectivity & transport; poverty alleviation; energy; agriculture and food security; climate

change; security; information technology; digitalization; and cultural and people-to-people linkages.

The prime minister underlined the need for developing appropriate funding mechanisms to

the connectivity agenda and, in this regard, also highlighted that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could serve as a useful model in its facilitation.

The prime minister also shared his perspective on a number of specific regional and global security issues as well as SCO's role in promoting stability in the region and beyond.

In this context, he appreciated the work of SCO-RATS where Pakistan, together with other member states, was playing an active role in countering common security challenges.

The SCO secretary general expressed his sincere gratitude to the government and leadership of Pakistan for arranging his visit before the upcoming SCO Council of Foreign Ministers and Heads of State meetings in Uzbekistan.

The secretary general lauded

Pakistan's constructive contributions to SCO's work and activities across all domains and thanked the prime minister for the guidance provided with regard to SCO's priorities and endeavours in the future.

He also highlighted the invitation to the prime minister to attend the SCO summit in Samarkand in September 2022 to which Prime Minister Sharif responded that he was looking forward to participate in the summit.

The prime minister also warmly felicitated the secretary-general on taking up his important assignment.

SCO is an 8-member trans-regional multilateral Organization, based on the "Shanghai Spirit" which stands for mutual trust and respect, equality, respect for diverse civilizations, and pursuit of shared development.

All SCO members would continue to work together for building peace, enhancing int'l solidarity and cooperation.

promote intra-SCO trade as well as development initiatives.

Stressing the enhancement of transport and communication links, the prime minister underscored the importance of

Fawad accuses PML-N of planning attack on SC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday said that the issue of the deputy speaker's ruling resulting in the rejection of 10 votes of PML-N had nothing to do with interpretation of Article 63(A) but the Supreme Court has just asked the deputy speaker to pinpoint the reference he took from the verdict to give such decision.

Talking to the media in Islamabad, he blamed PML-N for once again acting like the Sicilian mafia and hurling threats to the judiciary.

Fawad said the judges of the Supreme Court are being targeted on social media and alleged PML-N of planning to launch an attack on the top court in tomorrow's hearing.

Some 11,000 tweets against the apex court's judges were done from 529 different accounts, he added. Agencies

Kashmir Council-EU's Chief expresses solidarity with Yasin Malik

Ali Raza Syed urges world including UN, rights organizations to pressurize India to accept legal demands of Yasin Malik

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed has expressed solidarity with Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Yasin Malik who is on a hunger strike in the India's notorious Tihar jail.

Yasin Malik was sentenced to life imprisonment by an Indian court on May 25 this year on the fake charges against him.

In a statement issued on Sunday Ali Raza Syed said that Yasin Malik who is deprived of all legal, constitutional and fundamental rights and even denied of the fair judicial trial by the Indian government, is currently battling for life in the Indian prison, says a message released to the media here Sunday evening.

Yasin Malik started his hunger strike on Friday morning against the denial of justice and fair trial to him by the Indian kangaroo courts.

As per a JKLF statement, Yasin Malik had written to the Indian government for a physical appearance before the court in order to respond to the false cases registered against him. He also requested for cross examination of witnesses himself and said that he would sit on hunger strike if his request was not accepted by the Indi-



an government.

Chair of KC-EU Ali Raza Syed urged the International community including United Nations and international human rights organizations to pressurize India to accept legal demands of Yasin Malik sitting on the hunger strike.

Ali Raza Syed asked the international community including European Authorities to use their good office to pressurize India for early and unconditioned release of Yasin Malik.

Chair of KC-RU also called for unconditional release of rights activists including Khurram Parvez and Mohammad Ahsan Unto, Kashmiri Journalists and as well as the Kashmiri political activists detained in the Indian prison.

These Kashmiri figures remain in detention under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in Tihar, the one of the most overcrowded and unsanitary prisons in the country for raising rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir.

KC-EU has already launched a campaign in Europe for release of the Kashmiri prisoners a few months ago.

Ali Raza Syed said, these Kashmiri figures are detained because they always helped the people of Kashmir in raising their voices against the Indian brutality in occupied Kashmir particularly they highlighted the terrible incidents of Indian state terrorism in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Chair of KC-EU said, India can not achieve its evil objectives including concealing war crimes and inhuman acts in occupied land of Jammu and Kashmir. He added, people of Kashmir offered their sacrifices for the right to self determination and would not compromise on this basic political right.

US President tested positive for Covid

PM Shehbaz wishes President Biden speedy, complete recovery from Covid

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Sunday wished President of the United States Joe Biden a speedy and complete recovery from Covid-19 infection.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister posted "I wish President Biden a speedy and complete recovery from corona."

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre had told media that president Biden was experiencing "very mild symptoms" and would



continue to carry out all his duties in isolation.

In a separate tweet 79-year-old president Biden said he was "doing great" and "keeping busy".

The White House informed that the president tested positive for Covid on Thursday, and had been fully vaccinated and twice boosted.

'No compromise on constitution, democracy'

Marriyum says nobody will be allowed to violate constitution, law

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said that no one would be allowed to criticize and violate the Constitution and the law as well.

In a reaction to Fawad Chaudhry's statement, she said that a person who abused and threatened national institutions should not worry about it.

"Imran Khan will not be allowed to play the game of 'establishment and anti-establishment' just for a return to power", she said.

The minister said Imran Khan had admitted that he took the help of institutions and agencies to run the government for four years.

She said that no body would be allowed to pressurize justice system through bullying, threats and abuse.

The minister remarked that narrative of Nawaz Sharif and Muslim League (N) remained as the narrative of the Constitution.

She advised Imran Khan to stop dragging the army

and judiciary into politics as she opined Imran's target was institutions and he wanted that their leadership should be removed.

She maintained that Imran Khan's narrative of 'conspiracy abroad' was now buried and the new narrative of establishment and anti-establishment has started.

The minister demanded that Election Commission of Pakistan should announce the verdict of foreign funding immediately.

"Imran wants NRO in foreign funding case through bullying, intimidation, anarchy, rioting and hooliganism", she maintained.

The full court should hear the case related to the election of the Chief Minister of Punjab, she said.

The Full Court should simultaneously hear the review petition of Supreme Court Bar Association, present petition and other related petitions.

Justice on important national, political and constitutional matters should not only be done, but it should also be seen to be done, she remarked.

PTI discusses post Punjab CM election issues

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, Sunday, chaired an important consultative session of the political committee.

According to media reports, Imran Khan started chairing the consultative session of the PTI political committee at his Bani Gala residence. The political party will hold discussions over the elections of the Punjab Chief Minister (CM) and the court affairs in the meeting.

A private TV channel reported that PTI will formulate its next political strategy in the ongoing meeting. The PTI's top leadership also held discussions on the postponement of the local government (LG) elections in the Sindh province.

The session was attended by Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Shireen Mazari, and other senior leaders of the PTI.

While talking to a private TV channel, Fawad Chaudhry said that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and its allies have expedited their campaign against the judiciary to pressurize the Supreme Court (SC), the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) and



Justice Ijazul Ahsan.

He alleged that the ruling political party launched a malign campaign against the judiciary and so far 11,000 tweets were posted on social media. Fawad Chaudhry revealed that the government wanted to pressurize the judiciary for dissolving the bench hearing the concerned case.

The PTI central leader alleged that the ruling party lost the public confidence and it will lose the confidence of the institutions soon due to its controversial move of targeting the judiciary and the institutions.

Regarding President Dr Arif Alvi's tweet, Fawad said that Dr Arif Alvi's message was very important in the current situation. He was of the view that the role of the president will be crucial in the coming days. Agencies

Discussing post CM Punjab scenario

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and Punjab Home Minister Attaullah Tarar addressing a joint press conference here on Sunday.



Political Crisis

Law Minister wants full court to hear cases on Article 63-A

Azam Nazir says political circumstances reached such a situation that several constitutional issues needed to be resolved

LAHORE: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar has demanded the Supreme Court of Pakistan to constitute a larger bench or full court to hear the case of Punjab chief minister election, as well as the review petition of the Supreme Court Bar Association about Article 63-A interpretation.

Addressing a joint press conference with Punjab Home Minister Attaullah Tarar here on Sunday, he said that political circumstances had reached such a situation that several constitutional issues needed to be resolved.

He said that the president of Pakistan had sent a reference to the Supreme Court for interpretation of Article 63-A before voting on no-confidence resolution against the then prime minister Imran Khan, and it was appealed that votes cast against the directions of

the party head should not be counted.

The SC did not give stay order and the proceedings of no-confidence were completed, he added.

The law minister said that later, during election of the Punjab chief minister, the split 3-2 judgment was given that the votes cast against the directions of the party leader would not be counted. Therefore, 25 votes cast in favour of Hamza Shahbaz were not counted.

On Friday, in the run-off election for the Punjab chief minister slot, the votes of 10 members of the PML-Q, who had cast their votes against the directions of the party head, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, were not counted, in the light of the apex court verdict.

He said that the Punjab Assembly deputy speaker announced the victory of

Hamza Shahbaz as the chief minister, in the light of the SC interpretation of Article 63-A. However, the other candi-

PML-N respects the courts

date, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, moved the SC and appealed for counting those votes, he explained.

He said that the Supreme Court Bar and the civil society had demanded that hearing of these cases should be held together by the full court.

Tarar said that prominent lawyers including Latif Afridi, Yasin Azad, Fazal Haq Abbas, Qalb-e-Hussain and Ahsan Bhoon had also said that it was a serious and sensitive

issue which was taken up by 8-member and 5-member benches earlier; therefore it should be heard by the full court now.

The federal law minister said that it was an issue related to the elected chief minister of 120 million people of Punjab, and the chief justice should assign its hearing to a full bench. He said that a baseless perception was being developed against the PML-N through a private channel that the PML-N was running any campaign against the courts.

He made it clear that the PML-N respected the institutions including the judiciary, and rejected the allegations about any campaign. He said that people knew well that which party was expert in trending or launching campaigns against the national and constitutional

institutions.

Punjab Home Minister Attaullah Tarar said that it were not norms of the PML-N to run any campaign against institutions; however, he added, PTI's Fawad Chaudhry and Hamid Azhar were expert in launching trends against the institutions including courts, forces and the Election Commission. "We know, on whose directions Fawad is running trends and who is funding them," Atta claimed.

He said that Fawad was the person who never spoke truth. He said that it was a tradition that sensitive constitutional cases were heard by the full court to end confusion once and for all. He said that the letter of PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain was not yet presented before the court, which was directly written to his members. APP

SC to hear plea against Mazari's ruling today

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will hear the petition filed by Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi against Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari's ruling over the election of Punjab CM on Monday.

According to details, the government has taken the decision over the assurance of arranging foolproof security for the SC and Red Zone ahead of the opening of the superior court on Monday.

In connection with the security, the anti-riot force will be deployed in Red Zone.

After taking the decision, the

government has reached the point that it would not allow the political workers of any parties to reach the vicinity of the Supreme Court, however, permission to enter of Red Zone will only be permitted after the showing of office cards to the authority.

It merits mention here that on Saturday outside the Supreme Court Lahore Branch Registry, the political workers were gathered in large numbers, after which the security institutions issued a warning over another possible gathering of the workers outside the SC, following the tomorrow's hearing over the election of Punjab CM. Agencies

Ch. Shujaat may appear before SC

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain has left for Islamabad after he was summoned by the Supreme Court of Pakistan over his letter to deputy speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari during the Punjab Chief Minister election.

Former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain along with his son Federal Minister Salik Hussain left from Lahore to Islamabad.

He may decide to appear in the hearing of the petition filed by the Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi against the deputy speaker's ruling on Monday. Agencies



Punjab cabinet takes oath



Despite Hamza still 'on thin ice' as CM

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman on Sunday administered the oath to the 63-member Punjab cabinet following the victory of PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz in the run-off chief minister election which became controversial as it happened, and the matter landed in the Supreme Court on Saturday.

Despite that Hamza Shahbaz was relegated to a 'trustee' chief minister by the Supreme Court till the final verdict of the case on the same day

he took his oath, his cabinet has also sworn-in.

The oath-taking ceremony was held at the Governor House in Lahore on Sunday evening.

The cabinet has 63 members all together with 41 ministers, 12 political advisers, five advisers and special assistants each.

PML-N has the highest share in the cabinet while three members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are also part of it. Agencies

Ashrafi stresses harmony, peace in country



LAHORE: Chairman Muttahida Ulema Board Punjab and Special Representative of Prime Minister of Pakistan for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference at 90 Sharara. APP

LAHORE: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has

appealed to political and religious leadership of the country to play their role in creating an atmosphere of peace, harmony and mutual understanding.

Addressing a press conference after attending a meeting of Muttahida Ulema Board, Ulema-Mashaykh here on Sunday, he said that Pakistan was passing through a critical phase and the people living in this country need love, peace and unity.

He lauded the services of the national institutions to maintain peace in the country, saying that institutions' role was admirable and commendable.

Ashrafi said that the economic and financial situation of the country required wise and united decisions by the political side as country's development needs a better

understanding among political powers.

He said the religious scholars had expressed their disassociation from those elements that used foul or abusive language against the faithful and followers of various sects. He said it was a duty of ulema and mashaykh to educate people about difference between the right and wrong, while declaring someone as an infidel (kafir) was the jurisdiction of the state, which would be determined in accordance with the Shariah.

Ashrafi said non-Muslims were equal citizens of the state having full right to worship and practise their religious rituals

at their worship places on the occasion of their festivals. The rights given to non-Muslims by the Constitution could not be usurped by any individual, group, party and organisation, he added.

He said that Muttahida Ulema Board's meeting issued a code of conduct which should be followed to avert any untoward incident in the holy month of Muharram.

He also appealed to the media to highlight Muharram code of conduct during and after the days of Muharram and play a supportive role to spread the message of unity in the country. APP

Govt to turn AJK into a model state: PM Tanveer

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that the government has presented a revolutionary budget and it is now the responsibility of the state machinery to leave no stone unturned in serving the people.

Talking to media on Sunday, he said, "In order to make AJK a model state, we shall move forward as per the PTI chairman Imran Khan's vision. Tourism would be promoted as an industry to make people financially self-sufficient. For the purpose, digital mapping is being introduced for the first time." APP

Pakistan in well-placed position to facilitate SCO members: Zhang Ming

BELJING: Pakistan is well placed position for facilitating the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) members in improving regional connectivity as the Central Asia countries are land-locked, and Pakistan is ideally located to provide shorter sea access to these countries, Secretary General of SCO Zhang Ming said.

He said, "this will facilitate trade among SCO member states and even beyond", China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

In an answer to "what is the impact of SCO on Pakistan's economy", he remarked that the transport corridors stand to benefit all the member states, leading to a win-win cooperation.

"SCO is a multi-dimensional organization in terms of its scope and functions, Pakistan



can benefit greatly from it," he added.

During his stay in Pakistan, the Secretary General met Ministers of Commerce, Climate Change, Information Technology and Maritime Affairs to discuss a wide range of aspects on how Pakistan can contribute and benefit

from SCO. Pakistani officials are also positive about Ming's maiden visit to Islamabad.

While highlighting the importance of this visit, Director General, Foreign Ministry of Pakistan, Muhammad Mudassar Tipu said that the visit of Secretary General SCO to Pakistan is of great significance.

It will provide an important platform for Pakistan to promote socio-economic cooperation within a very rich region with an enormous potential to grow and expand.

"It will also help explore ideas and approaches to expand CPEC and BRI across the region and promote greater connectivity", he added.

Faisal Afridi, Chairman JW Group (partner with Haier & MG) in Pakistan also hoped that SCO Secretary General's visit to Pakistan can play an instrumental role in rejuvenating regional economies.

Pakistan's location straddling across South, West, and Central Asia also makes Pakistan a pivot for regional integration. APP

He added that the court immediately took up the petition, which suggests that it was under some pressure.

Subliminally pointing at the judiciary, the PDM chief said that interference from the institutions was weakening the state.

"Let the government rule. We accepted the government in critical times," he said and accused some individuals in the institutions of covertly being part of a political party.

He went on to claim that even at this time, some people are supporting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"Get retired and contest on the ground," he challenged the individuals he was referring to.

Maulana Fazl said that Imran Khan's politics is based on a fake narrative and that he had no ideology or belief.

He asked who was giving protection to Imran Khan in the foreign funding case. Agencies

KP govt taking steps to promote technical education: Mahmood

Says youth should not face any hardship in finding employment

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has said that the provincial government is taking result-oriented steps for promotion of technical education in the province to equip youth with technical skills.



modern era, so the youth should not face any hardship in finding employment.

He was speaking at the 19th meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (KP-TEVTA), held under his chair, said an official handout issued here on Sunday.

The CM said that technical educational institutes of the province would be brought at par with the needs of the

The BoD meeting reviewed progress on decisions taken in the last meeting of the board and detailed discussion on the

agenda items approved some of them.

Besides, Secretary Law Masood Ahmad, Secretary Planning & Development (P&D) Mahmood Shah, and Secretary Industries Saqib Raza other members of the board also attended.

The meeting approved the handing over of the remaining 17 technical training institutes operating under KP System of Technical & Vocational Education and Training to the authority.

The board, after holding discussion on all agenda items regarding the regularization of recruitment in vari-

ous cadres in KP-TEVTA and creation of new vacancies in the newly merged districts, decided that industries and finance and other concerned departments should sit together to resolve all matters within a period of two weeks and then present it for final approval.

During briefing on the implementation of decisions taken in last meeting, the board was told that all decisions including KP-TEVTA regulations had been implemented. The board also approved the formation of a monitoring & evaluation committee for KP-TEVTA. Agencies

President expresses grief over Punjab BC secretary's murder

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the murder of Punjab Bar Council (PBC) Secretary Ashraf Rahi.

The president prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family. The president said that the family of late bar council office bearer should be provided justice with the immediate arrest of culprits.

According to media reports, PBC secretary Ashraf Rahi was killed by unknown suspects in the Badami Bagh police limits on Saturday night. Agencies

Ansar Mahmood elected as President ILA

Staff Reporter

KHARIAN: Chaudhry Ansar Mahmood Advocate was elected unopposed as the President of International Lawyers Association.



"It is an important honor to be elected president of the large and active organization of the lawyers' community, 'International Lawyers Association'."

Chaudhry Ansar Mahmood Advocate. Prominent personalities from different walks of life of Tehsil Kharian and District Gujrat have congratulated him. Chaudhry Ansar Mahmood Advocate is a member of the Lahore High Court Bar and also holds the post of President of Muslim League Lawyers Wing UK. He is one of the well-known personalities of the Pakistani community living in the UK.

10 test positive for COVID-19 in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: As many as 10 people were tested COVID-19 positive in the district during the last 24 hours.

According to the Health department spokesperson, 501 coronavirus tests were conducted in public and private sector labs during the same period. He said that total active cases in Faisalabad were 120 while 28,556 patients had so far recovered from the disease. He said that 119 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 52 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for COVID-19 patients.

At present, 3 patients were under treatment at the Allied Hospital. He further said that 117 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district. Agencies

Hyderabad receives torrential downpour

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad received a torrential downpour on Sunday with Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) recording 69 millimeters of rain which continued through the evening.

Many low lying localities were partially submerged while almost the entire city was deprived of the electric supply by Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO).

At least one old house was partly damaged in the Saddar area after its roof caved in. Luckily no person was injured in the incident. The ongoing spell of monsoon rains has turned the weather pleasant in Hyderabad.

AJK President inaugurates 6th Mango Festival

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has said that the mango festival would not only increase the export of mangoes but also generate a large foreign exchange that would exert positive impact on the country's economy.

He expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of the 6th Mango Festival in Islamabad on Sunday.

The president said that it was heartening to see that more than a hundred varieties of mango had been displayed at the exhibition.

"Pakistan is the world's number one exporter of mangoes", he said, adding that mango production in Pakistan stood at 1.7 million tonnes whereas the country earns nearly 145 million Dollars in foreign exchange on mango export amounting to 142 metric tonnes.

Earlier, the AJK President inaugurated the 6th Mango Festival, and visited various mango stalls. Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi was also present on this occasion. Agencies

CCPO pays tribute to Police martyrs

LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore DIG Bilal Siddique Kamyana on Sunday said that sacrificing life in the line of duty has always been a great tradition of Lahore Police.

In his message issued on the 5th anniversary of Arfa Kareem Tower tragedy, he said that the role of officers and officials of Lahore Police had been exemplary to protect life and properties of the citizens, maintain law and order situation in the country and defeat the vested interest of the terrorists to weaken our country.

The CCPO paid glowing tribute and homage to the sacrifices of the police martyrs of 'Arfa Kareem Tower' tragedy which occurred five years ago in which eight police personnel including two real brothers of Lahore Police sacrificed their lives in a suicidal attack.

Inundated

KARACHI: Commuters struggle to move forward in a flooded road after heavy monsoon rains in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Sindh CM visits rain-hit areas in Karachi

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah along his cabinet members and chief secretary on Sunday visited old city areas and inspected flow of the storm water drains, installation of cesspool machines.

He directed administrator Karachi to install heavy pumping machines in the DHA areas where water had accumulated.

The chief minister was accompanied by Minister Information Sharjeel Inam Memon, Minister Local Government Nasir Shah, Administrator Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Commissioner Karachi Iqbal Memon and Secretary Local Government Najam Shah.

He visited nullah at Shaheen Complex and inspected its smooth flow right from Shaheen Complex towards Clifton. He got a cesspool installed at the road to dispose of accumulating

water in the low-lying areas of the Ziauddin Road.

The chief minister on Chundrigar road visited nullah at City station, then at Habib Bank plaza and inspected flow of water there. At Habib bank plaza the flow of the nullah was slow therefore he installed a mobile pumping system there to speed up the flow of the rain water.

While visiting Tower, Murad Ali Shah discovered that it was usually submerged with the choking of storm water drains running along the stock exchange building and KPT godowns. He directed the water board to install two suction systems- one at the low-lying area of Tower and the other at the backside of the KPT godowns to keep disposing of the accumulating water in the sea towards Native Jetty.

Murad Ali Shah visited different localities, Imambargah Hussaini-

an Iranian- Kharadar, Mithadar Lee Market and their adjoining areas and inspected proper disposal of the rain-water and smooth flow of the nullahs in Lyari. The areas of Lyari were clear and there was no rainwater on the roads.

The chief minister also visited Garden East and West areas and then went to inspect underpasses at KPT and Submarine Chowringi and inspected their dewatering system.

Murad Ali Shah visited different nullas passing through Shahrah-e-Faisal where the water board and other concerned staff was on duty.

He visited Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Sindh office where he was received by Advisor on Relief & Rehabilitation Haji Rasool Bux Chandio. He was briefed there about the rain monitoring system and rain gauge system installed at PDMA. APP

Road mishap leaves 3 dead on Hazara Motorway

MANSEHRA: At least three persons died and five injured when a bus and car collided near Mansehra on E-35 Expressway.

According to the motorway police sources, a speeding car and bus collided on Hazara Motorway near Mansehra city and left a woman and two minor girls on-board the unfortunate car dead on the spot.

In the accident, five people received minor injuries who were shifted to King Abdullah Hospital Mansehra. The motorway police was quick in reaching the spot and rendering rescue services to the injured, who were reported to be out of danger and discharged from the hospital after initial treatment. Agencies

DPO vows to ensure best security arrangements during Muharram

KHANEWAL: District Police Officer (DPO) Hafiz Atta-Ur-Rehman said that best security arrangements would be ensured during Muharram to maintain peace in the district.

During his visit of different routes of mourning processions along with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shahid Fareed on Sunday, the district police officer said that foolproof security arrangements would be made during Muharram and barbed wire would be installed at mourning procession routes.

He said that parking would be made 300 meter away from Imambargah and warned officers concerned that no negligence would be tolerated in security arrangements otherwise strict action would be taken against them under zero tolerance policy.

He directed police officers to build coordination between police, caretakers of Imambargah, Ulemas and traders to maintain peace during Muharram.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Shahid Fareed said that tight monitoring of security arrangements would be ensured through installing CCTV cameras at all four Tehsils of the district. He urged Ulemas to play their role in making Muharram peaceful. Agencies

Young Leaders Conference 2022 underway in Karachi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Young Leaders Conference is underway at Dreamworld Resort, Karachi.

YLC is an optimism and a vision that holds the power to amplify the potential among youth towards productive prospects. Each year, these promising youngsters from all over Pakistan join the mission to empower their lives and vow to become the young leaders who will bring positivity to their communities and societies.

This year with theme "Pehchaan" the motive is to embark on a journey of finding ourselves this day is all about rebooting our limiting beliefs and recognizing the essence of being ASHRAF. We are to push ourselves to unlearn our complexities, our judgments towards our fellows, myths that are stopping us from moving ahead in our careers and take a fresh mind back



to our communities, as a result, to instill a growing mindset with an approach of achieving brilliance in the communities we live with, it encourages us to be conscious of our responsibility as humans, showing humility and spreading love.

The Day 01 kicked off at 7:00 AM with the participants ready to check in, they stored their luggage at the designated areas, got their compulsory health checks done and submitted all necessary documents and enter into this world full

of craziness and learnings; YLC2022! The theme for day 1: Realize, Personal Leadership and was moderated by Waleed Anwar as the day champ!

Later, participants were given an hour to mingle with their Youth Facilitators to initiate icebreakers and energizers. At 2:00 PM inauguration started with recitation, Live national anthem performance by team ZHRSSS and a documentary on 2 decades of YLC. All the respected Partners who have been

a huge part of this conference's success came on the stage to receive their token of appreciation and share their messages for YLC and what they think about this conference and why such conferences should take place in Pakistan.

EBM has been a prestigious partner of YLC and SoL for the past 21 years and have contributed a lot in the growth of youth of Pakistan. Shireen Naqvi, Founder of YLC shared her fond memories about EBM and YLC and how this partnership began.

EBM's Marketing Manager, Asad Saeed brought in a very simple yet effective message, "What you seek, seeks you". The conversation revolved around participants understanding that their focus should be on themselves identifying what defines them and make it their true Pehchaan. Participants were also mentored that this journey is all about efforts and not results.

DC reviews relief, rescue operation in Parowa

D.I.KHAN: Deputy Commissioner Nasrullah Khan on Sunday visited the flood affected areas of Parowa Tehsil and reviewed all the rescue and relief operations.

The DC issued immediate instructions to the authorities concerned to take all possible measures for protecting the life and property of the people.

On this occasion, he was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Dera Iqbal Khan Wazir, Assistant Commissioner Parowa (Additional Charge) Muhammad Faseeh Ishaq Abbasi, Assistant Commissioner Parowa (Additional Charge) Umar Khattab and the officials of other departments concerned.

The DC reviewed the situation on the spot and ordered the quarters concerned to deal with the situation under his close supervision. He said the boats should be arranged as many as possible so that the flood affected people could be shifted to safe places at earliest.

A tent village was established near-

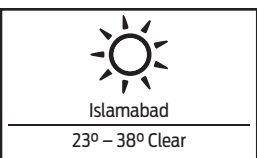
by that area and many affected people had been safely brought there. The DC said other tent villages will also be established as per the need.

In view of this situation, the DC said the people of respective areas should be informed in time about the risk of flooding so that any untoward situation could be avoided.

He said the people should also take precautionary measures by themselves, stay away from mud-houses and walls. They should take special care of small children.

The DC said that the district administration was using all its resources to ensure the safety of people's lives and property.

Meanwhile, on the instructions of DPO Dera Captain (Retd) Najamul Hassnain Liaquat, Additional SP Dera Fawaz Awan also visited the flood affected areas in Ramak area of Parowa Tehsil. The police along with other relief teams are also performing their duties in shifting flood-affected people to a safer places.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:36 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:09 pm
Maghrib 7:14 pm
Isha 8:52 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

No Monkeypox case reported in Pakistan so far

Health Minister says situation is being closely monitored

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel on Sunday said that the government decided to increase surveillance in the country in view of the WHO's statement, declaring the monkeypox outbreak a global health emergency. "All the national and provincial health authorities have been advised to remain on high alert for any suspected case of monkeypox as the government has started taking effective measures to prevent the disease," the minister said in a statement. He said that the recommendations on the basis of international health regulations will be fully implemented in the country. The government would continue its work as per the guidelines of WHO, the added.

The minister said that instructions had been issued to stakeholders, especially border health services of the Central Health Establishment for strict monitoring at all points of entry in the country. He said that an effective monitoring mechanism had been developed on a

scientific basis at all points of entry. The screening of all incoming passengers will be ensured particularly passengers coming from African countries, he added. Patel said that instructions had also been issued for strong coordination among concerned organizations while steps were being taken for awareness of the public. The role of health workers was important in this regard, he added. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of National Health Services, the situation is being closely monitored by the health authorities and as per the report, no case of monkeypox has yet been diagnosed in Pakistan. He said that the minister for Health had also directed the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) to ensure regular monitoring of the monkeypox situation in the country along with the Covid-19. Monkeypox is a rare viral zoonotic disease that is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Although the

natural reservoir of monkeypox remains unknown, African rodents and non-human primates like monkeys may harbor the virus and infect people. The patient develops a rash within one to three days after the appearance of fever, often beginning on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body. Other symptoms include headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, and lymphadenopathy. The incubation period is usually seven to 14 days but can range from five to 21 days. The illness typically lasts for two to four weeks. The transmission occurs via contact with an infected animal, human, or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus enters the body through broken skin, respiratory tract, or mucous membranes like eyes, nose, or mouth. Other human-to-human methods of transmission include direct or indirect contact with body fluids, lesion materials, or through contaminated clothing or lines. APP

Health Corner

Effective strategy for diabetic eye disease



ISLAMABAD: Clinical trial results from the DRRC Retina Network suggest that a specific step strategy, in which patients with diabetic macular edema start with a less expensive medicine and switch to a more expensive medicine if vision does not improve sufficiently, gives results similar to starting off with the higher-priced drug. The main complication of diabetic macular edema, fluid build-up in the retina that causes vision loss, is commonly treated with anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) drugs. The trial was funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), both part of National Institutes of Health. Results of the trial, which examined a stepped regimen of anti-VEGF drugs Avastin (bevacizumab) and Eylea (afibercept), were published today in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"Our study showed that switching treatments when needed is a reasonable strategy," said Chirag Jhaveri, M.D., Austin Research Center for Retina, Texas, the lead study author. "Insurance companies often require clinicians to start with the less expensive treatment, so we really wanted to see how a specific treatment strategy using this approach would affect patient care." Diabetic macular edema is caused by diabetes-related alterations to retinal blood vessels. Symptoms include blurred vision. If untreated, vision loss can become permanent and progress to blindness. Retinal injections of anti-VEGF drugs can restore vision. The DRRC Retina Network previously showed that Avastin and Eylea improve visual acuity in people with diabetic macular edema. However, while Eylea is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat diabetic macular edema and results in better visual outcomes on average, off-label Avastin is much less expensive and is sometimes required by insurers as a first-line treatment. The study enrolled 270 participants with diabetic macular edema, some of whom received treatments in both eyes. At enrollment, all had best-corrected visual acuity between 20/50 and 20/320. Half the study eyes were assigned to Eylea from the start, and half were assigned to start with Avastin. For participants who needed treatment in both eyes, each eye started treatment with a different drug. Participants received either Avastin or Eylea injections every four weeks for 24 weeks. If eyes assigned Avastin failed to reach the pre-set improvement benchmarks starting at 12 weeks, the eye was switched to Eylea. After 24 weeks, physicians could taper down the frequency of injections as appropriate to maintain visual acuity. The study collected information about participants' retinal structure and visual acuity for two years. After two years, eyes in both groups had similar visual acuity outcomes, improving on average approximately three lines on an eye chart, compared to the trial's start. In the Avastin group, 70% of eyes switched to Eylea during the study. "While most participants on Avastin eventually switched to Eylea, they still had improvement during those initial weeks, even if they didn't hit our pre-set benchmarks," said Adam Glassman of the Jaeb Center for Health Research and director of the DRRC Retina Network coordinating center. "There are large cost disparities between these drugs, so differences in treatment strategies may have substantial cost implications." "We've demonstrated here one method to managing a step treatment, where the outcomes are similar to the best existing treatment protocol with Eylea," said Jennifer Sun, M.D., M.P.H., of Joslin Diabetes Center and Harvard Medical School, Boston, and chair of diabetes initiatives for the DRRC Retina Network. "Any time we can add to a clinician's toolbox, whether it's a new medication or a new approach to using existing medications, as in this study, it's a benefit for patients." Courtesy Science Daily

Death Anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Naseeb Ullah Hazarvi speaking on the occasion of death anniversary of wife of Chief Editor PPA news agency Khalid Athar. A large number of people including journalists and relatives were present and offered Fateha for the departed soul.



Photo: The Spokesman

ICTP fines 8,951 unregistered vehicles

ISLAMABAD: Capital territory police issued tickets to 8,951 unregistered vehicles and motorcycles during the ongoing year 2022 in a crackdown launched against the unregistered vehicles in the city.

According to the details, special enforcement squad, led by Dr Syed Mustafa Tanweer, was constituted for checking the unregistered vehicles plying on the roads. SSP (Traffic) has asked the residents to get their vehicles registered at the earliest and affix only the ETO-issued number plates on their vehicles. The officials said that the police would show no leniency in this regard. Special enforcement squads have been erected at different points of the city by the ICTP to monitor movement of the possible unregistered vehicles as DSP level officers of all the four zones have been given special directions to ensure rule of law.

Mega cities to face urban flooding: PMD

ISLAMABAD: The prevailing monsoon effects spreading across the country have increased the risk of urban flooding in mega urban centers as heavy downpour further lashed out various parts of the country. The ongoing monsoon rains were in their active phase especially in the northern and central areas of the country including Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore, Deputy Director Flood Forecasting Department, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Dr Zaher Ahmed Babar told APP while sharing updates on the monsoon rains. Babar said these rains were expected to travel further to

other parts of the country within the next two days. "In the north, areas like Peshawar and Kashmir are likely to experience rainfall while in the south cities like Thatta and Badin in Sindh are expected to be hit by downpour," he added. The Met Office official underlined the monsoon pattern of this season was abnormal that wreaked havoc in various parts of the country particularly the southern region. He mentioned that an early peak was expected in the rain pattern and it became a reality with the ongoing excessive rains throughout the country. "The areas like Balochistan and Sindh have been severely hit due to this early spell which was previously not common in

the region." He further explained that there was a list of negative effects that should be looked out for in the coming days. "Many cities may have to face urban flooding including cities like Karachi that are already inundated due to the excessive rains this season. Simultaneously, there are chances of flash flooding and landslides in the mountainous regions of the country," Babar added. Commenting on the positive impacts of monsoon rains, the Met Office official underscored that the prevailing rains were recharging the water reservoirs and underground water reserves. "At the same time, the crop growth such as that of rice and sugarcane will positively be affected due to availability of water in excess for kharif season." He highlighted that the Met department had also released an advisory for travelers and tourists to avoid venturing into high-risk areas especially in the north and south region due to the inclement, and take all precautionary measures to avoid any untoward situation. "They [tourists] are requested to regularly check weather and traffic updates, and avoid crossing over flooded areas on foot or in vehicles. The farmers are advised to take precautionary measures in the context of flooding on their fields," he mentioned. APP

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
(Information & Broadcasting Division)
Invitation to Bids
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Information & Broadcasting Division), Government of Pakistan, Islamabad intends to pre-qualify Authorized service providers/workshops/firms/contractors etc. For repair/maintenance of vehicles and other office equipment's like Computers, Printers, Photocopiers, Fax machines, Furniture, other services etc. for Financial year 2022-2023.
2. The firms registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments may obtain the Tender documents, essential for pre-qualification, from the office of the undersigned on any working day on submission of written application after publication of this notice at a cost of Rs.500/- (non-refundable).
3. The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the tender documents, must reach the office of the undersigned on or before 10th August, 2022 till 11:00 am. The bid will be opened on the same day at 12:00 am.
4. The notice is also available on www.ppra.org.pk and www.moib.gov.pk.
(Haroon Arshad)
Section Officer
Information & Broadcasting
4th Floor, Cabinet Block, Islamabad.
Ph: 051-9201089
PID (I) No. 453/22

Ulema urged to help maintain peace during Muharram

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, Tahir Farooq has urged Ulema to play a role to maintain peace during the holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram. According to a district administration spokesman, the DC while chairing an inter-faith harmony meeting held here urged Ulema of different schools of thought to exercise tolerance and forge harmony by desisting from delivering controversial and provocative speeches to help maintain peace during Muharram. He asked the religious leaders to keep an eye on anti-social elements and educate people to respect each other's religious beliefs. The DC said that all-out efforts would be made to ensure implementation of code of conduct issued by Punjab Government for Muharram-ul-Haram. The CPO said that foolproof

security arrangements would be finalized for Muharram and comprehensive security cover would be given to Majalis and Muharram processions. Strict action in accordance with the law would be taken on misuse of social media to spread sectarian disharmony, he added. Agencies



Work on Potohar Hospital to be completed soon

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority, Dr Lubna Ishaq has said that despite financial constraints, 97 per cent work of the Tehsil Headquarters (THQ), Hospital Potohar Town, had been completed to help ailing sections of the society. The CEO told APP that due to the upsurge in prices, the project's cost has also been increased, and the revised PC-1 at the estimated cost of Rs 1149.68 was being forwarded to the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Punjab for the completion of the project at the earliest. Dr Lubna informed that earlier, the provincial government had approved the project's cost at Rs. Rs.656. 28 million, out of which Rs 460.87 million had been spent on the construction of the site, released Rs 473.319 mln so far by the Provincial Development Working Party. Dr Faiza added that the government had released an amount of Rs 50 mln in 2021-22 for the purchase of equipment, out of which Rs 49.65 had been utilised of the total 182.70 approved for the revenue site. Dr Lubna said that modern healthcare facilities, including emergency, surgery, and indoor and outdoor patient departments, would be set up, which were still unavailable in any tehsil level hospital. The CEO hoped that the state-of-the-art 100-bed Hospital would lessen the burden on Rawalpindi's region hospitals

ANF recovers over 435kg narcotics

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Sunday conducted three operations and managed to recover over 435 kg narcotics besides netting three accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in a joint operation conducted by ANF and Pak army personnel at 'Karachi' check post, 435 kg narcotics including over 403 kg hashish and 32 kg opium, concealed in secret cavities of a coal-loaded truck were recovered. An accused Afghan national namely Mina Gul was also arrested. In another operation, ANF recovered 72 narcotics filled capsules concealed in a shampoo bottle from the possession of a passenger namely Ayub while 50 Ice filled capsules were also recovered from the possession of accused Bani Rehmat, a resident of Khyber. Both the accused reached at Bacha Khan International Airport from Bahrain via Dubai through flight no EK-636. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.



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World needs to work together to confront growing threat of drought

Ibrahim Thiauw

Drought may be an ancient scourge but the threat is getting worse. Now, no region or country is immune to its effects.

Southern Europe, for example, is in the grip of a severe drought, the worst that Italy has experienced in 70 years. In the western US, the past two decades have been the driest in 1,200 years. Chile is in its 13th consecutive year of drought and Monterrey, Mexico's third-largest city, is being forced to ration water.

In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have recorded their fourth consecutive year without rains and the situation has grown increasingly dire for people, livestock and the ecosystems that support them. Owing to a lack of adequate nutrition, children are dying from diseases they would ordinarily survive. Even camels, which typically survive longer than people or other animal species in tough conditions, are dropping dead in large numbers across this region.

This suffering evokes traumatic memories of my own first encounter with drought, in Mauritania. I was barely 12

years old when every household in our community lost everything: Food, livestock and their livelihoods. Unable to provide for their families, many adults took their own lives.

That experience has stayed with me, motivating my efforts to ensure that no more children have to live through what I did. Sadly, many still are being traumatized by drought, and many more soon will be. Scientists predict that climate change will increase the frequency, duration and geographic spread of droughts, with three out of four people in the world affected by 2050.

Areas across all regions are becoming drier, and while there is not yet a consensus on where exactly the most acute drought conditions will emerge, scientists agree that land degradation exacerbates the problem. Worse, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment report warns that we are not making sufficient progress in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert even more severe conditions in the decades ahead.

Taken together, recent traumatic experiences and the latest scientific projections should convey a sense of urgency, compelling everyone to build resilience against future drought risks. Drought is a natural

phenomenon but it need not become a natural disaster. Land degradation can be mitigated, at least partly, through better decisions about land and water use and land restoration initiatives.

In a recent report, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification highlighted successful examples of systems that have reduced the drought risk among vulnerable populations. In Brazil, Ethiopia, India and Tunisia, a combination of water harvesting and sustainable land management practices are being used to reduce the impact of droughts. While it might take time, all countries can adopt similar strategies to help move their people from water scarcity toward water security.

A major shortcoming of the current approach, however, is that it is based on national systems, even though droughts do not observe political boundaries. Proactive planning across sectors within countries is essential; but without international collaboration, the effects of drought eventually will reach other countries. Common knock-on effects include conflicts over diminished water resources, soaring food prices or shortages, wildfires, mass wildlife and livestock losses, sand and dust storms, human

displacement and forced migration, and civil unrest.

Collaborative arrangements to anticipate and respond to droughts quickly can avert or reduce the scale of these outcomes. Australia and the US, for example, have long had policies and planning protocols in place to ensure that affected communities can endure droughts with dignity.

Building such resilience globally will take time and political will. Fortunately, even in the world's most vulnerable regions, policymakers already have foundations on which they can build. For example, Africa's Sahel — the area between the Sahara in the north and the Sudani-savanna to the south — has a regional drought-risk system that was set up 50 years ago. It brings together a broad range of stakeholders, from producer associations to political decision-makers, and benefits from the pooling of scientific and technological capabilities at the regional level.

India has adopted an even more comprehensive approach that includes drought management as part of its national disaster management plan. An intricate strategy is in place to include all the relevant government ministries and closely coordinate responses at the national, state and local levels.

Thanks to a process that began 15 years ago, India now has an integrated water management system that also serves as a drought warning system.

In June, the US announced that drought is now considered a strategic domestic and foreign policy priority. As home to one of the most sophisticated and advanced drought-monitoring and response mechanisms in the world, the US could help to fast-track the development of better risk-management systems globally.

Around the world, there is a strong appetite among governments to act quickly, before the effects of increasingly frequent and severe droughts become unmanageable. And following the creation of an intergovernmental working group on drought during the UN summit in May, we now have a platform for mobilizing collective action according to what science tells us is necessary.

We can rein in the effects of drought, together. But all leaders, from the very top all the way down to the community level, will need to commit to doing what it takes to build effective resilience — starting immediately. (Courtesy: Arab News)

Ibrahim Thiauw is executive secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

Indian bulldozer justice

It also appears that the Hindutva-influenced policies followed by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are bent upon crushing the minority communities, particularly Muslims, through application of the coercive powers of the state and as is reported lately that the state apparatus has been instructed to do the needful. It is evident from the fact that Hindutva is reigning supreme in India and is spreading its tentacles far and wide. It is more than obvious that the increasing writ of Hindutva is almost becoming unchallengeable for the primary reason that it performs under the aegis of state machinery.

The recent development has taken place in respect of the fresh arrests regarding killing of a Hindu tailor in Rajasthan who was known for injuring the religious sentiments of Muslims by casting aspersions on the revered personalities of Islam. This development is the latest in a series of state coercion perpetrated by the Indian Muslims as they are also subjected to bulldozer justice whereby scores of dwellings and businesses have been flattened by wrecking crews in a campaign authorities have promoted by turns as a battle against illegal construction and a firm response to criminal activity.

However, rights groups have condemned this despicable bulldozer justice as an unlawful exercise in collective punishment by India's Hindu nationalist government and many of the campaign's victims have one thing in common that they are invariably Muslims. Since then bulldozer politics have spread elsewhere in the country and demolition campaigns have begun quickly following on the heels of outbreaks of religious unrest.

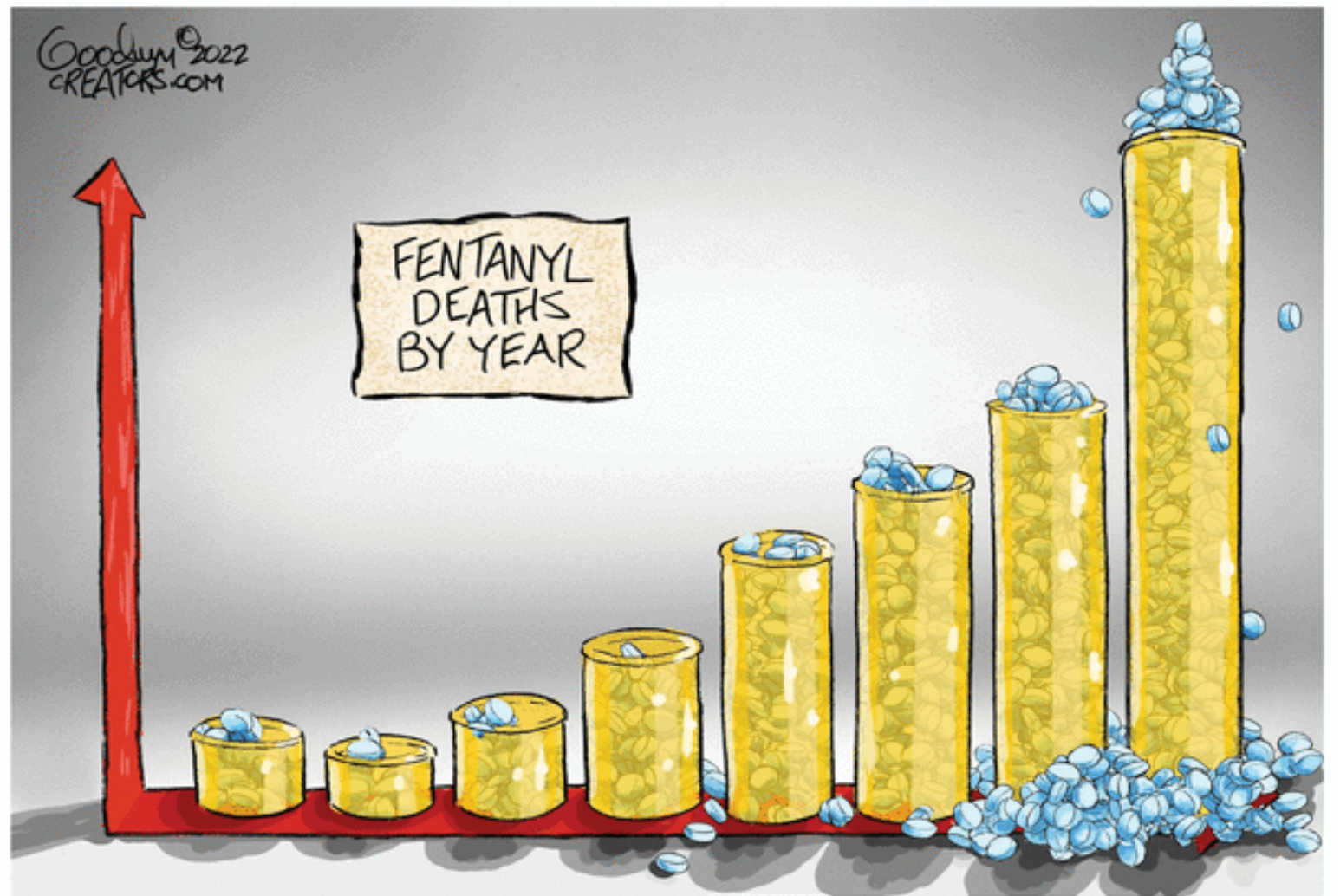
After a violent confrontation in April between Hindus trailing a religious procession and Muslims holding Ramzan prayers, authorities in Delhi knocked down nearly two dozen Muslim shopfronts and the facade of a mosque, defying a court order to stop. Officials simply toed the official line and stated that the spate of demolitions is lawful as they only target buildings constructed without legal approval.

But victims of the campaign deny that their dwellings are illegal and say they are not given the legally required notice period to dispute demolition orders.

The houses were demolished in the presence of hundreds of police and hundreds of cameras with no empathy indicating that such actions have no comparison for this ruthlessness. It is pointed out by many observers that the government's campaign is the latest manifestation of the BJP's discriminatory policies towards India's 200 million-strong Muslim minority community.

It is added that they have an ideological commitment that in India they have to make Muslims a second-class citizen, socially humiliate them and destroy their property. This observation is echoed by the Amnesty International that stated that the demolitions were part of a selective and vicious crackdown on Indian Muslims who dared to speak up against the discrimination they faced. Many Muslims living in Uttar Pradesh now fear their own homes are being earmarked for destruction after their family members participated in last month's protests.

Muslims now are subjected to sleepless nights and restless days and many are fearful as they have received orders to vacate their houses as they were found participating in a demonstration. Residents of many residential areas lie under constant fears as bulldozers remain parked outside the police stations near their homes.



Global debt relief should not be about politics

Tom Fowdy

In recent months, several developing countries around the world have been faced with unprecedented debt crises.

This, most notably in Western mainstream media coverage, has involved Sri Lanka. Still, similar debt fears are also increasing around Africa, with Ghana struggling to meet its repayment commitments and facing a potential default. Western sources have swiftly scapegoated these developments as China's fault, part of a longstanding narrative described as "debt trap diplomacy." They deliberately discredit the Belt and Road Initiative and China's infrastructure assistance to the global south by assigning "predatory" motivations to Chinese lending.

There is no truth or factual evidence behind such a claim, which scholars have widely discredited as little more than a politicized discursive talking point.

The mainstream media has not disclosed that debt crises across the developing world are actually caused by changes in the international financial environment, which coincide with the economic disruption and market depreciation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Surging inflation in Western countries has led central banks world-

wide to hike interest rates, a decision made during a time of economic fragility. The most significant consequence of rising interest rates is that those who are borrowing money, therefore, have to pay more interest on their respective debts, making it more expensive.

The United States, the core of the global financial system and holder of the dominant currency used in global financial markets, has raised its interest rates multiple times. This has created an economic shockwave worldwide for every country lending or paying the USD rate. Meanwhile, other key currencies, including the British Pound, the Euro, the Japanese Yen, the Indian Rupee, and the Chinese Yuan, have appreciated against many other currencies. This means respective countries borrowing USD rates not only have to pay higher rates of interest but are also faced with higher exchange rates.

This, combined with lower-than-usual fiscal revenue due to weaker economic conditions, surging commodity prices, and fuel prices, all stand to mean that poorer governments now have less money to pay their debt, creating debt crises throughout the developing world. It is therefore misleading to politicize them in this light. Instead, such a scenario underscores the inherent weaknesses in the global economy, the gulf of inequality between the "global north" and "global south," and how

the recovery from the pandemic was imbalanced, unstable, and brittle. It illustrates how there was little multilateral cooperation in practice on overcoming respective global challenges and how some countries' self-interest has placed others at a critical disadvantage.

Growing geopolitical confrontation attempts to divide the international community and rising tensions are only likely to exacerbate these problems, as opposed to resolving them.

The numerous mechanisms created by the U.S. are being used to isolate and exclude others. This demonstrates how much debt crises are a product of a world increasingly divided and at odds with itself, threatening the foundations of globalization and post-cold-war prosperity.

There are no debt traps. Western economies' short-term, unstable economic "quick fixes" are duly responsible for the crises and the attempt to disintegrate global governance into smaller "mini-lateral" bodies to pursue the cold war and bloc politics. Only by an open, fair, equal, and balanced path of multilateral engagement can today's economic challenges be genuinely overcome. (Courtesy: China.org.cn)

Tom Fowdy is a British political and international relations analyst and a graduate of Durham and Oxford universities.

Unleashing young people's creativity

Ritu Raj Subedi

An exhibitor introduces products at the 2021 Shanghai Cooperation Organization International Investment and Trade Expo in Qingdao, east China's Shandong province, April 26, 2021. [Photo/cfp.cn]

The world is now passing through the fourth industrial revolution marked by the fusion of digital, robotics, and biological technological advancements. Crosscutting technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), genetic engineering, and quantum computing have brought about transformative changes in social development.

Young people have played an essential role in humanity's progress. For example, 23-year-old Isaac Newton invented the principles of motion and gravitation, which enabled the discovery of the steam engine and mechanized production of goods, ushering the world into the first industrial revolution.

The second industrial revolution became possible when Michael Faraday invented electricity at 21. With the invention of semiconductors in the 1950s, the world moved into the electronic age that heralded the third industrial revolution.

Last year, China proposed an initiative to hold a forum to inspire further the creativity of the young people across SCO countries. As a result, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held the Youth Technology and Innovation Forum in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in June. The forum recognized young people's crucial role in promoting development and prosperity due to their energy, innovation capability, and bold vision.

Since its inception in 2001, the SCO has emerged as a model multifaceted regional body committed to promoting political stability, security, and economic cooperation. It has always upheld the Shanghai Spirit and conducted important theoretical and practical work for building a new type of international relations and a community with a shared

future. It has fostered further cooperation characterized by solidarity, inclusiveness, and mutual learning for countries with different social systems and development paths.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented health and economic challenges to the globalized world, reinforcing the importance of scientific and technical innovation and cooperation among nations.

Given all this, efforts to promote cooperation among young people have become even more critical for the SCO members. The convention of this forum has facilitated member states better to understand the development trends of cutting-edge technologies and industries, offering a platform for discussing global innovation rules and innovation governance.

Participants can share their innovative ideas and development philosophy, which could be helpful for them to jointly explore ways to tackle challenges facing the world, such as poverty reduction and sustainable development. It will also boost exchanges among countries in education, talent training, health, and information infrastructure construction.

Innovation and entrepreneurship mark the progress and dynamism of a country, enabling it to address problems and promote economic growth. Seizing the opportunities that the SCO forum and related incubator programs have provided, the young generation that represents the future of a country and the world as a whole will be able to master more skills and raise their capacity for pursuing innovation.

Under the SCO youth business cooperation framework, it is expected that more young people will have access to the imperative resources for innovation and entrepreneurship, such as capital, cutting-edge technologies, and a favorable environment. All this will stimulate their vitality so that they will thus serve as a bridge of friendship and solidarity and make their efforts to help deal with challenges facing development and governance. (Courtesy: China.org.cn)

Ritu Raj Subedi is the Deputy Executive Editor of Rising Nepal.

Russia says strike on Ukrainian port hit military targets

EU condemns Russian missile strike on Odesa's seaport

KYIV: Russian defense ministry officials on Sunday insisted that an airstrike on the port of Odesa — less than a day after Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on resuming grain shipments from there — had hit only military targets.

"In the seaport in the city of Odesa, on the territory of a shipyard, sea-based high-precision long-range missiles destroyed a docked Ukrainian warship and a warehouse with Harpoon anti-ship missiles supplied by the U.S. to the Kyiv regime," ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said at a daily briefing.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly televised address Saturday evening that the attack on Odesa "destroyed the very possibility" of dialogue with Russia.

The Ukrainian military said on Saturday that Moscow had attacked Odesa's sea port with four cruise missiles, two of which had been shot down by Ukrainian air defense.

Command spokeswoman Nataliya Humenyuk said that no grain storage facilities were hit. Turkey's defense minister, however, said he had had reports from Ukrainian authorities that one missile struck a grain silo while another landed nearby, although neither affected loading at Odesa's



docks.

Russia and Ukraine on Friday signed identical agreements with the U.N. and Turkey in Istanbul aimed at clearing the way for the shipment of millions of tons of desperately needed Ukrainian grain, as well as the export of Russian grain and fertilizer. Senior U.N. officials voiced hopes that the deal would end a months-long standoff brought about by the war in Ukraine that threatened food security around the globe.

The agreement, obtained by The Associated Press, committed both Kyiv

and Moscow to refraining from strikes on the three Black Sea ports.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Ukrainian authorities reported that Russian shelling continued to kill and injure civilians in Ukraine's south and east.

The governor of the eastern Donetsk region, one of two which make up Ukraine's industrial heartland of the Donbas and a key focus of Russia's offensive, said that two civilians had been killed and two more had been injured over the previous 24 hours.

The U.K. military on Sunday morn-

ing reported in its daily intelligence update that Russia was making "minimal progress" in its ongoing Donbas offensive, which it said remained small-scale and focused on the city of Bakhmut in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

The Ukrainian General Staff confirmed in its regular update that Russia was "conducting military operations to create conditions" for an assault on Bakhmut, while firing on surrounding settlements and battling Ukrainian defenders for control of a nearby thermal plant.

In Ukraine's south, regional officials said that at least five civilians were wounded by Russian shells in the Black Sea port of Mykolaiv on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

A Washington-based think tank says Ukrainian forces are likely preparing to launch or have launched a counteroffensive in the Kherson region.

The Institute for the Study of War quoted Kherson Oblast Administration Adviser Serhiy Khlan as saying Ukrainian forces have seized unspecified settlements in the region, but had called on Ukrainian civilians to remain silent on the progress of the counter-offensive until Ukrainian authorities release official statements.



SEOUL: Uzbek delegation led by S. Safoev the First Deputy Chairman, Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan had fruitful meeting in Parliament of South Korea.

Hunger strike by Yasin Malik enters 3rd day in Tihar jail

NEW DELHI: The hunger strike by incarcerated Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik entered its third day, on Sunday, in New Delhi's Tihar jail.

Muhammad Yasin Malik had announced the hunger strike till death to push for legal demands such as fair trial and physical presence during court hearings. He started the strike on Friday, July 22.

Malik's family members and leaders of his party Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front have expressed concern about the health of ailing JKLF chief. They said the hunger strike poses a great risk to his life as his health has already deteriorated to a great extent due to suffering from various ailments besides solitary confinement in Tihar Jail for the past three and a half years.

The JKLF chief spokesperson, Muhammad Rafiq Dar in a statement said, apart from Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Azad Kashmir, hunger strike camps were established around the world especially in London, Birmingham and Brussels by the party in solidarity with Muhammad Yasin Malik. Besides JKLF leaders and workers, political leaders of other organizations, civil society members and a large number of Kashmiri common participated in the strike.

China launches space station's first lab module

WENCHANG: China on Sunday launched Wentian, the first lab module of its space station. The new module will function both as a backup of the core module and as a powerful scientific experiment platform.

The Wentian module is 17.9 meters long, has a maximum diameter of 4.2 meters, and a takeoff mass of 23 tonnes, according to Liu Gang, deputy chief designer of the China manned space program's space station system with the China Academy of Space Technology.

The Long March-5B Y3 carrier rocket, carrying Wentian, blasted off from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of the southern island province of Hainan, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The construction of China's Tiangong space station is expected to be completed this year. It will then evolve from a single-module structure into a national space laboratory with three modules — the core module, Tianhe, and two lab modules, Wentian and Mengtian.

The Tianhe module was launched in April 2021, and the Mengtian module is set to be launched in October this year.

Greece eroding Lausanne Peace Treaty: Turkish president

ANKARA: Greece has recently been deliberately eroding terms and conditions of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday.

In a video message on the 99th anniversary of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, he said: "The terms and conditions of Lausanne Peace Treaty, particularly rights of Turkish minority, have recently been deliberately eroded by Greece."

"It is not possible for our country to accept this situation, which is incompatible with the principle of good neighborly relations and loyalty to the treaty," he added.

The Lausanne treaty was signed on July 24, 1923 after the Turkish victory in the War of Independence.

Describing it as one of the founding documents of the Republic of Türkiye, Erdogan emphasized that Ankara has meticulously monitored its implementation over the past 99 years.

Shabbir Shah urges world leaders to help stop civilians' bloodbath in IIOJK

NEW DELHI: Illegally detained APHC vice chairman and President of Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party Shabbir Ahmed Shah has urged the world community, particularly the United Nations, to play role in stopping bloodbath of innocent Kashmiris at the hands of Indian forces in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Shabbir Ahmad Shah in a message from notorious Tihar jail, New Delhi, highlighting the grim situation in the held territory, said there has been immense increase in the incidents of bloody violence unleashed upon the Kashmiris by the Indian troops.

"It is quite unfortunate that the Kashmiri youth were being killed by the Indian forces without any reason," the APHC leader said, adding that during the past couple of months, dozens of civilians, mostly young boys, have been killed during fake-encounters and cordon and search operations (CASOs) conducted by the Indian military and paramilitary forces across the valley.

Terming the systematic killing of youth as the worst form of state terrorism, Shabbir Shah maintained that targeted killing of youth was a part of India's nefarious designs to change demography of the territory.

Demanding the international community to take notice of the growing military onslaught against Kashmiris, he said that the bloodshed and violence would continue to wreak havoc in the region unless the Indian government was held accountable for the heinous war crimes.

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians in West Bank

NABLUS: Israeli troops and special forces on an arrest mission exchanged fire with Palestinians barricaded in a house in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, Israeli police said. The local rescue service said two Palestinians were killed.

Israeli police said a number of armed Palestinians were killed during the hours-long battle deep inside the city of Nablus, without specifying. Police said no Israeli forces were wounded.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said the two men were killed in clashes with the military in Nablus and identified them as Aboud Sobh, 29, and Muhammad Al-Azizi, 22. The rescue service said 19 Palestinians were wounded, including two critically.

Israeli Prime Minister Yair



Lapid said the suspects had been wanted for a series of shootings. "We won't sit and wait for Israeli citizens to be harmed," he told a meeting of his Cabinet.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the violence, saying it was a result of Isra-

el's occupation of lands Palestinians seek for an independent state.

"The region will remain in a cycle of violence until the occupation is ended and a just peace achieved," he said.

The military said a violent protest broke out as troops were operating in Nablus, with protesters hurling

explosive devices at soldiers and opening fire at them. The soldiers fired back, the military said.

The military said it also operated in a separate area of the West Bank, where another brief exchange of fire took place.

Israeli forces have been carrying out near-daily raids in the West Bank for months, in a bid to quell a spate of attacks by Palestinians on Israelis that has since subsided. The military has faced resistance during some of those raids, which in several instances have turned deadly.

The Palestinian attacks on Israelis earlier this year killed 19 people. More than 60 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since the start of the year, according to an official Palestinian tally.

Mediterranean ships rescue over 1,100 migrants

MILAN: Italian vessels have recovered five bodies and rescued 674 people packed on a fishing boat adrift in the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast, the Italian Coast Guard said Sunday, while European charities reported saving more than 500 more.

Some of the survivors had to be plucked from the sea in the Italian operation Saturday that was carried out 120 miles (190 kilometers) off the coast of Calabria by a Navy mercantile ship, three Coast Guard patrol boats and a financial police boat. All of those rescued were brought to ports in Calabria and Sicily. The causes of death for the five dead were not immediately known.



The Coast Guard said it was just one in a series of rescues in recent days in the Italian search and rescue area of the central Mediterranean, as desperate people fleeing poverty or oppression seek a better life in Europe. In one case, a helicopter was called

to evacuate a woman in need of medical treatment from a migrant boat in a precarious condition, the Coast Guard said.

In separate operations, the German charity Sea-Watch said it rescued 444 migrants trying to cross the Mediterr-

anean on overcrowded, rickety smugglers' boats. The Sea-Watch 3 vessel carried out the five operations over 24 hours, and said the rescued included a pregnant woman and a man who had suffered severe burns.

The charity is asking for permission to bring the rescued people to a safe port, as the rescue ship is unable to accommodate so many people.

In addition, the European charity SOS Mediterranean said its rescue ship Ocean Viking have saved 87 people, including 57 unaccompanied minors, from an overcrowded rubber boat off the Libyan coast. None had life jackets, the charity said.

Russia FM visits Egypt

CAIRO: Russia's top diplomat was in Cairo for talks Sunday with Egyptian officials as his country seeks to break the diplomatic isolation and sanctions by the West over its invasion of Ukraine.

Sergey Lavrov landed in Cairo late on Saturday, the first leg of his Africa trip that will also include stops in Ethiopia, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to Russia's state-run RT television network.

On Sunday, he first held talks with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, then his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shukry. Lavrov was later to meet with Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit and also address the pan-Arab organization, RT reported.

In a joint news conference with Shukry, Lavrov said he discussed

Russia's "military operation" in Ukraine with Egyptian officials who urged for "a political and diplomatic" settlement to the conflict. Lavrov laid the blame on Ukraine for the rupture of earlier peace talks.

"We do not have any prejudices about resuming negotiations on a wider range of issues, but the matter does not depend on us," he said. "Ukrainian authorities, from the president to his innumerable advisers, constantly say that there will be no negotiations until Ukraine defeats Russia on the battlefield."

Following Russia's airstrike Saturday on the port of Odesa, Ukraine, it was not immediately clear how plans to resume shipping Ukrainian grain by sea in safe corridors out of Ukrainian Black Sea ports would be affected. Lavrov said in Cairo that

Russian grain exporters are committed to fulfilling their obligations in the wake of twin U.N.-backed deals signed by Moscow and Kyiv to unblock the grain shipments from Ukrainian ports.

"We discussed the specific parameters of cooperation in this area, agreed on further contacts between the relevant ministries, and we have a common understanding of the causes of the grain crisis," he said, without elaborating.

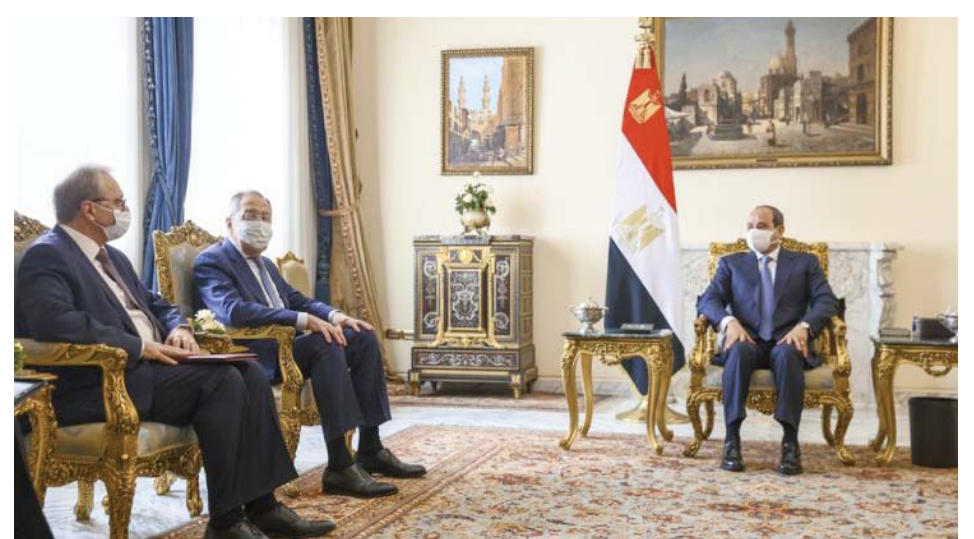
Russia's war in Ukraine has had dire effects on the world economy, driving up oil and gas prices to unprecedented levels. Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion and naval blockade of its ports have halted shipments.

Some Ukrainian grain is transported through Europe by rail,

road and river, but with higher transportation costs. The war has also disrupted shipments of Russian products because shipping and insurance companies are reluctant to deal with Western sanctions on Russia.

African countries are among those most affected by ripples of the war. The prices of vital commodities skyrocketed and billions of dollars in aid have been directed to help those who fled the war in Europe. That has left millions of people in conflict areas in Africa and the Middle East suffering from worsening growing shortages in food and other assistance.

In an article posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry website, Lavrov rejected the West's accusations that Russia is responsible for the global food crisis, as "another attempt to shift



the blame to others."

Seeking to rally African nations on his country's side, he hailed what he called "an independent

path" they took in refraining from joining the West in sanctioning Russia and the "undisguised attempts of the U.S. and

their European satellites to gain the upper hand, and to impose a unipolar world order to the international community."

