



NIAS Area Studies EUROPE MONITOR

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Image source: Jonathan Brady/AP

Comment

Boris Johnson exits: The Unravelling of UK leadership in crisis

Will Russia's latest attack on the Odessa port, undermine the grain deal with Ukraine?

France: Uber files leak, and Macron's trouble

Italy's political instability: Three Issues

Heatwaves across Europe: Causes, effects and response

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Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science Technology and International Relations*.

About NIAS Europe Studies

As a part of pursuing global politics, the programme has started area studies. Europe is a part of the NIAS area studies initiative. With an aim to nurture a pool of scholars working on issues related to Europe, the scope of the studies would range from regional/sub-regional cooperation to new technology and innovations and include gender studies, migration issues, and climate change.

NIAS Europe Studies will focus on capacity building amongst the young scholars, expert lectures by prominent academicians and diplomats, monthly discussions on Europe, and a Monthly Dispatch – *Europe Monitor*.

About Europe Monitor

Europe Monitor is an academic initiative by NIAS Global Politics and the KAS India Office.

The Monthly is an integral part of NIAS Europe Studies. It includes focused commentaries on Europe, short notes, and daily updates on contemporary Europe.

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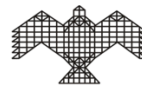
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National Institute of
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About NIAS

National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) was conceived and founded in 1988 by the late Mr JRD Tata, who sought to create an institution to conduct advanced multidisciplinary research.

The objective is to nurture a broad base of scholars, managers and leaders who would respond to the complex challenges that face contemporary India and global society, with insight, sensitivity, confidence and dedication.



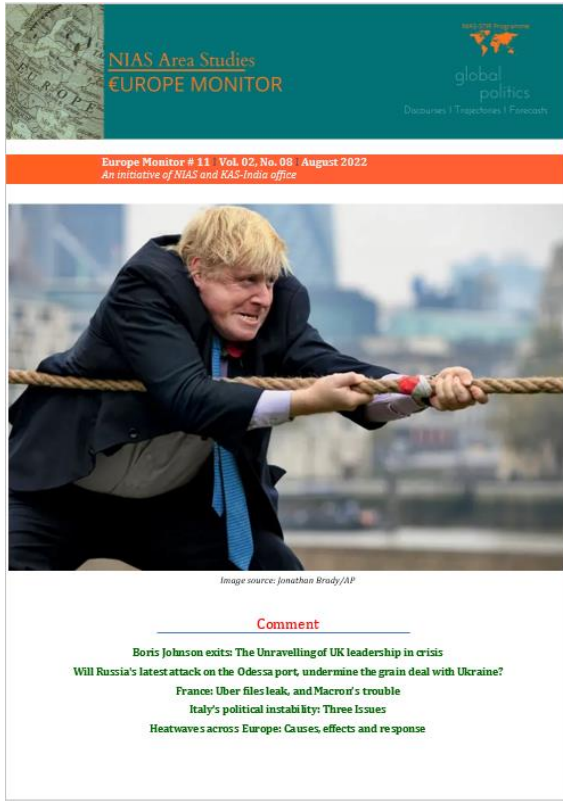
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The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as “Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education”, in 1964, the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

Europe Monitor

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COMMENT

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EM DAILY FOCUS



Source: NIAS Europe Studies Team/ UK Government, aurora-universities.eu, The Guardian, European Commission, Ken Mürk/ERR, AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

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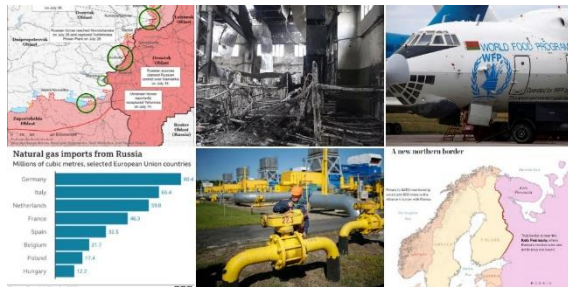
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WAR IN UKRAINE: DAILY UPDATES



Source: Institute for the study of war, AP Photo, REUTERS/Vasily Fedosenko, Eurostat/BBC, The Washington Post, The Washington Post

War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from Day 156 to Day 127 in four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View: Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, THE GLOBAL Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war.

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, and Emmanuel Selva Royan

EM SHORT NOTES



Source: ESA, CDC/Deutsche Welle, Jean-Claude Coutausse / Jean-Claude Coutausse Pour, AP Photo/Kevin Schembri Orland, Belga/AFP/D.Roland/ europa.eu, AP Photo/Javier Bernardo, File

EM Short Notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe, and provides the sources from which they are compiled. The daily developments cover from the UK, western Europe, Nordic, Baltic, Balkans to the far east Russia.

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav

COMMENT

Boris Johnson exits The Unravelling of UK leadership in crisis

By Sourina Bej

With Boris Johnson stepping down as the party leader, the political conservatives face internal divisions to elect the next prime minister of the United Kingdom. Three questions contend: what are the political consequences after Johnson's exit? how will the conservatives regain public trust? Will the new leader bridge the UK's political divisions?

On 07 July, another prime minister in the UK bites the dust. It was not the tussle over "getting Brexit done" like his predecessor Theresa May, rather in disrespecting one's code of political conduct, that prime minister Boris Johnson stepped down as party leader. He will however continue as the prime minister till a new leader is elected from within the conservative party. The outgoing leader said, "To you the British public... I want you to know how sad I am to be giving up the best job in the world. But them's the breaks." In a bit of a sleepless gripping political drama for Johnson, it is the last 48 hours, 44 cabinet resignations and one sacking that determined the resignation. A month ago, the pushout of Johnson started after controversies over Downing Street parties breaking the COVID-19 protocol tainted the party's rules on public accountability. The Tory MPs called a confidence vote in the prime minister, which he won, yet 41 per cent of parliamentary Tories wanted him out. Under party rules, his win stalled the resignation for 12 months, thus setting the ball rolling for cabinet resignations.

Unboxing the end of Boris Johnson

The political editor of the Guardian, Heather Stewart summarise the essence behind Johnson's exit in a line: "Boris Johnson's unrepentant resignation speech was delivered with trademark bullishness." Such is the bitterness against Boris Johnson, once revered as the "Tory man" taking conservatives through their biggest win in 2019. What changed and made the party pull the rug from under Boris Johnson?

First, in courting scandals, Partygate merely provided a plausible reason for the party to

disassociate from Johnson. After Sue Gray's report on the 10 Downing Street pandemic parties, the prime minister was fined, he lost a string of byelections and appointed an alleged sexual assaulter as his deputy chief whip which appalled his own ministers who backed him in 2019. In the three years in office, Johnson's conduct on misleading the press, lying to his own party members with an unapologetic hint, became a crucial violation of party, political and public code of conduct. With Johnson, there was no rest to the threat of scandals: whether it was his friendship with Lord Lebedev, a Russian oligarch or bigger than public office personal relationship with the businesswoman Jennifer Arcuri.

"Lack of policy vision and dwindling public opinion could be observed in the post Brexit realities when inflation, food shortages and healthcare crisis emerged much before the war pushed the energy prices throughout Europe."

Second, the conservative party's losing political ground. What the Johnson's scandals did to the party was more than an image dissolution rather it incapacitated the party machinery from looking into crucial issues such economic inequalities and retaining public mandate. Four prime ministers in six years: the speed with which the conservative party replaced and elected its leaders, raises questions on the stability off the party machinery itself. "Getting Brexit done" had figuratively impaired the Tory consensus and the political trust was further

eroding when Boris Johnson took a hardline approach with a unilateral offsetting of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Clear evidence that party had been relying more on one leader over its own mandate emerged through the electoral loss in Devon. One of the strong arguments among many Tory MPs for getting rid of Johnson is his unpopularity, yet it could also be argued that underneath a self-sabotaging leader, conservatives have also subterfuged their lack of new vision for policy change.

Last, lack of policy vision and dwindling public opinion could be observed in the post-Brexit realities when inflation, food shortages and healthcare crisis emerged much before the war pushed the energy prices throughout Europe. The only big economic measure from the party was in the last few months after former chancellor to the exchequer, Rishi Sunak committed EUR15 billion. Some of the party's ideas to cut the cost of living such as windfall tax had been proposed by the Labour party before. The Brexit had brought back queues, and wastage of harvest leading voters to target their anger at the leader representing the party.

Troubled political landscape ahead

The new leader of the Conservative party will not only have to provide an alternative to the party but also to the people and the region itself. Starting with an introspection of the party pathways, Conservatives will have to bring back the Number 10 operation with full political trust. For the new leader, the support of the backbencher committee, accountability in the PMQ sessions and honest interaction with the press could probably salvage the inner rebellion and the Conservative's fear of a rout in the local elections. Secondly, getting Brexit done just not in rhetoric will be a harder negotiating path yet to be foreseen. The Northern Ireland Protocol Bill could have had sabotaged the Good Friday agreement, but the questions that still remain is how to bring the electoral representation back in the province? With Boris Johnson still as the prime minister and a vivid breakdown of the party trust, the next six weeks will be a crucial test for democratic values in the Westminster.

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COMMENT

Will Russia's latest attack on the Odessa port, undermine the grain deal with Ukraine?

By Padmashree Anandhan

Russia signing of the grain deal is a strategic move to carry out sanctions free grain exports while keeping a check on Ukraine's ports and setting a benchmark for future deals

What was Russia-Ukraine grain deal?

On 22 July, representatives from Ukraine, Russia, Turkiye, and the UN met to mediate a deal to remove the Russian blockade from Ukraine's ports. All the actors to the deal agreed to sign upon the setting up of the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul, which will overlook the vessels that will enter Ukraine's ports to keep check on cargoes, personnel and possible attacks. The key aspects of the deal are, first, it will allow the exporting of the grains, foodstuff, fertilizers, and ammonia through three Black Sea ports, Odesa, Chernomorsk, and Yuzhny. Second, it mandates registration of every vehicle that will pass through the humanitarian maritime corridor and shall be inspected by Turkiye authorities to check the cargoes and personnel entering and exiting Ukraine. Third, the vessels passing through the corridor will be monitored by all parties to the agreement and will be subject to direct inspection if any suspicious activity traced. Fourth, the signed deal is applicable for 120 days and will be extended for the same period unless one of the party's calls for termination or modification.

Why did Moscow and Kyiv agree to the deal?

The reason behind Russia and Ukraine accepting the deal varies at different levels. At the domestic, Ukraine being the top producer of grain, cooking oil, fertilizers, wheat, corn, and sunflower oil, the deal will help reduce the economic damage, prevent the threat of running out of storage facility for grains and re-start the exports. From the perspective of war, Ukraine wanted a security guarantee to carry out its exports without disruption and interventions from Russia. With the deal providing Ukraine's export a safe path through the maritime corridor and to monitor the movement of the

ships, meant an equal hand for Ukraine to sign the deal.

For Russia, withdrawing its blockade from Ukraine's key Black Sea ports might be step back on the war front. In terms of economy, the deal matters more to Russia. With sanctions from the west blocking its wheat and sunflower oil exports, Russia sees this as an opportunity to use the mirror agreement which was scheduled to be signed after the grain deal to export its goods free of sanctions. The Russian economy is already struggling with excess oil and grains, the deal could be a start to strike future deals to ease its economic loss.

“As per the agreed conditions of the deal, the signatories are banned from attacking the ports, ships, civilian vessels engaged in the grain exporting. Therefore, Russia's recent attack on Odesa port does break the deal, regardless of the target being a military infrastructure or a silo.”

In terms of the deal, Russia is in better position than Ukraine. After the sinking of Moskva ship, Russia's limitation in navy was revealed, but it recouped and was successful in causing disruption to Ukraine's maritime traffic to scare away the shipping firms. Therefore, if the mirror deal is not signed or Russia's demands on exporting its grains sanction free is not met, then the possible next step would be to interrupt Ukraine's maritime route again. On the other hand, since Turkiye is the overseeing inspector and being a close ally, Russia will be able to keep a close check on the goods that enter or

exit and prevent supply of weapons through waterways to Ukraine.

Another important factor for Russia is its international reputation, apart from close partnering countries like China, India, and few countries in Europe, and Africa all have shunned their economic trade and relations due to the war and pressure from the US. To keep up its international image and economy, it requires the international links. Therefore, to showcase that its issue lies only with Ukraine and not rest of world which is facing the food crisis, Russia opted to green signal the deal.

Why was the grain deal important for rest of the world?

Ukraine has nine ports which forms part of the north-western Black Sea and Sea of Azov. Amongst the nine ports, Chornomorsk, Odesa and Pivdennyi contributes the highest per cent of grain exports. Major importers of Ukraine's grain are east African countries, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and Middle-East country, Yemen. These countries are not only dependent on Ukraine's grain exports but also face economic downturn and acute hunger. With Russia launching the war and forcing Ukraine's maritime trade to close down, has pushed others to face the price hike and increased food shortages. Although certain remote ports in Bosphorus Straits have continued to operate, it has not been sufficient. In the regional level, Ukraine is considered the "breadbasket" for Europe and with Russia blocking the port entrances, Europe attempted to re-route the grain export through Danube Delta of Romania, or through road or train from Moldova and Lithuania. Since the attempts failed due to challenges in scraping the way for ships, issues in train gauges and logistics, Ukraine transiting its grains is more crucial than ever

for the regional and international. Challenges still exist, as shipping companies might fear to engage due to high risk in freight and insurance, but through the deal, the accumulated grains can be unloaded from silos and exported using the agreed humanitarian maritime corridor.

Will the missile attack on ports torpedo the deal?

According to the deal, no foreign personnel can be in the Ukraine port, only the monitoring of ship movement and inspection of cargoes in the ship is open for all parties to the deal. In terms of missile attacks, Russia is barred from launching any attacks on the port facility, ships and civilian vessels that enter and exit between Ukraine and JCC. As per the agreed conditions of the deal, the signatories are banned from attacking the ports, ships, civilian vessels engaged in the grain exporting. Therefore, Russia's recent attack on Odesa port does break the deal, regardless of the target being a military infrastructure or a silo.

On the probability of such attacks, one, Russia would consider its economy and its international equation before launching, but for short-term gains, such as signing similar deals to withdraw its forces from other ports or important industrial cities. Two, to maintain its sphere of influence, it can carry out missile attacks to take down Ukraine's military that stand guard of the ports.

Padmashree Anandhan is a Project Associate at the National Institute of Advanced Studies. As part of the NIAS Europe Studies, her research focuses on issues relating to politics, protests, Brexit, economy, maritime and NATO' operations.

COMMENT

France: Uber files leak, and Macron's trouble

By Padmashree Anandhan

The Uber files leak exposes the exploitation of France's taxi industry, digital loopholes and the extent of political lobbying.

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What has been found in the leaks?

In early July, The Guardian reported on leaked documents of Uber; it was found to have breached laws, held lobbying campaigns, and involvement of leaders from prominent countries to expand and establish its brand. The documents were let out by Uber's former chief lobbyist in Europe, Mark McGann to The Guardian, which contains an exchange of emails, iMessages, WhatsApp texts, memos, and invoices that took place between the senior executives of high-performing MNCs and politicians between 2013 to 2017.

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and US president Joe Biden have been mentioned in the leaks. For Macron in France, the

consequences of involvement in Uber's lobbying campaign are important.

What is the French-Uber scandal?

Macron, the then finance minister was found to be directly engaged in the promotion of Uber in France. When Uber was formerly led by Travis Kalanick, where the company was new in the market, through strategies such as UberPop, UberX, and Kill Switch it exploited the taxi market across 40 countries. In France, Uber offered services at much less cost and replaced France's taxi industry. The initial threat created by Uber was infusing job insecurity amongst the taxi drivers, but later the company weaponized its drivers to protest and involved in violence to gain sympathy and portray a bad image of France's taxi drivers. Its lobbying effect furthered to reaching out to

governments and politicians to draft Uber-friendly laws.

One such major break of laws was through "UberPop." Under the "car-sharing" idea, Uber allowed individuals to use their own cars to provide rides. The concept was in violation of France's commercial transport service. Later with the help of Macron, Uber worked around a deal to implement the same under UberX through granting of VTC licensing to the Uber drivers.

Although the French government was convinced to draft flexible laws for UberX, other countries did not have defined ridesharing regulations. For which there were numerous raids carried out in the offices of France, the Netherlands, Belgium, India, Hungary, and Romania. In such cases, the company used "Kill Switch" where the site executive will ask the IT staff to shut the access to data system so that the government will not be able to trace any evidence.

What was Macron's deal with Uber?

The overlap between Uber's supporters and Macron's En Marche party. The Uber files revealed how the supporters of Uber, who held positions as EU Internal Market and Industry Commissioner, advisor to Macron and a Socialist deputy were keen on holding a top executive positions in Uber. They later became part of En Marche, or to support Macron's presidency campaign. The biggest challenge will be to define the boundaries Uber, Macron and his close allies shared. Which will determine Macron's continuity and the party's existence.

"It will be a real challenge for Macron to prove the extensiveness of the relations with Uber and his involvement in supporting the activities of the company."

Uber which was just launching itself in the market, found Macron's "Startup Nation"

initiative as an entry point to France. Whereas Macron positioned as the finance minister who wanted to expand the regulated French economy and reverse the increasing unemployment rate saw it as an opportunity. At the domestic level, many young men with immigrant backgrounds, and unemployed were influenced by Macron's support of new business systems and joined Uber for jobs. Through this Uber gained the human resource to establish itself in competition with the taxi industry. This provided a way for Macron to draft flexible labor laws that suited tech-advanced companies like Uber.

At the governmental level, allies close to Macron and executive officers of Uber worked closely to sign a secret deal using a socialist government. Macron was observed to be campaigning and supporting the Uber promotional activities as he saw Uber as a rule breaker to conservative France. Placing the same argument amongst the socialists, he signed a deal in the Cabinet which broke the Thévenoud legislation. Uber was allowed to shut down its controversial UberPop and instead implement UberX with fewer regulations. Which reduced the requirement of hours needed to become a VTC driver.

So what next?

First, increasing digital-induced legislation. Five years ago, the startup nation idea of

Macron evolved to "La French Tech" opening platforms to new technologies and business systems for Europe to stand in par with the US and China. This has now led to not only new legislation such as the Digital Markets Act (which monitors tech companies' online behavior) and the Chips Act (ensure resource and value chains for semiconductor and new technologies) but help understand the nuances of the threats arising from such digital scams.

Second, it undeterred Uber's growth. The existing management and head have accepted the scandal and have assured the credibility of existing possibilities. But the expansion and the profits the company acquired through the scandal and post-2017 cannot be undone. The investigation and court proceeding might slow down or have a short-term impact on its performance, but what has been established will remain established.

Third, more trouble for Macron. The national assembly is increasing its bet to investigate Macron's dealings with Uber, questioning the legitimacy of the presidency. Since the lines are unclear, it will be a real challenge for Macron to prove the extensiveness of the relations with Uber and his involvement in supporting the activities of the company.

COMMENT

Italy's political instability: Three Issues

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

The Prime minister's resignation reveals the complex nature of Italy's political system.

On 21 July, Italy's prime minister Mario Draghi resignation was accepted by president Sergio Mattarella which was rejected earlier. His resignation follows after the withdrawal of support from the coalition party- the Five Star Movement on confidence vote. Followed by the resignation, the leaders of the two right-wing parties that also make up Draghi's cabinet, Silvio Berlusconi of Forza Italia and Matteo Salvini

of the League party declared that they could no longer cooperate with the 5Star Movement. Upon resignation the Italy will now hold a snap election on 02 October to choose the prime minister, until then the caretaken government will govern Italy.

Three issues

First, the complexity in the political system. Italy's parliament has a bicameral

legislature, the Chamber of Deputies, which has 630 members, and the Senate with 315 members. Italians have two votes, one for each house. A total of 37 per cent of the seats in each house will be directly elected using the first-past-the-post method, and 64 per cent will be distributed proportionally. Small parties have a better chance of representation in Italy because it utilizes proportional representation and does not require a minimum percentage of the total vote to win seats. The original intent of the system was to prevent the likelihood of one party or leader acquiring an excessive amount of power. A first-past-the-post component and thresholds of three per cent for individual parties and ten per cent for coalitions were introduced by the electoral law 2018, increasing the incentive for coalition formation. Grand coalitions, or groups of parties from several political spheres that come together after the vote, have governed Italy. Such coalitions frequently struggle to reach a consensus on legislation and frequently result in conflicts that cause governments to fall because the parties involved typically hold extremely divergent viewpoints. As a result, coalition governments are more susceptible to crises and opportunism as junior partners use threats to dissolve the governments and, in some cases, actual implementations to gain greater power or cabinet seats.

Second, failure in the technocratic leadership and public discontent. Technocracy's fundamental premise is that there is only one method to solve any given issue, and experts are the only ones who understand how to do it. As the foundation of political parties that are claimed to represent the diverse parts of society, this conception does not permit disagreement or compromise between conflicting interests and principles. Since 1993, Draghi was the fourth technocrat to serve as the head of government. He succeeds Mario Monti, a former European Commission member who served as prime minister from 2011 to 2013. Before him stood Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, a former governor of the Bank of Italy, and Lamberto Dini, a former executive director of the International Monetary Fund.

“The EU will only release the funds in tranches to the country under the condition that the government is stable to avoid mishandling and corruption.”

Italy's technocratic leadership over the years have neither resolved the economic issues and political instability. The citizens were wary of technocrats as they felt that they did not directly represent them. Due to the discontent among people following two years of technocratic rule, the populist Five Star Movement emerged with a commitment for 'direct democracy'. This signaled the beginning of several years of ineffective governance and served as a clear warning of rising dissatisfaction among the people with how the Italian democracy was functioning.

Third, unreliability of the Five Star Movement party. The Five Star Movement party makes up the largest coalition ally of the government and holds significant votes. The party initially supported Draghi's EUR 23 billion decree on Economic aid for social welfare and businesses. However, the Five Star Movement declined to vote on the bill and presented Draghi with a nine-point list of demands, which includes a commitment for basic income and minimum wage. After complaining that his party's supporters had been treated disrespectfully and ignored by other coalition parties. Such claims and unreliability of the party made other coalition parties to not work with the Movement anymore, therefore leading to the collapse.

What next for Italy?

First, the snap elections. POLITICO's opinion polls place the right-wing parties in the lead to winning the elections. The Brothers of Italy party, led by Giorgia Meloni is leading the polls with 23 per cent. Therefore, she will likely ally with the other two right parties, Forza Italia and the League parties led by Silvio Berlusconi and Matteo Salvini. Who share the same sentiments against migration, abortion, and sexual rights. One point behind Meloni is the Democratic party led by Enrico Letta. He may partner with the populist Five Star Movement party and other

center-left parties to stand a chance against the right.

Second is the receiving of EU funds. Before his resignation, Draghi was successful in getting the EU to approve Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan to receive its COVID-19 and economy recovery funds. However, the EU will only release the funds in tranches to the country under the condition that the government is stable to avoid mishandling and corruption. Italy's economic and social security is entirely dependent upon the political stability of the upcoming government. The government also faces the challenge of drafting the annual budget for 2023 within weeks.

Third, sentiments towards the Ukraine war. All the major right parties have condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine and pledged

to continue sending arms to Ukraine. Meloni has, in fact, added arming Ukraine in her manifesto for the election campaign. However, the Five Star Movement party refuses to arm Ukraine stating that it only prolongs the war and pushes for more diplomatic measures to resolve the issue. The different facets of the crises, including the political, economic, and climate change aspects (referring to the region's increasing heatwaves and wildfires), could distract Italy's assistance to Ukraine.

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COMMENT

Heatwaves across Europe: Causes, effects and response

By Rishma Banerjee

Heatwaves in Europe rage on as countries lack long-term preparedness to deal with such high temperatures.

On 19 July the UK recorded its highest temperatures ever, crossing 40 degrees Celsius. Moreover, parts of France, Spain, and Portugal recorded high temperatures between 42 and 46 degrees. While the heatwave had started in southern and western Europe, it is moving eastwards. Over the last few days, Netherlands, Poland, Italy, and Slovenia, authorities have issued heat warnings. This is not the first time in the year that Europe is experiencing heat waves. In May, France registered temperatures higher than the historic average. In June, southern part of Europe experienced another heatwave, which spread from Spain to Turkey.

Causes

There are a few factors that are contributing to the recent heatwaves in Europe.

First, this is an indirect result of the average global temperature being up by 1.1 degrees Celsius than in the 19th century. Second, a region of low-pressure air off the coast of Portugal resulted in the heat from North African regions reaching into England and Wales. Third, a connection between the heatwaves and splitting of the jet stream into two has been established. Because of the split, an area of weak winds results in the build-up of heat between the two branches. Fourth, changes in the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation which is seen to be adversely affecting the weather in Europe.

Effects

First, the continuing wildfires and droughts. The heatwaves caused wildfires have erupted in several European countries like Portugal, Spain, France, and Poland. Thousands of people across Europe have

been evacuated to temporary shelters. Portugal reported more than 250 blazes over a period of two days, and 650 deaths due to heat-related illnesses. Spain lost 14,000 hectares to fires; an estimated 360 people succumbed to extreme heat. Wildfires have also destroyed over 19,000 hectares of forest in southwestern France. The greater frequency, intensity, and duration of the heat waves have also been linked to the growing incidence of drought in different parts of Europe. The water level in Italy's longest river, the Po river reached record low levels after no rainfall for more than 200 days. Spain's reservoirs were at 44.4 per cent of their capacity from 65.7 per cent in the last decade.

Second, infrastructural incapability. Many European cities are not designed to withstand such high temperatures. They do not have the infrastructure to keep people cool, and that had added to the crisis. European buildings most of which are not equipped with air conditioners also do not have fan fans. They are built to trap heat in order to help residents better withstand the cold. This has caused indoor temperatures to soar during a heat wave. In some places, roads have melted.

“Brexit has not taken place within Northern Ireland. The UK still has not let go of its interest in being engaged in the region's politics, economy, and people.”

Third, increase in energy usage. With the frequency, duration, and intensity of heat waves rising this summer, Europe's energy requirements have increased at the wrong time, given the sanctions on Russian energy. While Europe has aimed to cut down emissions and to invest heavily in renewables, this shift has also been disrupted by the war in Ukraine and the impending energy crisis.

Fourth, worsening public health. High temperatures reduce air circulation and lead to an increase in air pollution. This worsens respiratory issues and increases risks of

heatstroke and heat exhaustion. Reportedly more than 600 people have died in Portugal in Spain due to high temperatures.

Responses

First, the state responses. Most of the states have declared red alerts due to the extreme heat. The UK called an emergency Cabinet meeting to discuss Britain's first-ever “Extreme Red” heat warning. Trains and flights functioned at a lower rate due to fears of expanding tracks and melting runways. Free water points and announced emergency provisions for rough sleepers. In France, city councils made museums and other air-conditioned places free of charge, and extended pool opening hours. Over 3,000 firefighters, assisted by rescue forces from Greece, and six ‘water-bomber’ aircraft have also been deployed. In Portugal, more than 1,400 firefighters were in action at 44 fires while in Spain the firefighters were struggling to control the active blazes.

Second, the regional response. In 2003, an intense heatwave in Europe had killed over 70,000 people. Since the attempt to build capacity, long-term heat action plans have not materialized. While the member states are committed to shift to green energy, the process or rate has not been as swift as necessary. While measures have been discussed in theory, in practice however Europe lacks preparedness.

Third, the international response. The World Meteorological Organisation has issued a warning saying that this is a “foretaste of the future.” They linked the heatwaves as a direct consequence of the global warming and climate change. According to WMO heatwaves will become more frequent and more severe because of concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This is the reason the IPCC mandates member states to attempt and cap the global rise in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius rise.

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EM Daily Focus¹

Source: NIAS Europe Studies Team/ UK Government, aurora-universities.eu, The Guardian, European Commission, Ken Mürk/ERR, AP Photo/Manu Fernandez

ESTONIA

Estonia: New coalition after collapse

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 18 July, Estonia's prime minister, Kaja Kallas formed her second government and took the office in the Riigikogu. She formed her new coalition government with her liberal Reform party, the Social Democratic party (SDE) and the conservative Isamaa party. The previous government was dissolved by Kallas on 15 July after breaking up her coalition with Center Party as it collided with the opposition the Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE). The new government coalition's priorities will include enhancing overall security, switching to an Estonian-language education system, and enhancing the economic security of the Estonian people. In addition, hasten the removal of energy market bottlenecks and accelerate the growth of renewable energy capacity in order to achieve stable energy costs.

The collapse of the government

On 03 June, prime minister Kaja Kallas dismissed seven ministers from the Center Party headed by former prime minister Jüri Ratas which made up her two-party coalition. Since then, discussions have taken place between various parties to create a new alliance. The first reason for dismissal being the Centre party was found to be operating against the values of Estonia. Which is the Center party's engagement with Russia's leader Putin. Although the relations between the Center Party and Russia is on the declining side, it was observed to be an obstruct to Kallas's reforms and Estonia's security. Second, when the split in the coalition was furthering over existing legislation reforms on family support payments, the coalition Center Party voted against the Reform party favouring the opposition party EKRE's proposal for overturning an education bill. The bill would have mandated Estonian language at kindergarten level, such factors led to the break-up.

¹EM Daily Focus is published every evening by the NIAS Europe Monitor team on the day-to-day contemporary developments. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read it every day.

Formation of a new government

On 14 July, at an extraordinary session in the parliament, the prime minister announced the resignation of the cabinet. Hanno Pevkur, the deputy speaker, also announced his resignation from the office. After negotiations with the SDE and Isamaa party over the month, the prime minister Kaja Kallas proceeded to form the government with the new coalition on the same day during the second extraordinary session. Kallas delivered a presentation on the principles of establishing a government and the awarding of powers to the ministers in the parliament. After the parliament's approval of the prime minister to form a government, a third extraordinary session was convened on 18 July to take the oath of office. The three parties believe it is critical to focus on Estonia's long-term objectives and development requirements. The resilience and accessibility of Estonian culture, public finances, a creative and ecologically conscious business environment, and the accessibility of social and medical services is said to be given special consideration.

Challenges Ahead

First, improved security. Estonia which has been focusing on boosting its border security due to Ukraine war, has been barred due to Center party's block in the coalition. With a new coalition in place, Estonia will now be able to boost its military capabilities and border defence in line with NATO and the Baltic countries.

Second, continuing economic crisis. Even if governments change, the problems at large persist. Due to the conflict in Ukraine, GDP growth is anticipated to decline from a very strong expansion in 2021 to 1.3 per cent in 2022 and 1.8 per cent in 2023. According to Eurostat, Estonia now has the highest inflation rate among the eurozone countries, with annual inflation reaching 22 per cent in June.

Third, addressing the refugee inflow from Ukraine. The government will have to help Ukrainian refugees return to their homes, and aid in the rebuilding of Ukraine's damaged regions as it had promised

previously. Furthermore, to include the refugees in the labour market, the government will have to educate the Ukrainians Estonian language and reskill the men if necessary to provide employment. With a struggling political stability and economic crisis, treatment of refugees will pose additional challenge to the government.

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FINLAND

What does Finland fencing its border with Russia mean?

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 07 July, the parliament of Finland amended the Border Guard Act to strengthen its shared border with Russia. A senior advisor to the ministry of interior, Anne Ihanus stated that the objective of the new legislation was to "improve the border guard's operational capacity to respond to hybrid threats," and mentioned that the Ukraine conflict made the situation more urgent. One of the amendments in the Border Guard Act will concentrate on the receiving of asylums to only certain entry points. However, under the EU asylum policies migrants have the right to request asylum from any point where they enter a country. Despite disagreements over the EU's regulation, the bill of preparedness was passed by a supermajority that enables parliament to adopt bills more quickly amid concerns that Russia would retaliate for

Finland's bid to join NATO.

The history of the border with Russia

For the majority of its 1,300 kilometer length, the two countries' forest-covered border zone is currently only delineated by signs and plastic lines. The Gulf of Finland's shores serve as the southernmost point of the land border between Finland and Russia, while Muotkavaara in Lapland serves as the northernmost point of the shared border between Finland, Norway, and Russia. The border was a portion of the Iron Curtain's perimeter during the Cold War. For a large portion of its length, crossing the border was impossible. There were extremely few border crossing points, and only accompanied travel to a few places was allowed by the Soviet government; tourist access to border areas was prohibited.

Why would Finland want to fence the border now?

First, fear of refugee infiltration from Russia. Finland recalls the time when over 1000 migrants arrived at the northern border post between Russia in January 2016. The Russian strategy was swiftly recognized by Finnish officials, who found that more than half of the asylum seekers had been legally residing in Russia for five to ten years and claimed to come from 40 different countries. The pattern of asylum seekers arriving in other parts of Europe at the time was not the same, as they mostly came from Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan. Finland anticipates a similar move by Russia to retaliate against the country joining NATO.

Second, aligning with NATO's defence strategies. As Finland and Sweden go through the ratification process of joining the alliance, as a part of its defence expenditure, is increasing its border security. Along with building concrete walls in specific spots, Finland will also be increasing its border patrol troops to advance the military presence in Europe's eastern flank. The parliament also amended the Emergency Powers Act to include hostile hybrid attacks to invoke emergency powers as a response. It is to ensure its

sovereignty is not breached by Russia or as consequence of Ukraine war.

Third, a political message to Russia. The increase in border security can be perceived as Finland trying to present the border fencing as a deterrence to Russia. The implications of joining NATO is signaled to Russia by Finland ahead of its membership status. Accession of Finland by NATO would further extend its border with Russia and a potential front for direct confrontation.

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ITALY

Italy's drought condition: Causes, state response and international stance

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 05 July, Italy declared a state of emergency in five northern regions. Which include Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardy, Piedmont, and Veneto. The droughts in the Po River and eastern Alpine basins have triggered the announcement. The president of the Italian Meteorological Society, Luca Mercalli, stated: "This drought is unique in history due to the combination of two anomalies – the lack of rain, on top of the elevated temperature, which is directly linked to climate change."

River Po and its drought condition

Italy's longest river Po flows 650 kilometers from the snowy Alps in the northwest to the Po Delta in the east before pouring out into the Adriatic Sea. The large stream provides nourishment for northern Italy's vast, lush plains. These flat, crop-covered areas, known as Italy's breadbasket, provide almost 40 per cent of the country's GDP. However, most of the regions of this river have dried up. The water from the Po River

is utilized to irrigate rice fields, and cow grazing lands, some of whose milk is used to produce the highly regarded Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. Half of the livestock in the Po Valley, where Parma ham is made, are in danger due to the drought. The drought has decreased hydroelectric power generation. Nearly 20 per cent of Italy's energy is produced by hydroelectric plants, the majority of which are found in the north. The saline waters of the Adriatic Sea have seeped 12 miles into the basin as there is no stream present to push it back into the ocean. The country is currently experiencing a severe heatwave, and there has been around 50 per cent less rain than 2021.

Causes of the draught

The primary cause of drought in Italy is claimed to be climate change. The previous winter temperatures experienced an anomaly of 2.1 degree Celsius and an average precipitation deficit of 65 per cent. Together with the mild winter temperatures, the lack of precipitation resulted in poor snow accumulation, low soil moisture, and low water levels in lakes and reservoirs. Researchers indicate that such a combination of mild and dry winter has not occurred in Lombardy, Piedmont and southern Switzerland in the past 30 years.

State response

The declaration of a state of emergency gives the government "extraordinary means and powers" to intervene to ensure public safety. The government had also released EUR 36.5 million to the affected regions in the north. The Po River District Basin authority reduced water withdrawals for agriculture by 20 per cent, and a hydroelectric power plant in Emilia Romagna region has been shut down since there is not enough water to produce electricity. At the municipal level, the local authorities have prohibited using water for activities such as washing vehicles, watering plants, and cleaning outdoor patio areas. In order to raise reservoir levels, Utilitalia, a union of water providers, have asked for the overnight suspension of drinking water supply in 125 towns in 100

Piedmont and Bergamo province in Lombardy.

Italy's stance in international climate goals

Italy's recovery and resilience plan "Piano di Ripresa e Resilienza," which is a five-year plan, does not align with the EU 2030 climate goals. Its national objective is to lower emissions 38 per cent, below 2005 levels by 2030. Italy's score for adoption readiness in 2018 was just slightly below the G20 average. Although there are still difficulties with adaptation, Italy's energy mix remains heavily reliant on fossil fuels. In 2020, 18 per cent of all primary energy consumption was made up of renewable energy, which has been steadily rising in recent years. However, the carbon intensity of the energy mix has barely altered during the past two decades, notwithstanding the rise in renewable energy.

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Italy's migration crisis

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 24 July, Italy's coast guard and other international non-governmental organizations rescued 674 people and recovered five dead bodies from an overcrowded fishing trawler. In addition, another 522 people rescued from 15 boats were brought to Lampedusa. Many of those making the risky crossing on makeshift boats provided by smugglers, and when the boats break down, they are frequently left abandoned in the middle of the Mediterranean sea. One of the riskiest routes for illegal migration is the

Mediterranean and the northwest Atlantic region, where 3,231 have been reported by the United Nations High High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to have died or missing in 2021.

Who are the migrants?

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in "irregular" African migration through the Mediterranean. They boarded boats from Morocco and Tunisia to travel to Spain and Italy. There were also inflow of migrants from economically unstable countries like the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Somalia, and Eritrea. Twenty years later, individuals from all across Africa and portions of Asia departed from Turkish, Egyptian, and Libyan ports to attempt the crossing. Such people are migrants who leave due to war, oppression, and poverty.

These migrants are found to be travelling in dangerous wooden fishing boats that are overloaded and flimsy polyurethane sailboats which hardly fit for crossing a river. Before the Covid-19 outbreak, the number of people undertaking these travels is observed to be reduced since 2015 when more than a million migrants crossed the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Prior years saw reports of 123,300 individual crossings in 2021. Despite fewer crossings, the death toll has sharply increased.

Three issues faced by the migrants

First, treatment of migrants. The Lampedusa Island of Italy is the predominant destination of migrants traveling by sea as it is closer to North Africa. Refugee center located in Lampedusa has a capacity of only 300 beds. However, it hosts more than 2000 migrants. The Italian Navy had to relocate the migrants to other parts of Sicily, as the camps had exhausted their resources due to high populations. Other issues such as bad sanitary facilities, lack in privacy and no demarcation for men and women for sleeping which shows bad handling of the migrants.

Second, public attitude toward migrants. The Italian locals initially welcomed the migrants, particularly in Lampedusa and Sicily. Some of them even adopted and

sponsored Tunisian children. However, over the years of excess migration, the locals have started to resent them. There were instances of protests against a few migrant centers for negatively impacting their vital tourism industry. The sentiments of Italians have also been capitalized on by the far-right party leaders in their campaigns for the upcoming snap elections after the recent collapse of the government. Two groups, in particular, Matteo Salvini's League and the right-wing Brothers of Italy party, frequently bring up the topic of immigration routinely use immigration to mobilize voters, especially since Europe's refugee crisis in 2015.

Third, International actors' responses to the migration. Following the 2015 Migration crisis, the EU realized the threat and focused on border management through Frontex, the European Border, and Coast Guard Agency, and gave priority to building barriers to accessing its borders, stepping up surveillance, and making non-governmental organization's search and rescue operations illegal. Securitization increased the risk and difficulty of the maritime journey but did not decrease migrant fatalities. Instead, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) has resulted in more migrant deaths than any other waterway in the world years.

Italy, on the verge of collapse, has threatened the EU to block foreign boats from bringing in the rescued people in the Mediterranean to share the load of the thousands of migrants that flood into the nation every day. The EU has pledged its assistance and will continue to do so, but little has changed over the years.

NORTH MACEDONIA

Protests in North Macedonia: Three reasons

By Rishma Banerjee

On 02 July, thousands of people from North Macedonia began protesting in the streets

of Skopje. Protestors threw rocks, petrol bombs and other objects at the police, and attacked government buildings like the parliament and the foreign ministry building. On 05 July, nearly 50 police officers were injured in violent clashes and on 06 July, the violence further escalated when Macedonians and ethnic Albanians clashed in Skopje. On the proposal, president Stevo said that it "...will be neither a historic triumph, as one camp would call it, nor a historic failure or debacle, as those in the other camp say."

Reasons behind the protests

First, the French proposal induced protests. The EU offered North Macedonia a set of specific terms to kick start the negotiations for accession. The proposal submitted by France envisages concessions for both Bulgaria and North Macedonia, where North Macedonia will be entitled to adopt major changes. It is because, one, they have to recognize Bulgarians as a minority as per the constitution. Two, the proposal contains a unilateral declaration which allows Bulgaria to claim the Macedonian language as a dialect of Bulgarian. Three, to resolve the historic issue, it mandates North Macedonia to recognize a medieval king as "Bulgarian." Due to the resistance amongst the people to accept the proposed key conditions has resulted in protests.

Second, government stance on the proposal. The government has backed the proposal stating it will serve as base to initiate relations with Bulgaria and the proposal is yet to be passed in the parliament. Whereas, the centre-right main opposition party, the VMRO-DPMNE disagreed stating the deal favours Bulgaria and questions North Macedonia's history, language, identity, culture and heritage. The differed stance of the government and support from the opposition party has been the trigger to the protests

Third, anti-sentiments against the EU. The public support for North Macedonia joining the EU has been low although the accession process has been slow. In February, the poll conducted by the Institute for Democracy "Societas Civis" in Skopje showed that only

13 per cent still see the EU as "the biggest ally." One of the reasons for the poll voting to reduce amongst the public is the Bulgaria problem and persisting fear of threat to North Macedonia's interests.

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RUSSIA

Russia's threat to cut off energy supplies to Europe: Three implications

By Sai Pranav

On 20 July, the European Commission called for mandatory gas demand reduction from 01 August 2022 to 31 March 2023 up to 15 per cent for all the member nations to save energy for the upcoming winter. The EU fears the permanent disruption of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline after its 10-day annual maintenance by Russia. Since the winter would pose difficulty in living, increasing the demand for more energy causing energy shortage and price rise. Therefore, the EU aims to have an 80 per cent capacity of energy in underground gas storage by 01 November 2022 to battle through the winter without impacting the price levels.

Supply disruption by Russia

The EU accused Russia's president Vladimir Putin for weaponizing gas in response to the sanctions. Although Putin denied the claims stating Russia will deliver gas as promised, Gazprom reduced the supply to 40 per cent capacity of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline. According to Putin, there might be a possible reduction in supply via Nord Stream 1 pipeline due to the maintenance of other equipment. Russia has blamed Canada for not returning the turbine that was sent by the German company, Siemens Energy

for repairs. Canada refused to return the turbine as it saw as a violation of its sanctions on Russia. However, due to persuasion from Germany, they returned the turbine to Siemens Energy which in turn gave it to Gazprom, a Russian gas company. Followed by the row of European countries not paying in Russian roubles for gas and as a counter measure to the sanctions, Poland, Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Lithuania have been cut off from energy supplies by Russia.

Three Implications

First, Europe's energy problem. From the start of Ukraine war on 24 February 2022, the energy prices have on the rise. Europe's existing energy crisis has furthered due to the war and from the dual effect of the sanctions put on Russia. It has resulted in increased demand for more energies from the industries and household and this will aggravate with climate conditions leading to price hike.

The EU has taken measure such as incentivizing for less energy consumption and switching for other forms of energy. However, the taken steps have low outcomes resulting in supply shortage. Poor condition of the existing pipelines and limited supplies to Austria and south-eastern Europe from Ukraine's pipeline are also other reasons for the dualling energy crisis. Apart from this, EU member states such as Germany, Poland and Austria shifting towards their coal mines as a short-term solution to the energy crisis can be a short-term solution but lead to environmental risk.

Second, energy combined economic problem. The surging energy prices are predicted to impact EU's industrial sectors and have a longer effect on its economic growth. Inflation and the cost-of-living crisis have decreased consumer growth and purchasing power. Industries such as chemicals, fertilizers and steel have been negatively impacted due to supply disruption in gas. Such industries use gas as an energy source and a raw material as well. With investments into renewable energies falling short to meet the energy demands

and increased energy imports from Middle-East, the stress on economy is set to build more along with the energy crisis.

Third, search for alternatives. The EU is looking for other ways to replace Russian gas imports to fulfil its energy needs. The bloc is eyeing the middle east for an alternative. Germany had already signed a deal with Qatar to import LNG and hydrogen fuel from Doha, which is the largest LNG exporter. Construction of LNG floating terminals to store the energy from places like the US or Qatar and transiting it towards Norway, Algeria and North African countries are also other methods by the EU to alternate the oil shortage.

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SPAIN

Morocco: Three issues faced by migrants in Melilla

By Rishma Banerjee

Issue in background

On 24 June, around 2000 people tried entering Spain's enclave Melilla, from Morocco. 133 of them reached Melilla. However, in the chaos, a stampede occurred and Morocco's authorities reported a death toll of 23 people. Moreover, 76 migrants were wounded. It was revealed in the aftermath that the stampede was exacerbated by Moroccan border guards who used tear gas and batons, while Spanish agents fired rubber bullets to disperse those trying to climb the border fence.

Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sanchez spoke about Spain and Morocco's effective collaboration on the issue. He blamed the "mafias and criminals who organize violent actions" for the attack and thanked the Moroccan police for their work. However, Morocco blamed Algeria for the incident. The Moroccan Embassy in Madrid mentioned that the Migrants entered Morocco via Algeria due to the country's "deliberate laxity" at the Morocco-Algeria border.

Algeria which backs the self-determination of the Western Sahara region is thus at odds with Spain, over their support of Morocco's claims on the region. They expressed anger about how the chaos was being treated. A diplomat Amar Belani called the deaths a "massacre."

The reaction from the international community has been strong. The EU's commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson said that the situation was "deeply troubling" and "forced, and violent, crossing can never be condoned". The African Union Commission chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, called for "an immediate investigation". The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, reiterated a similar sentiment and called on both

countries to conduct an effective and independent investigation about the same.

Migration crisis: Three issues

First, Morocco as a transit point into Spain and Europe. This is not the first time that migrants have tried to reach Spain from Morocco. Morocco also acts as a destination and transit point for migrants escaping conflict, violence, lack of opportunities, impacts of climate change or economic difficulties from North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Spain is not necessarily the destination of these refugees. However, since Ceuta and Melilla, the two autonomous cities under Spain are in North Africa it creates a pathway to Europe in general.

Second, mutual migration policy, given improving Spain-Morocco relations. This incident comes amidst a controversial shift in relations between Spain and Morocco. Morocco and Spain had a longstanding dispute over Western Sahara. However, after decades of neutrality Madrid recently favoured Morocco's claims to the territory. In April, they also renewed their migration cooperation commitments. Allegedly, this agreement is based on an abusive model which the EU uses for migration and asylum. While Spain's prime minister has supported Morocco's handling of the incident, members from other parties in the ruling coalition have criticized Spain's externalizing its borders.

Third, racial differences in Spain regarding the treatment of refugees. The response of Spain with regards to migrants has been racially motivated. There have been severe crackdowns resulting in the death of migrants from Africa. However, the same is not true for refugees and migrants from Ukraine. According to the Spanish government, since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Spain has provided temporary protection to more than 124,000 Ukrainian refugees.

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THE UK

Who are the eight candidates heading towards the Conservative leader contest?

By Padmashree Anandhan

On 12 July, the first round of voting for choosing UK's prime minister ended shortlisting eight contenders to go forward for the second round after getting back by 20 members of parliament. To choose the new party leader of the conservatives the selected candidates will now have to 36 or more votes to qualify for the postal vote from which the leader will be chosen. At the end of first round, Grant Shapps, Sajid Javid, and Rehman Chishti have dropped out due to short of votes.

Profile of the eight candidates Kemi Badenoch, former equalities minister

On 08 June, former equalities minister Kemi Badenoch announced her decision to compete for the UK leadership. Badenoch comes from London and spent her childhood in the US and Nigeria. She was elected as Member of Parliament in 2017 and has performed different roles as part of the cabinet, which includes being the spokesperson for the economy under GLA Conservatives. Although her growth did not evolve in the government, being a former levelling up and equalities minister has stood for Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (Cred) report, criticisms against government being oppressive on minorities, culture wars, and defended Boris Johnson on handling Brexit, and COVID-19. In her bid to the leadership, she has vowed to focus on UK's net zero climate target, and lowering of taxes.

Suella Braverman, attorney-general

Suella Braverman, who comes from Indian origin and based in London is one of the strongest contenders in the list and has a long-standing specialization in public law and judicial review. She worked as the Attorney General's Panel of Treasury Counsel where she helped the Home Office in immigration, Brexit, Parole Board problems posed by prisoners, and Ministry of Defence in issues relating to continued injuries in the battle. In terms with previous government, she is sighted as one of the loyalists and has promised to bring a “low-tax state,” cutting down energy VAT, and to bring spendings under control. Her stance on climate crisis stands firm as she believes pledging for net zero target and climate action as far-fetched aim.

Jeremy Hunt, former health secretary

Jeremy Hunt became the Conservative MP in 2005 for South West Surrey. Starting his role as a Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, was first selected as Secretary of State for Health in 2012, and later served as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in 2018. He has a record of losing close to Johnson in the previous voting rounds in the conservative party and has been criticized for “delivery style” by the party members. Hunt has pledged for lowering taxes but for businesses, raising national insurance limit and increase defence expenditure to 2.5 per cent of GDP. On the climate issue, as a foreign secretary Hunt was on the front for the UK's climate change.

Penny Mordaunt, trade minister

Penny Mordaunt, who was a former governor at the World Bank, has held several positions in the parliament since 2014 as minister of local government, armed forces, Disabled People, Health and Work. She has also been appointed as Secretary of State for International Development, Defence and was also posted as Paymaster General to head the resilience and build UK's defence in cyber security. Comparing the current government, Mordaunt has been a critic throughout and believes her leadership will unite the segmented Conservative party. Some of the

key position held by Mordaunt will functioning as first female defence secretary. After Rishi Sunak she has the second biggest count of supporters in the party. Being positioned as an equalities minister and then shifted to trade minister, has always focused on gender issues and is a supporter of trans rights.

Rishi Sunak, former chancellor

Rishi Sunak, one of the prominent candidates amongst the competitors to replace Johnson. The reputation comes due to his impressive role in pandemic, on the other hand few party member are divided over his unpopularity in the economic side which questions his leadership of the party. He comes from a business and finance background, his political career started when he was elected as conservative member of parliament in 2015 and gradually moving up the ladder to become Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2019, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 2022. Unlike others, he has not mentioned on the tax cuts and perceived to be resistant towards climate action. With regards to the former leader, has worked as close member of the party until his resignation.

Liz Truss, foreign secretary

Liz Truss, one of the longest members of the conservative party with a record of holding positions in government since 2012. She became the party's member for south west Norfolk in 2010 and held a range of roles in the parliament from being Secretary of State for Education and Childcare, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Secretary of State for International Trade and president of the Board of Trade, Minister for Women and Equalities, to becoming Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs. Her political career has shot at a fast pace along with forming a strong base in the party. She has focused her leadership bid on "libertarian ideals or Thatcherism," Similar to Rishi Sunak, she did not pledge for climate commitments when she held the trade minister post.

Tom Tugendhat, foreign affairs select committee chair

Tom Tugendhat has been a well-known critic of Johnson in the party and similar to Truss became the parliament member in 2010. Although did not have a rapid development like Truss, was positioned as chair of the foreign affairs select committee in 2017. He is expected to focus on cutting fuel taxes, "victim culture, and climate emergency" as key debate points in contest for leadership.

Nadhim Zahawi, chancellor

Nadhim Zahawi is the last contender in the list with least political experience. He was seen as a probable replacement, due to his fast development under Johnson's lead, first a vaccines minister, to education secretary. Of all the competitors Zahawi is expected to be the most prepared with a team to run for the leadership. He has pledged for reviewing of UK's corporate tax policy, children education and climate change.

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Boris Johnson resignation: What does it mean for Scotland?

By Sai Pranav

What are the recent developments?

On 28 June, first minister Nicola Sturgeon of Scotland announced the new date "19 October 2023" to hold referendum. Since the win of Scottish National Party (SNP) in the 2021 elections Nicola Sturgeon has been

pushing forward the idea of a second independence referendum in Scotland after the first one failed to gain support. On 06 July, the referendum was rejected by Westminster, followed by former UK prime minister Boris Johnson who also rejected the referendum on 07 July 2022. Johnson stated: "As our country faces unprecedented challenges at home and abroad, I cannot agree that now is the time to return to a question, which was clearly answered by the people of Scotland in 2014."

Why is Scotland determined and united for the referendum: Three issues

First, failure of first referendum. The reason for the failure of the first referendum was that many in the UK believed that the key aspects of education fees, finance, defence and the economy would remain unsolved if Scotland split from the UK. According to the UK, Scotland's economy was newly formed and was very weak to cope up with challenges such as cost of living, fuel and energy prices, inflation. Therefore it imposed Section 30 after 2014 referendum, which gave the Scottish parliament the power to legislate for the referendum.

Second, the people's opinion. In a recent Panel base survey, forty-eight per cent of Scotland's people agreed to its independence. Meanwhile, forty-seven per cent disagreed to the referendum and five per cent were left undecided. On the Brexit, the people of Scotland were against UK's decision. The UK parliament ignored sixty-two per cent of Scotland objection and went ahead with Brexit. Another key reason for people to opt out from UK to implement its independent decision making.

Third, the economic crisis that followed the Brexit. According to the Scotland, the fall of the value of pound, cost of living crisis, and the recession was due to Brexit. The UK had faced one of its worst economic crisis in the COVID pandemic followed by Brexit. Hence to achieve economic stability and to access the EU market, Scotland is demanding for independence from the UK.

How would Boris Johnson's resignation impact the referendum?

The conservative party and Boris Johnson do not support the referendum. According to them, Scotland should focus on problems such as the COVID pandemic, food crisis, climate change, and cost of living crisis, rather than focusing its agenda on the independence referendum. Even if the leadership of the Tories change, their decision and sentiments on the matter might remain the same. Therefore, unless there is a strong move from the Scotland government to push for the referendum to hold the polls, Scotland has narrow chance to get what it aims in the short-term.

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Political crisis in the UK: Four issues

By Padmashree Anandhan

On 06 June, more than 50 cabinet ministers of UK prime minister Boris Johnson resigned from their posts demanding resignation. The move comes upon growing criticism of Johnson's involvement in the party-gate scandal. In response, Johnson said: "But my job is to get on and deliver the government's aims, which is what I was elected to do ... The welfare of the British people and the security of the nation are indispensable." Till now two senior-most Cabinet ministers have resigned followed by ministers in charge of Treasury, prison, health, home secretary, and junior ministers. Johnson's Conservative party holds 358 seats out of 650 in Parliament. With the resignation of party members, Johnson is now under pressure to refill the positions to maintain the majority.

Four issues

First, the problem of integrity amongst the party members. The row of the resignation of the party members comes as the division has sprung over Johnson's integrity towards the party. Ministers who have resigned seem to have lost trust in Johnson in handling the scandal and removal of certain ministers. Although the scandal seems to be the reason upfront, the objection towards Johnson's leadership is also due to the split in economic policy making.

Second, the worry over economic growth. The conservative party member is also dissatisfied with Johnson's approach to UK's economy and "tax trajectory." In the G7 Johnson indicated that the UK was the fastest growing economy, but the Office for Budget Responsibility has estimated only 1.3 to 1.7 per cent growth after the pandemic rebound settles. Therefore, increasing inflation rates, cost-of-living prices, and the limitations in health care are other concerning factors that can worsen with a decline in economic growth. Although Johnson vows to keep national security and people's welfare on the front the party thinks otherwise.

Third, the party's leadership and unity in the focus of the conservative 1922 committee. In the UK, till now the government formed is by either the Labour Party or the Conservative Party. The conservatives fear that the factions created under Johnson will threaten the position held by the conservative in the parliament. One faction is socially conservative, the other being immigration focused and another set in the north demanding more funds for schools and hospitals, the party believes that the governance misses focusing on the hike in taxes. With the Labour Party gaining strength through new voters, conveying a message to rebalance the economy can be a threat to conservatives in the upcoming elections. Therefore, Johnson's leadership will be put under test if the 1922 committee decides on a rule change to have another set of elections to choose the leader of the party.

Fourth, the future leader of the conservative party. If the conservatives decide to cast voting to choose the leadership, Johnson's chances to win the majority seem uncertain. The likely leaders to replace him are expected to be Rishi Sunak who was responsible for UK's COVID support program, Liz Truss who has the popular vote amongst the party and is the most likely to replace Johnson, and defence secretary Ben Wallace who has gained reputation over Ukraine war.

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REGIONAL

EU's Digital Services Act: Three takeaways

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

On 05 July, the European Parliament approved the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA), two legislations are intended to limit the influence of big tech and improve internet security. The DMA obtained 588 votes in favor, 11 against it, and 31 were abstained. DSA was approved with 539 votes in favor, 54 votes against, and 30 abstentions. The DSA lays specific requirements for digital service providers, social media platforms and online marketplaces, this is to address the threats to society in terms of dissemination of illicit content and online misinformation. Therefore, any unlawful online activities will be monitored and governed under the DSA's fundamental tenet. The president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen stated: "Today's agreement on the Digital Services Act is historic, both in terms of speed and of substance. The DSA will upgrade the ground-rules for all online services in the EU. It will ensure that the online environment remains a safe space, safeguarding freedom of expression and opportunities for digital businesses."

Three takeaways

First, increased attempts for transparency and accountability. The DSA will restrict tracking-based advertising and misleading design techniques used by platforms and establish a tough EU-level enforcement framework for the biggest platforms. Through this, the EU countries will have access to more information and transparency and will be able to directly examine these "black boxes" to find the data the regulators need to ensure the execution and oversight of activities in the internet space. In addition, the data will be

made available to qualified researchers so they can undertake study to assist the enforcement efforts.

Second, emphasis on protection of rights online. The law requires firms to promptly remove any illegal content, such as anything including child sexual abuse, hate speech, terrorist propaganda, or an illegal product. With quick removal of posts, victims of online abuse will be better safeguarded against unauthorized, non-consensual distribution of private photographs. The act limits data collection for profiling and a ban on advertising directed specifically at children. Online advertising targeting based on a user's sexual preference, health information, religion, or political convictions is prohibited. Hence, removal of illegal content, the effective protection of users' fundamental rights online, and right to free speech, have been addressed in the Digital Services Act.

Third, empower small enterprises and startups. The gatekeeping of major online platforms has become detrimental as it stifles competition and disadvantages small and medium enterprises (SME) and newcomers into the industry. For the moderation of communications and content rankings, small enterprises and organizations are dependent on major platforms. SMEs and startups are forced into direct competition with gatekeepers who exploit their data to further their own interests since platforms like Google and Facebook hold the keys to accessing the consumer data. By increasing transparency regarding the inner workings of advertising and ranking algorithms, the DSA will help level playing field for SME enterprises.

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Eurozone inflation: Three reasons

By Sai Pranav

On 01 July, the inflation rate rose to 8.6 per cent in June. The EU is suffering economically due to the covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The unpredictability and uncertainty of the war in Ukraine have caused a lot of setbacks to the economy of the euro group countries which led to a revision of the European Commission's forecast. "Recovery is very much underwear due to service sector" said European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde in June. This meant that the service sector is in more demand than goods. The stagnant growth of the economy and the inflation in the Eurozone is predicted to slow down after 2022.

Three Implications

First, EU's dependency over Russian energy. Europe was the largest importer of Russian oil and gas until the war began and sanctions game set in by the EU and the US on Russia. The oil embargo on energy imports from Russia and its response through cut off gas and oil supply to the nations that depended on it. EU member states dependent on Russian energy are facing the brunt to find alternates for Russian energy which has led to rise in energy prices. Along with large economies such as Germany and Italy, the Baltic countries Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia economies have also

been affected resulting in an 18 to 21 per cent rise in inflation rate.

Second, war induced rise in food prices. The existing food crisis from the pandemic intensified with Ukraine war. With Russia holding back more than 30 per cent of wheat exports and blocking Ukraine ports from sending the agriculture supplies to rest of world has caused price hike in food, reflecting in Eurozone.

Third, the falling rate of the euro. The euro is in parity with the dollar and is falling rapidly due to the Ukraine war. The increase in energy prices, food pricing, and cost of living have contributed to the drop in the euro's rate. The European Central Bank (ECB) is looking to increase its interest rate by 25 points. This is the first time in 11 years that ECB is increasing the interest rate. It has predicted the inflation rate to ease by 2023 and 2024, but with the Ukraine war and search for energy alternative prolonging the Eurozone economies will face the challenge to keep up with the inflation.

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European Commission approves Nature Restoration Law: Five takeaways

By Padmashree Anandhan

On 22 June, the European Commission adopted the proposal on “Nature Restoration Law” which targets to restore the EU’s land and sea, with a specific focus on habitats and species. The proposal lays down key provisions to not only improve and re-work the existing laws towards wetlands, forests, and lakes, but it also provides a restoration plan for pollinating insects, river connectivity, forest, urban, agricultural, and marine ecosystems. The adopted proposal is expected to come into practice from 12 July (20 days from the publishing of the proposal). EU countries will get two years to submit their national targets and their approach to achieving the targets. Upon which the European Environmental Agency will form technical reports to assess the progress. Later, the reports will be forwarded to the European Parliament and Council.

Five Takeaways

First, renewed attempts to restore nature and biodiversity. The first attempt of the EU, as part of its Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to draft laws and implement a procedure to conserve and restore nature failed to materialize. The second attempt of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 adds legal value to nature restoration efforts. Although the target set by the European Commission to bring back 20 per cent of the land and sea area by 2030 does seem

promising, achieving the same across the targeted ecosystems seems like a high-end goal.

Second, declining plant biodiversity on land and sea. The EU has found its environments around peatlands, grasslands, and dunes to be affected by close to 80 per cent, and mainly 50 per cent of its Wetlands located in the Western, Central to have been eroded since 1970. This is mainly due to the increase in GHG and removal of land which has affected the natural carbon removal process. Apart from this, the soil quality has gone down by 70 per cent resulting in a loss in agricultural produce of EUR 1.25 billion.

Third, the challenge of extinction of species on land and sea. Species such as three bees, and butterflies are one amongst 10 species under the threat of extinction. Such species which are called pollinators are important for terrestrial ecosystems, and food security, and contribute immensely to agricultural yield. The law also brings a new focus on marine habitats such as fish which have reduced by 71 per cent and the amphibian population has shrunk by 60 per cent. It is mainly due to the problem of overfishing and not allowing time to breed.

Fourth, addressing nature restoration. When it comes to deciphering the restoration, strategies opted by the EU, the approach to bring back the grasslands, wetlands and peatland have been laid briefly to include different cultivation methods, and sustainable farming methods, it is not in the case of dunes. For conserving the soil, the EU has opted the EU soil strategy 2030 which covers both soils on land and subsoil in the seabed to maintain the minerals and organic carbon through rewetting practices. To promote healthy marine ecosystems and fishing practise, it has a marine strategy to address the deterioration of fisheries and marine

habitats, with regards to Amphibians the law does not provide any key provision to address the decline. The same applies to increasing the pollinator species population where the problem is well highlighted in the provision but the way or methods to be taken by the member states to address the issue are absent.

Five, “One Health” and food system as the driving force. The overall nature restoration law seems to be drafted targeting “One health” and ensuring a continuous supply of food aimed at food security. The concept of one health is to maintain the food supply chain for all organisms from humans, animals, and marine beings to the whole nature and ecosystem. Thereby the regulations and provisions that form part of the Nature Restoration Law produce a holistic plan to bring back the depreciating nature, and animal species in a way to stop the further degradation of nature and help maintain the earth’s nature.

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NATO New Strategic Concept 2022: Five Takeaways

By Padmashree Anandhan

On 29 June 2022, at the NATO summit held in Madrid, Spain, the heads of the State and Government revealed the NATO's new Strategic Concept which listed the security challenges of NATO, its purpose and principles, the current strategic environment it faces, and its core tasks of “deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.” According to NATO secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg: “NATO’s new Strategic Concept is the blueprint for the Alliance in a more dangerous and competitive world.”

Five takeaways

First, emphasis on open dialogue over direct confrontation for peace in Euro-Atlantic. In the previous strategic concept, NATO aimed to establish military cooperation with Russia. At present, the whole equation has turned around. Although NATO is expanding in the region and massively increasing its military power it substantiates the development as building resilience against Russia. This can be viewed as NATO’s deterrence strategy to avoid a direct confrontation and to push Russia for a dialogue.

Second, growing challenges for NATO. When it comes to NATO’s strategic concept, its core task has remained in ensuring Euro-Atlantic peace. With the growing challenges in terms of Russian aggression, altered security environment, increasing human rights violations, the need to support Ukraine to maintain stability, meet the rising competition, and most importantly deal the authoritarianism. The report has brought out the threats and challenges which need to be addressed by NATO.

Third, NATO’s robust stand against nuclear weapons. NATO assured that the nuclear weapons will be used remotely. Despite its nuclear deterrence position and aim to bring down the strategic risks, it’s warning on change in nature of conflict on the deployment of such weapons along with the support from the US for its nuclear forces shows the nuclear capabilities of NATO. This will leave no option for Russia but to settle down for dialogue or slow down its aggression.

Fourth, strengthened deterrence and defence. NATO which circled its military in only developing a collective defence in terms of missiles and weapons systems has now drastically boosted expanding its military capabilities into maritime, cyber, space, and digital transformation along

with a special focus on non-military threats such as civil preparedness and civil support to NATO's forces.

Five, missed focus on NATO's enlargement. In the enlargement process, NATO has boosted its open-door policy, with Sweden and Finland joining the alliance soon, it will add significant value in terms of territorial and military expansion. However, with regards to securing the Balkan front or the Arctic much detail on its strategy has not been given. Even in terms of addressing the effect of climate change it does not form a major part of NATO's core tasks.

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NATO Summit: Five Takeaways

By Rishma Banerjee

What happened at the summit?

The NATO leaders met on 29 and 30 June 2022 in Madrid, Spain. Leaders of the 30 member countries, crucial NATO partners from Europe, Asia-Pacific partners, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea attended the meeting. The meeting took place in the backdrop of growing Russian attacks and NATO's expansion in Europe. The two-day summit discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, increasing security in member countries and allies, and Sweden and Finland's formal invitation to join NATO.

NATO leaders adopted the new strategic concept. It is a document that states the challenges faced by NATO and provides the necessary political and military steps to be taken by NATO. They agreed to boost the alliance's defence and deterrence capacities and reiterated their support for Ukraine. The alliance also reaffirmed its

open-door policy officially inviting Sweden and Finland to join NATO. It gives assurance to protect the territories and sovereignty of its member states and allies. Other issues such as food security, terrorism, climate change, cyber security, and space were also addressed

Five takeaways from the summit

First, change of stance about Russia. The last strategic concept identified Russia as a strategic partner. However, the new one identifies Russia as the "most significant and direct threat." This complete shift results from Russia's actions in Ukraine and their threats of further escalation. The members pledged more military and financial aid to Ukraine; they also discussed the possibility of Russia's attacks on member countries. Another concern for NATO would be how Russia might be using Belarus to stage attacks.

Second, pre-empting a future attack. At the summit, NATO members decided to augment the NATO forces, especially along the NATO-Russia border in Eastern Ukraine. They will increase NATO's high-readiness contingent, the response force, from 40,000 to 300,000. In addition, the US will establish a permanent headquarters for its V Corps in Poland. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg noted the irony of the situation and said: "Putin wanted less NATO on his borders, but because of his actions, he's getting more."

Third, the further eastward expansion of NATO. Currently NATO has expanded across 14 countries in Eastern Europe. This summit saw Turkey lift their objection to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. Thus, leading a direct confrontation with Russia as both Finland and Sweden share land/sea borders.

Fourth, NATO's Asia-Pacific focus. Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea were invited to attend the summit. These countries share similar values as NATO. Moreover, in this summit, NATO

identified China's growing power as a threat. The four countries in the Indo-Pacific are expected to add to NATO's influence in the region against China and thereby expanding NATO's footprint in the region.

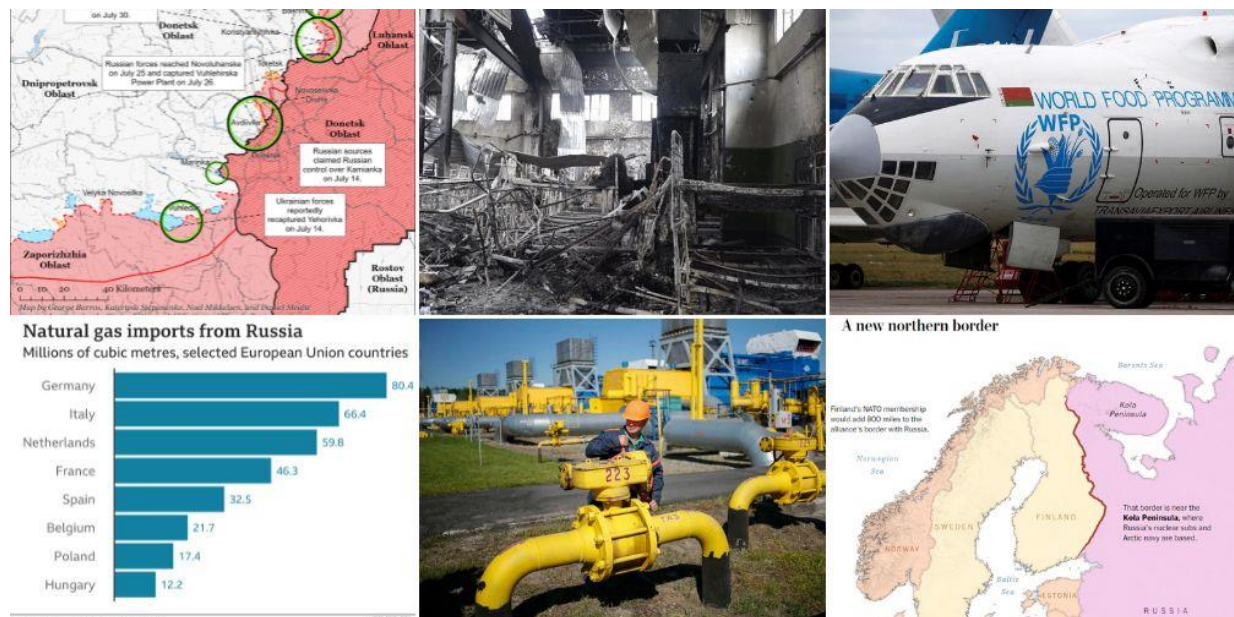
Fifth, renewed unity and importance of NATO. The war in Ukraine has catalyzed a greater unity amongst the member states in NATO. Members unanimously agreeing to support Ukraine in its war efforts, showcases the united stand of the NATO group and the integrated approach towards countering Russia. Before the war, NATO's efficacy was questioned, but with NATO's involvement in the war and there is renewed attention from the European countries looking up for NATO's collective defence.

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War in Ukraine: Daily Updates*

By Padmashree Anandhan, Rishma Banerjee, and Emmanuel Selva Royan



Source: Institute for the study of war, AP Photo, REUTERS/Vasily Fedosenko, Eurostat/BBC, The Washington Post, The Washington Post

War in Ukraine: Day 156

The War on the Ground:

On 29 July, Ukrainian intelligence reported that mercenaries from the Russian private military firm, the Wagner Group, murdered Ukrainian Prisoners of War in the temporarily held village of Olenivka in the Donetsk area. On July 28, a large explosion occurred there. The Chief Directorate of Intelligence stated: "The explosions in Olenivka, which killed Ukrainian defenders, are a deliberate provocation and an undeniable act of terrorism committed by the occupier's armed forces."

On 29 July, ministry of infrastructure reported on the process of loading the initial ships under the "grain deal" signed. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, ambassadors from the G7 nations, Turkey, and UN representatives. The ten of the 17 ships that have previously been loaded at the ports of "Odesa" and

"Chornomorsk" are prepared to go. The minister of infrastructure of Ukraine, Oleksandr Kubrakov stated: "For the first time since February 24, work has resumed in the seaports of Ukraine. Ships that were loaded with grain in the winter are ready to leave as soon as our partners, the UN and Turkey, agree on a 'green corridor' towards the Bosphorus Strait."

During the observation, Zelenskyy indicated that Ukraine is awaiting the proper cues from allies, including UN and Turkish officials, before beginning grain shipments. He further mentioned that exports may start soon. He stated: "Our side is completely ready. Our military ensures the security situation, and we conveyed clear signals to our partners, the UN and Turkey. The UN and the Turkish side are in direct touch with the minister of infrastructure, and we are awaiting their signal to begin."

On 29 July, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dmytro Kuleba stated that the Civil

* War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground: Second, The Moscow View: Third, Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, THE GLOBAL Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read them every day.

Protection Mechanism of the EU will be used to help clear mines from formerly occupied territories in Ukraine, as Slovenia plans to send civilian mine-clearing equipment to Ukraine.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 29 July, the Russian deputy foreign minister Andrei Rudenko reported that 40 Ukrainian prisoners of war were killed and 75 were injured when Ukrainian forces used HIMARS rockets to attack a jail in separatist-held territory. Ukraine said that Russia launched the attack to unjustly implicate Kyiv. The building allegedly housed soldiers of the Ukrainian Azov Battalion, who surrendered to Russian and Donbass troops during the siege of the Azovstal steel factory in Mariupol.

Also on 29 July, the deputy chief executive of Gazprom, Vitaly Markelov stated that Russia's gas supply to Europe through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline has to be reduced because of turbine issues. He told *Russia-24 TV* that the problems are a result of the German corporation Siemens, which manufactures and repairs the turbines. Markelov claims Siemens has only successfully fixed one-fourth of all detected issues with its turbines.

The chairman of Latvijas Gaze reported that despite refusing to comply with Moscow's demand for payment in rubles, Latvia has continued to purchase Russian natural gas. According to the chairman: "Latvijas Gaze is now purchasing gas, but we do not purchase gas from Gazprom since we are unable to pay Gazprom."

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 29 July, to update its military to NATO standards, North Macedonia proposed to provide Ukraine with an undefined number of Soviet-era tanks. In a statement: "North Macedonia has determined that a specific number of these tanks would be provided to Ukraine, in line with its demands, taking into consideration these circumstances and the requirements of the Ukrainian defence ministry."

Belarus's foreign ministry recalled its ambassador to the UK to return to Minsk. As a result of London's "hostile" sanctions on Minsk for its suppression of the 2020 protests and participation in Russia's war in Ukraine. On the removal of the ambassador, the ministry said: "...does not imply that we are cutting off contact with London."

The German defence ministry stated that it would send 16 tanks to Ukraine that may be used to build temporary bridges or assist in repairing damaged ones so that troops and military vehicles can cross rivers. It mentioned that the Biber tanks would help Ukraine strengthening its combat. The ministry further added that the first six systems will be supplied this year beginning in the fall and that 10 further systems would follow in 2019.

On 28 July, the spokesperson of the US State Department Ned Price announced that the US and 37 other nations are organizing an expert team to assess the human rights situation in Russia. In response to recent Russian actions to restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as reports of torture of those held in detention in Russia, Price said in a statement that the review was sparked by the use of the "Moscow Mechanism" of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 29 July, following the postponement of diplomatic talks for the war-torn nation due to Russian demands, which were related to its invasion of Ukraine, the UN is proposing a "firewall" surrounding the procedure involving Syria. The ninth round of negotiations on a new Syrian constitution was supposed to take place this week in Geneva under the auspices of Geir Pedersen, the UN Special Envoy for Syria. However, Moscow objected to the location, apparently saying that Switzerland, which has imposed sanctions due to the Ukraine War, is not impartial, forcing them to postpone. The war-torn nation's constitution is the subject of exploratory discussions. The discussions may have opened the door to a more extensive political procedure.

On 29 July, the China-Europe Railway Express, which offers an alternative to shipping goods maritime between Asia and Europe, maybe exhibit indications of slowdown because of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. As a result, prices for shipping containers have been reduced by an average of 20 per cent.

Also on 29 July, China said that the US had double standard positions by contesting Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan while emphasizing Ukrainian sovereignty following a Russian invasion. In a discussion on Ukraine at the 15-member UN Security Council, deputy UN ambassador Geng Shuang reiterated Chinese leader Xi Jinping's warning to US President Joe Biden against playing with fire over Taiwan.

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War in Ukraine: Day 155

The War on the Ground:

On 28 July, Ukraine forces reported on the Russian attacks in the Chernihiv region and Sumy region. Where artillery fire took place in the Kharkiv region and two Mi-8 helicopters struck near Staryi Saltiv. Ukraine observed that the launch of 22 missiles and 10 artillery strikes in the Mykolaiv region had also hit the regional center. Russia also launched attacks in the Sloviansk, and the Southern Buh region with tanks, and tube and rocket artillery, but no new activity were recorded in the Kramatorsk direction.

Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted a poll that revealed that 84 per cent of the citizens in Ukraine are against any territorial concessions. The poll sampled from 06-20 July showed a similar result to the previous poll held in May, where 82 per cent of people believed that losing territory was not an option.

The spokesperson of the security service of Ukraine, Artem Dekhtiarenko said that Russia was preparing to hold "pseudo-referendums" on the territories that they have occupied. Dekhtiarenko alleged that the organization, DPR, which already has over 1000 members was being used to mobilize more people.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 28 July, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov held meetings with leaders from Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda and Congo-Brazzaville Ethiopia's president, Sahle-Work Zewde, and foreign minister, Demeke Mekonnen. During the visit, Lavrov blamed

the West for imposing sanctions on Russia which has impacted the prices of the grains. In his meeting in the Egypt, he assured that Russia would stand committed in exporting its grains. Egypt is one most dependent country on wheat from Russia and Ukraine which has been severely affected by the war.

The commander of Russia's Black Sea fleet, Admiral Igor Osipov congratulated the navy on the Day of the Navy. He reiterated that it was the Black Sea Fleets resilience that made it possible for Russia to gain control in the Azov sea region.

On the same day, the deputy head of the Kherson region's military-civil administration, Kirill Stremousov said that Kherson is preparing to hold a referendum on the region. If passed, the region will become a full-fledged constituent entity of Russia.

Also on 28 July, Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor filed a lawsuit to revoke the registration of the independent newspaper, *Novaya Gazeta*. The media had already stopped operating in Russia since March after warnings from Roskomnadzor about removing anti-Russian content from its website. If its registration is stripped off, journalists in *Novaya Gazeta* will lose the right to work in Russia, even if the paper resumes operations later.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 28 July, the UK government disclosed on the count of applications received from the Ukrainian refugees. According to UK, close to 198,200 application have been received and 166,200 visas have been issued. To deal the refugee influx, UK provided visas under its two schemes, if one of the family member of the Ukrainian resides in the UK and next if any of the UK residents offer to give accommodation to the Ukrainian. Initially the UK faced criticism for the long visa process, which later converted to digital applications.

The UK's foreign minister Liz Truss, who is contesting for the Tory party leadership said that she would be Ukraine's "greatest friend" if elected to office. She promised to provide

more weapons and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, ensuring a "strategic defeat" for Putin.

Poland's prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki met Germany's opposition leader Friedrich Merz to address the tense relations between the two states. Morawiecki criticized Germany for delaying the arms delivery to Ukraine and said that the time taken by Germany to fulfill its commitment was "not satisfactory."

US retired lieutenant general Ben Hodges, commented on the Ukraine's position in the war. He remarked that if the pace of foreign aid and assistance is increased, then Ukraine might be able to win the war by the end of 2022.

On 28 July, Estonia said that it will not allow people from Russia to avail temporary residence permits or student visas in the country. The foreign minister reiterated that this move was to create "relentless pressure" on Russia.

Hanover, Germany introduced energy-saving measures, where public monuments and fountains will be switched off, and only cold showers will be available in municipal swimming pools and sports halls. Berlin also switched the lights off in about 200 historic monuments and municipal buildings. The measures are to reduce Europe's energy consumption due to a potential stoppage of Russian gas supplies,

On the same day, the European Commission revealed that it will amend the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) proposal to take into account Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resultant changes in the geopolitics of the region. The commission said that the war has affected global markets, supply chains, and food security, and has shown how critical it is to maintain the connectivity amongst EU member states. As per the amended proposal, Russia and Belarus will be removed from the TEN-T map, while Ukraine and Moldova will be added. Commissioner for Transport Adina Valean said: "...our proposal will help improve transport connectivity between these two countries

and the EU, facilitating economic exchanges and better connections for people and businesses alike.”

A review of the humanitarian situation, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Russia was initiated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE). The US and 37 other countries will now establish an expert mission to conduct a thorough review of the humans rights situation in Russia.

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 27 July, *AP News* reported that the Philippine government has canceled a deal with Russia for the purchase of 16 military transport helicopters. The former defence secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that he with the approval of the former president Rodrigo Duterte had canceled the deal due to fears of possible US sanctions under their federal law called the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.

Following the Black Sea shipping agreement, India plans to resume their import of Ukrainian sunflower oil. The Sunvin Group estimates that they will receive about 50-60,000 tonnes of sunflower oil by September, thus bringing some relief to the world’s largest edible oils importer. Reportedly, India imports nearly 2 million tonnes of sunflower oil annually, 75 per cent of which comes from Ukraine

Europe’s second largest car manufacturer, the Volkswagen group, called for buyers announcing its decision to sell off its business. Volkswagen which has a factory in Kaluga with a capacity to produce 225,000 vehicles per year.

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War in Ukraine: Day 154

The War on the Ground:

On 27 July, Ukraine’s navy reported on the continuation of activities in the Odesa, Chernomorsk and Pivdennyi ports after the deal signed to export. In a statement: “Military and civilian specialists carefully search for underwater objects and install

special means of navigation equipment that will help the safety of navigation.”

On 27 July, Ukraine’s prime minister, Denys Shmyhal met Republic of Slovenia, minister of foreign affairs, Tanja Fajon in Ukraine to discuss on Slovenia’s support to EU’s sanction package and establishing a special tribunal against Russia for the committed crimes in Ukraine.

On the same day, in his address, Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine will be exporting electricity shortly to the EU to support the energy shortage caused by Russia. He said: “We are preparing to increase our export of electricity to consumers in the European Union, our exports allow us not only to earn foreign currency, but also to help our partners withstand Russian energy pressure.”

Zelenskyy proposed for a new top prosecutor to replace Iryna Venediktova who was terminated due to links with Russian agencies. The parliament is yet to vote on the new replacement.

On 27 July, ministry of agrarian policy and food of Ukraine reported on how organic production in Ukraine remains one of the key tasks and disclosed how Ukraine’s production capacity has increased 1.5 times with regards to “organic grain and oil products to the EU, soybeans, honey, vegetables and fruits.” According to agricultural policy and food of Ukraine, first deputy minister, by 2030 Ukraine will aim to increase its exports in organic products to USD one billion.

The Ukraine forces reported on the Russian shelling which was observed across Kharkiv, the Dnipropetrovsk, the Mykolaiv, the Sumy, the Donetsk, the Zaporizhzhia, the Luhansk, and the Kherson regions. It also reported the count of combat losses faced by Russia, including 40070 troops, 883 artillery systems, 2847 military auto vehicles and fuel tanks, 174 cruise missiles, and 726 tactical UAVs.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 27 July, TASS reported that a bridge in Kherson held by Russia was attacked by Ukraine in an attempt take back the control. The Antonovsky bridge is considered the main crossing point to reach Dnieper River which has been important for Russia to transfer its supplies.

On the EU continuing its ban on RT France, Russia accused EU’s for being “extremely negative.” RT France which had re-appealed to remove the ban to broadcast it channel in the EU. The ECJ ruled stating the content casted was promoting “war-propaganda and demoralizing Ukraine,” and rejected the appeal.

A Russian spokesperson from the LPR region confirmed on Russia gained control of Uglegorsk thermal power plant in Svetlodarsk which was initially possessed by Ukraine. He said: “As they were withdrawing, the enemy spared no effort, no ammunition to destroy the infrastructure of the power plant.”

Russian forces reported on LPR and DPR forces had achieved bringing Novoluganskoye in control. Novoluganskoye which is located seven kilometers from Uglegorsk thermal plant, north of Gorlovka region.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 27 July, Turkish defence minister confirmed the installation of the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul. He said that the center will use civilian and military personnel from Russia and Ukraine to monitor the ship movements and inspect to ensure no banned weapons are transported into Ukraine.

The UK ministry of defence’s intelligence reported on the forward movement of Russia’s Wagner Group on ground in Donbas surrounding the Vuhlehirsk power plant. As per its observation, the Ukraine forces were seen to have withdrawn from the region.

Turkey’s foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has once again warned Sweden and Finland on not satisfying the agreed conditions of Turkey placed during the NATO Madrid

summit. He has accused Sweden especially for not still initiating the extradition process of the listed suspects by Turkey. Cavusoglu said: "They must fulfill their responsibilities, or we'll block their NATO bids."

Germany's minister of foreign affairs Annalena Baerbock affirmed on the supply of IRIS-T to Ukraine by end of August. The promised defence system was earlier meant to be given to Egypt and now being sent to Ukraine. The IRIS-T SLM launcher will help in deploying close at 20 kilometer distance, provides 360 degree protection, and high power firing capacity with multiple target capacity.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

The International Energy Agency's executive director warned the EU member states that with the steps taken on gas cut down against Russia might result in "serious rationing." He said that Europe's immediate steps to minimize the gas usage will make the winter situation challenging.

Ukraine-Canadian most famous band, the Balaklava Blues have raised CAD 500,000 through concerts and charity events to help Ukraine. This was also in connection with their brothers being part of the Ukraine armed forces.

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War in Ukraine: Day 153

The War on the Ground:

On 25 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Europe to retaliate against Russia's "gas war" by increasing the sanctions. He stated: "The gas blackmail of Europe, which only gets worse every month, is needed by a terrorist state to make the life of every European worse." He further claimed that Russia deliberately intended to reduce the flow to make it hard for Europe to cope with the coming winter.

On 26 July, Ukraine's southern military operational command reported that Russian forces launched several missile attacks on the Black Sea coast near the southern port city of Odesa and in Mykolaiv. The mayor of Mykolaiv, Oleksandr Sienkevych, claimed that the city's boiler facility had been damaged. Kim also reported that Aircraft were used to launch cruise missiles targeting port and railway infrastructure.

On the same day, the gas transmission system operator of Ukraine stated that Russian gas firm Gazprom has increased pressure on the Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod pipeline which carries gas to Europe without prior caution. The operator stated: "Failing to inform the operator in a timely manner carries potential risks to the normal operation of the pipeline."

Also on 26 July, the Chairman of the International Churchill Society, Laurence Geller conferred president Zelenskyy the Winston Churchill Leadership Award. Geller stated that he admires Zelenskyy's devotion to the fundamental principles of democracy

and persistence in defending his country which helps Europe to understand itself. Zelenskyy in response said that he dedicated the award to the Ukrainian people. He also urged for the continuation of modern and effective weapons to Ukraine in considerable quantities by stating: "The democracies of the world are capable of stopping any tyranny. We are capable of stopping any evil that threatens our freedom. Only the joint leadership of the entire free world can be enough for this."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 26 July, the deputy head of the military-civilian administration of the Kherson region in Ukraine, Kirill Stremousov stated that a referendum on joining the Russia will be held despite Kyiv's attempts to stop it. He further stated: "After the referendum takes place, we will become [part of] the Russian Federation, it will be another history, another country." Sremousov also reported that the referendum will be held with the Zaporizhzhia region on the same day and that the preparations for it are underway.

Also on 26 July, Russia's defence ministry reported that more than 40 foreign mercenaries, most of whom were Polish citizens, were killed by a missile strike in Donbas. The high-precision missile strike hit a temporary deployment of Ukraine's International Legion units in Konstantinovka. The defence ministry's data reveals that as of 17 June, 6,956 foreign mercenaries from 64 countries have arrived in Ukraine to fight for the country.

On 26 July, Russian gas operator Gazprom announced plans to reduce the supplies through the Nord Stream pipeline to 20 per cent of its capacity and will not be exceeding 33 million cubic meters a day. The move comes after the announcement that another Siemens gas turbine engine at the Portovaya compressor station will be halted for regular maintenance.

On 26 July, the ruble's value decreased relative to the international currencies. According to statistics from the Moscow Exchange, the dollar increased to the mark of 60 rubles and the euro to 61 rubles. At the

end of June, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov stated that the strengthening of the currency was causing the Russian budget to lose billions of dollars. By July 19, the specifics of the updated budget rule were revealed. The ministry advises focusing on a cut-off price of USD 60 per barrel and setting output at 9.5 million barrels per day for calculating basic revenues from the oil and gas business.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

The EU member states have added an exemption clause for some countries, where the agreement will be invoked as a mandate if supplies reach alarmingly low levels. According to the new clause, some countries which are not connected to EU's gas pipeline and are heavily dependent on Russia like Ireland, Malta and Cyprus will be exempt from this mandatory gas reduction. The Baltic States are also exempt from meeting the compulsory targets as they are heavily reliant on gas for their electricity production. According to the decision, countries will also ask for exemption if they are dependent on gas for critical industries, if their consumption has gone up by eight per cent or if they have exceeded their storage filling targets.

On 26 July, the UK government sanctioned two leaders from the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republics (LPR) and have frozen their assets. DPR prime minister Vitaly Khotsenko and LPR first deputy chairman Vladislav Kuznetsov have been banned from entering the UK. Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said that UK will keep imposing similar sanctions on people who are legitimising Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

On the same day, as a part of his three-leg tour of Africa, France's president Emmanuel Macron visited Cameroon. He disputed the claims that the West is to blame for the food crisis in Africa. Macron said that like energy, Russia was also using food as a "weapon of war." He also mentioned that given the current situation, France will help Africa in producing more food for their own use and to reduce their dependency.

On 25 July, Slovakia's defence minister

Jaroslav Nad announced that they are considering donating their Soviet-era MiG fleet of warplanes to Ukraine. He mentioned that no concrete decision has been taken yet, but they are “ready to discuss that later on,” after their fleets are grounded. Slovakia has deals with Czech Republic and Poland to assist in monitoring Slovak airspace, after from the beginning of September. If discussions with their allies are fruitful, this will be fourth variety of heavy weapons that Slovakia has donated to Ukraine. Till now, its donations include Soviet-era S-300 air defence system, military helicopters and thousands of Grad multiple-rocket launcher rockets.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 26 July, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued a warning about an impending global recession. In an update of the *World Economic Outlook*, the IMF said that due to the war in Ukraine and its resultant fallouts, the economies of the US, China and Europe will slow down more sharply than projected. This might lead to the weakest world economy since 1970. In the new forecast, the IMF says that output will fall to 3.2 per cent from the 6.1 per cent as had been predicted last year. Moreover, prices are expected to rise 6.5 per cent in rich economies and 9.5 per cent in emerging and developing economies. In a blog post accompanying the report, the IMF chief, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said that the outlook of the global economy is “increasingly gloomy.”

Also on the same day, Ukraine’s National Bank Governor Kyrylo Shevchenko said that Ukraine has requested the IMF for a USD 15-20 billion loan, and are in consultation about the same. He hoped that the loan will be granted through a Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) or an Extended Fund Facility (EFF), over the course of two or three years.

Guatemala’s president Alejandro Giammattei became the first Latin American leader to visit Ukraine, since Russia’s invasion in February. He met with Zelenskyy in Kyiv and expressed his solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Giammattei also reiterated that Guatemala has been against this conflict from the very beginning and as long as

human lives are lost they will not silence their voices.

On 26 July, Uganda received Russia’s foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, as a part of his Africa tour. President Yoweri Museveni conducted a closed-door meeting with Lavrov. After the meeting Museveni thanked Russia for supporting the anti-colonial movement for the last 100 years. According to him, there were no reasons to criticize as he observed to have not committed any mistake.

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War in Ukraine: Day 152

The War on the Ground:

On 25 July, president Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine's forces are reclaiming territory under Russia's control in Kherson. "Step by step" progress was being made by the forces to encircle Russia's troops in the region.

Ukraine's deputy minister of infrastructure, Yuriy Vaskov, reported that under the Istanbul agreement, the shipment of grains from Ukraine will begin from the Chornomorsk port, followed by Odesa and then Pivdennyi. Vaskov also mentioned that Ukraine will be ready to export soon. A deputy UN spokesperson, Farhan Haq also reiterated that all parties involved in the deal have "reconfirmed their commitment," and that the Joint Coordination Centre will be coordinating the procedure.

Missile attacks have been reported in Chuhuiv in Kharkiv and explosions were also heard in Mykolaiv. While no casualties have been reported, around five people have been injured. Russia's forces also opened fire in Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region with multiple launch rocket systems. Moreover, three districts in the Dnipropetrovsk region were also struck by close to 40 rockets.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 25 July, Russia's spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov said that the strike on Odesa port was to target the grain shipments under the Istanbul accords. He further clarified that the strike was meant only to target the military infrastructure around the port. Since Russia's forces only struck a ship repair

plant and a depot of US-supplied Harpoon missiles, it will not be affecting the start of the shipment process.

On the same day, the head of Russia's Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin said that they have found that over 200 members of Ukraine's military were involved in "crimes against the peace and security of mankind." He also said that charges have been filed against 92 commanders and subordinates in Ukraine, while 96 are currently on the wanted list. On 25 July, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov who was visiting Africa, met Congo's foreign minister. Post the meeting, he said that Europe was sacrificing its own interests by trying to "submit to the dictates of the United States." He was speaking in the context of a comment made by Poland's president Andrzej Duda, about how Russia "must lose the war" against Ukraine. He also reiterated Peskov's statement about how the strikes on the Odesa port do not contradict the recently signed Istanbul agreement regarding grain shipments from Ukraine. On 24 July, the head of the Zaporizhzhya region military-civilian administration, Yevgeny Balitsy informed that two more centers will be opened to receive applications for Russian citizenship. The centers will be in Melitopol and Berdyansk. Balitsy said that this was due to increased demand in the region for Russian citizenship.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 25 July, the UK's outgoing prime minister Boris Johnson joined Ukraine's troop's training in Scotland. He participated in a training exercise to learn how to throw grenades, shoot assault rifles, and use top-of-the-range rocket launchers.

The UK will be hosting the upcoming edition of the Eurovision Song Contest. This comes after the organization decided that it cannot be held in Ukraine, due to the ongoing war-time conditions.

After an executive order by the EU, Lithuania has lifted its rail transit ban of Russian goods to the Kaliningrad exclave. As per EU sanctions, transport by road is still affected,

but 60 wagons of cement will be taken to the territory soon.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 24 July, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Kazakhstan will increase its defence spending and seek closer bilateral ties with China and NATO countries. This is amid fears of Russian aggression and geopolitical ambitions spilling over into Kazakhstan. An additional USD 918 million will be allocated to the defence budget.

On 25 July, Taiwan started its largest annual military exercise, consisting of trench warfare and shoulder-launched Stinger missiles. The exercise was simulated to be against Chinese attacks. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan's increased military preparedness can be in apprehension of a similar Chinese attack.

The Human Rights Watch has said that Russia's forces in the occupied areas of Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions have tortured, unlawfully detained, and forcibly disappeared civilians. The organization reported on 42 such cases and said that the objective of these was to either obtain information or instill fear in the people to accept Russia's occupation.

The World Food Programme (WFP) said that they were optimistic about grain export as a part of the UN-brokered deal between Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, and the UN. However, they warned that the export of grains alone will not be enough to mitigate the global food crisis, even if its implementation is smooth and immediate.

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War in Ukraine: Day 150 & 151

The War on the Ground:

On 23 July, Russia struck Ukraine's military infrastructure in Odesa port with missiles. The attack followed a day after the signing of the Istanbul agreement which unblocked Ukrainian ships that carried millions of tonnes of grains from the Black Sea port. The

Kalibr missiles that were allegedly launched by Russia destroyed military infrastructures and a Ukrainian patrol boat in Odesa port with high precision. Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed that the attack on Odesa exhibited the credibility of Russia's promises. He also said that it was "spit in the face" of the deal that was made at Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul.

On the same day, Ukraine reported that its air defence systems shot down two cruise missiles before two more struck the port of Odesa. In the Eastern Ukraine region of Donetsk, the fighting continued in which two Americans and three people were killed.

On 23 July, Zelenskyy in his address spoke about the developments in the Donbas, Kharkiv regions and the advancement of the Ukrainian Armed Forces troops in the occupied Kherson region. He reported that Odesa Art Museum was also demolished during the strike. Apart from this Zelenskyy mentioned the discussion that he had with the president of Kazakhstan on projects in the fields of energy, economy, and digitalization.

On the same day, Zelenskyy met with the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee of the US, Adam Smith. Zelenskyy showed his gratitude to the US for its staunch support of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also thanked them for the warm welcome that first lady Olena Zelenska received during her visit to the US. Which has provided the latest package of weapons that included HIMARS launcher systems, shells and unmanned aerial vehicles to Ukraine. They also discussed the reconstruction of Ukraine post-war with the Fast Recovery Plan.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 24 July, Moscow confirmed the missile strike in the port of Odesa in the Black sea. Russia's defence ministry denied its claims of Ukraine saying it attacked Ukraine's military infrastructure and arms stockpile and nothing more. They had destroyed a shipyard, a docked warship that belonged to Ukraine, and a warehouse that contained Harpoon anti-ship missiles that were

supplied by the US to Kyiv on the Odesa port. They were destroyed by sea-based high-precision Kalibr missiles. Ukraine claimed Russia targeted the grain silos that were there but Moscow refused to accept the accusation.

On the same day, an attack from the UAF in Melitopol was repelled by the Russian air defence systems. Ukraine's military had sent attack drones and missiles during the night which was incapacitated by Russian air defence and thus protecting the residents of Melitopol.

On 23 July, a seven-member election committee was to be formed in the Kherson region to conduct a referendum that allows the region to accede to Russia. On 22 July 2022, the head of the Kherson Region's military-civilian administration placed the decree stating that a seven-member election committee that serves for three years was to be created and the nominations for the same were accepted. The Kherson region will not have the right to express its opinion on the future of the region. Also on the same day, the head of the military-civilian administration of the Zaporizhzhia region signed a decree on the creation of an election committee to hold a referendum to accede to Russia.

On 24 July, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov after talks with his Egyptian spokesperson stated that Russia was not looking for the removal of western sanctions but urged to fix the food insecurity that the west had created on the global market itself. Even though the west claims that they do not include Russian ships that carry grains in the sanctions, they bar Moscow's ships from admission to foreign ports and restrict the entry of foreign ships in Russian ports. The west has been silent about the grain ship restrictions that increased the global food crisis. He urged the west to free Russian grain exports to ease global hunger. The UN chief Guterres agreed to remove the sanctions placed on Russian grain export if Russia follows through with the deal to unblock exports of grain, food and fertilizers from Ukraine made in Istanbul with Ukraine.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 23 July, Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orbán urged the US and Russia to hold peace negotiations stating that Ukraine cannot win the war. He also added that the EU needs to restructure its strategies toward Russia as the sanctions are not playing an effective role. Orbán stated: "A new strategy is needed which should focus peace talks and drafting a good peace proposal...instead of winning the war." In his speech to Romania, he claimed that the four pillars of the Western strategy on Ukraine were that Ukraine could defeat Russia with NATO weapons, sanctions would weaken and destabilize Russia's government, sanctions would hurt Russia more than Europe, and the rest of the world would unite in support of Europe. However, he mentioned that this strategy is toppling European governments and rising energy prices.

On 24 July, the US secretary of state Anthony Blinken condemned Russia's attack on the port of Odesa amid the grain corridor talks. He further blamed Russia for worsening the food crisis by not abiding by the grain corridor agreements signed with the UN, Turkey, and Ukraine. He stated: "This attack casts serious doubt on the credibility of Russia's commitment to yesterday's deal and undermines the work of the UN, Turkey, and Ukraine to get critical food to world markets."

On 24 July, Siemens Energy AG firm in Canada submitted the documentation on the transportation of turbines for the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline to Gazprom. The documents also stated the exemption of sanctions from the EU and Canada for the turbines.

On 23 July, the deputy director of the European Commission's energy department, Matthew Baldwin stated that the EU plans to acquire gas supplies from Nigeria in response to the anticipated supply cuts from Russia. During his visit to Abuja, the minister of petroleum resources, Timipre Sylva mentioned that the federal government is improving its security in the Niger Delta and is planning to reopen the Trans Niger pipeline in September which would

potentially provide more gas to Europe.

On 24 July, the defence ministry of Turkey stated that the joint coordination center in Istanbul for the agreed grain corridor is operating successfully to ensure the shipment of grain to global markets. The ministry also mentioned that the first ship from Ukrainian ports is expected to leave soon.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 22 July, Egypt's president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi visited Paris to meet France's president Emmanuel Macron to discuss the economic, energy and global food security fallouts of the conflict in Ukraine.

On 24 July, bakers in the Philippines are reducing the size of a well-known breakfast bun to deal with greater inflation as the conflict in Ukraine drives up wheat costs and a weaker peso raises the cost of imported edible oil. The bun "pandesal" also known as the poor man's bread which is preferred by workers and retirees had to be downsized to keep the cost constant.

The supply disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine have also affected Tunisia as it imports 60 per cent of its soft wheat and 66 per cent of its barley from Moscow and Kiev.

On 24 July, the secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Rebeca Grynspan stated that the agreement on the grain corridor may partially ease the sanctions on Russia by reducing the logistical costs. She stated: "There are delivery problems, insurance problems, payment problems, freight problems, and all these things make prices go up. So, the main thing I foresee is that these difficulties will ease and transaction prices will come down."

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War in Ukraine: Day 149

The War on the Ground:

On 22 July, Ukraine and Russia agreed to sign the deal to allow the export of millions of tonnes of grains that were blockaded at Black Sea ports in the Odesa region. The signing of the UN-backed agreement will take place at Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul and will be attended by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The deal would be critical for global grain security. This deal would loosen up the global food crisis. The deal was agreed upon after Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and UN held a meeting to discuss about the blockade.

On 21 July, more than 230 fire missions were performed by the missile and artillery units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, exterminating 35 Russian soldiers and demolishing a Msta-S self-propelled howitzer, two reconnaissance drones, three armored vehicles and eight vehicles. Ukrainian aircraft made eight strikes on Russia's reserves and positions, with five strikes launched by a bomber and attack aircraft and three by helicopters. The UAF also ambushed five Russian strongholds and two ammunition depots in the Kherson region and also attacked a large number of Russian soldiers in the Mykolaiv region.

On the same day, Ukraine's deputy defence minister Volodymyr Havrylov visited Scotland to meet the UK Armed Forces minister James Heappey. He also went to observe the training of the sailors of Ukraine's navy with the help of the British Royal Navy. Ukraine's recruits were educated on weapon drills, the operation of machinery on board navy vessels, and advanced damage control methods. They were being trained in the water of Scotland. Over a thousand of the UK's Armed Forces personnel were seen to teach the UAF the tactics and techniques used by them.

Also on the same day, the naval forces of the UAF posted on *Facebook* that three Russian Kalibr operational and tactical missile carriers were on combat duty in the Black Sea. Furthermore, there were five Russian Kalibr operational and tactical missile carriers and two missile cruisers were spotted in the Mediterranean Sea. Six

Russian ships and boats still control the maritime lane in the Sea of Azov. It was also noted that Russia violated the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, by turning off the Automatic Identification System on civilian vessels in the Sea of Azov. According to Ukraine's ministry of defence intelligence, Russia had consumed more than 50 per cent of the high-precision weapons that it had from the beginning of the war.

On 22 July, Mariupol-based Ukrainian steel company, Metinvest claims that Russia has been looting USD 600 million worth of steel from plants and ports in Ukraine. Russia was looting thousands of tonnes of steel that were paid for by European customers including in the UK. Russia has been pillaging the company's selling it to internal markets in Africa and Asia. Yuriy Ryzhenkov, chief executive of Metinvest wants to go before international courts to take legal action against Moscow on accounts of thievery. He said that his company is contributing to the war by manufacturing bulletproof west and providing steel for underground bunkers and armoured vehicles.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 22 July, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov promised to deliver pledged food, fertiliser, energy and other commodities to Africa despite being sunk in western sanctions. He denied the west's and Ukraine's claim of Russia purposefully starving Africa. Russia had blockaded 20 million tonnes of grain in Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea. The sanctions imposed on Russia denied its ships insurance and obstructed foreign vessels from Russian ports. This is in addition to already worse conditions due to the covid pandemic that led to food shortages in Africa. Lavrov said that Russia will fulfil its promise and will provide what is obligated to Africa.

Also on 22 July, the leaders of the pro-Russian separatists decided to block Google in the region of Donetsk People's Republic. Luhansk People's Republic blocked Google on the previous day of DPR doing the same. The reason given by DPR leader Denis

Pushilin for obstructing Google was that the American giant was endorsing violence against Russians, especially the people of the Donbas region. Pushilin also accused Google of working for the US government. According to Pushilin, the west and Ukraine are trying to build unprecedented pressure on the physical and psychological safety of the people of DPR and are intending to break its people.

On the same day, Russia updated its list of unfriendly nations. Greece, Denmark, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Croatia were added to the list of foreign states that committed unfriendly acts toward Russia. The list was a countermeasure deployed by Russia's president Vladimir Putin to unfriendly actions by other countries by limiting the possibility of hiring Russian workers for its embassies, consulates, and representative offices of government agencies. The limitations of Greece, Denmark, and Slovakia were 34, 20, and 16 respectively. Slovenia and Croatia were denied hiring employees for their diplomatic missions and consular institutions.

Also on 22 July, a referendum on accession to Russia by LPR was decided to be held at 492 polling stations. The creation of the headquarters of the referendum was initiated on 15 July at the meeting of the Public Chamber of the republic. According to the head of LPR, Leonid Pasechnik, the main task before the referendum was to liberate the LPR from Ukraine's army. However, on 03 July it was confirmed to be liberated which led to the consideration of the referendum. On 17 July, the election commission of LPR approved the procedure for creating voting and referendum stations.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 21 July, Germany is seen to have relied upon coal as a temporary solution to its energy. It is afraid that coal alone would not be efficient in providing energy for industries and the whole country. Its dependence on Russian gas will leave Berlin facing challenges if the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, which carries the Russian gas, will cut off its supply completely. Germany is looking to increase its gas storage from 66

per cent to 80 to 90 per cent before winter. Berlin would have to implement gas rationing to save for the winter. It is planning to expand its LNG imports to secure supplies from countries like Qatar and store them in floating LNG terminals. The coalition government especially the greens is against the usage of nuclear power.

On the same day, the EU imposed a new set of sanctions on Russia mainly targeting its gold export. Russia's second-largest export industry after energy has also been financing its invasion of Ukraine. According to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the gold export ban will not be enough to hurt Russia and its economy. The EU also decided to grant EUR 500 million to boost Ukraine's military aid.

Also on 22 July, Poland is getting ready to purchase tanks, howitzers and fighter planes from South Korea as Warsaw looks to increase its defensive capabilities if Russia attacks it. The deal entails 48 FA-50 light combat jets, 180 K2 "Black Panther" tanks, and an unknown number of K9 howitzers. The agreement would bolster Poland's armed forces if Russia threatens to attack Warsaw. First howitzers and tanks are scheduled to arrive at the end of this year and planes next year, said the defence minister of Poland. Poland had contributed weaponry in its aid to Ukraine. The deal is to replace arms that were given to Ukraine.

Also on 22 July, the federal council reacted to the decision taken by the leaders of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) regarding Tiraspol incorporating into Russia. Russia will only consider Transnistria's incorporation only if it abides by the norms of international law. Transnistria plans to gain independence from Moldova by the 2006 referendum. After gaining independence it is planning to become a part of Russia.

Also on 22 July, Italy's ambassador to Ukraine Pier Francesco Zazo met with Kyiv's deputy head of the office of the president, Kyrilo Tymoshenko to discuss the reconstruction of Ukraine's recovered regions affected by the Russian invasion. Tymoshenko presented a Fast Recovery Plan

for infrastructures in the regions that were affected by the Russian aggression. The recovery plan includes the restoration of schools, private houses, apartments, hospitals and networks. Ambassador Zazo noted that Italy would help in the implementation of the fast recovery plan.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 21 July, US senators said that the spreading of Russia's influence in Africa has threatened American interests. Senators expressed worries over Russia's use of the mercenary Wagner Group in Africa, especially in Mali which is politically unstable at the present. The group had helped in multiple military coups in the region, giving the stronghold of West Africa to Russia. They have also expanded market influence in Africa ousting the US from getting Africa's rich commodities. Russia had gathered support in Africa opposing western sanctions. The US is afraid of Africa accepting disinformation from Russia and the impacts it brings to fragile and unstable countries.

On 22 July, South Africa saw the food crisis worsening in the country, increasing social instability and unrest. People have died of starvation including 12 children in the Eastern Cape. The South African consumer inflation rose to a 13-year high last month with an average household basic food costing around USD 270 per month. The war in Ukraine and the Blockade of grain in the Odesa region have influenced the rise of food prices in South Africa.

Also on 22 July, Israel decided to help Ukraine in its war against Russia albeit with caution. Even though Israel also faces security threats, it has reached out to Ukraine to assist. The strategic decision made by Israel is to provide Ukraine with the maximum aid that it can afford. Israel has provided treatment for dozens of people that were brought to their country. Humanitarian aid like delivering medicine, food, fresh water, generator, and Israeli doctors was provided to Ukraine

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War in Ukraine: Day 148

The War on the Ground:

On 21 July, the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) devalued the Ukrainian hryvnia currency by 25 per cent against the US dollar to assist the country from the economic impact of the war. The bank reduced the

new hryvnia rate to 36.5686 to the dollar compared with the previous rate of 29.25. The governor of NBU Kyrylo Shevchenko mentioned that the new exchange rate "will become the anchor for the economy and make it more resilient at times of uncertainty." Changing the exchange rate would result in the increased inflows of foreign currency by exporters and minimize the "speculative behavior of market participants." The NBU has also forecasted the country's inflation rate for 2022 to be more than 30 per cent from its previous forecast of 20 per cent.

On the same day, the Ukrainian Stock exchange reported that the permission for holders of its Eurobonds to defer payments for two years and holders of its Value Recovery Instruments (VRIs) to change their terms is scheduled for tenth August. The Ministry of Finance stated that this measure will preserve foreign exchange liquidity within the country and reduce the existing USD five billion monthly budget deficit.

Also on 21 July, the Secret Service of Ukraine detained a Russian spy suspected of sharing on-the-ground intelligence in Ukraine to assist the invasion. The agent was claimed to be a major business owner. The individual has been collecting information on the deployment and movement of forces in the South and transmitted collected intelligence to the Russians by secure communication channels. His messages included map coordinates, detailed descriptions, and pictures of buildings.

On 21 July, Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation reported that the joint agreement of the mobile operators of Ukraine and the EU will be extended for ease of communication. The refugees taking shelter in other countries will be able to continue calling their relatives in Ukraine without extra charges

On 21 July, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Oleh Nikolenk urged China to not politicize the war in Ukraine and to use its powers on Moscow to condemn the war.

**The Moscow View:
Claims by Russia**

On 21 July, Russia's president Vladimir Putin signed a decree to grant citizenship status to an individual from France. The head of the Foundation for the Development of Russian-French Strategic Initiatives, Pierre Malinowski served eight years in the French army. Then he was a member of the European Parliament, where he dealt with issues of relations with Russia. For the past six years, he has been residing in Moscow and organizing historical projects based on the common history of Russia and France.

On 21 July, Hungary's foreign minister Peter Szijjarto visited Moscow to purchase gas for his country. His party office stated: "In order to ensure the security of Hungary's energy supply, the government has decided to purchase an additional 700 million cubic meters of natural gas in addition to the quantities stipulated in the long-term contracts."

On 21 July, the operator of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, Nord Stream AG has completed the maintenance of the pipeline and the twin turbines within the scheduled time. The operator mentioned that gas flow has achieved 40 per cent of the maximum capacity. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that Western sanctions obstruct the maintenance of equipment and turbines critical for Nord Stream one to work at full capacity. He said: "Any technical difficulties linked to this are caused by those restrictions that European countries introduced themselves."

Also on 21 July, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's second Commonwealth of Independent States, Alexey Polishchuk department stated that the 5+2 format on the Transnistrian settlement de facto was not progressive and gave no alternate solutions. The peace talks in the 5+2 format which includes Moldova and Transnistria as parties to the conflict, Russia, Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe acting as mediators and the EU and US with the observer status has began to lose momentum amid the political instability in Moldova.

On 21 July, the chief of Russia's National Defence Management Center, Mikhail Mizintsev reported that more than 2.7 million people have been evacuated from Ukraine and from the Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics to Russia since 24 February. He stated: "Despite the difficulties and obstacles created by the Kiev regime, during the day, as many as 26,764 people, including 4,624 children, were evacuated from dangerous zones in various Ukrainian regions, and from the republics of Donbas to Russia without the participation of the Ukrainian side."

**The West View:
Responses from the US and Europe**

On 21 July, the first lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska visited Washington to address the US Congress and called for additional defensive weapons. She expressed gratitude to the US for its assistance in providing aid to Ukraine. She stated: "We are grateful, really grateful that the United States stands with us in this fight for our shared values for human life and freedom." Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said Olena's address has made the legislators "...learn more about the terrible toll of the Russian invasion and to express our gratitude to the people of Ukraine for their fight for democracy." Senator Roger Wicker said that supplying Ukraine with defence systems was a "necessary part of our efforts" to help Ukraine, and Senator Bill Cassidy said that the Biden administration had congressionally approved the funds for Ukraine.

On 21 July, the US Central Intelligence Agency director William Burns reported that an estimated 15,000 Russians were killed in the war in Ukraine during his address to the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado. Also during the conference, the chief of MI6 Richard Moore mentioned that Russian spies working as diplomats in Europe have been expelled. Moore stated that the expulsions of about 400 Russian diplomats from countries in continental Europe, including France and Germany, had reduced the Kremlin's espionage capabilities.

On the same day, the UK foreign secretary and prime ministership candidate Liz Truss

in an interview with *BBC Radio* mentioned that she did not support the direct involvement of British troops in Ukraine. Truss said: "We are doing all we can to support Ukraine. We've led the international coalition on sending weapons, we're putting the sanctions in place, but I do not support the direct involvement of UK troops."

The UK's National Crime Agency called for more funding to address Russian kleptocracy. NCA claimed that it receives only a third of the budget per officer given to the FBI, making it difficult for it to combat Russian kleptocracy and sanctions evasion. The UK had lagged behind the US in seizing the assets of Russian oligarchs who had been sanctioned, because London was unable to commit the same "substantial level of investment" that Washington had made in fighting global corruption and evading sanctions.

The UK's defence secretary Ben Wallace has revealed a further military support package for Ukraine, The UK will supply scores of artillery guns, drones and more anti-tank weapons to Ukraine in the coming weeks. He also mentioned Counter-battery radar systems and more than 50,000 rounds of ammunition for Ukraine's existing Soviet-era artillery will be provided.

On 21 July, *Bloomberg* claimed that the Kremlin may hold referendum elections in the occupied territories for Putin to include them into Russia within September. According to sources on the ground authorities are preparing to set up elections in regions the Russian military is able to take control of in the upcoming weeks.

On 21 July, the foreign banks operating in Russia, which include Citi and Raiffeisen Bank International, began to recruit staff for operations amid sanctions. The Central bank of Russia has refused to take over the operation of foreign banks amidst domestic calls to do so. The foreign banks are unable to move out of Russia because of sanctions, therefore the banks have begun to start its operations and service nevertheless.

On 21 July, the EU froze assets and banned visas of ten Syrians for recruiting

mercenaries to fight for Russia. The names of the Syrians and two private security firms were added to the EU sanctions list. Those on the blacklist include the owner of the Cham Wings airline Issam Shammout, who is a close ally of Syria's president Bashar al-Assad. An army colonel, Saleh al-Abdullah is accused of involving forces from his 16th Brigade, who worked with Russian forces in Syria, to fight against Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 21 July, South Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries reported that the cargo processed at seaports fell 5.1 per cent in the second quarter of this year amid global supply disruptions due to the prolonged conflict in Ukraine. Cargo operated at the ports came to 373.98 million tons in the April-June period, compared with 394.17 million tons a year earlier.

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War in Ukraine: Day 147

The War on the Ground:

On 19 July, Ukraine joined the International Energy Agency (IEA), after a joint declaration was signed in Warsaw. Ukraine's energy minister, German Galushchenko, and the IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol represented the two parties. Galushchenko said that given the energy war with Russia, this agreement will help Ukraine in building better energy systems in the country.

On 20 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a phone conversation with European Council president Charles Michel. They discussed the on-ground situation in Ukraine. Zelenskyy stressed on the importance of modern heavy weapons for

their war efforts and also thanked the member states for the recent fifth package of financial assistance to Ukraine.

On 20 July, Ukraine's armed forces shelled and destroyed parts of the Antonovskiy bridge. This connects Kherson, which is currently occupied by Russia, with regions in the Crimean Peninsula. Ukraine used the HIMAR multiple launch systems, launching 12 rockets, and 11 of them hit the bridge. As a result, Russians in Kherson might soon face a dearth of supplies. They will also face troubles in retreating from Kherson in an organized fashion if necessary.

Russia's forces continued their attack on the Sumy and Chernihiv regions with aviation, mortars, canon, and rocket artillery. They also launched assaults on Bakhmut, on the way to the Vuhlehirska thermal power plant and opened fire in Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

On the same day, in a briefing at the Ukraine Media Center, Mariupol mayor Vadym Boichenko alleged that Russia has set up at least four filtration centers. He said that over 10,000 Ukrainians were detained there, often under abusive conditions. Boichenko added that many Mariupol residents had already died in the filtration centers, as there were no doctors available.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 20 July, Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov told state media that Russia's "geographical goals" in Ukraine have moved beyond the Donbas region. He mentioned that their goals now include among other territories, Kherson and the Zaporizhzhya region. He blamed the West's steady weapons supply to Ukraine as the cause of Russia's change in objectives. Moreover, about the grain corridor talks with Ukraine and Turkey, Lavrov asked UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to intervene and facilitate the process. This came after his comment that Moscow has agreed to "basic principles" on a grain agreement but Ukraine's delegation has refused to include a clause to protect Russian exports.

On the same day, Russia's state media

regulator, Roskomnadzor announced that they will punish Wikimedia Foundation. Wikipedia is being held in violation of law, as it allegedly has misleading information about the Ukraine war. Roskomnadzor said that a coercive measure will be applied which will require search engines to “inform internet users about a violation of Russian legislation by a foreign entity...”

On 19 July, Russia’s foreign minister Sergey Vershinin said that international organizations should participate in the upcoming tribunal against Ukrainian militants. He also said that for greater awareness of the crimes against civilians in the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) and Lugansk People’s Republic(LPR), a “broader representation” will be necessary.

Russia’s envoy to North Korea, Ambassador Alexander Matsegora said that North Korea could send builders to the Donbas regions, to help in reconstruction efforts. He further mentioned: “Highly qualified, hardworking, and ready to work in the most difficult conditions, Korean builders will be an asset in the serious task of restoring social, infrastructural, and industrial facilities destroyed by the retreating Ukronazis.”

On the same day, Russia’s chief of Russia’s National Defence Management Center, Mikhail Mizintsev reported that around 600 tonnes of humanitarian cargoes were delivered to the DPR and LPR. Six humanitarian operations were conducted, which extended to the Kharkhiv and Zaporizhzhya regions. Mizintsev also said that over 28,000 people, including nearly 4,000 children, were evacuated from dangerous regions in Ukraine, and from the LPR and DPR to Russia.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 20 July, the EU asked member states to cut gas usage by 15 per cent till next March, pre-empting a complete shutdown of the Russian gas supply. Ursula von der Leyen presented the commission’s winter plan and proposed the establishment of a new Council Regulation on Coordinated Demand Reduction Measures for Gas. This regulation would set targets to assist all member states

to reduce their gas demands. The Commission has also adopted a European Gas Demand Reduction Plan which contains measures, principles, and criteria for a coordinated reduction in gas demand.

On the same day, US Defence Secretary, Lloyd Austin said that they will send four more high mobility artillery rocket systems to Ukraine. At a virtual meeting with allies in Ukraine, Llyod Austin said: So far, the US has provided 12 HIMARS. “(We) will keep finding innovative ways to sustain our long-term support for the brave men and women of the Ukrainian armed forces...”

Also on 20 July, the Czech Republic’s foreign minister Jan Lipavsky and Austria’s foreign minister, Alexander Schallenberg visited Irpin. This is part of their work visit to Ukraine. The mayor of Irpin, Oleksandr Markushyn thanked them for their continued support to Irpin, and Ukraine at large. The two leaders also met president Zelenskyy who thanked them for their “powerful support” and spoke about Ukraine’s membership in the EU.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 20 July, the WHO said that millions of refugees and migrants are being denied appropriate and adequate healthcare. WHO is attempting to analyze the implications of migration and healthcare and has urged host countries to include vulnerable populations in their health systems. This crisis has been increased by the conflict in Ukraine which has pushed the total number of displaced people in the world to above 100 million. Moreover, the UN refugee agency reported that since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February, more than 9.5 million border crossings have been recorded from Ukraine.

Egypt’s president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, met with Serbia’s president during his three-day visit to the country. The two leaders signed a partnership declaration announced plans for a free trade agreement and also discussed the phase of dealing with the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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War in Ukraine: Day 146

The War on the Ground:

On 19 July, the first lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska met the first lady of the US, Jill Biden where both met the Ukrainian residents in the US and the USAID administrator. The USAID, is one of the partners to Ukraine which supports the Ukrainians in terms of psychological under the Psychosocial programme. Zelenska stressed the continuity of the programme.

Ukrainian Agrarian Policy and the first deputy minister state receiving an extra supply of sacks to store grains up to 200,000 tonnes from international allies. With the scheduled supply Ukraine will be able to store grains and use them for loading or unloading purposes for the rest of the year. The statement also covered the harvest data of Ukraine, where 67 million tonnes of grain crops are due to be harvested for the year.

On 19 July, a Ukraine member of parliament released a statement announcing the dismissal of Ukraine's spy agency Iryna Venediktova. The decision comes after 650 cases were filed over treason collusion charges.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Russia's Council member, Vladimir Dzhubarov commented on Estonia for portraying itself as a bigger player and for going against its neighbour Russia. The comments come in response to Estonia's Ministry of Internal Affairs' accusation of the EU for its double standards on Estonian citizens.

On 19 July, *RT* reported that the Transnistrian president Vadim Krasnoselsky had proposed giving security guarantees to Luhansk and Donetsk regions in the 5+2 peace dialogues. Krasnoselsky said: "There are political representatives, there is the president, there are other Moldovan officials

who should now be talking and finding compromises on the issues that are currently not being solved. The agenda of the talks is known by everyone quite well, and it still holds true.” The proposal comes as a way to solve the dispute between the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) and Moldova. Since the start of the war PMR is found to be experiencing series of explosions and has a history of holding friendly relations with Russia.

The Russian representative in the LPR region, Leonid Slutsky issued a warning that Russia will opt for stricter demands when negotiations with Ukraine resume. He said: “Today, the conditions on our part will be tougher regarding demilitarization and ‘denazification’; tougher both in terms of essence and the timeframe of their implementation.” Earlier the talks were paused, where Ukraine was blamed for not being on the forefront.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

The UK ministry of defence reported on the war ground status, where it found Russia to be holding six armies in Donbas and continues to face the issue of maintaining its combat power. It also said that Russia faces a limitation in terms of placing soldiers and deploying the military against Ukraine in the Kherson region. It revealed the instant policy objective of Russia to be seizing of Donetsk and proceeding further to acquire more territory.

On 19 July, the Ireland government announced on the Gormanston army camp which can hold 320 people will be soon ready to hold Ukrainian refugees. Close to 250 people are located in an old terminal building of Ireland where facing space shortage and due to which the army camp provides an option for the shift. According to the Irish minister for integration: “We have been focused on trying to reduce the numbers of people staying in City West, that’s why we are looking to bring in additional accommodation.”

On 19 July, the European Commission accepted the proposal on reinforcing the defence industrial capabilities of the EU. The

decision comes to address the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Commission will invest EUR 500 million from the EU budget from 2022 to 2024 to invest in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and boost its interoperability. According to Executive Vice-President, Margarethe Vestager: “..The proposal for the EDIRPA Regulation is a historical milestone in establishing the EU Defence Union, increasing the security of EU citizens and making the EU a stronger partner for our allies.”

On the same day, European Commission president von der Leyen issued a statement with leaders of Albania and North Macedonia on initiating the accession talks. In the released statement she announced the start of the screening process to ensure both countries are aware of the “rights and obligations of the EU.” Secondly, she assured how the EU, Albania, and North Macedonia will work closely in terms of floods, forest fires, earthquakes, and migration. Apart from this Ursula confirmed the investments in energy, transport, and new business sectors.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 19 July, South Korea and the UK agreed to boost their defence cooperation in expanded domains such as cyber, outer space and combined exercises in the first defence dialogue. During the meeting between South Korea’s vice defence minister Shin Beom-chul and UK defence minister Annabel Goldie, they discussed on implementing the agreements on defence as part of the bilateral cooperation. Both South Korea and the UK have so far agreed to cooperate on “Indo-Pacific regional strategy, defence and security, North Korea issues, supply chains and trade.”

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War in Ukraine: Day 145

The War on the Ground:

On 18 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy temporarily suspended the Head of the Security Service (SBU) Ivan Bakanov and Prosecutor General Iryna Venedyktova. The president's office said that even though an investigation was to be conducted on them, they have not been completely dismissed from service yet. The two top officials were removed by "Article 47 of the Disciplinary Statute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," which elucidates that a "serviceman" can be removed if they caused a significant threat, or failed to perform their duties leading to "human casualties or other grave consequences."

In his address, Zelenskyy alleged that Russia was holding back the Ukrainians in the occupied regions in an "information vacuum." He reported that 1,028 settlements were liberated from Russia, while 2,621 still remain under control.

On 18 July, Ukraine's General Staff of the Armed Forces released a statement on the ground developments, where several attacks

across Kharkiv, Sloviansk, Zaporizhzhia, and the Bakhmut region were observed. Followed by shelling, airstrikes were recorded in Rubizhne, Bohorodychne, and Berestove. Russia's navy was also found to be still blocking civilian ships in the northwest Black Sea.

On the same day, in an interview with *Forbes*, Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, blamed Russia for no progress on peace negotiations. He mentioned that any attempt at negotiation has been met with further strikes on Ukraine. While Zelenskyy does not rule out the possibility of negotiations, Kuleba said: "Russia must sit down at the negotiating table after its defeat on the battlefield. Otherwise, it will again be the language of ultimatums." In an address to the EU Foreign Affairs Council, Kuleba also outlined that "weapons to Ukraine, sanctions on Russia, and accountability for Russia" were the only three ways to restore peace to Europe and enhance the security of the continent. Additionally, the foreign ministry accused Russia of the illegal treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war. It urged Russia to adhere to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and stop using the captured soldiers for their "own political purposes."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 18 July, at a meeting with the Council for Strategic Development, president Vladimir Putin emphasized that Russia will not backtrack from years of progress due to the West's isolation. He said that Russia was being denied access to foreign hi-tech products but assured that they will not "lose heart" about it. While outlining their priority tasks, he said: "Obviously, we cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world. And we won't. It is impossible in the present-day world to merely issue as a decree and erect a huge fence. It is simply impossible."

The State Duma deputy chairman, Dmitry Novikov claimed that Ukraine's military might overthrow their president. He further said that it would be best if they started to adhere to what Putin had recommended at the beginning of Russia's "special operation" in Ukraine and their objective there.

On 18 July, Russia's defence ministry reported that the defence minister Sergei Shoigu had instructed the Vostok group to prioritize the destruction of long-range weapons from Kiev with high precision weapons. Shoigu reasoned that it was crucial as Ukraine was shelling residential areas in the Donbas region and wheat fields and storage facilities with the long-range weapons.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov said that while Germany is demanding Russia respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, the Minsk Agreement, designed for the same purpose was previously "killed" by Germany and France. He also alleged that in 2019, despite having a chance to sign the agreement at the Normandy format summit in Paris, Zelenskyy "did nothing, and Berlin and Paris were shielding him once again." In an interview for *Izvestia*, Lavrov criticized France's proposal to create a "European political community." He said that the idea was deliberately confrontational and dividing in nature.

Gazprom has issued a letter to its customers in Europe saying that they will not guarantee gas supplies due to "extraordinary" circumstances. The letter says that they will retroactively be invoking the "force majeure," popularly known as the "act of God" clause. This comes as the Nord Stream 1 pipeline undergoes 10 days of maintenance.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 18 July, the EU announced that they have signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan about doubling their natural gas imports by 2027. European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen visited Baku to finalize the deal. As per the document signed by the two countries, the gas flow through the Southern Gas Corridor pipeline into the EU will be increased to 20 billion cubic metres annually by 2027.

On the sidelines of the ongoing EU meetings in Brussels, Hungary's foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó said that the EU had agreed to a new package of sanctions on Russia. According to Szijjártó, the seventh set of EU

sanctions will upgrade the existing sanctions and include an embargo on Russian gold. The new package will also restrict the trade of dual-use products for both the civilian and military industries, along with further restrictions on public purchases. However, no official response has been released by the EU.

BBC reported, UK's chief of the defence staff, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said that Russia has lost more than 30 per cent of its land combat effectiveness. He further clarified saying: "What that actually means is 50,000 Russian soldiers that have either died or been injured in this conflict, nearly 1,700 Russian tanks destroyed, nearly 4,000 armored fighting vehicles that belong to Russia destroyed."

On the same day, the *Kommersant* newspaper reported that the turbine for the Nord Stream gas pipeline was sent from Canada to Germany. The turbine had reached the Russian Portovaya compressor station, while the pipeline goes through scheduled annual maintenance till 21 July.

On 16 July, *POLITICO* reported that Russian students studying in various universities in Europe are facing extreme Russophobia. They are also facing pressure from Moscow to return to their homeland to complete their studies. Some students have also reported that Russophobia has become normalized and was actively contributing to discrimination.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

The world's second-biggest clothing retailer, H&M declared that it was "impossible" to conduct their business in Russia and said that they will be discontinuing their Russian stores. Though they have not provided a timescale for their exit, they mentioned that before leaving they will aim to sell the remaining stocks. Reportedly, there are over 150 H&M stores in Russia, which employ around 6000 staff, and accounted for the company's sixth biggest market.

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War in Ukraine: Day 143 & 144

The War on the Ground:

On 17 July, the Ukrainian forces staved off Russia's assault near Ivano-Darvika, also Moscow's attempt to move forward in the Sloviansk direction. The Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) also deterred Russian troops from conducting reconnaissance activities. The Russian troops openly fired on settlements in the Kharkiv, the Sloviansk and the Bakhmut directions using rocket artillery, cannon, mortars, and missiles. The UAF stopped Russian troops from advancing further and prevented them from doing reconnaissance through unmanned aerial vehicles.

On 17 July, the Ukrainian army reported that Russian navy had redeployed warships from Sevastopol in Crimea to the country's port in Novorossiysk. The deployment of the ships earlier in missile-proof regions was covered by coastal air defence systems, which were as near to the coast as possible. Russia continues to control maritime navigation in the Sea of Azov to illegally export products confiscated from Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions.

On the same day, Russia was found to have two Kalibr missile carriers and one amphibious ship in the Black Sea. The Russian troops were found to have changed their deployment points in the Kherson region to hide behind civilians, where the UAF would not attack. Russia attacks periodically to ensure control of Snake Island. Their equipment on the island was struck by a pair of Ukraine's Su-24 bombers at night.

On 15 July, deputy minister of culture and information policy of Kyiv Kateryna Chuyeva accused Russia for destroying cultural heritage sites. The ministry found that 453 cultural sites were either destroyed or damaged. Major museum collections from Mariupol and Melitopol were reported to be stolen or taken away by the Russians.

On 16 July, economic advisor to Ukraine president, Oleg Ustenko, wrote to heads of major banking firms such as JP Morgan Chase, HSBC, Citigroup and Crédit Agricole asking to quit financing the Russian invasion. The banks had been accused for prolonging

the war by providing credits for Russian oil companies such as Gazprom and Rosneft. They were called out for help in Russia's war crime by giving credits and having securities investment trusts holding stakes. This helps the revenue of Russia that will directly finance the war. Rudenko said that he will sue the banks for financing Russia's war crimes.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 15 July Russia requested documents of the Nord Stream pipeline's turbine to be returned from Germany. The turbine which was held back by Canada due to the sanctions imposed on Russia is to be delivered to Russia by Germany. The German industrial company Siemens was asked to provide documents for the return of the turbine. Canada does not directly violate the sanctions that it had imposed on Russia by giving the turbine, which was to be repaired in the Canadian factory of the firm, to Germany. The Nord Stream pipeline is the major pipeline that supplies gas to Europe. It is currently out of action due to the 10-day maintenance period.

On 16 July, presidential aide Maxim Oreshkin commented that Russia will venture till they will be able to no longer need SWIFT. He said that Russia is looking at increasing its comfort for foreign economic activity. He also said that the dollar and the euro are being used by the world due to their convenience but are keeping it hostage to the western financial system. He said that it will change as the situation has raised where Chinese yuan and Russian ruble turnovers are soaring.

On 17 July, Russia said that it will continue its offensive until Ukrainian military capabilities are completely wiped out. The threat of the Ukraine Junta attacking the Crimean bridge has finalized Moscow's military goal of demilitarization and denazification of the entirety of Ukraine. Russia wants to protect its region of Crimea which was added in 2014 after the referendum.

On the same day, a storage warehouse for Harpoon anti-ship missiles at an industrial site in Odessa was demolished by Russian

forces. It destroyed the anti-ship missiles using high-precision long-range missiles. The Russian troops also destroyed HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems) multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), which were manufactured in America, and a resupply vehicle by high precision ground-based weapons. Russia's defence ministry also reported that its air defence systems and aerospace had struck down one Su-25 aircraft and a Mi-17 helicopter of the UAF in Kharkiv region.

On 17 July, the head of the village of Zernovo in the Suzemsky district of Russia bordering Ukraine reported that the place was bombed by the UAF. 29 shells were fired according to initial information. However, no casualties were recorded.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 16 July, the majority of North Macedonia's parliamentarians voted in favor of France's proposal to open the door to negotiations for the country to join the EU. The proposal was approved by 68 of the 120 members of the parliament. The MP's have also voted in favor of making sure that negotiations with the EU are conducted on an equal and moral basis, with respect for international law, the Macedonian language, and its identity.

On 16 July, the president of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and French president Emmanuel Macron in a phone call discussed the establishment of a coordination center in Istanbul to manage the grain exports through the Black Sea.

The US intelligence and military analysts claim that Russia's need to fill a critical battlefield gap and find a long-term supplier of a crucial combat technology is reflected in the US revelation that Moscow is seeking hundreds of armed and unarmed surveillance drones from Iran to use in the war in Ukraine. To counter Russian systems with advanced technology, the Royal United Services Institute, a research institution in London, concluded that Ukraine needed more of its electronic warfare gear. According to the report, Ukrainian surveillance drones that aid in targeting

Russian forces last just about a week before Russian defences compel them to crash or shoot them down.

On 16 July, the *New York Times* examined the report of the Organization for Security and Economic Cooperation for Europe on the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and war crimes committed in Ukraine released on 14 July. The detention or disappearance of thousands of Ukrainians was one of the two topics that the OSCE report focused on. The other was Russians utilizing the filtration centers to look for Ukrainians who might be connected to the Ukrainian military, government, or media. These facilities are where Ukrainians who are evacuating an attacked city must go before their personal information is recorded. Some deported Ukrainians who managed to flee Russia have related stories of brutal interrogations and humiliating body examinations. Eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region's Bezimenne has grown to be a particularly well-known centre. According to the report, 33,000 persons had been processed by Bezimenne by 17 May.

On 17 July, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell commemorated the day of International Criminal Justice. Borrell stated that the EU will continue to support the International Criminal Court financially, diplomatically, and politically "to allow it to carry out effectively its vital work on behalf of victims of grave international crimes. Moreover, the EU and its Member States will continue their work in favor of the universal ratification and full implementation of the Rome Statute." Borrell also expressed sympathy by recognizing the eighth anniversary of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, where 298 passengers from 17 different countries lost their lives. The aircraft was shot down by rebel forces amid the Donbas conflict, a Russian separatist force-controlled region as it was passing over eastern Ukraine in 2014. The aircraft crashed 40 kilometers from the border, close to Hrabove in Ukraine's Donetsk Oblast.

Also on 17 July, the Latvian State Revenue

Service reported that over 1,250 trucks were stalled at two border crossings between Latvia and Russia. The longest wait time was 153 hours. Additionally, there were queues at the border between Latvia and Belarus, where 450 vehicles were stuck in traffic at two crossings for 32 to 67 hours. The transition period that permitted sanctioned items to be exported and imported from the EU to Russia under previously signed agreements came to an end on July 10.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 16 July, the finance ministers of the Group of the 20 largest economies met to address global issues like inflation and food crises, but they were unable to agree with the conflict in Ukraine. As this year's G-20 host, Indonesia has attempted to heal the rifts caused by Russia's incursion, but tensions remain despite agreement among the finance ministers and central bankers on other global issues that the crisis has made worse. Also during the meeting, Canada sent a warning to a Russian delegation that was present at a gathering of the G20 saying it believed that president Vladimir Putin's economic advisors were personally complicit in war crimes. Deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland stated that she informed the group that "Putin's economic technocrats, who work to fund Putin's war machine, are personally complicit in Russia's war crimes, just as Putin's generals are."

On 17 July, the state councilor and foreign minister of China Wang Yi had a telephone call with the foreign minister of Hungary Peter Szijjarto. Szijjarto, gave a brief overview of the state of affairs in Europe and Hungary, focusing on the difficulties Hungary is currently facing economically and financially as a result of the Ukraine crisis's spillover effects. He said Hungary is pleased with the achievements resulting from cooperation with China in various fields, especially the smooth progress of trade and investment cooperation

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War in Ukraine: Day 142

The War on the Ground:

On 14 July, the chairmanship of the head of the office of the president, Andriy Yermak held a meeting under the president on account of the Presidium of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The main agenda for the meeting was a fast recovery plan for Ukraine to deal with the aftermath of the full-scale war. Their main aim was to restore and improve what was destroyed during the Russian aggression without delay. The state budget had allocated UAH three billion which was provided for the restoration of villages, towns, and cities that were affected during the war. The total amount required for the fast recovery plan implementation is estimated to be USD 17 billion.

On 14 July, the Ukrainian Armed Forces struck down Russian barracks and headquarters at Nova Mayachka in the region of Kherson. The Russian troops had set up near a former children's sanatorium. In the past few weeks, UAF has eliminated the Russian camp at sixteen sites. They destroyed their barracks and ammunition depots.

On 15 July, Russia assaulted the two biggest universities in Mykolaiv with at least ten missiles. Two people were reported to be injured. The attack took place around 0750 hrs in the morning. The mayor of Mykolaiv, Vitaliy Kim, also the head of the Mykolaiv military administration called upon universities of all democratic countries to deem Russia as a terrorist nation.

On the same day, 197 civilians who were affected by Russian missile attacks on the city of Vinnytsia requested medical aid. The aftermath of the three Russian Kalibr missiles that struck the city left 23 people dead, 197 people injured and 50 residential houses destroyed. Ukrainian anti-aircraft

defence units in Vinnytsia struck down two more of the missiles.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 15 July, the Russian minister of industry and Trade, Denis Manturov, said at a plenary session in the State Duma that Russia should also look at satisfying its domestic need rather than stick to a market economy. He also said that it should amend its industrial policy to achieve the goals it has set. The policy must focus on turning Russia into a technological sovereign. He also said that Russia should start producing its products and technology for defence, energy sector, shipbuilding, aircraft, and chemical industries domestically rather than importing it from foreign countries.

On the same day, Russia justified its missile attack in Vinnytsia city in Ukraine. The Russian military said that it only struck Ukrainian high commanders and officers who were dealing with foreign weapons suppliers. They also said that the attack was not intended toward civilians refuting Ukraine's defence ministry's claims that it was deliberate. Russia claimed that it killed all the participants in the negotiations between Ukraine's military air fleet and foreign weapon suppliers. Moscow accused Ukraine of having military bases near civilians and that it was their fault for the death of the civilians.

Also on 15 July, Ukraine's two MiG-29 aircraft were shot down by Russian fighter jets in a special military operation in the region of the Donetsk People's Republic. There were reports of 230 Ukrainian military targets and 18 command posts being struck down in the past 24 hours. The Russian air force also shot down Ukraine's two Sukhoi Su-25 ground attack aircraft in the Nikolayev region.

Also on the same day, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, the UN Secretariat was not observed to be taking a balanced stance on the situation around the city of Vinnytsia in Ukraine. She said that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' statement was conflicting with the UN charter and the Secretariat's

balanced stance. She also said that the UN was supposed to look into any matter without any bias and has to facilitate efforts to maintain peace and stability. She also justified Russia's attack on the city as an attack on Ukrainian high officials having a negotiation with foreign arms suppliers.

Also on 15 July, a law was passed that granted the Russian FSB fighters that served on the borders the status of veterans reflecting their work in Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic. The bill passed through the three readings of the lower house of the State Duma and was signed by president Vladimir Putin. They were to receive special benefits including tax benefits, social support, pension, and various other things.

The Federal Council called out that the European Commission eased its sanctions against Russia for fear of food complications. The sanctions were threatening food shortages not only in Africa but also in the EU in the future. In the seventh package of sanctions, the EU eased up on several restrictions that focused on Russian exports. It has allowed now for the countries to let Russian ships access their ports for food and medicines.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 14 July, the US Treasury Department elucidated that exports of food, fertilizers, agricultural equipment, and medicines do not violate its sanctions against Russia. The Treasury Department accused president Putin of using food as a tool of war.

At the gathering of the finance ministers at the G20 meeting, Canadian deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland told the Russian delegate that she holds Moscow to be accountable for their war crimes in Ukraine. Freeland is also Canada's finance minister. She also stated that not only the defence ministry is responsible for the war but also economic technocrats who are part of the war crimes.

Also on 14 April, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), banned Russia from participating in Europe's football competitions such as the Champion's league.

The CAS upheld the decision made by UEFA and FIFA to bar Russian national teams and clubs after Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia was already banned from the Men's Football World Cup qualifying and women's European Championship. They are excluded from participating in the Champions League 2022-23. The FIFA and UEFA decision did not exceed their authority while dealing with unforeseen and unprecedented circumstances, in this case, the war in Ukraine. The Russian football federation strongly disagreed with CAS's decision.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 15 July, North Korea said that Ukraine has no right to have a problem with the recognition of DRP and LRP. According to North Korea, the two breakaway regions are legitimately exercising sovereignty. On 13 July, Ukraine announced that it is severing its diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea due to it supporting the pro-Russian republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. North Korea became the third country after Russia and Syria to recognise DRP and LRP.

On the same day, China abstained from supporting the US demand for a price cap on Russian oil. According to Shu Jueting of the Chinese ministry spokeswoman, the price capping of Russian oil is a complicated issue. China listened to the US demand but said that it would take action that facilitates all the involved parties sitting down for peace dialogues. It wants to promote cooling down the situation rather than blowing the crisis. The US wants to cap Russian oil so that it would further restrict Moscow's energy revenue and thereby allow more oil to reach the global market. India and China are major buyers of Russian oil and have abstained from joining the west to place sanctions on Moscow. The talks between the US and China went constructively with both sides agreeing that the world economy is facing challenges and they have to coordinate to create US-China macro policies. China has refrained from openly condemning Russia even though there is pressure from the west.

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War in Ukraine: Day 141

The War on the Ground:

On 14 July, *Kyiv Post* reported that there was an overnight missile attack in Mykolaiv, where a business centre and two educational institutions were targeted. Shelling also took place in the Dnipropetrovsk region. Missile attacks were reported in Kramatorsk, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions. Moreover, fighting continued in the Luhansk region.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy criticized the recent Russian attacks and said that they once again proved that they are a “terrorist state.” He said: “No other state in the world allows itself to destroy peaceful cities and ordinary human life with cruise missiles and rocket artillery every day.”

At the International Conference in The Hague, Zelenskyy referred to the “war crimes, crimes against humanity, the crime of genocide” committed by Russia in Ukraine and said that all perpetrators must be punished by law. To aid the investigation of the same, Ukraine will be launching the “Book of Torturers of the Ukrainian People” project. The project will be collecting evidence and data on war crimes. However, he mentioned that the current institution will not be enough but a Special Tribunal needed to be set up for the same.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 14 July, president Vladimir Putin signed a law, which will disallow Russia’s private companies to refuse military contracts. The law specifically mentions the purchase of goods and services for army use and stockpiling of raw materials and semi-finished goods. This legislation will ensure that the Russian Armed Forces are properly equipped to carry out counter-terrorism and other military operations.

Putin also signed another bill into law, which allows Russia to retaliate against countries banning Russian media. As per the bill, the prosecutor-general and deputies will be able to withdraw the registrations and terminate the licenses of those media outlets in the country. Before law, only the courts had the power to do the same. Further, another law signed by the president expanded the definition of “foreign agents”. The list of any people or organizations who have worked with or received funding from foreign agents will be included in a new Justice Ministry list. According to the law, Russia’s state communications watchdog Roskomnadzor will now be able to block “foreign agent” websites at the Justice Ministry’s request without a court order. The law comes into force on 01 December.

On the same day, the head of Zaporizhzhya’s military-civilian administration, Yevgeny Balitsky, said that the region will hold a referendum about joining Russia in the coming days. He mentioned that the procedure for the referendum needed to be fixed and the ballot paper for the same would be printed soon. 70 per cent of Zaporizhzhya region is under Russia while the main city is still under Kyiv’s control.

Russia’s deputy foreign minister, Sergey Vershinin said that Russia was not blocking any initiative to export Russia’s grains. However, he mentioned that to start trading Ukraine will have to clear its ports of mines.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 14 July, the EU is set to deliberate on the seventh round of sanctions on Russia. The member states are expected to approve the same by next week. This new package is likely to include a ban on the import of Russia’s gold, which is the country’s biggest non-energy export. It might also widen a list of dual-use goods banned for export, and add to the list of individuals facing sanctions. The Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said that this package of sanctions will not curb the import of Russian gas, as that would destabilize many countries at once.

In a recent forecast, the European Commission said that the inflation in the Eurozone is likely to reach a “historical high” of 7.6 per cent. EU vice president Valdis Dombrovskis said: “Russia’s war against Ukraine continues to cast a long shadow over Europe and our economy.” The EU also reduced its growth forecasts for the Eurozone for the same reason. Brussels now forecasts growth of just 1.4 per cent in 2023, which is down from the previous estimate of 2.3 per cent.

The European Space Agency (ESA) reported that they will withdraw from a joint Russian-European rover mission to Mars. This is in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. ESA chief Josef Aschbacher tweeted: “Council mandated me to officially terminate the currently suspended cooperation with

[Russia's space agency] Roscosmos on the ExoMars Rover and Surface Platform mission."

The Republic of Ireland reported that they will use some military facilities to accommodate the Ukrainian people arriving to the country. So far, around 250 people were housed in an old terminal building at Dublin Airport. However, from 18 July, the Gormanston Camp, in County Meath will become functional and will host up 320 people. To date, there has been an influx of around 41,000 people fleeing the war.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 13 July, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva issued a warning about how the war in Ukraine will affect global economic growth. She said that the global economic outlook "has darkened significantly". She mentioned how the restrictions on food exports worsening energy security in Europe, higher than expected inflation rate, and the Covid pandemic are all drivers for this downgrading in economic growth. 14 July, Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro said that he will present a solution to the Ukraine war to Zelenskyy scheduled for 18 July 2022. He referred to Argentina's solution to the Falkland wars of 1982 and said that a similar framework can be adopted.

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War in Ukraine: Day 140

The War on the Ground:

On 13 July, defence ministries from Turkey, Ukraine, Russia, and UN representatives met for the first time since march directly to discuss the exporting of grains through the Black Sea from Ukraine in Istanbul. According to the Ministry of National Defence of Turkey: "The four-way meeting between the military delegations of the defence ministries of Turkey, the Russian Federation and Ukraine with the delegation of the United Nations regarding the safe transportation by sea of grain and foodstuff waiting in Ukrainian ports has ended," So far there has no update on the reached agreements.

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) along

with Ukrainian Canadian Congress has urged the Government of Canada to put down the waiver given to Siemens Canada which acts as a way for the Nord Stream 1 turbines into Germany. According to president and CEO of the Ukrainian World Congress, Paul Grod, "Canada's decision to break sanctions and send the Siemens' turbine back to Russia is a grave mistake with dire consequences."

On 13 July, Ukraine government called Lithuania to involve their businesses to restore Ukraine economy. So far 614 investment projects have been promised to upscale larger reconstruction projects in Ukraine. This is mainly to help stabilize Ukraine's economy in the post-war period.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 13 July, Russia reported on shelling the southern port city of Mykolaiv. It claimed for killing dozens of soldiers and was successful in the Donetsk region. It also confirmed on entering two towns of Soledar and Siversk, to the north of Bakhmut.

On 13 July, *RT* reported that Russia had agreed to cooperate to support the grain exports in Turkey. According to Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar: "An agreement has been reached on technical issues such as joint controls at the destination points and ... the safety of navigation on the transfer routes," Akar told journalists.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 13 July, the German government revealed a list of weapons and equipment systems that have been supplied to Ukraine till now. In the report released: "In 2022 Germany has increased its funds for security capacity building to 2 billion Euros. These additional funds are primarily dedicated to Ukraine and German contributions to the European Peace Facility, from which the cost of military support measures for Ukraine can be reimbursed to EU member states." The weapon systems included M113 armored personnel carriers, COBRA radar systems, and MARS multiple rocket launchers.

On 13 July, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland

and Minister of National Defence, Mariusz Blaszczak visited Irpin town in Ukraine where mass killings have been recorded and in the statement, he said that the brutal post-war scenario was brutal and shocking. He said: "These are the bloody crimes of the Russians who must be punished. I am proud of Ukrainian defenders who liberated Irpin and, in general, of all military personnel who are currently defending Ukraine."

On 13 July, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Russia to stop its infiltration operations in eastern Ukraine. As per the recent report from Blinken, close to 1.6 million people were forcibly deported into Russia and were put through torture and evidence has been found of the same. Although Russia has rejected the report, Blinken termed them as war crimes for transferring people illegally, breaching the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 12 July, Iran's foreign ministry rejected the accusations by the US of selling drones to Russia. The ministry released a statement confirming that the drone cooperation between Russia and Iran has been persisting before the start of the Ukraine war.

North Korea's foreign minister Choe Son-hui announced the government's decision to recognize the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). According to Choe: "expressed the intention of the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to develop the state-to-state relations with the countries in accordance with the idea of independence, peace, and friendship." North Korea will be the third country followed by Russia and Syria to recognize the regions. In response, the Ukraine government has announced to cut their diplomatic relations with North Korea.

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War in Ukraine: Day 139

The War on the Ground:

On 12 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke to Poland's deputy prime minister and minister of national defence, Mariusz Błaszczak. He thanked Poland for its continuous support of Ukraine and Ukraine's army. Zelenskyy also said that he was certain that Poland and Ukraine's post-war relations would develop further.

Zelenskyy has ordered prime minister Denys Shmyal to consider establishing a mandatory examination for acquiring Ukrainian citizenship. This move comes after a petition about the same by Vitali Kapustian secured 26,586 votes, saying that an estimated 520,000 Russians had illegally immigrated to Ukraine since 2014.

On 12 July, Ukraine's military reported that they had hit Russia's forces and military equipment in Nova Kakhovka city in southern Ukraine. They used an advanced HIMARS mobile artillery system supplied by Washington to carry out the long-range rocket strike. The strike resulted in hundreds of munitions being detonated, the breaking out of massive fires, and the death of at least seven people.

On the same day, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine also reported that the army had suppressed Russia's attempted assault operations in Dementiivka in Kharkiv. Heavy shelling was reported in the Sumy region and Sloviansk. Russia is also

attempting to improve its tactical position in Bakhmut and Novopavlivka directions through systematic firings.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces also said that between 24 February and 12 July, an estimated 37,470 Russian soldiers have been killed by Ukraine's forces. An elaborate list of approximate losses endured by Russia was also released. It said that Ukrainian defenders have destroyed about 1,649 Russian tanks, 3,829 armored fighting vehicles, 838 artillery systems, 247 multiple launch rocket systems, and 2,699 other vehicles and tanker trucks amongst countless other air defence systems, warplanes, helicopters, cruise missiles, and warships.

In *Telegram post*, Mykolaiv mayor, Oleksandr Sienkevych said that Russia's rockets have hit two medical facilities and residential buildings. Reportedly, amidst heavy shelling in the region, 4 people were injured.

On 12 July, *Kyiv Post* reported about Ukraine's Agrarian Policy and the Food ministry's announcement about Ukrainian farmers bringing in the first million tons of the new harvest. The announcement was made on 08 July and said that the harvest of grains, legumes, and winter wheat has been collected from 417,300 hectares of land in the country.

Also on 12 July, Ukraine's State Emergency Service department in the Donetsk region reported the death toll from the Russian missile strike on an apartment building in Chasiv Yar. They said that 45 dead bodies have been pulled from the rubble so far.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 12 July, the chief of Russia's National Defence Management Center, Mikhail Mizintsev, said that over 270 tonnes of humanitarian cargo has been delivered to Donetsk People's Republic. This was done through five humanitarian operations in the region. Mizintsev, who also heads the Russian Joint Coordination Headquarters for Humanitarian Response in Ukraine said that more than 22,000 people have been

evacuated from Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) to Russia. Reportedly, 4,433 private cars also crossed into Russia from Ukraine.

On the same day, Mizintsev spoke about mine disposal in the DPR and LPR regions. He reported that a total of 3,856.42 hectares have been covered, including 35 buildings, 13 important facilities, two bridges, and 9.64 kilometers of motorways. Allegedly, 54,690 explosive objects have been found and destroyed.

The head of the Kharkiv region's interim civil administration Vitaly Ganchev said that the grain exported from Kharkiv were all based on contracts. He clarified that the sale of the same had been negotiated with the farmers in a process overseen by the interim civil administration.

Amidst wider crackdowns on western tech companies, a court in Moscow fined US tech giant Apple for not storing personal data belonging to Russia's citizens on Russia-based servers. The fine has been set at RUB two million. Russia has already banned Facebook and Instagram as "extremist organizations" and blocked Twitter addition to it.

On 12 July, the world's largest toy-making company from Denmark, Lego announced that they will stop operating in Russia. The company had partnered with Inventive Retail Group which operated 81 stores on the brand's behalf, but now the collaboration will be terminated.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 12 July, EU's Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders said that so far the EU has frozen EUR 13.8 billion worth of assets belonging to Russian oligarchs and other individuals with ties to Moscow. On 11 July, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson reported that more than three million Ukrainian refugees from Ukraine in the EU have returned to their homeland.

The White House national security adviser, Jake Sullivan spoke at a press briefing about the possibility of Iran supplying Russia with

"several hundred UAVs, on an expedited timeline." This statement comes in the background of Russia's president Vladimir Putin's scheduled visit to Tehran next week. Moreover, the US treasury announced that it will send an additional USD 1.7 billion in economic aid to Ukraine. This aid will be to fund "essential services".

On the same day, Germany's government discussed its plans to improve its cyber-security defences. The decision comes after several major cyberattacks have been traced to Russian intelligence-linked hackers. The new measures will require small- and medium-sized enterprises to up their cyber resilience, and also the introduction of a central video conferencing system for the federal government.

On 12 July, Turkey's defence ministry announced that a meeting between Turkey, Ukraine, Russia and the UN has been fixed for 13 July in Istanbul. The military delegations from the three countries and a delegation from the UN will be discussing about a safe and smooth export corridor for Ukraine's grains. This comes after Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan held phone conversations with Putin and Zelenskyy.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 12 July, an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, Craig Reid warned that Russia and Belarus may not be allowed to compete in the Paris 2024 Games. The governing bodies of the individual sports had been warned in February to remove the athletes from these two countries, and a decision regarding the same will be taken soon.

On the same day, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report regarding the number of civilian casualties in Ukraine. They said that since the beginning of the war, a total of 5,024 have been killed and 6,520 have been injured. On 11 July, the UN announced that they will start monitoring the war in Ukraine, for violations against children, including killings, injuries, recruitment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence.

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War in Ukraine: Day 138

The War on the Ground:

On 11 July, the prime minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte visited Kyiv to meet president Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Rutte assured Zelenskyy that his country will continue to support Ukraine politically, increase bilateral and multilateral cooperation and sanction Russia.

The general staff of the armed forces reported that Ukraine army have effectively withstood an enemy assault on Krasnopillia and stopped Russia from trying to launch another onslaught towards Marinka, in the Donetsk Region. Russian soldiers opened fire around settlements like Kharkiv, Bazaliivka, Petrivka, Ruski Tyshky, Slatyne, Prudianka, Rubizhne, and Blahodatne using artillery, multiple launch rocket systems, and tanks.

The Ukrainian commissioner for missing individuals in Special circumstances, Oleh Kotenko stated that up to 7,200 Ukrainian army personnel have been missing since the Russian incursion began. Kotenko added that the Ukrainian military had previously reported 2,000 personnel missing. The National Guard, border guards, and the security service, he claimed, made up the substantially higher number. Kotenko, the commissioner for missing persons in Ukraine, stated: "Our call center registered about 7,200 people." He expressed his hope that they would be returned home and exchanged for Russian POWs "sooner or later."

The ministry of digital transformation of Ukraine reported that the information

technology army targeted more than 800 websites. The private data of around 500,000 customers was stolen on Roseltorg, the largest electronic procurement platform in Russia and a joint venture between VTB Bank and the Moscow government.

Ukraine has condemned a recent law that Russian president Vladimir Putin signed granting Russian citizenship to Ukrainians living anywhere in the nation. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry stated that the directive "is another attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, incompatible with the norms and principles of international law."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 11 July, a decree signed by president Vladimir Putin stated that any native of Ukraine may now apply for Russian citizenship under a simplified process. Stateless people who reside permanently in Ukraine are also added by the law, as are residents of the two Donbas republics that Russia formerly recognized as separate states. Ukrainians can now submit the necessary application without having to meet the standard requirements for foreigners applying for Russian citizenship, such as living in Russia for five years, having a source of income, and passing a Russian language test.

On the same day, the State Duma has been presented with a bill that would confer the rank of a veteran to Federal Security Service (FSB) agents who participated in repelling armed incursions into Russia during the special military operation in Ukraine. The proposal in the document also calls for giving FSB personnel who became disabled as a result of wounds, concussions, injuries, or illnesses received while carrying out these missions the status of disabled individuals.

Also on 11 July, president Putin and president Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke over the phone. The two presidents talked about creating secure routes for grain exports by the Black Sea, the situation in Syria, and the situation in Ukraine in light of Russian military operations. Erdogan urged Putin to

implement the UN's proposal to establish grain export lanes to address the food shortage. In another telephone call with the president of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, Putin discussed the possible measures to be taken regarding the restriction of goods to Kaliningrad by Lithuania.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 11 July, the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken announced that the US would allocate an additional USD 368 million to assist Ukrainian refugees. He stated that: "Our commitment to the people of Ukraine is resolute. The US is providing nearly \$368 million in additional humanitarian aid to support people inside Ukraine and refugees forced to flee their country to seek safety in the midst of Russia's brutal war."

On the same day, the economy minister of Germany Robert Habeck and the Czech Republic's Industry minister signed a declaration promising to reduce the dependency on Russian fuel and to rush the transition to low carbon energy. The declaration stated: "We are going to finalize the agreement on solidarity measures to safeguard the security of gas supply between our countries prior to the start of the upcoming winter season."

On 11 July, the Scottish government announced a three-month suspension of services for new visa applications for displaced Ukrainians effective from 13 July 2022. The suspension was required to guarantee safe accommodation to those who have already applied for a visa. Scotland is presently providing hospice for over 7000 people. Of which two-thirds are under the Scottish super sponsor scheme. This exceeds the government's commitment to receive 3000 refugees amid the war in Ukraine.

Lithuania continues to restrict the transportation of goods from Russia through its territory to Kaliningrad despite warnings from Moscow. Lithuania Railways estimates that around 15 per cent of the 3.7 million tonnes of cargo that flowed from Russia to Kaliningrad in the initial months.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 11 July, the UN's special representative of the secretary-general on sexual violence in conflict, Pamela Patten stated that around 124 cases of sexual assault were reported since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. More than 8.72 million border crossings into Europe have been registered from Ukraine, a country with a pre-war population of around 40 million as reported by UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). According to the UNHCR portal, there are currently 5.56 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe.

On the same day, the EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson announced the establishment of a hub in Moldova to combat organized crime, including the smuggling of weapons from Ukraine. The EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management will concentrate on stopping weapons from leaving Ukraine and finding their way into criminal gangs, the majority of which are provided by NATO allies.

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War in Ukraine: Day 136 & 137

The War on the Ground:

On 09 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that he will be replacing ambassadors of Ukraine to Germany, India, Sri Lanka, Hungary, and Norway. The reason for the changes is ambiguous at this period.

On the same day, Zelenskyy met with the president of the French Republic's Senate, Gerard Larcher, and senators of the upper house when they visited Ukraine. Zelenskyy thanked France for its help in numerous ways. Paris had helped Kyiv with its support in the EU, its hospitality to Ukrainian refugees, assisting the defence forces of Ukraine, providing financial support, and aiding with post-war reconstruction. These acts of France were thanked by president Zelenskyy during the meeting.

Also on 09 July Zelenskyy went to the front lines of the war in the Dnipropetrovsk region to motivate and raise the morale of the troops. He visited the Mechnikov hospital in Dnipro to thank the healthcare workers for their part in helping wounded soldiers. He gave a medal to honour the commander of the tank battalion. He also addressed the parliament of Slovenia about protecting

their common freedom from Russian evils.

Also on the same day, Ukraine military reported that Russian military equipment was seen to be transported to the temporarily captured Berdiansk region through Mariupol. A large convoy of military equipment and five buses carrying Russian soldiers were seen travelling to Berdiansk via Mariupol. Exports of looted goods and imports of fuels and military equipment resumed in the Mariupol port after the city was brutally captured by the Russians.

On 10 July, fifteen bodies were recovered by rescuers and five people were pulled out of the rubble caused by the destruction of an apartment after a Russian missile strike hit it. The building in Chasiv Yar town was partially destroyed trapping people under it. Thirty others were expected to be rescued soon from under the rubble. This shows the Russian forces attempting to go deeper into Donetsk to capture the entirety of the Donbas region.

On the same day, Ukraine's deputy prime minister and minister of digital transformation Mykhailo Fedorov thanked the US for contributing to Kyiv's Army of Drones project after the Ukrainian Armed Forces received the first drone from America.

On 10 July, the head of the Kharkiv Regional Military Administration, Oleh Syniehubov, warned the people who live in Kharkiv to stay in their homes as there is a threat of Russia firing missiles that will reach the place in thirty to forty seconds as it is only 40 kilometers from the Russian border. The attacks have been increasing in the region and he advised the people of Kharkiv to be cautious.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 10 July, *Moscow Times* reported that Russia's forces were continuing their offense in the east of Ukraine in the Donetsk region. Blasts were heard in Druzhkivka, south of Kramatorsk, and Sloviansk.

Russia's defence ministry reported that the Russian Armed Forces had hit two Army

hangars in Kostantinovka in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. They said that the hangars were storing US-produced M777 howitzers. Spokesman Lieutenant General Igor Konashenkov said that they had also struck 200 targets in Ukraine. The list provided by him includes 17 command posts, four platoons of Grad MLRS targets, artillery positions in 42 areas, and troops and equipment in 143 areas. Konashenkov also reported Russia's strike in Sloviansk and said that 100 Ukrainian troops have been killed.

On the same day, the State Duma chairman, Vyacheslav Volodin spoke about the possibility of a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine. He said that such a negotiated peace will be disadvantageous to the US. In the programme, he mentioned how the leaders of the European countries and the US were all going through a systemic crisis, were indifferent to the fate of the Ukrainians, and were only treating the war from a consumer's point of view.

On 09 July, the regional branch of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) released a statement regarding migrant activity across the Russian border. The statement read: "Over 18,000 people crossed the border to enter Russia through checkpoints in the Rostov Region in the past 24 hours."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 10 July, US secretary of state, Anthony Blinken met China's foreign minister Wang Yi, and urged China to take a stronger stance against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He denounced China's narrative of being 'neutral' about the conflict and said given how there was a 'clear aggressor' and there was a 'clear victim' it was quite difficult to be neutral. He also asked him to extend a hand of cooperation to Biden's administration. The meeting lasted for more than five hours and said: "The relationship between the United States and China is highly consequential for our countries, but also the world."

Blinken also spoke about the G20 meeting and said that Russia's diplomats at the G20 did not address the invasion of Ukraine. He

mentioned that there were no signs that Russia was “prepared to engage in meaningful diplomacy” and that the US would seize any chances of diplomacy with Russia, if they arise.

On 10 July, UK’s defence ministry reported that six fighter jets of the Royal Air Force have flown to Finland and Sweden for joint training exercises. The exercise is an effort to strengthen the collective defence capabilities of the states. Sweden’s defence minister, Peter Hultqvist said that the training was to improve their “ability to operate together in response to a crisis in our neighbourhood,” necessary in “today’s challenging security environment.” Four RAF Typhoons, Finland’s F-18 Hornets, and Sweden’s Gripen aircraft are being used for the training.

UK’s defence secretary, Ben Wallace announced that the forts cohort of soldiers from Ukraine have arrived at UK for combat training. The first phase of the programme aims to train 10,000 soldiers in weapons handling, battlefield first aid and patrol tactics. Ukraine’s soldiers, many of whom have no military training will also be training on weapons that they will use on the frontlines.

On 09 July, Canada announced that they will return a Russian turbine, which is a part of the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline to Germany. Canada’s minister of natural resources, Jonathan Wilkinson said this was to support Europe’s efforts to transition away from Russian oil and gas. He also mentioned that the export permit for the same had been issued after discussions with their “European friends and allies,” and the International Energy Agency (IEA). This decision was however criticized by Ukraine. To this, Canada’s foreign affairs minister, Melanie Joly said: “Canada is unwavering in its support of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity...Canada will not relent in pressuring the Russian regime.”

On 08 July, the *EUObserver* reported that the EU is building a secure bunker in Brussels. The project worth EUR eight million will be to discuss issues without Russian surveillance. The offline room will be

equipped with internal big-screen conferencing technology and microphones hard-wired to equally secure booths. It will host up to 100 people and will be enclosed in a NATO-certified insulation cage. The facility is expected to be built by 2024.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 11 July, the EU home affairs ministers held a meeting to discuss the effects of the war in Ukraine in the EU. They discussed various topics such as child sexual abuse and interoperability of information systems strengthening EU security. They also discussed increasing human trafficking especially among women and children during the war in Ukraine. The EU has implemented the “Temporary Protection Directive” which has proven to be effective against human trafficking.

Also on the same day, the G20 foreign ministers attended a joint summit to discuss Russia’s unprovoked aggression on Ukraine. Both opposing sides, the west, and Russia were present at the meeting. The war had caused a lot of problems including a global economic crisis and food crisis due to sanctions on Russian fossil fuels and the blockage of Ukrainian grains from being exported.

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War in Ukraine: Day 135

The War on the Ground:

On 07 July, Ukraine's foreign affairs minister, Dmytro Kuleba urged the Oceanian countries to join the international powers in sanctioning Russia. It is to target Russia's maritime activities and prevent them from Ukraine's territorial waters. He also warned the Oceanian countries which have joint projects with Russia.

On 08 July, Ukraine's prime minister and the president of the French Senate met to discuss the rising food shortage, energy crisis, and unblocking the seaports. The president also emphasized how Ukraine helps supply electricity to the European energy market.

The South Operational Command reported a Russian attack on the infrastructures in Mykolaiv, which was spotted using Smerch multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS). It also reiterated the block continued by Russia's navy in the Black Sea using two submarines, and three landing crafts.

On 08 July, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy presented his address in the Slovenia Parliament where he thanked Slovenia's support for Ukraine's EU candidacy. He highlighted the growing food crisis and hunger in Ukraine due to Russia blocking ports, stating: "Russia deliberately blocked our exports in order to worsen the price crisis, to make it catastrophic, including for Europeans." On the energy system, he mentioned how Ukraine is becoming an exporter of electricity to Romania and Slovakia at a low price than the EU. Zelenskyy held a meeting with the commander of the Kakhovka operational group of troops and Brigadier General Mykhailo Drapatyi where they discussed assembling defence structures, material, and technical support in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 08 July, Russia president Vladimir Putin warned the West about the continuity of its sanctions over the Ukraine war. He called the US to stop asking countries to rely on Russian oil since it will affect the price caps of oil and lead to more impact on the economies that are not sanctioning Russia. At the same, he said: "Further use of sanctions may lead to even more severe — without exaggeration, even catastrophic — consequences on the global energy market."

On 08 July, TASS reported that Russia had launched strikes using a "sea-launched smart weapon" to take down two Harpoon missile launchers located in the Odessa region, which was given by the UK. According to Defence Ministry Spokesman Lieutenant-General Igor Konashenkov, "Sea-launched precision weapons eliminated two Harpoon coastal missile launchers in the area of the settlement of Liman in the Odessa Region delivered from Great Britain." Harpoon missiles are those which can hold a 225 kg warheads and travel at subsonic speed in a range between 120 to 280 kilometers.

People's militia officer of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) reported that Ukraine had deployed "new fortifications" near Artyomovsk and Soledar cities in the DPR region. The cities located in the east of DPR are currently held by Ukraine. Another spokesperson said that the Ukrainian 80th air assault brigade was also discovered near the cities.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 08 July, the Finland government announced the upcoming informal meeting on 11 July between the EU home affairs ministers, Justice, and Home Affairs Council. It will be the first meeting held under the Czech Presidency. The agenda includes a discussion of the effects of war, the EU's internal security, increasing child abuses, and interoperability between the EU information system and the Council. The US announced a new set of military aid to Ukraine worth USD 400 million which will

include HIMARS launchers, that will aid Ukraine in attacking targets in the ammunition dumps that have missiles from a longer distance. With the HIMARS system, Ukraine now will be able to deter Russia's strikes on the frontlines and counter its artillery operations.

On 08 July, Poland Border Guard reported on its border checks where it found 4.62 million people to have entered Poland from Ukraine since the start of the war. The Border Guard added: "2.68 million people had left Poland for Ukraine since the beginning of the war. On Thursday, 22,000 people crossed the border from Poland to Ukraine."

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 08 July, the Canada government announced a new set of sanctions on Russian Orthodox Church leader, Patriarch Kirill, and 29 other individuals. As per the statement: "...sanctions against the Patriarch could only be introduced by Satanists."

On 08 July, the UN release the report on food prices for June month and it found the wholesale food prices to have fallen by 2.3 per cent. Whereas the prices of cereals, edible oils, and food shot up due to the Ukraine war. Overall, it observed an increase of 23 per cent rise compared to the prices in June 2021. The UN Food Prices Index tracked the most traded food commodities to be "cereals, vegetable oil, dairy, meat, and sugar."

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War in Ukraine: Day 134

The War on the Ground:

On 07 July, US senators Lindsey Graham of the Republican party and Richard Blumenthal of the Democratic Party visited Kyiv to meet president Volodymyr Zelenskyy. They discussed the developments on the front lines, the air defence system in Ukraine, and the educational sector.

On 07 July, a disputed cargo ship containing alleged Ukrainian food grains was expected to be returned to the Russian territorial waters after being detained by Turkey for four days. The ship named Zhibek Zholy was released from Karasu port in Turkey's part of the Black Sea after four days of its detainment on 05 July 2022. Previously Ukraine has asked Turkey to seize the ship, which Turkey ignored. Later the Ukraine foreign ministry was criticized for such an act and Turkey's spokesperson countered stating that they found no such evidence of Ukraine food grain in the investigation.

On the same day, Ukraine Armed Forces agents found that the military officials in Russian had cremated officers and soldiers who had died in action in the occupied city of Kherson. The UAF discovered charred remains of people in the city who were burnt which was difficult to identify. It believes that the Russians had been burning its dead

military personnel, killed in the war to hide the number of casualties. The soldiers and officers who were killed during the UAF bombardments were reported missing. They are suspected to be the ones burnt by the Russian forces. The information on the losses suffered by the Russian army in Ukraine is kept a secret from the Russian public.

The Ukraine deputy prime minister and the minister for digital transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov said in a telegram post that the first batch of unmanned aerial force has been sent to the front lines. These drones form part of the Army of Drone project, which contains the systematic purchase of drones, repair and faster replacement, and pilot training programs.

Ukrinform reported that 21 sorties were held by the Ukrainian National Guard helicopters on the Russian forces and the National Guard of Ukraine reported detaining 354 spies and 16,515 people who have committed administrative and criminal offenses over to the security service of Ukraine.

On 07 July, defence deputy minister Hanna Maliar of Ukraine said in a briefing that the Russian was waging a war of attrition to seize full control over the Luhansk region. Russia's ultimate goal is to reach the geographical border of the Donetsk region. Maliar said that the most challenging situation is around Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, and Bakhmut on the same day. According to Ukrainian intelligence, the Russian troops are preventing the Kyiv forces from advancing toward the state border in the directions of Kharkiv and Balakliia. They also observed that the Russian forces are attempting to conduct offensive operations that surround the units of armed forces of Ukraine in the direction of Zaporizhzhia.

Also on 07 July, Zelenskyy of Ukraine expressed his sympathy for the resignation of the UK prime minister Boris Johnson over a phone conversation. He was thankful to prime minister Johnson and the UK for the constant support that they have shown toward Ukraine in the war.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 07 July, the defence ministry of Russia reported destroying of two US made high mobility artillery rocket systems. Russia for the first time employed its advanced electromagnetic weapon Stupor jams against unmanned aerial vehicles. The ministry also reported that the US department of defence threat deduction office extracted a collection of microorganisms from Ukraine and organized inspections to assess the biological situation. The US held projects that studied "...highly dangerous and economically significant infections" that can worsen the epidemiological situation.

On 06 July, president Vladimir Putin addressed the leaders of the State Duma and heads of factions of political parties of the Federal Assembly. In the address, he thanked the parties for organizing humanitarian support for the residents of Donbas and stated his work towards improving the basic sectors of the Russian economy and the workforce of enterprises.

On 07 July, president Putin met the winners of the Leaders of Russia national management competition, which was held between 26 - 29 May in Moscow. At the meeting, he stated that the people of Donbas were subject to isolation and genocide for the past eight years and pledged that Russia will now completely restore living conditions in the Luhansk region. Furthermore, he agreed to a proposal put forward by the head of the party, Sergei Mironov: "Fair Russia- For the Truth," to equate the military of Donetsk and Luhansk with the ranks of Russian forces.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 05 July, NATO's member countries have fastened the ratification of Sweden and Finland's accession protocols. Canada was the first to sign the ratification of the document. The legislatures of all the 30 member countries will have to approve the proposal, this process may take up many months. Turkey's communication director Faretin Altun stated that Ankara has "specific expectations" from Sweden to sign the ratification document. He mentioned

that the memorandum of understanding signed with Sweden and Finland in June shall not be perceived as Ankara's vote for the countries to join NATO.

On 07 July, Finland's parliament passed legislation to amend the Border Guard Act. It will facilitate the construction of stronger fences on its 1300-kilometer-long border with Russia. The decision comes in light of Finland starting the process of joining the NATO this week. Currently, Finland's borders are marked by light wooden fences, mainly to keep livestock from wandering across. The director of the Finnish border guards' legal division, Sanna Palo, said: "What we are aiming to build now is a sturdy fence with a real barrier effect... In all likelihood the fence will not cover the entire eastern border but will be targeted at locations considered to be the most important."

On 07 July, the Polish Economic Institute reported that 94 per cent of its country's businesses have experienced the negative implications of the war in Ukraine. The think tank stated that the firms which conducted business with eastern markets such as Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine will have to completely restructure its operations. The EU's statistical office, Eurostat reported that Poland received and sheltered the highest number of Ukrainian refugees among the bloc's member states. Poland received 96,085 refugees, followed by Romania with 20,435 and Bulgaria with 19,860.

On the same day, Lithuania defence minister Arvydas Anusauskas stated that the government will be transferring a crowd-funded combat drone - Bayraktar TB2 to Ukraine. The people raised around EUR six million for the drone. However, the manufacturer of the drone decided to donate it, therefore the money will be spent to arm the drone. The remaining funds will be allocated towards humanitarian aid. On 07 July, the US senators Lindsey Graham and Richard Blumenthal presented Zelenskyy with a draft resolution to designate Russia as "A state sponsor of terrorism." Russia would be the fifth country the US has designated as a state sponsor of terrorism following Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Syria. Braham and

Blumenthal had visited Borodyanka and Bucha after the meeting. The US state department expressed disappointment that Indonesia has invited Russia to the upcoming G20 summit. They mentioned that with Russia's participation the meeting would be inconclusive regarding Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 07 July, the Ukrainians in Canada have written to prime minister Justin Trudeau to refrain from returning a turbine to Moscow, amid sanctions. The turbine used for transporting petroleum by Gazprom was sent to be serviced in Canada by Siemens Energy. The president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), Alexandra Chyczij stated that: "Any waiver of Canadian sanctions would be viewed as a capitulation to Russian blackmail and energy terrorism, and would only serve to embolden the Russian terrorist state."

On 07 July, foreign ministers of Russia and China were seen to be meeting privately before the G20 foreign ministers meeting in Bali to discuss strategic cooperation between the nations amidst pressure from the West. Foreign ministers Sergey Lavrov and Wangi Yi from China talked to strengthen the relations and work amidst the economic sanctions by the West. Lavrov is seeing the G20 meeting as an opportunity to convince other nations about the actions of Russia against Ukraine as a special military operation. Meanwhile, the Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, wants to focus on the food crisis but also is not willing to accept any reasons put forward by Russia for starting the war against Ukraine.

In Ethiopia, the fuel subsidies have been lifted due to the rise in energy prices. The Ukraine war has affected global energy prices and in turn, increases the rate of fuels in Ethiopia. This has given rise to the country facing an increase in inflation.

The director of the UN World Food Programme, Patrick Beasley, has warned that a hunger catastrophe will emerge within the next two years, resulting in global political turmoil. He stated that: "A staggering 50 million people in 45 countries are now just one step from famine." He also

urged for the quick release of the 25 million tonnes trapped Ukrainian grains. According to Beasley, the world's food markets are in a state of chaos due to rising prices, export restrictions, and shortages of staple items that extend well beyond Ukraine's borders. Where African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and even Latin American nations are facing the implications of this conflict.

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War in Ukraine: Day 133

The War on the Ground:

On 06 July, in his address president Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported that a Russian strike has destroyed the pedagogical university in Kharkiv. Further, he spoke about the Western artillery that he believes is helping Ukraine reduce Russia's offensive potential. Zelenskyy said, "...the weapons we received from our partners - started working very powerfully. Its accuracy is exactly as needed." He also reported about his successful conversations with the presidents of Paraguay and Mozambique, and his meeting with the prime minister of Ireland.

On 06 July, Ukraine's military reported that Russia's forces were now concentrating their efforts in the north of the Donetsk region. The heavy bombardment was reported around Sloviansk as Russia aims to seize the towns of Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, and Bakhmut and gain control over the highway linking Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Shelling was also reported in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Mykolaiv.

The governor of the Donetsk region, Pavlo Kyrylenko urged the 350,000 remaining residents in the province to flee the area. He said that evacuating Donetsk would help Ukraine's forces put up a better resistance against a Russian advance.

The Moscow-installed director of seaport authority said that the Mariupol port was "operating in full-fledged" conditions. Earlier

on the same day, the Ministry of Coal and Energy of the Donetsk People's Republic reported that the power supply to the port was completely restored.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 06 July, the Chief of Russia's National Defence Operations Centre, Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev reported that over 24000 people were evacuated from parts of Luhansk and Donetsk to Russia. Close to 4310 private vehicles have crossed Russia's state border. He also noted that Ukraine's authorities did not participate in the process.

At a press conference after his talks with Vietnamese diplomat Bui Thanh Son, Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia's army was not attacking their own cities, as alleged by Ukraine. He accused Ukraine of lying. Lavrov also urged the West to take responsibility for the civilian deaths in Donbas, as it was with their weapons that Ukraine was attacking them.

On the same day, Russia's parliament strengthened their legislation on state treason and espionage. Tougher prison terms have been introduced, where acts against Russia's security are to be punished by up to seven years of prison term. In a statement released by the lower house of parliament, a senior parliamentarian, Vasily Piskarev said: "The changes are an adequate and timely response to the challenges that our country is currently facing." Moreover, Russia's parliament also introduced two bills which will ensure stricter controls on the economy. If these "special economic measures" are signed by the president, one bill will mandate some businesses to supply goods to the armed forces. The other bill will require employees at some firms to work overtime

The Russian foreign ministry reported that president Vladimir Putin was invited to be a part of the G20 summit hosted by Indonesia and had also sent a preliminary confirmation of his attendance. The ministry mentioned that: "The format of his participation is subject to clarification depending on the development of the situation in the world and the sanitary-epidemiological

environment in Southeastern Asia.”

On 06 July, a Russian court ordered the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) to suspend its operation for 30 days. The pipeline transports 80 per cent oil from Kazakhstan to the Western markets through the Black Sea. The court stated that it found “documentary violations” in the CPC’s oil spill response plan.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

Ireland’s prime minister, Micheál Martin met with Zelenskyy and visited Borodianka, Bucha and Irpin in Ukraine. They discussed the food security crisis, the energy crisis and spoke about a possible joint response. Additionally, the two leaders spoke about the seventh set of sanctions against Russia. Martin also reiterated his support for Ukraine.

NASA’s Harvest mission reported that Russia controls around 22 per cent of Ukraine’s agricultural lands. In their analysis, done through NASA Harvest satellite images, these territories are where mainly winter crops like wheat, rye and barley are grown.

On 06 July, defence minister of Latvia, Artis Pabriks announced that the country will reintroduce national military service, which it revoked in 2007. He mentioned that men between the age of 18-27 will be recruited and paid up to EUR 400 per month, for 11 months. The option for women to join is voluntary.

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 06 July, the 2022 edition of the U.N. food security and nutrition report was released. UN agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and WHO said that nearly 10% of the world’s population, were affected by hunger in 2021. However, more concerning was the report’s forecast for 2022, where the food crisis is bound to be exacerbated due to the Ukraine war. WFP executive director David Beasley said: “The result will be global destabilization, starvation, and mass migration on an unprecedented scale. We have to act today to avert this looming

catastrophe.”

42 countries have signed the declaration of the conference on the restoration of Ukraine in Lugano. They condemned Russia’s aggression and asked them to withdraw their troops at the earliest. They said that the draft Recovery and Development Plan initiated by Ukraine would be considered the main framework for the recovery process. Other than the 42, representatives from the Council of Europe, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development were also present.

On the same day, following the Donetsk governor’s appeal for the residents of Donetsk to evacuate, the UN’s refugee agency said that as per their reports, 8.793 million people have fled Ukraine since the war began.

Ukraine’s prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova reported that she is investigating more than 21,00 war crimes committed since the start of Russia’s invasion. She mentioned that trials will have to be held in absentia of the accused and stated that: “Russian militaries who decided to kill civilians, to torture civilians, to rape civilians, they should understand that it’s only a question of time when they all will be in court”.

Russia’s president Vladimir Putin spoke with the president of Sri Lanka, Gotabaya Rajapaksa. They discussed bilateral trade and economic cooperation, particularly in the energy, Agriculture, and transport sectors. Rajapaksa tweeted that their phone call had been productive and that Putin has agreed to help import fuel to Sri Lanka.

On 06 July, Ukraine’s prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova reported that she is investigating more than 21,00 war crimes committed since the start of Russia’s invasion. She mentioned that trials will have to be held in absentia of the accused and stated that: “Russian militaries who decided to kill civilians, to torture civilians, to rape civilians, they should understand that it’s

only a question of time when they all will be in court".

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War in Ukraine: Day 132

The War on the Ground:

On 05 July, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his virtual address to the opening of the 26th annual economist government roundtable conference stated that the only way the world can make Russia end the conflict in Ukraine and its aggressive foreign policy is by applying consistent pressure on all fronts.

Separatists backed by Russia have taken control of two foreign-flagged ships in Mariupol, a port city in eastern Ukraine, and declared them to be "state property." After being under siege for several months, Mariupol, which is located on the southern coast of Ukraine, was captured by Russian and rebel forces in May.

Also on the same day, Ukrainian defence ministry spokesperson Oleksandr Motuzyanuk stated that the Russian Combined Arms Armies, forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, and tank and Airborne forces are currently active in the Donbas and attempting to advance on Sloviansk. The Ukrainian general staff had also informed that Russian forces conducted an airstrike near Siversk and fired on residential buildings in Serebryanka, a settlement five kilometers northeast of Siversk directly along the Luhansk-Donetsk Oblast border.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 05 July, in its second reading, the Russian State Duma approved a law that labels treason to the extent of defecting to the enemy during hostilities. The bill adds a new offense, "defection to the enemy amid an armed conflict, hostilities, or other action ... that Russia participates in," to article 275 of the Russian Criminal Code. Defection is described in the bill as "participating in forces of foreign state, international, or foreign organization, which directly oppose Russia in an armed war, hostilities, or other action, with the use of weapons and military vehicles."

The parliament also approved two bills that will require industries to supply the military with goods and work extensively. Deputy

prime minister Yuri Boriso stated: "The load on the defence industry has increased significantly. In order to guarantee the supply of weapons and ammunition, it is necessary to optimize the work of the military-industrial complex and enterprises that are part of cooperation chains."

Also on the same day, the Russian diplomat Yevgeny Ustinov condemned the UN high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet's report on the situation in Ukraine claiming that it is a part of a campaign to spread lies about Moscow's actions.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 05 July, the participants of the Ukraine Recovery conference signed the Lugano Declaration in Switzerland. The declaration outlined a set of principles for rebuilding Ukraine. The Lugano principles emphasized that "the recovery process has to contribute to accelerating, deepening, broadening and achieving Ukraine's reform efforts and resilience in line with Ukraine's European path." The document called for Ukraine to be rebuilt in a "sustainable manner" and for the rehabilitation process to be "inclusive and achieve gender equality." During the conference, the president of Switzerland announced to fund Ukraine an addition of CHF 100 million by the end of 2023. Furthermore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has also allocated EUR 200 million in loans for Ukraine's public sector operations through the International Monetary Fund.

Also on 05 July, the prime minister of the UK Boris Johnson in a phone call with Zelensky said that he believed Ukraine's military could recapture territory taken over by the Russian forces. He also informed him that ten self-propelled artillery systems and loitering munitions from the UK will be arriving soon. Furthermore, the deputy head of the UK delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) Deirdre Brown reported on the devastating cost for civilians in the war in Ukraine at the OSCE permanent council meeting. She called upon Russia to abide by the "principles of proportionality and distinction, and to immediately cease the indiscriminate use of

wide-area impact weapons in civilian areas."

The Global Fallouts: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 05 July, the UN high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet stated that there have been 270 cases of verified arbitrary imprisonment of civilians by the Russian military and other armed groups in Ukraine and announced plans to increase monitoring. The findings were based on evidence from field visits by the monitors, interviews with little over 500 victims and witnesses of human rights breaches, and other sources of information. Furthermore, the UN Food Agency (FAO) reported that they have received USD 17 million from Japan to fund the grain storage infrastructure in Ukraine to control the rising food prices.

On 04 July, at the tenth World Peace Forum Russian and Western diplomats clashed over the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Russia's ambassador to China, Andrey Ivanovich Denisov, refuted the US ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, who claimed that Russia's military actions in Ukraine posed the greatest threat to the current international system.

The forum urged major powers to find a way to contain the impact of the conflicts' spillover effects and concentrate on areas of shared interest, such as preserving peace and the current international order supported by the UN Charter and international law.

Also on the same day, Dmitry Peskov, the press secretary for the Kremlin, stated that Russia does not doubt that the Uzbek government will make an aggressive effort to address the problems the country is currently experiencing. Peskov referred to the country as Russia's "ally and key partner" and said that what is taking place is an internal matter during a press conference.

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War in Ukraine: Day 131

The War on the Ground:

On 04 July, the governor of Kharkiv, Oleh Synyehubov said that missiles hit a school in the region. The Donetsk People's Republic said that Ukraine's forces shelled 15 of the 240 settlements under their control, in the

region. Reportedly, five people were killed and 20 were injured. Moreover, Ukraine's forces are targeting Russian military infrastructure with indirect fire and with HIMARS systems which have been provided by the US. They struck Russian ammunition depots in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Melitopol, and Zaporizhzhya.

The Governor of the Luhansk region, Serhiy Gaidai, told *Reuters* that Bakhmut in the Donetsk region was facing increased shelling after the fall of Lysychansk. Gaidai spoke to *Reuters* after the withdrawal of troops was reported from Lysychansk. He said that after their capture of the Luhansk region, Russia's forces are likely to move into Sloviansk city and Bakhmut town. He also mentioned that while the fall of Luhansk is indeed a 'painful' affair for him, it is still not the end of the war for Ukraine. Reflecting on what could be Russia's immediate strategy, he said: "They (Russian forces) will not transfer 100% of their troops to some front because they need to hold the line. If they leave their positions, then ours can carry out some kind of counter-offensive."

On 04 July, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Sweden's Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson. In his nightly address, he informed that primarily a new defence package was discussed. During the meeting with Andersson, he said that Ukraine is conducting talks with Turkey and the UN to facilitate a smooth export of grains from Ukraine's ports. Zelenskyy also addressed the fall of Lysychansk and said that with the help of long-range Western weapons, Ukraine will surely regain control over the area.

Moreover, Zelenskyy met with senior politicians from Ukraine and spoke about the USD 750 billion recovery plan of Ukraine. The plan has 27 sectors and is into two stages- the medium term (2023-2025) and the long term (2026-2032). Prime minister Denys Shmyhal elaborated on the sectors that would need immediate attention. He said that there has been direct infrastructural damage worth USD 100 billion so far, including 1,200 educational institutions, 200 hospitals, and thousands of kilometres of gas

pipelines, water and electricity networks, roads, and railways.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 04 July, in a televised meeting with Russia's defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, president Vladimir Putin congratulated the forces for their victory in the Luhansk region. He also suggested that the members of the forces should rest and recover from the recent ordeal. Shoigu provided an elaborate list of Ukraine's losses in Luhansk. He said 2,218 military personnel from Ukraine had been killed and 3,251 wounded; 196 tanks and armoured vehicles, 12 aircraft, one helicopter, 69 drones, six long-range surface-to-air missile systems, and 97 multiple rocket launchers among other things have been affected by this recent offensive by Russia.

On the same day, Russia's space agency, Roscosmos, released photos of Russian cosmonauts on the International Space Station (ISS). They were shown holding the self-proclaimed republics in Luhansk and Donetsk. Roscosmos also released a statement regarding the same and said: "This is a long-awaited day that residents of the occupied areas of the Luhansk region have been waiting for eight years. We are confident that 3 July 2022 will for ever go down in the history of the republic."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 04 July, the European Investment Bank proposed a new funding structure, similar to the one used for Europe during the COVID 19 pandemic, for rebuilding Ukraine. They have suggested up to EUR 100 billion of investment for the same. They clarified that through the EU-Ukraine Gateway Trust Fund, they will ask member countries to initially contribute EUR 20 billion in the form of grants, loans and guarantees.

On 03 July, Turkey stopped a Russian cargo ship off its Black Sea coast. It has been alleged that the ship was carrying grains stolen from Ukraine. Turkey's senior official has said that the allegations are being investigated thoroughly. Ukraine's ambassador to Turkey, Ambassador Vasyl

Bodnar said: "We have full cooperation. The ship is currently standing at the entrance to the port, it has been detained by the customs authorities of Turkey."

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

Syria's ambassador to Russia, Riad Haddad said that they are aware of Kremlin's 'special military operation' in Ukraine and were in full support of the same. He highlighted that this was important for Russia's national security. According to Haddad, Russia is having to deal with mercenaries and a misleading media war waged by the West. He also mentioned that the economic blockade on Russia is 'unjust' and is similar to what the West had done in Syria.

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War in Ukraine: Day 129 & 130

The War on the Ground:

The War on the Ground:

On 03 July, after an intense battle for the important city of Lysychansk in the Luhansk region, the Russian forces strengthened the positions around the city and forced the Ukrainian army to withdraw. Ukraine's general staff stated that "After heavy fighting for Lysychansk, the Defence Forces of Ukraine were forced to withdraw from their occupied positions and lines."

On the same day, the Ukrainian forces attacked a Russian weapons stockpile at the airfield in Melitopol using HIMARS rocket artillery systems supplied by the US. Ivan Fedorov, the mayor of Melitopol, said that two attacks were made by Ukrainian forces on one of the four Russian depots there.

Also on 03 July, the Ukrainian military intelligence directorate (GUR) stated that the Russian government's failure to pay its firms backing Russia's war in Ukraine is affecting the ability to repair damaged vehicles. According to the GUR, the Russian military has not paid the heads of Russian military vehicle repair facilities for earlier work, hence they are refusing to take new equipment for repair.

According to Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the Belarusian leader's remarks amounted to a "signal," and his subsequent acts should be closely scrutinized. According to some Ukrainian officials, Belarus might soon take a direct part in the battle.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 02 July, the Russian minister of defence, general of the army Sergey Shoigu, declared the liberation of the Lugansk People's Republic to Vladimir Putin. The ministry stated that Lysychansk and other adjacent settlements, the largest of which are Belogorovka, Novodruzhek, Maloryazantsevo, and Belaya Gora, are now completely under the authority of the

Russian Armed Forces and the People's Militia of the LPR. The minister reported that the total area of the regions liberated over the past 24 hours reached 182 square kilometers.

On 03 July, the local Border guard service reported that an estimated 17,500 residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic (DPR and LPR) have crossed the border to enter Russia in the Rostov region. The chief of Russia's National Defence management center stated that the Russian army had carried out seven humanitarian operations in DPR and LPR. Around 619 tonnes of humanitarian aid were given to the people. On 02 July, 421.7 tonnes of daily essentials and food aid were delivered to the people in the Zaporizhzhia region.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 03 July, the US government-backed Open Technology Fund is assisting firms that provide virtual private networks (VPNs) for free to Russians to access websites blocked by the censor. A spokesperson from Lanter stated that: "Our tool is primarily used by people trying to access independent media so that funding by the OTF has been absolutely critical." The US is also dispatching two NASAMS surface-to-air missile systems, four counter-artillery radars and up to 150,000 rounds of 155mm artillery ammunition to Ukraine as a part of its recent commitment of USD 820 million.

On the same day, president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, stated that he supported Russia wholeheartedly in its military campaign in Ukraine as part of its long-standing commitment to a "unity state" with Moscow. Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994 and is accused in the West of violating human rights, has permitted Russian soldiers to invade Ukraine using his nation's territory

On 03 July, the foreign secretary of the UK, Liz Truss announced that it was collaborating with Ukraine and others to host a conference in 2023 to recover the destruction caused by Russia's invasion. From 04 July, the Ukraine Recovery Conference (USC2022) in Lugano, Switzerland will bring together a Ukrainian

delegation with representatives of other countries, international organizations, and civil society to discuss rebuilding Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts:

Implications of the Ukraine war

On 03 July, the prime minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese visits Kyiv to meet president Zelenskyy. During his trip, he visited the cities of Bucha, Irpin, and Hostomel. He also committed an aid package worth AUD 100 million which includes drones and 34 armored vehicles. In addition, he will further impose sanctions and travel bans on 16 Russian ministers and oligarchs and terminate the import of gold from Russia.

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War in Ukraine: Day 128

The War on the Ground:

On 01 July, missiles struck an apartment building and two-holiday camps near Odessa. Reportedly, at least 18 people were killed and dozens were wounded. Odessa's regional emergency official, Ihor Budalenko informed that 41 people have been rescued

from the region. Odesa region governor Maksym Marchenko said that the missiles were Soviet-era Kh-22 missiles, and came from the direction of the Black Sea. President Zelenskyy addressed this incident and said that these attacks were "conscious, deliberately targeted Russian terror and not some sort of error."

Ukraine has requested Turkiye to seize a Russian-flagged ship off the Turkish coast. While it is not clear where the cargo was obtained from or where it is being shipped to, the ship set sail from Berdyansk.

On 01 July, Ukraine's foreign ministry announced that they have introduced visas for Russians willing to visit Ukraine. Since Ukraine's embassy and consulates in Russia have been closed, people will have to apply at centers run by external service providers in eight cities in Russia. However, people with a visa might be denied entry at the border, as that decision will solely be taken by Ukraine's border guards.

The head of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), Denis Pushilin spoke about a prisoner exchange between the two countries. He said that 37 members of nationalist battalions of Ukraine have been handed over, as they were uninvolved in war crimes. Pushilin also said that such members will not join active service soon, owing to their grievous injuries. Likewise, Ukraine's authorities have handed over 49 fighters from Russia.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 01 July, president Putin made a statement regarding the West. He said that the collective West was using Ukraine and the Ukrainians as a pawn for their geopolitical games. Addressing a meeting of the Foreign Intelligence Service he said: "this model is nothing but a new version of neo-colonialism and a US-style world order for the chosen ones, where the rights of others are simply trampled on."

The chairman of the State Council of Crimea, Vladimir Konstantinov said that the majority of citizens in Kherson preferred to accede to Russia. On the sidelines of the ninth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia in Grodno,

Konstantinov reiterated that activists in both Zaporizhia and Kherson regions have been looking forward to becoming a part of Russia from the very beginning.

On 30 June, Russia's parliament approved legislation that will allow the blocking of foreign news outlets. This is in response to the bans that Russian State media is facing abroad. As per this bill, Russia's prosecutor general has the right to ban foreign outlets, if they are found to be "hostile" against Russia, without waiting for the court's approval.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 01 July, the European Council president, Ursula Von der Leyen said that it might take a long time for Ukraine to complete the accession process to the EU. She noted that many crucial reforms were to be made by Ukraine and that it requires "hard work." She also said: "There is a long road ahead but Europe will be at your side every step of the way, for as long as it takes, from these dark days of war until the moment you cross the door that leads into our European Union."

The Pentagon announced new aid to Ukraine. The USD 820 million military packages will include new surface-to-air missile systems and counter-artillery radars. Up to 150,000 rounds of millimeter artillery ammunition will also be provided to Ukraine. The US has until now supplied Ukraine 14 military packages.

Norway's prime minister Jonas Gahr Stoere met president Zelenskyy in Kyiv and pledged USD 1.04 billion to Ukraine for their war efforts. He said: "This war is a breach of international law... You have the right to defend yourself and we have the right to help you defend yourself."

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

The Arctic Council announced that they will suspend all contacts with Russia with regards to international Arctic cooperation. Russia's ambassador-at-large and chair of the Council's senior arctic officials, Nikolay Korchunov reported to TASS that currently their partners in the Arctic had 'frozen' their contacts in "...fields of science, youth ties,

and contacts between people."

On 30 June, United Nations Secretary General's Spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric spoke about the export of Ukraine's grains via the Black Sea. He said that it was still very early to anticipate the results. Dujarric said that further announcements will be made only upon a conclusive decision.

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War in Ukraine: Day 127

The War on the Ground:

On 30 June, Russian forces departed from the strategic Black Sea outpost of Snake Island. Brigadier General Oleksii of Ukraine's military reported that the Ukrainian forces are yet to occupy the island. The withdrawal of Russian forces from the island may loosen the hold on the Ukrainian ports.

The regional governor of Luhansk, Sergiy Gaiday reported that the last major city in the eastern region of Ukraine that Russia needs to take over is under continuous shelling. Gaiday stated that the Russians are advancing from all sides with numerous vehicles and artillery. He further mentioned that the operation to evacuate over 15,000 civilians was not possible because of the shelling.

Ihor Budalenko, an emergency official for the Odessa region, reported that a missile had struck a building in the village of Serhiivka in the Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy district at around one in the morning killing 16 people.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 30 June, the deputy chairman of the security council Dmitry Medvedev stated that when Russia launched the military action to defend Donbas, it did so in complete accordance with the UN charter's right to self defence. Medvedev stated that: "The purpose of the special operation is to protect people who for years have been subjected to inhuman treatment and abuse by the Kyiv regime, which violated all possible standards and norms."

On the same day, the defence ministry reported that the Russian army has withdrawn its garrison from Snake Island as a gesture of goodwill. The move was taken to demonstrate to the world that Russia does not obstruct UN operations for humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the ambassador of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) to Russia Rodion Miroshnik mentioned that the entire Lisichansk oil refinery was occupied by the Russian Army and the LPR. The allied forces have also taken over the Spornoye settlement in the Donetsk region.

Also on 30 June, president Putin in a news conference at Ashgabat, affirmed that the special military operation in Ukraine is working as planned and there are no deadlines to be followed. He stated that: "The troops are advancing and reaching those endpoints that are assigned as a task at a certain stage of this combat work. Everything is going according to plan." He also asserted that the objective of the

mission has not been amended or shifted since the beginning and the goal is "to create conditions that will guarantee the security of Russia itself."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 30 June, the secretary-general of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg addressed the press conference post the NATO Summit. He stated that the alliance has agreed to establish a EUR one billion Innovation fund. Which will promote artificial Intelligence to space technologies. On the last day of the summit, the discussion focused on threats from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel region. Along with this, the NATO leaders agreed on building defence capacity of Mauritania, Tunisia, and Jordan. Stoltenberg also highlighted how NATO is getting prepared with Finland and Sweden joining the alliance and briefed on the latest announcement on aiding Ukraine with equipment from both the soviet eras and modern NATO standards.

Also on 30 June, the prime minister of the UK, Boris Johnson committed of additional one billion in military aid to Ukraine during the NATO summit will be funded by climate finance underspending. The business secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng stated that his department will redirect the "underspends" from climate finance and foreign aid to military aid. Furthermore, the Scottish government has pledged GBP 65 million to the UK's one billion commitment for the military defence of Ukraine.

US president Joe Biden in the press conference during the NATO summit assured the sale of new F-16 jet fighters to Turkey, the decision comes after Turkey agrees for Sweden and Finland to join NATO. Biden announced USD 800 million support for Ukraine he said: "This summit was about strengthening our alliances, meeting the challenges of our world as it is today and the threats we're going to face in the future."

The US department of defence will be stationing its two squadrons of F-35s in the Royal Airforce Base Lakenheath in Suffolk as a part of its commitment to advance the military presence across Europe.

On the same day, Germany's chancellor Olaf Scholz called on the EU and Lithuania to lift the restrictions on the movement of freight traffic from Russia to its Kaliningrad exclave. Scholz suggested that sanctions should not apply here as the goods were just transiting between two Russian territories and not for imports to the bloc.

The Global Fallout: Implications of the Ukraine war

On 30 June, president of Indonesia Joko Widodo visited Moscow to meet president Putin and called to solve the global food-supply disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine. He further discussed with Putin commerce, investment, and tourism between the two countries. He appreciated Putin's assurances of the safe arrival of food and fertilizer from Russia and Ukraine.

Also on the same day, the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to increase its oil production by 648,000 barrels a day. However, the cartel's plan to increase supply by 50 per cent more than anticipated in July and August hasn't done much to lower prices thus far.

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EM Short Notes*

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BELARUS

Lukashenko claims Poland intends to seize pre-world war two territories from Ukraine

On 23 May, president of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko expressed concern over what he described as Western attempts to "dismember" Ukraine, referring to NATO. He further accused Poland of intending to seize the Western part of the country in a virtual meeting with the president of Russia Vladimir Putin. Lukashenko stated: "What worries us is that they are ready, the Poles and NATO, to come out, to help take western Ukraine like it was before 1939." Referring to the non-aggression pact of 1939 when Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union carved Poland up between them. The majority of Moscow's acquired land is either in Belarus or Ukraine. Kaliningrad, once German East Prussia, became a Russian exclave. ("Lukashenko accuses Poland and NATO of plotting to partition Ukraine," *Reuters*, 23 May 2022)

BELGIUM

Belgium celebrates National Day

On 21 July, Belgium celebrated its national day marking 192 years since independence. It became independent in 1830 after the end of Belgium Revolution, where the National Congress made Belgium a kingdom. The celebration for 2022 will be special since it was not celebrated for past two years in the Pandemic. On the day, the royal family attended the National Day ceremony that included military and civilian parade in the Place des Palais. It also marked the remembrance of the historic soldiers who have helped the country. (Lauren Walker and Maïthé Chini, "What does Belgium celebrate on its National Day, and how?," *Brussels Times*, 21 July 2022)

Belgium signs deal with French energy company to extend the operation of nuclear reactors

On 22 July, the Belgium government signed a deal with Engie which is a French energy company to prolong the functioning of the

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nuclear reactors by 10 years. The decision comes in the background of the Ukraine war and Europe's growing energy dependency. With regards to the reactors, Doel 4 and Tihange 3 were scheduled to be closed down by 2025 for a technical examination, the reactors account for half of electricity generation for Belgium. With the government opting to phase out from the nuclear energy by 2025, the Ukraine war has trickled the decision. ("Belgium reaches tentative deal with Engie on extending nuclear reactors," *POLITICO*, 21 July 2022)

BOSNIA

Memorial march to pay respect to the victims of the Srebrenica massacre

On 08 July, thousands of people in Bosnia joined a Peace march to commemorate the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. In July 1995, around 8,000 Bosniak males were separated by Serb troops from their families, chased through the woods, and then killed. The bodies of these soldiers were then dumped in mass graves. So far the remains of 6,600 people have been found. The Srebrenica killings are the only acknowledged genocide in Europe since World War II and took place at the peak of the war in Bosnia, after the break-up of Yugoslavia. The 100-kilometer memorial march traces the route taken by the victims while attempting to flee the Bosnian Serbs. ("Thousands march in Bosnia in memory of Srebrenica massacre," *AP News*, 08 July 2022)

BULGARIA

Bulgaria to go through snap elections as PP party fails to form a new coalition

On 08 July, *Reuters* reported that Bulgaria is likely to face a snap election soon. Kiril Petkov's government fell after members of the ruling coalition resigned, and co-leader Assen Vassilev was given the responsibility by president Rumen Radev to form a new government. However, he reported that his party would not propose a new government as it had failed to gain the support of four lawmakers needed for an absolute majority. While other parties will get two attempts to form a government, they are unlikely to succeed. The president will then appoint a caretaker government before Bulgaria

conducts fresh elections- the fourth one since 2021. (Tsvetelia Tsolova, "Snap election looms in Bulgaria after PP party fails to form government," *Reuters*, 08 July 2022)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Fighter jets to be sent to Slovakia to protect its airspace

On 03 July, prime minister Petr Fiala of the Czech Republic said that the country would provide fighter jets to protect Slovakia's airspace until it has new planes at its disposal. Slovakia had previously asked its NATO allies to help guard its skies after it decided to not use the Soviet-designed MiG-29 aircraft. It is expecting a late delivery of the US-built F-16 fighter jets. Fiala said that Ukraine is not only fighting for its independence but also the liberty and the security of the West. (Clothilde Goujard, "The Czech Republic to protect Slovakia's airspace from September," *POLITICO*, 03 July 2022)

Prime minister Petr Fiala to lead the EU Council presidency

On 30 June, the leaders of the Czech Republic, prime minister Petr Fiala and the minister of European affairs Mikulas Bek assumed the presidency of the EU as it was their turn to lead the bloc. They are presiding over the bloc at a tumultuous time of war, energy crisis, climate change, and a European summit. The leaders primarily focus on helping Ukraine in the war against Russia as the Czech Republic is the second most strong supporter of Kyiv. They have to deal with the coronavirus pandemic in addition to it as the virus is spreading rapidly across Europe. The leaders set their priorities straight by focusing on each problem at a time and they adapted the motto "Europe as a task" from the former Czech Republic president. Their goal is to achieve unity among the EU members. The Czech Republic has to preside over the mega summit that will take place in Prague in October 2022 and also have to solve the energy crisis. (Lubos Palatia, "Czech Republic assumes EU Council presidency with confidence and ambition," *Deutsche Welle*, 30 June 2022)

DENMARK**Three killed in a shooting at a shopping mall in Copenhagen**

On 03 July, a 22-year-old Danish man was arrested and charged with manslaughter for shooting at a shopping center in Copenhagen killing three and injuring several others. After reports of a shooting at the Field's mall in Copenhagen came to the police, armed officers were sent to capture the shooter and calm other people down from panicking. The suspect was arrested at 1548 GMT. He was seen carrying a rifle and its ammunition. The initial investigation states that he was alone. The witnesses said that the man was seen holding a rifle and started shooting at the crowd all of a sudden. The killer was determined to be an Islamic militant. Denmark last saw a militant attack in 2015. (Stine Jacobsen and Nikolaj Skydsgaard, "Denmark in shock as gunman kills three at Copenhagen shopping mall," *Reuters*, 03 July 2022)

ESTONIA**New government in Estonia after a collapse**

On 18 July, the prime minister of Estonia, Kaja Kallas formed her second government and took the oath in the Riigikogu. She formed her new coalition government with her liberal Reform party, the Social Democrats and the conservative Isamaa party. The previous government collapsed on 03 June after Kaja's resignation and breaking up her coalition with Center Party as it collided with the opposition EKRE party. From Kaja's party, the minister of finance Keit Pentus-Rosimannus, minister of social protection Signe Riisalo and Minister of rural affairs Urmas Kruuse retain their positions in the new government. ("Estonia: New cabinet sworn into office," *Deutsche Welle*, 18 July 2022)

Prime minister Kallas agrees for a coalition government

On 09 July, Estonia's incumbent center-right Reform Party, led by Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, tentatively agreed to form a coalition government with two other parties. The left-leaning Center Party was expelled from the two-party coalition on 03 June as a

result of disagreements over spending and welfare policies amid rising household costs due to high inflation. The opposition Social Democrats and the conservative Fatherland (or "Isamaa") party have joined the politically liberal Reform Party, which supports conservative budgetary policy. The 101-seat Riigikogu legislature is controlled by the three parties, who can manage 56 seats in all. The agreement, which will be formalized in the coming days, allows Kallas, Estonia's first female prime minister, to avoid leading a minority one-party administration. (Jari Tanner, "Estonian PM reaches coalition deal for majority government," *Associated Press*, 09 July 2022)

FRANCE**Paris to build cooling system to control increasing temperatures**

On 28 July, Paris decided to build the largest cooling system to fight against the heatwave that has spread across the city. Paris City Hall has agreed to a contract with the private company that takes care of the cooling systems in museums to triple its network by 2042. The cooling system injects cool water into the air to keep the surrounding areas chilled. The system uses a network of underground water pipes that takes water from the river Seine, which will help Paris cool down by one degree Celsius. (Angela Symons, "Paris' eco-friendly underground cooling system to become the largest in the world," *Euronews*, 28 July 2022)

Macron tours West Africa to form friendly ties

On 26 July, France's president Emmanuel Macron visited Cameroon which kicked off his three-country west African tour. He will visit Benin and the responsibilities of the colonial power through an investigation. Cameroon's politicians wanted Macron to address the crimes committed by the colonial power during its stay in the country as reparation, France returned historians that were stolen to Benin in 2021. Macron also discussed counter-terrorism and security cooperation in Western Africa's Chad Basin with his Cameroonian

counterpart, Paul Biya. France promised it will aid Africa in its time of food crisis that is present Guinea-Bissau on 27 July 2022. He invited historians from France and Cameroon to look into Paris' archives of the colonial past. He wanted to establish now. ("Macron in Cameroon offers look at past, help for future," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 July 2022)

Paris celebrates La fête nationale

On 14 July, Paris celebrates Bastille Day commemorating the beginning of the French republic. It also coincides with the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789, which housed prisoners who had rebelled against the monarch or queen over socioeconomic reasons. However, the French do not call it the Bastille Day, because the date marks the beginning of the Federation of France in 1790, one year following the fall of the Bastille. As stated in the national anthem La Marseillaise, it is a day when the French celebrate liberté, fraternité, and égalité. For them, the day coinciding with the storming of the Bastille prison is a coincidence. The storming of the Bastille, a French prison, on 14 July 1789, gave rise to the term Bastille Day. This prison was well-known in Paris and represented royal power. An important development in the French Revolution was the decision to storm it. The official name of Bastille Day in France is La fête nationale, however Le quatorze juillet is more often used by them. (Amy Willis, "How to say 'Happy Bastille Day' in French and the history of the holiday," *metro.uk*, 14 July 2022)

Abdeslam and 19 others rulings changed to permanent after failing to file appeals

On 12 July, the only remaining attacker from the 2015 Paris attacks, 32-year-old Salah Abdeslam has not appealed his life sentence. Abdeslam was the only surviving member of the 10 attackers who blew themselves up in an act of terrorism. Affiliated with the Islamic State group cell in Syria and Iraq, the group murdered 130 people in 2015 at the Bataclan concert hall and various other locations. The ruling has gained permanent status and there won't be an appeal trial anymore. Although

Abdeslam pleaded not to put him in a life sentence, his request was ignored due to his clear involvement in the attack. He was later arrested four months after the attack in 2015 by the police force. ("Paris 2015 attacks verdict 'permanent' after Abdeslam, all 19 others decline to file appeals," *France24*, 12 July 2022)

President Macron linked with Uber lobbying faces parliamentary inquiry

On 11 July, president Emmanuel Macron was revealed to have ties with the Uber lobbying scandal. He was said to have assisted Uber against the taxi industry at the time when he was the economy minister under the presidency of François Hollande. The connection was found after 124000 confidential files of Uber were leaked to the International Consortium of Journalists. Macron, who was interested in making deals with foreign companies, made it possible for Uber to establish itself in the country. Macron will be subject to parliamentary inquiry in the coming weeks. (Jennifer Rankin and Angeline Chrissafis, "A state scandal: calls for inquiry into Macron's links to Uber lobbying," *the Guardian*, 11 July 2022)

"Mega-fire" in France burns 1500 acres of land overnight

On 08 July, a massive fire was reported in France's southern Gard region. The blaze started near the Bordezac village and forced evacuations from nearby Bessèges and other settlements. Around 1,500 acres of land were burned overnight. Almost 1,000 firefighters, 12 water-dropping planes and 2 helicopters struggled to contain the fire. Reportedly, 13 firefighters have been injured and 100 people had to be evacuated from their homes. A red alert for fire risks has been issued by several neighboring areas by France's national meteorological service. ("Almost 1,000 firefighters tackle 'mega-fire' in southern France," *The Guardian*, 08 July 2022)

France repatriate Syrian women and children from Kurdish camps

On 05 July, the foreign ministry in France repatriated 35 children and 16 mothers from Kurdish-run camps in northern Syria.

The camps were allegedly holding family members of suspected Islamic State jihadists. The statement by the foreign ministry said that the minors were handed over to child protection services. However, the mothers will face judicial proceedings shortly. Until now, France's policy has been to give primacy to the their own internal security over the welfare concerns of the detained. However, this repatriation effort will be the largest since the ousting of the Islamic State in 2019. (["France repatriates 51 from Syria camps in policy change," France24](#), 05 July 2022)

President Macron to reshuffle his cabinet after June's election loss

On 04 July, France's president Emmanuel Macron reshuffled his cabinet following the loss of getting a majority in last month's elections. He retained a few prominent ministers while changing the rest. Ministers for defence, finance, and foreign affairs are the same while the portfolios of the rest were shuffled. Ministers who lost their seats in June's election have been replaced by people selected by Macron so that they can rebalance his alliance after the loss. The reshuffling came into fruition because of French political tradition that the ministers who lost their seats should resign from the cabinet. The major change was the removal of the solidarity minister Damien Abad due to him facing rape charges which he denied. (["France: Macron reshuffles Cabinet after election struggles," Deutsche Welle](#), 04 July 2022)

GEORGIA

People protest against government for sabotaging the EU candidature

On 11 July, the people of Georgia were taken to the streets to protest against its government. The Dream Party is the ruling party of the Georgian government. It has been ignoring the wishes of people and is aligning itself with Russia rather than with the EU. Georgia was rejected to join the bloc by the EU. People suspect that the government had thwarted the EU membership talks that led to its rejection in June. They believed that Georgia should have been there with Ukraine and Moldova to be granted EU membership. In protest,

people wanted the government to resign. The government aligned with Russia after it started the war with Ukraine instead of signing with the EU and its sanctions. (Dato Parulava, ["Georgians fear their government is sabotaging EU hopes," POLITICO](#), 11 July 2022)

GERMANY

Germany passes law to protect whistle blowers

On 27 July, the Cabinet approved a draft bill that will give more protection and security to whistle blowers. Even though the EU had given the whistle-blower directive last year, the government could not agree on a deal till now. As per the law, companies with over 50 but less than 250 employees will have to set up an internal reporting mechanism and can collaborate with other companies to facilitate the same. To receive protection from dismissals, warnings, disciplinary measures, discrimination, bullying or reputational damage, whistle blowers will need to either contact their respective internal reporting systems or the federal and state government offices. However, civil society organizations have criticized the law as insufficient. (["German Cabinet approves draft legislation to protect whistleblowers," Deutsche Welle](#), 27 July 2022)

The young population declines to record low

On 25 July, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, Destatis stated that the proportion of the young population aged 15-24 has reached its lowest since the beginning of current records in 1950. The number of young people in Germany has been declining since 2005, except for the year 2015. Regarding the demographic landscape, youngsters in the city-state of Bremen constitute 11 per cent of the population, and in the eastern state of Brandenburg eight per cent. (["Germany: Number of young people falls to record low," Deutsche Welle](#), 25 July 2022)

New migration bill targets achieving PR easier in Germany

On 06 July, Germany approved a new migration bill that allowed migrants, who

lived in Germany for many years without permission, a permanent residency. The cabinet gave its approval to this new bill that would be applicable to those who had been residents by 01 January 2022, for at least five years. Those that qualify for the conditions must apply for a one-year residency and then later go for the permanent residency application. They should have enough earnings to make an independent living, should know to speak German, and should be integrated into German society. People below the age of 27, can request permanent residency after staying in Germany for three years. The bill will integrate refugees who are seeking safety easily into Germany by providing them with language classes. The bill will also make the deportation of criminals easier. (Kristen Grieshaber, "[Germany eases path to permanent residency for migrants](#)," *Associated Press*, 06 July 2022)

GREECE

Europe's heatwaves move eastwards, spreading wildfires to Greece

On 24 July, several active blazes were reported in Greece. Wildfires were reported on the island of Lesbos for two consecutive days and nearby settlements had to be evacuated. In the mainland, blazes were seen in Krestena in the western Peloponnese, and in the forest near Dadia in the north. The Civil Protection Minister Christos Stylianidis, who is coordinating the firefighting efforts said that the difficult terrain and changing wind direction is making it increasingly difficult to deal with the fire. Greece faces wildfires for second consecutive summer. Last year, it had destroyed around 121,000 hectares of forest and bushland in the country. ("[Wildfires burn coastal homes, forests in Greece as Europe's heatwave spreads east](#)," *Reuters*, 24 July 2022)

HUNGARY

Orban's racist speech incites resignation from his advisor

On 27 July, Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban's advisor Zsuzsa Hegedus handed over her resignation letter due to Orban's racist comments in his speech in Romania. She called his speech a pure Nazi text In the

speech. Orban said that European people should be free to mix but mingling with non-European people will create a mixed-race world. He also said that they don't want more mixed races. Hegedus compared Orban to Joseph Goebbels who was in charge of propaganda under Adolf Hitler. Orban faced a lot of criticism for his speech and also his anti-migration sentiments. ("[Hungary PM Viktor Orban adviser Hegedus resigns over 'pure Nazi' speech](#)," *BBC*, 27 July 2022)

Prime minister Orban accuses Europe of racial mixing

On 23 July, in a keynote address at the Tusvanyos Summer University, Romania, Hungary's prime minister, Victor Orban made a far-right comment. He said that they do not aspire to be a "mixed race". Solidifying his position against the mixing of Europeans with non-Europeans, Orban mentioned that according to him, countries where European and non-Europeans mingle were "no longer nations." He alleged that the EU, the West and the troops rallied by his Fidesz enemy, George Soros were attempting to "force migrants" into Central Europe. However, his speech drew widespread criticism from Hungary's opposition Momentum party and Romania's members of parliament. (Shaun Walker, "[Viktor Orbán sparks outrage with attack on 'race mixing' in Europe](#)," *The Guardian*, 24 July 2022)

Protests emerge against new tax law on small firms

On 16 July, 1000 demonstrators protested against the prime minister Viktor Orban's new law that raises taxes for small firms. Since self-employed individuals and independent contractors relied on the tax relief programme for almost 20 years, the law could have an impact on them. Following the bill's passage, the right-wing Fidesz party of Prime Minister Viktor Orban also reduced a cap on utility bills for homes with increased utility usage due to rising electricity and gas prices. Hungary is eligible for awards worth billions of dollars through the COVID response fund of the EU, but Brussels has not yet made those funds available due to worries about democratic

standards and corruption. ("Hungary: Protesters angered by Orban-backed tax reforms," *Deutsche welle*, 17 July 2022)

IRELAND

Ireland's emission cut goals deemed as "problematic"

On 29 July, the chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council in Ireland, Maria Donnelly said that the sectoral targets set by the cabinet on cutting down greenhouse gas emissions are "problematic." On 28 July, Ireland's parliament finalized completed plans to cut down their emission by 25 per cent by 2023. Donnelly said that these cuts are not in keeping with the carbon budgets or the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act. The act mandates a total reduction of 51 per cent, while the current cuts show a reduction of only 43 per cent. ("Climate change: Republic of Ireland emission cuts 'problematic'," *BBC*, 29 July 2022)

Dublin extends cross-border health plan to a year

On 12 July, the Republic of Ireland extended the cross-border health scheme which was due to expire in June 2021 to another year. The scheme lets the people of Northern Ireland carry out their treatment in the Republic of Ireland. The country's department of health has allocated EUR five million towards the Health Services Republic of Ireland Reimbursement Scheme. As per the scheme, patients from Northern Ireland can access private treatment across the border and get reimbursed from 80 to 50 per cent of their medical fees. The common treatments included in the scheme are orthopaedic surgery, cataract surgery and hernia repairs. ("Cross-border health scheme extended for year," *BBC*, 12 July 2022)

No-confidence vote to be initiated as ruling coalition falls short of a majority

On 08 July, Ireland's main opposition party, Sinn Fein announced that it will initiate a no-confidence motion next week. The new development comes after Joe McHugh of the center-right Fine Gael resigned the party whip, after voting against a bill introduced by the government. The resignation means

that the coalition government made of Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and the Green Party now has 79 seats in the 160-seat lower house, which is one short of a majority. Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald said: "This government has lost its parliamentary majority, failed to tackle the cost of living and housing crisis... this government is out of touch and out of time... We need a government that puts workers and families first." ("Sinn Féin tables no confidence motion in Irish government," *BBC*, 09 July 2022)

Government allocates EUR 70 million for the Shared Island fund

On 05 June, over EUR 70 million was approved by the government of Ireland for cross-border initiatives. These cross-border initiatives include resuming the restoration of the Ulster Canal, an all-island electric vehicle charging infrastructure scheme, and art investment projects. The money is allocated to the Shared Island Fund, in which the Irish government had already given EUR 50 million in 2021. The restoration of the canal will also include new road bridges, a marina and heritage architecture. The electric car project is said to be delivering charge points in sports clubs and centres all across the island. The all-island partnership will benefit people from all communities and traditions. ("Ulster Canal to benefit from cross-border fund," *BBC*, 05 July 2022)

The Birth Information and Tracing bill passed

On 29 June, the Birth Information and Tracing Bill 2022 was passed as law in Ireland. The bill was signed by president Michael D Higgins of Ireland. The advancement of the bill through Ireland's parliament was described as a historic moment by the minister for children. The adoptees were given access to their original birth certificates because of this bill. For those parents who want their identity to be concealed, their adoptee children are given an information session where they are taught to respect each other's right to privacy. The right to access the birth identity information is given to the adopted individuals for the first time in the history

of the Republic of Ireland. Measures for smooth contact of the families will be done by the country. While some object to the law deeming it as discriminatory to the people who have to take information sessions due to their parents' wishes not to see them. ("[Irish Birth Information and Tracing Bill becomes law](#)," *BBC*, 29 June 2022)

ITALY

Italy sees the arrival of over 1200 undocumented migrants

On 24 July, it was reported that around 1,200 undocumented migrants arrived at ports in Sicily, Italy. The migrants hailed from Asia, Africa and Middle Eastern nations. In Calabria, 674 people were rescued and five dead bodies were discovered. A navy and mercantile ship, three coast guard patrol boats and a financial police boat carried out the rescue operation. In Lampedusa, 522 people were rescued, even though the island's immigration center is already well over its 350 people capacity. The rescued migrants hailed from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. (Matt Murphy, "[Italy migrants: Nearly 1,200 arrive by boat in 24 hours](#)," *BBC*, 24 July 2022)

Prime minister Draghi resigns signalling impending snap elections

On 21 July, the Italy's prime minister, Mario Draghi handed in his resignation, after the coalition of his national unity government collapsed. However, he has been asked by president Sergio Mattarella to stay on in a caretaker capacity, till snap elections are on 25 September. Leader of the Brothers of Italy party, Giorgia Meloni welcomed the news, as the bloc of conservative parties led by the Brothers of Italy seem to be in line to win a clear majority at the ballot. (Crispian Balmer, Giuseppe Fonte and Angelo Amante, "[Mario Draghi resigns, plunging Italy into political turmoil](#)," *Reuters*, 22 July, 2022)

Draghi wins vote of confidence but lacks support from coalition

On 20 July, Italy's prime minister Mario Draghi stated that he would be open to continue being the prime minister if his

quarrelling coalition could promise "sincere and real support" for him. Even though he won in a vote of confidence in the parliament, it was done so without the support of significant parties in the power-sharing government. Draghi appears to have no other option except to submit his resignation. On 21 July, he is scheduled to address the lower chamber of the Italian parliament before meeting president Sergio Mattarella and may also formally announce his resignation at that time. (Hannah Roberts, "[Mario Draghi faces the end after Italy's coalition refuses to back him](#)," *POLITICO*, 20 July 2022)

Carabinieri prevents the illegal sale of stolen 17th-century art

On 19 July, the Italian paramilitary force and Italian police thwarted a possible illegal sale of a 17th-century painting by the Baroque artist Artemisia Gentileschi at an auction house in Vienna. The Italian paramilitary force, which is also known as the carabinieri art squad, had apprehended the dealers trying to sell off the artwork worth EUR two million to an intermediary based in Tuscany, which would then be sold abroad. The dealers would then purposefully ignore providing historical documentation of the artwork to obscure the details of its origin. The dealers had claimed Gentileschi's masterpiece, *Caritas Romana* (Roman Charity) to be the work of one of her followers and not the artist herself, to gain export permission from Italian authorities fraudulently. The specialized art squad is on the lookout for any artworks or antiques from Italy that are being exported illegally. ("[Italian police thwart illegal sale of Artemisia Gentileschi painting](#)," *the Guardian*, 19 July 2022)

Right-wing parties refuse to work with 5Star movement

On 17 July, the leaders of the two right-wing parties that make up the current coalition, Silvio Berlusconi of Forza Italia and Matteo Salvini declared that they could no longer cooperate with the 5Star Movement, tipping Mario Draghi's government even farther toward dissolution. They released a joint statement in which they declared that they had "...excluded the possibility of ruling with

the 5Stars any further due to their ineptitude and untrustworthiness." Right-wing parties are anticipated to prevail as a coalition in an early election, which Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the extreme right Brothers of Italy opposition party, has been calling for. The thought of an election taking place "very soon" was welcomed by Berlusconi and Salvini, who said they would monitor the development of the political situation. (Hannah Roberts, "[Italian right-wing parties reject coalition partner as government heads toward collapse](#)," *POLITICO*, 17 July 2022)

President reduces to accept Draghi's resignation amid political and economic crisis

On 15 July, the prime minister Mario Draghi announced his resignation due to a political crisis. However, president Sergio Mattarella said he would not accept Draghi's resignation. The president's office stated that Mattarella "did not accept the resignation and invited the prime minister to appear before Parliament to give a speech." Draghi won a no-confidence vote in the Senate, but the future of his administration remained in doubt as a result of the populist 5-Star Movement (5SM), a significant coalition ally, abstaining from the vote. Draghi won the vote 172-39, but the 5SM boycott represented a clear threat to his government. Draghi had clearly stated that 5SM was a coalition partner in his unity government and that he had no intention of governing without them. Mattarella has avoided a catastrophic political disaster by rejecting Draghi's resignation while Italy battles significant debt issues, a terrible drought, and rising energy costs as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine ("[Italy: President rejects PM Mario Draghi's resignation](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 July 2022)

Migrants relocated as Lampedusa refugee center overcrowds

On 09 July, the Italian navy relocated the first 600 migrants from the Sicilian Island of Lampedusa after the facility for identifying refugees got overcrowded with additional arrivals. Statistics from the Interior Ministry show that compared to previous years, daily

migrant admissions in Italy have increased steadily in July. 30,000 have arrived so far this year, compared to 22,700 during the same period in 2021 and 7,500 throughout 2020, which indicates a substantial increase in overall migrant arrivals. Lampedusa is often the destination of choice for migrant smugglers operating out of Libya, who charge desperate people hundreds of dollars each to cross the Mediterranean Sea in crowded, perilous dinghies and boats. Lampedusa is closer to North Africa than mainland Italy. ("[Italy relocates migrants after Lampedusa center overwhelmed](#)," *Associated Press*, 09 July 2022)

Coalition party presents list of demands to Draghi

On 06 July, the leader of the Five Star Movement Giuseppe Conte presented prime minister Mario Draghi with a list of demands to ensure support for the coalition government. The demands included a call for minimum wage, protection of the Five Star's flagship welfare payments and budget alignment to the cost of living crisis. The document mentioned that the party has "accumulated profound political discomfort," in the Draghi government and needed "a clarifying discussion." (Hannah Roberts, "[Italy's 5Stars present Draghi with list of demand](#)," *POLITICO*, 06 July 2022)

Declares a state of emergency after the north face's severe drought

On 04 July, Italy declared a state of emergency for the region around the Po River. The country is facing severe drought in the area surrounding the river Po, which holds roughly a third of the country's agricultural production. This might lead to enforcing water rationing for homes and businesses. Many waterways in North Italy have dried up and the flow is weaker which has led to the seawater seeping inland in turn ruining the crops. The regions that fell under the state of emergency were Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto. To overcome the water shortages, funds of EUR 36.5 million were designated for these regions. The state of emergency took care of people's assistance and relief. Further measures could be taken to prevent the same from

happening in the future in central Italy. Prime minister Mario Draghi is contemplating appointing a commissioner to take care of the drought response. ("[Italy declares state of emergency for drought-stricken north](#)," *Reuters*, 05 July 2022)

NORTH MACEDONIA

Protests in North Macedonia over French proposal on a compromise deal with Bulgaria

On 08 July, protests were reported in North Macedonia, against a proposed compromise deal with Bulgaria that would allow the country to begin the process for their EU membership. Hundreds of people took part in the protest by parking their vehicles around government building and blocked regional roads. The proposal by France is expected to be debated by North Macedonia next week. However, the leader of the largest opposition party VMRO-DPMNE, which supports the protest, Hristijan Mickoski said: "We will never, never accept this treaty because it is contrary of our national interest and it is contrary to our identity." (Fatos Bytyci, "[Protests block North Macedonia's capital over Bulgaria, EU compromise](#)," *Reuters*, 08 July 2022)

Protest against France's proposal

On 03 July, thousands of people in North Macedonia protested against France's proposal on the country's EU accession. Protesters were led by the right-wing nationalist opposition party VMRO-DPMNE. The proposal was to settle disputes between Bulgaria and North Macedonia, which might eventually lead Bulgaria to lift the veto which was placed on North Macedonia to be a part of the EU. Bulgaria demanded North Macedonia recognize its language due to its Bulgarian roots and to secure rights for the Bulgarian minorities. However, the right-wing party leaders opposed the demand of Bulgaria and France's proposal stating that they will wait until they accept the civilized Macedonians. ("[North Macedonia: Nationalist protesters reject French EU proposal](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 03 July 2022)

NORWAY

Forced settlement ends the Norwegian oil and gas workers' strike

On 05 July, the Labour ministry of Norway intervened in the strike conducted by the Lederne union members. The workers from Norway's largest oil and gas producer, Equinor, went on a strike over an increase in their wages during the inflation. The strike was terminated by the government stepping in to impose a forced settlement. If the strike had continued, almost 60 per cent of Norway's energy export would have been cut short. Many West European countries now rely on Norway for their energy supply and a prolonged strike would have created difficulties for them. (Gwladys Fouche, Nora Buli and Victoria Klesty, "[Norway oil and gas workers end strike as government steps in](#)," *Reuters*, 06 July 2022; "[Norway's government ends oil and gas strike](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 05 July 2022)

POLAND

Tonnes of human ashes unearthed in former Nazi camp Soldau

On 15 July, a mass burial containing 17.5 tonnes of human ashes was discovered in the Nazi concentration camp of Soldau in northern Poland. Tomasz Jankowski from Poland's national memorial institute stated that there were at least 8,000 victims in the cemetery. It is believed that the Nazis torched the bodies after digging them up to cover up the evidence of their deaths. At Soldau, the Nazis killed Jews, political opponents, and Polish aristocracy. The concentration camp was constructed in 1939 and utilised during the Nazi occupation for transit, detention, and extermination. It is estimated that up to 30,000 individuals were slaughtered there, and experts aim to use DNA analysis to learn more about the deaths. Numerous remnants of clothing, buttons, and other objects have been discovered by archaeologists, but nothing valuable has been discovered, indicating that the victims were looted before being set ablaze. (Paul Kirby, "[Nazi Soldau: Ashes of 8,000 victims found in mass grave in Poland](#)," *BBC*, 14 July 2022)

SPAIN**San Fermin bull-running festival starts with celebrations**

On 06 July, the world-famous sport of Spain, San Fermin bull-running festival in the city of Pamplona started off with "chuinazo" fireworks and celebrations. The fireworks were ignited by former soccer player Juan Carlos Unzué, who was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) in 2018. He dedicated the fireworks to those suffering from the disease and to create awareness. The bull run festival was canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The celebrations were interrupted by animal activists disguised as dinosaurs to protest against the sport. They marched under the banner "Bullfighting is Prehistoric." ("[Spain's Pamplona Bull Run festival returns after two years](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 July 2022)

SWEDEN**Sweden refuses to return Polish historic document**

On 27 July, Sweden's foreign minister Ann Linde said that they will not be returning Laski's statutes to Poland. Published in 1506, and currently, in the collection of the Uppsala University in Sweden, this document is considered by Poland to be the first codification of Polish law. The right-wing Sweden Democrats had said that Sweden should return the 'looted' parchment as a sign of goodwill toward Poland, for accepting Sweden's NATO bid. However, Linde from the Social Democrats disagreed and said that "spoils of war from the 17th century are legitimate conquests according to the international law of the time." (Wilhelmine Preussen, "[Sweden dismisses move to return 'spoils of war' to Poland](#)," *POLITICO*, 27 July)

Stockholm convicts Iranian accused of war crimes in 1998

On 14 July, a former Iranian official, Hamid Nouri was convicted of war crimes by the supreme court of Sweden in connection with the 1988 mass killings of political prisoners in Iran. Nouri was accused by Swedish prosecutors of committing war crimes and murder between July and September 1988, while they claimed he was

working as the deputy prosecutor's assistant at Karaj's Gohardasht jail. Nouri was given a life sentence for his alleged major role in the murder of several opposition individuals. Iran referred to the verdict as "political." In 2019, Nouri was detained after taking a flight to Sweden, and he was tried under the doctrine of universal jurisdiction. He was the first to be charged with taking part in the executions. (David Gritton, "[Swedish court convicts Iranian ex-official over 1988 executions](#)," *BBC*, 14 July 2022)

SWITZERLAND**Freezing point in regards to altitude increases**

On 25 July, the meteorological department of Switzerland, MeteoSwiss stated that the freezing point of its country is higher than its tallest summits. Weather balloons rose to 5,184 feet before identifying the freezing point. This was about 70 meters higher than the previous record of 5,117 meters measured on 20 July 1995 and also 375 meters above Europe's highest peak, Mont Blanc located in the French Alps. This occurrence is said to be extremely unusual and is pushing the wild fauna that lives in cold climates to climb further up the mountains until they have nowhere to go to survive. ("[Freezing point climbs to record high above Swiss Alpine summits](#)," *The Guardian*, 25 July 2022)

THE UK**Lords' subcommittee advocates grace periods to the Northern Ireland Protocol be made permanent**

On 27 July, a House of Lords committee suggested that the grace periods to the Northern Ireland Protocol be made permanent. The protocol which was agreed upon by Boris Johnson and subsequently ratified by the parliament, is for the creation of a trade border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. The Lords subcommittee has been hearing evidence from politicians and businesses about how the protocol will affect them. Reportedly, they will begin the scrutiny of the bill from September 2022. Their advocacy for grace periods indicates that the deal is not being implemented

completely. (John Campbell, "[NI Protocol: Grace periods should be permanent, says Lords committee](#)," *BBC*, 27 July 2022)

Water companies prepare plans for possible drought in the UK

On 26 July, the UK is being cautious about their water supplies amidst concerns of drought due to heatwaves. The UK is imposing early phases of drought plans following record-breaking temperatures. The plan does not include regulation of water thus far but includes management of water levels and artificial maintenance of rivers. Assistance to farmers in areas facing prolonged dry weather will be given. The UK's water companies are preparing measures for potential drought in the country. ("[Britain begins drought planning after record heatwave](#)," *Reuters*, 26 July, 2022)

UK navy tracks down two Russian submarines in the Norwegian coast

On 22 July, the UK Royal Navy reported on spotting two Russian submarines in the north west of Bergen, Norway using UK submarine hunter HMS Portland. It found the vessels to be moving towards south in the underwater along the Norwegian coast. According to the Navy spokesperson, the navy used Type 23 frigate along with a Merlin helicopter which holds cutting-edge sonars, sensors and torpedoes to track down submarines. (Jo Couzens, "[Royal Navy tracks two Russian submarines in North Sea](#)," *BBC*, 22 July 2022)

Rising temperature causes big tech's data centres to shut down temporarily in the UK

On 19 July, Google and Oracle data centers in London had to shut down a few of their systems due to overheating caused by the heatwaves in the region. Oracle stated: "Following unseasonably high temperatures in the UK south (London) region, two cooler units in the data center experienced a failure when they were required to operate above their design limits." On the same day in the evening, *Google* reported that one of the buildings experienced a cooling failure which hosts cloud services for west Europe. The firm said that it had powered down

some of the equipment in order to prevent damage to them and a protracted outage. (Chris Vallance, "[Heatwave forced Google and Oracle to shut down computers](#)," *BBC*, 20 July 2022)

New energy plant approved for Suffolk

On 20 July, the UK government approved the new Sizewell C nuclear power plant project funded by France's energy firm Électricité de France (EDF) to be built on the Suffolk coast. The project is estimated to cost GBP 20 billion and would generate seven per cent of the country's energy needs for the next 60 years. The new plant will be built next to the decommissioned Sizewell A and operating Sizewell B power plants. Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, stated that the central government will be in charge of all upcoming planning decisions about the facility because it is considered to be a crucial infrastructure project for the country. ("[Sizewell C nuclear plant gets go-ahead from government](#)," *BBC*, 20 July 2022)

Former Chancellor Rishi Sunak comes ahead in the fourth round with 118 votes

On 19 July, the fourth round of the conservative leadership race, which will decide the successor of Boris Johnson, concluded with the former chancellor of the exchequer, Rishi Sunak leading with 118 votes. The former UK finance minister has been leading since the first round and is expected to be in the final round. Former trade minister, Penny Mordaunt followed Sunak with 92 votes. She is ahead of the former foreign secretary Liz Truss by six votes. Kemi Badenoch who was placed last in the fourth round with 69 votes was eliminated from the race. Sunak, Mordaunt and Truss are going ahead to the next round. ("[Former UK finance minister Sunak wins fourth round leadership contest vote](#)," *BBC*, 19 July 2022)

Liz truss pulls close to Penny Mordaunt in the race for the Tory leadership

On 18 July, foreign secretary Liz Truss neared second place trade minister Penny Mordaunt in the race vying for the seat of the UK's prime minister. She got important backing from conservative MPs with having

71 votes in the latest round, increasing her support from 64. Rishi Sunak, the former chancellor is still leading the race with 115 votes. Sunak needs only five more votes to jump to the final round. According to the conservative party's rule, the lowest placed candidate in each round is eliminated until two remain after which they out to a vote of the rank and file Tory party membership. Foreign affairs committee chairman Tom Tugendhat fell prey to the rule with only 31 votes and got eliminated from the race. Kemi Badenoch, former equalities minister comes in fourth place with 58 votes backing her. Only four members remain out of the ten that started. All the candidates are looking to take the 31 MPs who backed Tugendhat for themselves. Mordaunt or Truss are expected to run against Sunak in the final round. ([Andrew McDonald, "Liz Truss closes in on Penny Mordaunt in race to replace Boris Johnson," POLITICO](#), 18 July 2022)

Prime minister Boris Johnson wins yet another no-confidence vote

On 18 July, prime minister Boris Johnson survived another no-confidence vote, winning by 349 to 238 with a majority of 111. Johnson, in his speech, said that the deep state, a term used by conspiracy theorists, is planning to haul the UK back into the EU after he leaves office. The debate on the no-confidence vote on Johnson was opened after his speech in the House of Commons. Johnson accused Keir Starmer and the deep state of having the intention of taking the UK back into the EU. Starmer opposed the idea that until a new leader is chosen Johnson would be leading the government even after his resignation. Labour Party held a motion which indicated no confidence in the government. However, the motion was rejected and the government itself tabled a motion of their own and won the no-confidence vote. Johnson also talked about achievements in the last three years of his governance such as Brexit and handling of the Covid pandemic. ([Ben Quinn, "Boris Johnson defends record as government wins confidence vote," the Guardian](#), 18 July 2022)

Rishi Sunak leads the conservative party's contest for prime ministership

On 14 July, in the second round of the Tory leadership contest the attorney general, Suella Braverman was eliminated, leaving five candidates standing. Rishi Sunak received 101 votes, Penny Mordaunt gained support by receiving 83 votes, and Liz Truss received 64 votes to finish third. Former Brexit minister Steve Baker has also endorsed Truss, and the majority of the 27 Conservative members of parliament who supported Braverman are reportedly planning to follow suit. Both Tom Tugendhat, head of the foreign affairs committee, who finished sixth with 32 votes, and Kemi Badenoch, a former equalities minister, say they are committed to continuing the race. On 18 July, the contender with the fewest votes will be eliminated in the next round of voting. ([Tory leadership race: Rishi Sunak leads pack in tightening contest," BBC](#), 15 July 2022)

Rishi Sunak tops first vote for prime minister race

On 13 July, the UK conducted their first round of voting to select Boris Johnson's successor as the leader of the conservative party and the prime minister. Eight candidates were shortlisted before the vote. However, two candidates, Finance minister Nadhim Zahawi and former cabinet minister Jeremy Hunt were eliminated from the race. Former finance minister, Rishi Sunak received the most votes in the first round with 88 votes. He was followed by junior trade minister Penny Mordaunt on 67 and foreign Secretary Liz Truss who got 50 votes. The next round will be conducted on 14 July, and again next week, if required. ([Jill Lawless, "UK Conservatives cast votes in 1st round of leadership race," AP News](#), 13 July 2022; ["Rishi Sunak tops first round of voting in UK leadership contest," Reuters](#), 13 July 2022)

Metropolitan police operations are influenced by racism and extremism says IRR report

On 10 July, a report by the *Institute of Race Relations (IRR)* stated that the police forces in the UK and across Europe are

experiencing a growing “culture of extremism.” The reputation of a police force long suspected of being “institutionally racist” in the UK has been further tarnished by a number of recent events involving the Metropolitan police. They include police sharing pictures of two slain Black sisters over WhatsApp. At a station in the heart of London, it was discovered that another set of officers had made jokes about rape, killing black children, and beating their wives. A relationship between racist beliefs and operational practice is also highlighted in the paper, notably with regard to racial profiling and predictive policing. Concerns were raised in December 2021 over the Metropolitan's Operation Pima, in which 61 per cent of those listed in intelligence reports as London's “..most prolific or dangerous offenders” were black. (Mark Townsend, [“Growing 'culture of extremism' among UK and European police forces, report warns,”](#) *the Guardian*, 10 July 2022)

Rishi Sunak enters race for next prime minister

On 08 July, Rishi Sunak announced his intention to run for the position of the leader of the conservative party and the prime minister. The former finance minister's resignation from the cabinet was in part what triggered the mass walkout of ministers, which resulted in Boris Johnson having to stand down as Tory leader. Sunak announced his decision in a social media video and said: “Someone has to grip this moment and make the right decisions.” Several senior members of Parliaments of the Tory party supported Sunak's candidacy, promoting his campaign slogan “Ready for Rishi.” ([“Ex-Chancellor Rishi Sunak launches bid to be Conservative leader,”](#) *BBC*, 09 July 2022)

World reacts to Boris Johnson's resignation a leader of the conservative party

On 07 July, UK prime minister Boris Johnson resigned as the leader of the Conservative Party. Johnson's resignation comes on the back of a turbulent three years, numerous scandals, a narrowly survived no-confidence motion and dozens of his ministers quitting his government. US

president Biden did not mention the outgoing Johnson, but said that the US and the UK are the “closest of allies” and that he will want to continue “close cooperation with the government.” The EU and UK have recently had a tense relation due to Johnson and his endorsement for Brexit. Regarding the departure of Johnson, EU negotiator for Brexit Michel Barnier, tweeted “ May it be more constructive, more respectful of commitments made, in particular regarding peace and stability in Northern Ireland...” While, Ukraine's president Zelenskyy said that he accepted the news with sadness and that the Ukrainian society had its sympathies for Johnson, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov welcomed the news and hoped that “more professional people who can make decisions through dialogue will come to power.” Irish prime minister Micheal Martin referred to the recent strained relation between Ireland and the UK and said: “We have now an opportunity to return to the true spirit of partnership and mutual respect that is needed to underpin the gains of the Good Friday Agreement.” ([“Factbox: Reaction to Boris Johnson's resignation,”](#) *Reuters*, 07 July 2022; Alistair Smout, [“Bye bye Boris: UK PM Johnson bows out with regrets but no apologies,”](#) *Reuters*, 07 July 2022)

Two prominent Cabinet ministers resign from the government

On 05 July, Sajid Javid and Rishi Sunak quit Boris Johnson's government due to differences in opinions. Javid, who was the former health minister, said that he could not continue to work for Johnson under good conscience. Sunak, the former finance minister, said that the conduct of the leadership was bad and it might affect their name too. Reportedly, the attitude of the prime minister regarding the scandals and the way Johnson handled the narrow no-confidence vote upset both individuals. The competency of Johnson as a leader and his lack of looking at the nation's interests were also distressing to the former ministers. The resignation of these two ministers could lead to the eventual collapse of Boris Johnson's administration. ([“UK Cabinet ministers resign over Boris Johnson's leadership,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 05 July 2022)

Solar energy becoming the solution to surging energy bills

On 03 July, the UK turned its attention to solar power due to increased energy prices. The UK's citizens have been looking into ways to cut down the expensive energy bills. Solar power getting a reduction in VAT from five per cent to zero grasped the interest of the people. As the cost of living crisis increases day by day, people are choosing green energy products as they are cheaper and healthier for the planet. The government is encouraging the use of solar panels with incentives. The solar energy industry is seeing a boom as many people are turning toward renewable sources of energy. Even businesses like Amazon are looking to use solar energy as the electricity bill along with labour costs increase. There has been a shortage of solar panels in companies that sell them due to the huge demand from the people. (Alex Lawson, "It's hot': UK interest in solar power heats up as energy bills soar," *the Guardian*, 03 July 2022)

TURKEY

Ankara's court ruled the exit from the Istanbul Convention lawful

On 19 July, the move to withdraw Turkey from the Istanbul Convention on violence against women last year by president Recep Tayyip Erdogan was upheld by Ankara's top administrative court. The court ruled the move to be pulled out of the European treaty was lawful and legal. Critics argued that the president did not have the power to take the action unilaterally. The court rejected the petition to rescind Erdogan's move with a 40 page ruling that said that the president has the right of discretion in his interpretation of the Turkish laws. Turkey is said to have at least 38 per cent of women subjected to domestic violence in the country. Erdogan said that Turkey's women will be better off without the treaty and that it promoted homosexuality. ("Turkey: Court upholds exit from the treaty on violence against women," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 July 2022)\

Ankara to pay EUR 7500 remuneration to Kavala for violating ECHR ruling

On 11 July, Ankara was found guilty of

violating the European Court of Human Rights ruling to release the rights activist and philanthropist Osman Kavala. Kavala was sentenced to life in prison in May, although he was acquitted of charges previously. The court ruled that the government of Turkey should pay Kavala EUR 7500 for violating the 2019 judgment of releasing him. Due to its actions, the Council of Europe has started to think of removing Turkey from the EU. The EU has deemed Turkey to be violating human rights by imprisoning Kavala without conviction. He was accused of having a connection with the 2013 Gezi park protest that was followed by the 2016 coup attempt. However, he was exonerated from the charges. He was again put in prison immediately for allegedly trying to topple the government (Osman Kavala: ECHR rules Turkey violated ruling," *Deutsche Welle*, 11 July 2022)

UKRAINE

Ukraine-born mathematician becomes second ever woman to win the Fields Medal

On 05 July, Ukraine's Prof Maryna Viazovska, teaching at the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, became the second woman ever to receive the Fields Medal. Her work deals with a 400 year old puzzle on packing spheres. The prestigious field medal is given to mathematicians of great caliber under the age of 40, and is considered an equivalent of a Nobel prize for mathematics. Along with her, three other mathematicians, Prof James Maynard from Oxford University Hugo Duminil-Copin from the University of Geneva and Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques, and June Huh of Princeton University were also announced as winners of the prize. (Nicola Davis and Ian Sample, "Fields medal: Kyiv-born professor and Oxford expert among winners," *The Guardian*, 05 July 2022)

REGIONAL

A new bridge was unveiled that connects two parts of Croatia

On 26 July, Croatia officially inaugurated the Peljesac Bridge which connects the two divided parts of Croatia. Both parts were

divided by a stretch of Adriatic Sea which was controlled by Bosnia. The two-kilometres bridge cost around EUR 526 million in the EU funded by EUR 357 million. The China Road and bridge cooperation won the international bid for the construction of the bridge in 2018. The people of Dubrovnik feel connected to Croatia for the first time since Yugoslavia broke up. The official opening ceremony will have a speech from Croatia's prime minister Andrej Plenkovic and a video message from Chinese prime minister Li Keqiang. The bridge will be a huge boost to the tourism industry of Croatia, which is the key to the country's economy. ("Croatia opens Peljesac bridge, bypassing Bosnia to ease Dubrovnik access," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 July 2022)

Eurozone inflation stands highest at 8.9 per cent

On 29 July, *Euronews* reported that in July, the inflation in the Eurozone recorded the highest of 8.9 per cent. Increasing concerns about the possibility of an inflation, this rise shows a marked slowdown of the bloc's economy. Among the countries that use the Euro as a single currency, the Baltic States are most affected because of their dependence on imports- Estonia (22.7 per cent), Latvia (21 per cent) and Lithuania (20.8 per cent). Other than these countries, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Netherlands, Slovenia, and Slovakia are also in the double-digit category. The core inflation in the bloc stands at four per cent, which is the highest since the creation of the euro. This rise in the inflation rate is because of the spillover of the disruption in the global energy markets, the global food crisis, and China's strict zero-covid lockdowns. (Jorge Liboreiro, "Inflation across the eurozone reaches new all-time high of 8.9%," *Euronews*, 29 July 2022)

Spain and Brazil record first non-African monkeypox death

On 29 July, Spain and Brazil recorded the first monkeypox-related deaths outside Africa. The current outbreak which started in May has been concentrated in Europe, which has 70 per cent of the current infections. Recently declared as a public

health emergency, monkeypox has spread to 78 countries so far. In Spain, the health ministry's emergency and alert coordination center announced that 4298 cases have been registered so far, among which information is recorded for 3750 patients. Of them, only 64 are women, 120 have been hospitalized and one has expired. The Spanish health ministry has not provided any further details on the deceased. ("Monkeypox: Brazil, Spain report first deaths outside Africa," *Deutsche Welle*, 29 July 2022)

German foreign minister criticized by Turkey for her pro-Greece comments

On 29 July, Germany's foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock spoke at a news conference in Athens and addressed the disputes between Turkey and Greece. She mentioned that Germany will always stick up for the EU family and said: "Lesbos, Chios, Rhodes, and many, many others ... are Greek territory, and no one has the right to query this." Baerbock's comments has drawn criticism from Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, who maintains that Germany should maintain their "balanced stance" and not provoke further animosity between the two Aegean countries. Greece has criticized Turkey and Germany's joint venture with Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems to build six 214-class submarines and have asked Germany to stop the delivery of military equipment to Turkey. ("Baerbock's Aegean islands remarks in Greece anger Turkey," *Deutsche Welle*, 29 July 2022)

EU's new antitrust directorate to be headed by two veterans

On 28 July, two experienced antitrust officials, Albert Bacchiega, director of information, communication and media, who is the chief of antitrust and merger cases involving the tech, media and consumer electronics industries as well as Thomas Kramler, head of the unit dealing with antitrust cases in e-commerce and data economy, are being considered by the European Commission to become the head of its new directorate. Both the veterans will take up the task to implement the Digital Markets Act effectively. The act

forces tech giants like Google, Apple, Meta, and Amazon to push the usage of competing services by users rather than pushing their products. This will allow other companies to have a chance and the tech giants will be forfeited from using consumer data as leverage. (Foo Yun Chee, "[EXCLUSIVE EU mulls new unit with antitrust veterans to enforce tech rules - sources](#)," *Reuters*, 28 July 2022)

Germany advises Greece to systematically investigate refugee pushback in its border

On 28 July, Germany's foreign minister visited Greece to discuss important matters regarding the pushback of refugees and Berlin's World War II reparations. Germany was accused of not taking any actions against the pushback allegations on the Greek borders even though one of its newspaper agencies, *Der Spiegel* reported on the issue. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) is said to be involved in the issue. Asylum seekers fleeing countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan travel to Turkey to get into Europe via Greece. But they are ignored, push-backed, and face human rights violations at the hands of Frontex. The Greeks deny the allegation and also say that the country has the right to protect its border. Baerbock had called on the Greek authorities to further investigate the issue systematically. ("[Greece: Baerbock calls for investigation into pushbacks at EU borders](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 28 July 2022)

Phones of top EU Officials reportedly hacked by Pegasus spyware

On 27 July, *Euronews* reported that according to the evidence that has been found, some EU officials' phones were hacked by the Pegasus spyware. In a letter to European member of parliament Sophie in 't Veld, EU Justice Commissioner, Didier Reynders said that in 2021, Apple had alerted him about his phone being potentially hacked by Pegasus. Developed by an Israeli surveillance firm, the NSO Group, Pegasus was used in 2020 and 2021 to gain information from human rights activists, politicians, lawyers, journalists, and faith groups. However, NSO claims that

Pegasus has been sold only to government agencies to target criminals and terrorists. ("[Top EU officials hacked by Israeli Pegasus spyware](#)," *Euronews*, 27 July 2022)

Cities in Europe growing denser

On 27 July, European Commission reported on a new study that indicates that cities in Europe were getting increasingly dense, due to high immigration rates and lesser availability of land for housing. Conducted by the EU-funded connecting and clearing house, the project investigated the trends in population density of around 330 European cities between 2006 and 2018. According to the first author of the study, Chiara Cortinovis, the study also provides hypotheses about how the changes in population trends have impacts on urban development. ("[Europe shifts to more densely populated cities](#)," *European Commission*, 27 July 2022)

Firefighters battle wildfire spread across Germany and the Czech Republic

On 25 July, wildfires erupted in East Germany and the neighbouring Czech Republic. Hundreds of firefighters joined the wildfires from spreading. The fire spread across bone-dry pine forest which held buried world war II ammunition. The large fire destroyed 850 hectares of area and continues to spread quickly due to gusty winds. Several firefighters have been injured and many more are fighting to prevent the further spreading of the fire. Firefighters are cautious not to access the area of ammunition in the fear of an explosion. Countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Germany and Italy are providing special firefighting aircraft and helicopters to douse the wildfire in the Czech Republic. People are being evacuated from the towns and villages near the wildfire. ("[Hundreds of firefighters battle blazes in Germany and Czech Republic](#)," *Euronews*, 26 July 2022)

Traffic buildup continues in the port of Dover, amidst the France-UK blame game

On 23 July, a heavy build-up of traffic was reported outside the UK port of Dover. Since Brexit, UK's custom officials carry out

checks at the border, which is leading to the delays, as travellers now have to clear both the UK and French border checks. British foreign minister, Liz Truss accused French authorities for mismanagement and resource crunch at their checkpoints, but French member of Parliament Pierre-Henri Dumont said that the increased delays are occurring due to the post-Brexit increase in border control, for which France is not responsible. ("[UK, France trade blame over Dover traffic chaos.](#)" Deutsche Welle, 25 July 2022)

EU launches fresh legal charges against UK's proposal to alter Northern Ireland Protocol; UK's Brexit settlement amount increased due to inflation

On 23 June, the EU announced the launch of additional legal suit on the UK on its proposal to change the Brexit rules in Northern Ireland. UK's proposal to alter the agreed provisions in the Protocol is yet to be passed by the lords, until then the UK will have to face the legal proceedings filed by the EU. According to the EU, it has accused the UK for not sharing the trade information relating to trade check posts and goods exiting Northern Ireland. In response, the UK spokesperson said that it was frustrating to see the EU filing the case on the exit of goods which is of no risk and commented that the legal dispute will not help in resolving the Brexit problem. Treasury minister Simon Clarke raised concerns saying the outstanding payment to the EU by the UK upon Brexit has risen by GBP 7.5 billion due to inflation. Part of Brexit divorce bill, the UK agreed to pay back as part of financial settlement. With the inflation on peak, the repayment amount had increased. ("[EU launches fresh legal action over Northern Ireland border rules.](#)" BBC, 22 July 2022; "[Brexit: UK's divorce bill from EU could rise to £42.5bn.](#)" BBC, 22 July 2022)

European Central Bank hikes interest rates for first time in 11 years

On 21 July, the European Central Bank (ECB) declared that they will be raising the interest rates for the first time in 11 years. The interest has been raised by 0.5 per cent points to 0.0 per cent, while it had been

negative since 2014. ECB president Christine Lagarde clarified that the inflation rate in the country is expected to remain high, due to the energy and food crisis, and that further rate hikes "will be appropriate." Prior to taking this action, the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England both raised interest rates in an effort to combat the inflationary trend. ("[Eurozone raises interest rates for first time in 11 years.](#)" BBC, 21 July 2022)

Belgium and Iran sign controversial prisoner exchange treaty

On 20 July, Belgian parliament approved a controversial prisoner exchange treaty with Iran. 79 MPs votes in favour of the treaty, while 41 rejected it and 11 abstained. Justice minister, Vincent Van Quickenborne defended the treaty saying that it was important to free innocent people from the authoritarian regime in Iran. However, local NGOs and human rights groups criticised the deal and said that it will allow Iran to engage in "hostage diplomacy." They fear that this could lead to convicted terrorists like Assadollah Assadi to be pardoned in exchange of Olivier Vandecasteele, a Belgian humanitarian worker who has been illegally held in Iran. The treaty could also help Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali, sentenced to death in Iran be released. ("[Belgian MPs approve controversial prisoner exchange treaty with Iran.](#)" Euronews, 21 July 2022)

Sweden and Finland's NATO protocol ratified

On 21 July, Lithuania and Romania's parliaments voted to ratify the protocol on Sweden and Finland's accession. In Lithuania, the parliament ratified Finland's accession protocol with 111 votes and Sweden's with 112 votes, and the president Gitanas Nausėda signed the laws, thus completing the ratification procedure. In Romania, the members of parliament convened an extraordinary session to vote on the ratification process. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate approved the law and no votes were registered against it. (Bogdan Neagu and Giedre Peseckyte, "[Lithuania, Romania ratify Finland, Sweden's NATO accession.](#)" Euractiv, 21 July

2022)

Turkish foreign minister denies attack in Iraq

On 21 July, Iraq protested against Turkey for their alleged strikes on an Iraqi tourist resort, where eight people were killed and 20 were wounded. Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu has rejected the claims and said that they are willing to cooperate with Iraq's authorities to investigate the "treacherous attacks." He mentioned that the attack was being used as a "smokescreen" to prevent Turkish military operations in the region. Casavoglu further clarified that Turkey's fight in Iraq has always been against the PKK, and that they would not attack any civilians. (Ali Abd Al-Hasan and Samya Kullab, "[Turkey denies carrying out deadly strikes in northern Iraq](#)," *AP*, 21 July 2022)

Palestine's president visits Paris to meet Macron

On 20 July, France's president Emmanuel Macron with Palestine's president Mahmoud Abbas in a press conference in Paris urged that the long-stalled peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians be restarted in order to prevent growing tensions in one of the Middle East's longest conflicts from erupting once more. Macron mentioned that in order to avoid new eruption of violence in the region Israel has to end its unilateral measures in the occupied West Bank, which includes expansion of Jewish settlements and evictions of Palestinian families from their homes. Macron condemned these actions as "contrary to international law." Macron further reiterated his determination to lead efforts by the international community to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and ultimately bring a "just and lasting peace." ("[Macron hosts Abbas for talks, calls for new Mideast peace push](#)," *France24* 20 July 2022)

International music festival begins in Verbier

On 20 July, the annual international music festival 'Verbier Festival' began in the mountain resort of Verbier on the Alpines of Switzerland. Director of the Verbier

Festival, Martin Engström, stated: "We have about 300 young musicians between 15- and 30-years old working here in Verbier. They all come from different countries, and also from Russia, and also from Ukraine, and we are not blind to what is happening around us - so we live with the reality, and we have to be part of it." A 'Concert for Peace' in the symphonic style inaugurated the festival. The performance, which included pieces by Russian and Ukrainian composers, was led by Italian maestro Gianandrea Noseda and included Ukrainian pianist Anna Fedorova. (Frédéric Ponsard, "[Switzerland's Verbier Festival hits the high notes](#)," *Euronews*, 20 July 2022)

EU approves smallpox vaccine for monkeypox

On 25 July, the European Commission approved the Danish biotech company Bavarian Nordic's Imnavex vaccine for use against Monkeypox in the EU member states. The Bavarian Nordic vaccine was generally used for protection against smallpox. The company's chief executive Paul Chaplin said: "The availability of an approved vaccine can significantly improve nations' readiness to fight emerging diseases, but only through investments and structured planning of the biological preparedness." He added that the vaccine was developed in collaboration with the US government. ("[Monkeypox: EU approves vaccine to combat outbreak](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 25 July 2022)

Hungary wishes to pass a bill that restructures the European parliament

On 18 July, the Hungarian lawmakers from prime minister Viktor Orban's far-right party, the Fidesz party, voted to pass a resolution on an anti-European parliament bill. The content of the bill is that the parliament of the EU should be restructured and the goal of "ever closer union" in the EU treaties should be removed. The proposal said that the state heads should appoint lawmakers to the European parliament instead of the EU citizens electing them. The Hungarian proposal also suggested that the national parliaments should have the choice to veto any legislation at the EU and also to permit them to initiate legislative

procedures. Orban said that the democracy in the EU parliament has met a dead end and that this resolution would help the bloc out of it and steer it on the right path. The resolution will antagonise an already angry EU with Hungary. The EU has been denying Hungary's recovery funds and credit due to Budapest ignoring the EU standards on the rule of law and anti-corruption methods. Hungary is in much-needed financial support as it is suffering from an economic crisis. ("Hungary: Lawmakers back anti-European Parliament bill," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 July 2022)

A man was questioned for arson in a wildfire in France amidst heatwaves across Europe

On 19 July, extreme heat resulted in wildfires across western Europe. 13,000 hectares of pine forest were burned down in France. A man was suspected to have started the wildfire. He was already accused of the same offence in 2012. A motorist spotted the man near the starting site of the blaze on 12 July. Investigators found evidence of arson in the area. France saw a record temperature of 42 degrees Celsius in the western city of Nantes due to the rising heat wave. Firefighters have been working tirelessly across France, Spain, and Germany, putting out wildfires that are spreading. The UK also recorded 40.2 degrees Celsius at London Heathrow Airport, the highest in the country. Europe is being ravaged by wildfires and heatwaves. The reason for the phenomenon is said to be climate change caused by humans. (Jon Henley, "Suspect in huge French forest fire questioned over arson in 2012," *The Guardian*, 19 July 2022)

Northern Ireland and Ireland have successful trading despite Brexit and energy prices

On 18 July, the official government data released in Dublin showed that trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is booming in both directions post-Brexit with a EUR four billion boost. The report reveals that in January and May 2022 the imports from NI to Ireland increased by 23 per cent up to EUR 1.9

billion whereas there has been a 43 per cent increase to EUR1.9 billion in trade from Ireland to NI when compared to the same period in the last year. There has been an astonishing growth in the movement of food and live animals from Northern Ireland to Ireland. Rising energy prices increased energy trade between Northern Ireland and Ireland. Due to the Northern Ireland protocol, trade between Belfast and Dublin has not been affected by Brexit when compared to the rest of the UK, which is dealing with mountains of paperwork to sell into the EU. (Lisa O' Carroll, "Trade across Irish border booms after Brexit amid energy growth," *the Guardian*, 18 July 2022)

Heatwave's causing wildfires and concerns in Greece and the UK

On 15 July, Greece's climate crisis and civil protection minister Christos Stylianides talked about the increasing wildfire due to the rising heatwaves in all of Europe. The former commissioner for humanitarian aid and crisis management of Europe also said that he has to fight bureaucracy as well to change the climate crisis that Greece is going through along with the rest of the world. The response from the Greek authorities has been slow when compared to the speeding climate crisis. He also said that they are moving in the right direction to counter the climate crisis. Both the fire department and the forestry service are working hand in hand to prevent and stop wildfires. Elsewhere in the UK, the second hottest temperature in the nation of 38.1 degrees Celsius was recorded in Suffolk on 18 July. (Nektaria Stamouli, "Greek climate minister fights fires — and the system," *POLITICO*, 15 July 2022; "UK swelters under hottest night on record," *BBC*, 18 July 2022)

The EU splurges on hydrogen technology as an alternative to gas

On 15 July, the European Commission decided to give subsidies of EUR 5.4 billion for hydrogen energy technologies. There have been questions raised about the technology's potential to reduce carbon emissions in polluting industries. The subsidies exceeded previous large-scale cross-border projects. The hydrogen

technology project started with fifteen countries in the EU. The companies are selected for subsidies in four types of technology: hydrogen generation, fuel cells, storage and distribution and end-user technology. The public support may open another EUR 8.8 billion from private investors. The hydrogen technology was sought after due to rising gas and oil prices. (Simon Van Dorpe and America Hernandez, "[EU goes big on hydrogen as gas crunch looms](#)," *POLITICO*, 15 July 2022)

Cargo plane from Serbia carrying weaponry crashes

On 16 July, a cargo plane crashed near Palaiochori Kavalas in northern Greece. Meridian Airlines, based in Ukraine, was flying the aircraft from Nis, Serbia, to Bangladesh through Jordan. According to reports, the pilot asked for permission to make an emergency landing at the neighboring Kavala airport because of an engine issue, but he was unable to make it there. Filippos Anastasiadis, the mayor of the impacted town of Pangeo, claimed that the jet had been carrying "hazardous stuff," most likely weaponry. Around 11 metric tonnes of guns and mines were being sent to Bangladesh, who had purchased the armaments. Serbia's Defence minister, Nebojsa Stefanovic said that the shipment contained training shells and illumination mortar rounds. Mid-afternoon local time, it departed from Nis. The Ukrainian crew members, according to Stefanovic, were all dead. ("[Plane transporting 'dangerous material' crashes in Greece](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 17 July 2022)

Wildfires continue to enrage in Western European countries

On 17 July, firefighters battled wildfires that were out of control in France and Spain as Europe wilted under an abnormally intense heat wave that officials have linked to an increase in excess mortality. Just south of Bordeaux in southwest France, two enormous fires have been consuming pine trees for six days. 14,000 people, many of whom were in the area on vacation, were evacuated due to the flames. The emergency brigades of the armed forces helped Spanish firefighters put out more than 30 flames

that were raging through the nation's woodland. A summer heat wave in Europe is to blame for the destructive forest fires. Early next week, parts of Europe are preparing for new temperature records. A District head in Spain, Juan Manuel Moreno, stated that firefighters were able to contain a blaze that had destroyed 2,000 hectares of plants and trees in the southern province of Andalusia. Inland from the southern coastal city of Malaga, the Mijas mountain range is where the fire first broke out on Friday. About 3,000 people had to be evacuated as a result. ("[Wildfires continue to rage in France and Spain](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 17 July 2022)

US and Russia sign deal to send astronauts to ISS

On 15 July, NASA from the US and Roscosmos, Russia's Space Agency signed a deal to send each country's astronauts to International Space Station. The deal will serve as a break between the two amidst the war. As per the agreement, US astronaut Frank Rubio, Sergey Prokopyev, Dmitry Petelin, and Anna Kikina will fly in the September. According to the Nasa administrator and former space shuttle astronaut, Bill Nelson: "Despite all of that, up in space, we can have a cooperation with our Russian friends, our colleagues. The professional relationship between astronauts and cosmonauts, it hasn't missed a beat. This is the cooperation we have going on in the civilian space program." As per the statement from Roscosmos, it said that the agreement was signed due to interests of both parties and help in promoting cooperation withing ISS framework. (Richard Luscombe, "[US and Russia agree to fly each other's astronauts to the ISS as tensions thaw](#)," *The Guardian*, 15 July 2022)

Pacific Island Forum ends with stress on reducing usage of coal and fossil fuels

On 16 July, the Pacific Island Forum ended with leaders participating from Tonga, Palau, Papua New Guinea, French Polynesia, Albanese, and Solomon Islands. The pacific leaders urged Australia and big economy countries to step away from using coal and asked to pledge on banning fossil fuels

projects. According to Tuvalu's foreign minister: "Obviously they've been in office for about two months now, but the messaging that's coming from them is very positive. So, we're hopeful that we can work on the issues that the Pacific is pushing for." (Kate Lyons, "[Smiles and unity at the Pacific Islands Forum mask tough questions shelved for another day,](#)" *The Guardian*, 16 July 2022)

European Commission files case against Hungary

On 15 July European Commission has lodged case against Hungary over its LGBTQ laws. Hungary under its "Anti-Pedophilia Act," does not allow young people to access any data relating to LGBTQ. The Hungarian Parliament passed a bill to amend the provision on ban on sex education and media related info, but prime minister Victor Orban has restricted the bill to come into practise. Hence the EU has filed a suit stating: "The Commission considers that the law violates the internal market rules, the fundamental rights of individuals (in particular LGBTQ people) as well as EU values." ("[EU Commission sues Hungary over LGBTQ law,](#)" *Deutsche Welle*, 15 July 2022)

Migrants crossing from West Africa into Europe found by IOM

On 15 July, the International Organization of Migration found West African migrants who were trying to cross into Libya from northern Niger. Since the vehicle was broken, the migrants were left stranded in the dessert. As per the stats, 29 men, 12 women, and three girls were in Dirkou town, in north-eastern Niger. Recently many such migrants from West Africa are found to be entering into Libya and Mediterranean Sea to get inside Europe. ("[Stranded migrants rescued in Nigerien desert,](#)" *BBC*, 15 July 2022)

EU bans fly shooting method of fishing

On 14 July, the European Parliament voted to outlaw "fly shooting" fishing in French territorial waters in the English Channel. The decision favors small-scale fishermen. Organizations that represent coastal fishing communities on both sides of the English

Channel have issued warnings that fly-shooting and other industrial trawling techniques are destroying both the marine ecosystem and their livelihoods. The members of parliament stated that the decision delivered a crucial message to decision-makers about the impact of fly-shooting on coastal fishing communities. The European Commission, the European Parliament, and the EU member states will now deliberate the vote on a change to the common fisheries policy including access to territorial seas. In 2021, the UK was charged with allowing fishing vessels "unfettered access" to the English Channel without properly evaluating the impact on fish, the seabed, or the livelihoods of coastal residents. (Karen McVeigh, "[European parliament votes to ban 'fly shooting' fishing in part of Channel,](#)" *the Guardian*, 14 July 2022)

Denmark censured by the EU for advertising the Greek label 'fete'

On 14 July, the European Court of Justice reprimanded Denmark for allowing local businesses to market cheese outside the EU under the label "feta." In a victory for Greece, ECJ declared that Denmark had "failed to fulfill its obligations under EU law" by "failing to stop the use of the designation 'feta' for cheese intended for export to third countries." Greece wants to maintain sole ownership of the title since it considers feta to be a part of its cultural heritage. It claims to have been producing the brined white cheese made from sheep's milk or a blend of goat's and sheep's milk for 6,000 years. Denmark was told by the ECJ to stop using the classification immediately, or the European Commission could reappear in court to demand monetary penalties. However, Denmark was praised by the court for its earnest cooperation in the matter. ("['Feta' is Greek, EU top court rules, stopping Denmark from using designation,](#)" *BBC*, 14 July 2022)

European Commission's annual report criticizes Poland and Hungary

On 13 July, the European Commission released their annual report, which said that Poland and Hungary have failed to

improve the rule of law situation in their countries. The EU recently approved Warsaw's pandemic recovery plan to catalyse changes, but the issues have not been addressed to EU's liking. Poland now faces a daily fine of EUR one million as imposed by the European Court of Justice. The European Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders however said that the goal is not the fine, but rather the implementation of the requirements of the Court of Justice. Hungary too was criticised in the report. Corruption, lack of press freedom and excessive emergency powers of the Orbán government remain major concerns for Brussels. (Aida Sanchez Alonso, Poland & Hungary in European Commission's rule of law spotlight again, *Euronews*, 13 July 2022)

For the first time in two decades, euro values at less than the dollar

On 13 July it was reported that the Euro fell below the dollar in valuation for the first time in 20 years. One euro bought USD 0.998 on foreign exchange market, which was down by 0.4 per cent in the day's trading. The falling currency might lead to higher inflation in the Eurozone, which in June was already at 8.6 per cent. With the latest tumble, the Euro has fallen 12 per cent against the dollar since the beginning of 2022. Fears about Russia stopping Europe's energy supply has exacerbated the chances of recession in the Eurozone, and has further weakened the Euro. (Ben King, "Euro falls below dollar for first time in 20 years," *BBC*, 13 July 2022)

Nordic countries dominate gender parity list by World Economic Forum

On 13 July, the World Economic Forum released their Global Gender Gap Report 2022. It states that to reach gender parity the world will need 132 years, as only 68 per cent of the gap has been closed so far. For the 12th year in a row, Iceland has been named the most gender equal country out of the 146 economies, where 90 per cent of the gap has been closed. The other Nordic countries Finland, Norway and Sweden dominate the top five, and Ireland stands at the 9th position. Only four countries in the top 10 are outside Europe: New Zealand

(4th), Rwanda (6th), Nicaragua (7th) and Namibia (8th). ("Gender gap: These are the world's most gender-equal countries," *World Economic Forum*, 13 July 2022)

Euro falling to parity with the dollar for the first time in 20 years

On 12 July, the euro became equal to the dollar for the first time in twenty years. The last time the euro was valued less than the dollar was at the time of its nascent period. The euro has lost more than ten per cent of its value against the dollar since the beginning of 2022. The unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine has led an economic slump in the Eurozone nations. Supplies from the Nord Stream 1 pipeline have been cut off for 10 days of maintenance. As a result of this and the worry that the suspension might be permanent, the economies of the countries that relied on Russian gas have been severely harmed. The rising energy prices, cost of living crisis, and inflation will intensify further by the euro reaching parity with the dollar. (Johanna Treeck, "Euro falls to parity against the dollar, adding to inflation woes," *POLITICO*, 12 July 2022; Jorge Liboreiro, "Euro reaches parity with dollar for the first time in 20 years," *Euronews*, 12 July 2022)

EU concerns over inflation, revise the economic forecast

On 11 July, the EU finance ministers of the Eurozone member nations prioritized tackling inflation. The European Central Bank is expected to raise interest rates for the first time in 11 years on July 21. Moreover, the European Commission revised its economic forecast due to issues like the Ukraine war, supply chain disruption and surging inflation. EU's economic prediction had foreseen four per cent growth but the current expectation is 2.7 per cent. Annual inflation was forecasted to hit 3.5 per cent but it has reached up to 6.1 per cent, with the monthly inflation of June hitting a record 8.6 per cent. The increased food prices and cost of living crisis have also been prime factors for upward inflation.. ("EU slashes economic

forecast, vows to fight inflation," Deutsche Welle, 11 July 2022)

Heatwaves across Europe causes distress

On 11 July, climate change led to increased temperatures across western Europe. Spain, Italy, France and recently the southern part of the UK have been facing heat waves since June. The heatwaves have caused a lot of physical and mental health issues to the people of Europe. The UK has been experiencing the hottest period and might surpass its highest record of 38.7 degrees Celsius. The Iberian Peninsula consisting of Spain and Portugal has been on alert for wildfires as the temperature has risen above 40 degrees Celsius. Europe has recorded its second warmest June with 1.6 degrees Celsius above average. Extreme temperatures were recorded in Spain, France and Italy. The heatwave has caused fears of getting heatstroke and dehydration that may lead to severe health issues, particularly for children and elderly people. The UK is unprepared for the exponential rise in temperature at present as it is the first time in ages that they have experienced such a heatwave. (Damian Carrington, "Why is it so hot in the UK and elsewhere in Europe and what are the dangers?," *the Guardian*, 11 July 2022)

EU and US urged North Macedonia to accept France's proposal that will solve Bulgaria's objections

On 10 July, the leaders of the EU and US pleaded with North Macedonia's parliament to approve a French proposal that will advance the country to EU membership and get over Bulgaria's objections. The EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated in a joint statement that: "At this critical moment in European history, marked by the unjustifiable aggression carried out by Russia against Ukraine, advancing Albania and North Macedonia's EU path is key to strengthening the cohesion and resilience of the entire European continent." For 17 years, North Macedonia has sought membership in the EU. As an EU member, Bulgaria has vetoed North Macedonia's admission to the bloc. President Emmanuel

Macron's proposal envisages concessions from both sides. The government in Skopje would commit to changing its constitution to recognize a Bulgarian minority and protect minority rights. (Konstantin Testorides, "EU, US urge North Macedonia to move forward on EU bid," *Associated Press*, 09 July 2022)

Royal Navy hosts two-day workshop for NATO on maritime security

On 08 July, the NATO military committee attended the two-day workshop on maritime discussions in the KMS Prince of Wales battleship of the Royal Navy in the UK. The committee was briefed by the UK strategic command on Multi-Domain operation, the future commando force, risks of maritime warfare and the Madrid summit's influence on NATO's maritime strategy. The chair of NATO military committee Admiral Bauer stated that: "NATO'S maritime thinking has always been based around three pillars – the maritime contribution to collective defence, co-operative security, and crisis management... The decisions from the Summit will enable us to build on existing measures and further strengthen our overall Deterrence and Defence Posture." ("The NATO Military Committee attend maritime-related discussions in the United Kingdom," *nato.int*, 08 July 2022)

Wildfires rise in Portugal, EU triggers firefighting air fleet alert

On 10 July, the EU triggered its firefighting air fleet assistance programme to assist in extinguishing the wildfires in Portugal. The programme will allow the member states to share resources to help the country. Following the alert, Spain had mobilized two firefighting planes to Portugal. The country's civil protection agency reported that more than 3000 firefighters were attempting to extinguish the fires. The EU had also warned that Europe is experiencing one of the hardest years for natural disasters amid the rise in climate crisis. ("Dozens injured in Portugal wildfires as heatwave to intensify," *The Guardian*, 10 July 2022)

Morocco and EU release joint statement on border control

On 09 July, the EU and Morocco issued a joint statement on anti-trafficking efforts. The agreement comes after thousands of migrants crossing from Morocco to Spain's Melilla rushed to the border, where 23 died in the chaos. Spain's interior minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, Morocco's interior minister Abdelouafi Laftit and the EU commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson met in Rabat to discuss the issue. According to the statement, the new agreement will include border management support and strengthening of police cooperation. Cooperation between Moroccan and EU agencies working with the issues will also be strengthened. ("EU, Morocco announce joint anti-trafficking effort after migrant tragedy," *Deutsche Welle*, 08 July 2022)

Abortion to be a basic right for the EU

On 07 July, the European parliament voted in favour of a resolution endorsing abortion as a basic right. While 324 members voted in favour, 155 voted against and 38 were absent. The resolution adds "everyone has the right to safe and legal abortion" to the charter of EU's fundamental rights. The 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which gave women the right to safe and legal abortions, was overturned by the US Supreme Court, prompting this action. European Equality Commissioner Helena Dalli said the votes were "a reminder that hard-won rights cannot be taken as a given, anywhere," and that the EU "should push forward, not backward." However, the vote was nonbinding, and all the 27 member states will have to approve the changes to the charter. ("European Parliament urges EU to make abortion a basic right," *Deutsche Welle*, 07 July 2022)

European Parliament reiterates use of sustainable aviation fuel by 2025

On 07 July, the European Parliament reiterated its commitment to mandatory targets for replacing kerosene with more environment-friendly energy sources. Such a requirement was proposed by the European Commission last year but has now been expanded on. The new text

approved by the parliament will require suppliers to blend two per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) with kerosene from 2025, to be raised to 85 per cent by 2050. Originally, SAF included biofuels derived from recycled waste and hydrogen-based synthetic fuels or e-fuels from renewable energy sources. However, the new rules have added recycled carbon fuels derived from waste gas and biofuels derived from animal fats or distillates to the list. The rules will now await approval from the member governments and the EU Commission. ("EU lawmakers back mandatory use of green jet fuel from 2025," *Reuters*, 07 July 2022)

Europe might face ban on Facebook and Instagram

On 07 July, the Irish Data Protection Commission informed that they will not allow Facebook-owner Meta from sending user data from Europe to the US. The measure comes as a response to Meta's legal resort to transfer large chunks of data to the US. The draft decision by the Irish DPC has been sent to other European privacy regulators, and if confirmed might shut down many of Meta's services like Facebook and Instagram in Europe. The US and the EU are negotiating a new data-transfer text which will allow companies like Meta to ship data across the Atlantic. However, while a preliminary political deal was reached in March, the legal fine print is yet to be decided on. ("Europe faces Facebook blackout," *Politico*, 07 July 2022)

European Parliament votes in favor to label natural gas and nuclear power as green

On 06 July, the European Parliament approved the categorizing of natural gas and nuclear power plants as "climate friendly investments." The proposal to label them as green was initiated in the EU taxonomy and gained criticism from many member states of the EU including Austria, Luxembourg and Germany. The opposition grew as the states were phasing out nuclear power plants. Upon the approval, the countries have warned to file suit against the European Parliament. ("European

Parliament backs listing nuclear energy, gas as 'green'," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 July 2022)

Czech Republic universities hesitant to follow the EU sanction on Russian students

On 06 July, Czech Republic universities are being compelled to follow the EU sanction of restricting Russian students from studying any technical courses. Many universities are hesitant to obey the EU sanction due to them being autonomous. According to the Europe-wide sanction, Russian students who are studying technical subjects were told to either stop their education or switch degrees. The EU worries that the Russian students would aid the rogue nation in its war against Ukraine using their technical skills. Russian students who are in Czech Republic universities denounce any support for Putin but are afraid of the consequences that their families who reside in Russia might have to bear. The universities are reluctant to throw out the students. The Russian students have written letters of their support against Putin and the Ukrainian war. (Lubos Palata, "[Czech Republic: Russian university students face restrictions](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 July 2022)

Criminal operations conducted by Europol across five countries

On 05 July, Europol conducted a huge operation against human trafficking criminal network. Over 130 suspects across Germany, the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were arrested due to them being part of the massive human trafficking criminal network across the English Channel to get to the UK. Europol along with Eurojust and local police conducted the raid and arrested around 18 people just in Germany. Around ten thousand migrants had been smuggled across the English Channel through dangerous and small inflatable boats that had many people on board. Many of the people who were smuggled were from war-torn countries like Iran and Iraq. The raid was said to be the largest international criminal operation ever to take place in Europe. (John Silk, "[Police carry out Europe-wide raids](#)

[targeting human trafficking](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 05 July 2022; "[Suspected people smugglers arrested across Europe](#)," *BBC*, 05 July 2022)

Euro experiences worst slump since 2002

On 05 July, it was reported that Eurozone's shared currency, the Euro has fallen to a 20-year low against the US Dollar. It slumped by 1.3% against USD 1.0281 and is the weakest since December 2002. Fears of a recession in the 19-nation Eurozone are being exacerbated by this downturn, which is a part of a longer-term pattern. Other currencies related to the euro like the Hungary's forint, Poland's zloty and Romania's leu have also fallen considerably against the US currency. ("[Euro falls to 20-year low against the dollar](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 05 July 2022)

The stock market falls due to recession panic

On 05 July, European stock markets plummeted down to a 20-year record low and the value of the euro against the dollar hit the lowest ever whereas the pound hit the lowest since the pandemic. The fear of recession slumped the stock market in Europe. Oil and Gas prices that are soaring are the main cause of the worries about the recession. The soaring inflation pushes the central banks of Europe to desperately increase the interest rate thereby burdening the investors. The strike in Norway has also contributed to the rising energy prices. The stock rate fell in New York and in the UK. The interest rates on government bonds of the US, the UK, and the Eurozone have also tumbled. (Graeme Wearden, "[European stock markets tumble on rising fears of recession](#)," *The Guardian*, 05 July 2022)

Belarus provides visa-free entry to Polish citizens

On 01 July, Belarus abolished visa requirements for Polish citizens temporarily to build a good relationship with its neighbour. The visa-free entry will come into force from 01 July and will last till 31 December. The measure helps Poland's nationals travel to the Belarusian border area without special permission, instead,

they have to give a verbal explanation for their visit to the area. President Alexander Lukashenko already gave citizens of Lithuania and Latvia visa-free entry till the end of this year. He also denied accusations of Belarus stating: "facilitating illegal migration to try and destabilize the bloc" by the EU. Belarus was also accused of failing to address the vandalism issue on Polish graves and war memorials in Western Belarus. ("Belarus abolishes visa requirements for Polish citizens for six months," *Euronews*, 01 July 2022)

New rules to safeguard crypto assets and investors laid by the EU

On 30 June, the EU set rules for how the bloc will oversee crypto. The market in crypto assets bill also called MiCA will set industry standards and investor safeguards for crypto assets and the firms that service them. Although the bill will only come into action in late 2023 or early 2024. The technology has got the vote of the policymakers and companies that want lower transaction fees and democratize finance. The bill is supposed to give confidence to investors who operate in the market and safeguard them to ensure that the crypto companies are liable for their products and services. Another key aspect of the bill is to screen companies that have more than 15 million users. Even though crypto was popular during the pandemic, it took a big hit after new products like non-fungible tokens(NFT) and decentralised finance(DeFi) came into the limelight. ("Bjarke Smith-Meyer, "Brussels agrees on crypto rulebook for the EU," *POLITICO*, 01 July 2022)

Poland's recovery funds are held back until it changes its judiciary reforms

On 01 July, Warsaw's EU recovery funds were held up due to an important missing factor in its proposed judicial reforms. The reform looks upon the disciplinary chamber of the Supreme Court which penalizes a judge for the content of their ruling, for asking questions to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), and for validating that other courts are independent and unbiased. The reform was deemed to be not up to the

standards of the EU. Warsaw is looking to reform the chamber and create a new body that aligns with the EU's standards. The blockage of the EUR 35 billion recovery plan was due to the country not obeying the EU's demand of removing the chamber and adhering to the ECJ rulings. Even the new body proposed by president Andrzej Duda has the executive holding excesspower over the judiciary. Poland cannot receive the recovery fund until the judiciary reforms are fully implemented in the country that complies with the standards of the European Commission. (Jorge Liboreiro, "Brussels questions Poland's judicial reforms to unlock EU recovery funds," *Euronews*, 01 July 2022)

The EU creates order for the crypto market with new rules

On 01 July, new rules were passed in the EU regarding cryptocurrencies. The rule stated that cryptocurrency companies should have a license and customer safeguards to issue or sell digital tokens in the EU. The recent fall of the digital currency has led to some issues regarding the freezing of withdrawals, rising interest rates and the collapse of major crypto companies. Even Bitcoin has taken a hit by 70 per cent since its record of USD 69,000 in November. Protecting a consumer's wallet and their crypto assets are the main requirements that are needed to be fixed by the firms. The law will issue providers of crypto assets and related services a "passport" to serve the needs of the clients across the EU from a single base. (Huw Jones and Tom Wilson, "EU agrees to tame 'Wild West' with new crypto market rules," *Reuters*, 01 July 2022)

The inflation rate increased to 8.6 per cent in the EU countries

On 01 June, the inflation rate of the eurozone increased by 8.6 per cent in June. Rising energy prices, the war in Ukraine, global food security, disrupted supply chain and indirect effects of the Chinese lockdown have caused the inflation rate to rise to 8.6 per cent in June compared to 8.1 per cent in May. The alternative energy to cheap Russian oil and gas has become expensive in turn contributing to the rise in energy

prices by 41.9 per cent. The price for unprocessed foods such as fruits and vegetables has risen by 11.1 per cent due to increased fertilizers cost. Every EU country has been affected by inflation. The European Central Bank has decided to increase the interest rates if inflation increases further. ("[Inflation in the eurozone reaches new record high of 8.6%](#)," *Euronews*, 01 July 2022)

ECJ rules UK to pay EUR 678 million on tax fraud

On 29 June, the UK paid the European Commission over EUR 678 million (GBP 583 million) for a fraud it committed on imported Chinese clothes. The judgement was given by the European Court of Justice to the UK to pay the European Commission EUR 678 million for the tax fraud it engaged in between 2011 and 2017 over Chinese clothing imports. The Commission sued the UK for EUR 2.7 billion in 2018. In its argument, the UK said that it had followed the EU rules before the 2014 introduction of the new method of tax collection for the organization. The UK states that it paid the full amount that it considers due for the period between 2015 to 2017. The UK said that it paid in an interest that protects its taxpayers from significant continued interest accrual. It also said that it would reject any claims put forward by the Commission that does not align with the ECJ ruling. ("[UK pays EU £583m after customs ruling on Chinese imports](#)," *BBC*, 29 June 2022)

Fifteen people were arrested for human smuggling in the English Channel tragedy

On 29 June, fifteen people were arrested in France on suspicion of having a connection with the English Channel people smuggling incident that happened last November. 27 people who wanted to illegally migrate to the UK died near Calais due to a flimsy boat sank carrying an overpopulated number of people. The French authorities detained 13 men and two women who were suspected of being part of the incident. Some might be charged with manslaughter and people smuggling for their part in the incident. Five people were released without charge, one is

placed under formal investigation and the rest are awaiting a court decision on whether to face a formal investigation or not. The majority of the arrested individuals were of Afghani and Pakistani nationality. However, most of the people that died in the incident were Kurds from Iraq. Only two men survived the incident, an Iraqi and a Somali. (Tiffany Wertheimer, "[Calais migrant crisis: 15 arrested over Channel tragedy](#)," *BBC*, 29 June 2022)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Freya, the sea walrus sighted in Oslo

On 26 July, the young female sea walrus named Freya was spotted in Oslo resting on boats. The 600 kilograms marine mammal was first spotted in 2019 in northern Norway. She was subsequently spotted in the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden over the years. According to the World Wildlife Fund, she has been travelling south of the Arctic due to melting snowcaps. Climate change caused the walrus to migrate to another location in the summer. People were cautioned to stay away from the animal so as not to get harmed by it. (Alyss Davies, "[Freya the 600kg walrus causes a stir in Norway](#)," *BBC*, 26 July 2022)

Intense heatwave in Europe moves east and southwards

On 21 July, *Reuters* reported that the heatwave across Europe was moving towards the east and south. As a result, countries like Italy, Poland and Slovenia have issued their highest heatwave alerts. In the ongoing European heatwave has led to hundreds of deaths in the continent. The high heat has also exacerbated the wildfires across Europe. A gas tank exploded in a forest in Italy leading to a forest fire forcing hundreds to flee in central Italy. Similar numbers had to flee in Greece as winds spread wildfires. Reportedly, wildfires are also ranging in Spain, Portugal, France and Poland. (Renee Maltezou and Federico Maccioni, "[Europe's heatwave reaches Poland, Greece as it moves eastwards, brings wildfires](#)," *Reuters*, 22 July, 2022)

Berlin hosts Petersberg Climate Dialogue
On 17 July, Germany and Egypt hosting the Petersburg Climate Dialogue in

Berlin. The representatives of government from 40 countries will discuss climate protection agreements and preparations for the COP27 World Climate Conference to be held in Egypt from 07-18 November. The secretary-general Antonio Guterres in a video address to the dialogue warned that “Greenhouse gas concentrations, sea level rise and ocean heat have broken new records. Half of humanity is in the danger zone from floods, droughts, extreme storms, and wildfires. Yet we continue to feed our fossil fuel addiction.” He urged for stronger cooperation between nations. (“[Petersberg Climate Dialogue: starting signal for UN climate negotiations](#),” *unric.org*, 18 July 2022)

Firefighters struggle to curb wildfires across Europe

On 13 July, several wildfires were reported across Europe, especially in Portugal, Spain and France. This is the result of a continuous heatwave that has been prevailing over parts of Europe. More than 20 blazes raged on in Portugal and western Spain. 2841 firefighters and 860 vehicles were on ground in Portugal, where the most important highway connecting Lisbon to Porto was blocked due to a blaze. In southwest France, hundreds of firefighters, along with six water-bomber aircrafts helped to evacuate thousands of campers and control two wildfires in the Gironde region. (Catarina Demony and Miguel Pereira, “[Scorching heat wave sparks wildfires in Europe](#),” *Reuters*, 14 July 2022)

Finnish researchers install a sand battery

On 05 July, *BBC* reported that researchers have successfully installed a ‘sand battery’ which stores green power for months. The device uses low-grade sand and is charged with heat from solar or wind energy. Hence heat, which is stored at around 500 degrees Celsius can then be used to warm homes in the winter. The project was conducted by a team of researchers from Finland working with a small power plant in Kankaanpää. (Matt McGrath, “[Climate change: 'Sand battery' could solve green energy's big problem](#),” *BBC*, 05 July 2022)

Snow melting faster near Sonnblick Observatory

On 05 July, *The Guardian* reported that snow at the highest observatory in the world is expected to melt earlier than usual. The Sonnblick Observatory, in Austrian Central Alps, is 10,190 feet above sea level. They reported that this year, the snow started to melt more than a month before the time that had been recorded so far. The observatory, which records snow levels every 10 minutes along with other data said that the heatwave across Europe is one of the main reasons for the early melting of snow in the region. (Helena Horton, “[Snow at one of world’s highest observatories melting earlier than ever before](#),” *The Guardian*, 05 July 2022)

Popular brands found greenwashing on their plastic packaging

On June 30, according to a report, companies such as coca-cola and Unilever have been misleading and greenwashing consumers that their packaging is eco-friendly. In reality, these companies' plastic packaging is sometimes nonrecyclable and not eco-friendly. They have been misleading and lying about their packaging to the consumers. These companies cause more plastic pollution which is contrary to what they advertise as being eco-friendly. Companies such as Kim Kardashian's Skims advertise they are not plastic but print in a small size on the product that they are indeed one. These popular brands present their products as though they are better for the environment but in actuality, they are difficult to recycle or not recyclable at all or use just a tiny portion of ocean-bound plastic. (Sandra Laville, “[Coca-Cola among brands greenwashing over packaging](#),” *The Guardian*, 30 June 2022)

ENVIRONMENT

Dolphin hunting on Faroe Islands limited after petitions

On 11 July, Faroe Island was criticized for its dolphin and whale hunting practices after 1400 dolphins were killed in 2021. They limited this culling to 500 dolphins after hearing the complaints. The tradition known as the Grind has been practiced on

the island for hundreds of years to hunt sea animals, especially whales. There was a petition signed by 1.3 million people to ban the island's traditional hunting. The government has limited the number of white-sided dolphins that can be caught to 500, however the limit on Whales was not mentioned. ("[Faroe Islands to limit dolphin hunt after outcry](#)," *BBC*, 11 July 2022)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Meta reissues warning on the imminent ban of their services in Europe

On 29 July, in a US regulatory filing, Meta Platforms Inc. reiterated its warning that unless the deadlock regarding the new transatlantic data transfer pact is not resolved, they will be forced to stop their business in the European Union. If favorable deliberations are further delayed, Meta could face a ban by the Irish Data Protection Commission against EU-US data transfers. Meta said that unless a new framework is released and if they are unable to depend on SSCs or other alternative means of data transfers, they will not be able to provide services like Facebook and Instagram, in Europe. However, they added that this "would materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations." ("[Meta Repeats Why It May Be Forced to Pull Facebook From EU](#)," *Bloomberg*, 30 July 2022)

MARITIME

NATO ships dock at Estonia's ports

On 25 July, two ships of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) arrived in Estonia's Tallinn port. The Dutch joint support ship and current SNMG1 flagship HNLMS Karel Doorman (A833) and the Portuguese NRP Corte-Real (F332), a Vasco da Gama-class frigate arrived at Old City Harbor. The Standing NATO Maritime Groups are NATO's two Maritime Immediate Reaction Forces, which are multinational, integrated maritime forces that are permanently available to the military bloc to perform tasks ranging from participating in exercises and operational missions. ("[Gallery: Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 ships visit Estonia](#)," *ERR news*, 25 July 2022)

Insurance for ships exporting Ukrainian wheat

On 25 July, the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) recognized the international agreement to resume shipments and security of all port workers and seafarers from Ukraine's seaports to be "absolutely guaranteed," to fulfill the agreement's objectives. Even when exports do resume initially, Lee from S&P Global Market Intelligence anticipates that they will be limited to small, domestic vessels rather than the massive, internationally-owned vessels that typically handle the sector. ("[Updated: Security and insurance concerns hang over Ukraine grain export recovery](#)," *Seatrade Maritime News*, 25 July 2022)

Senckenberg scientists develop new indicators for marine ecosystem protection

On 07 July it was reported that Senckenberg scientists, working with an international team have developed new indicators to monitor the protection of marine and coastal areas. The study was published in the journal "Scientific Data," and illustrates the large gaps in the current system of protection of marine ecosystems. The team led by Senckenberg researchers, Joy A. Kumagai and Aidin Niamir, developed two indicators that provide information on what per cent of coastal and marine habitats are located within protected and conserved areas. Analysis showed that while 40 per cent of mangroves, coral reefs, and salt marshes are located in protected or conserved areas, less than 10 per cent of seamounts are under protected areas, as they often fall outside national jurisdiction. Niamir said: "The lack of protection on the high seas poses a major problem, since this area also offers the greatest opportunity for habitat conservation, in terms of area, if its protection were increased to 30 percent." (Judith Jördens, Aidin Niamir and Joy Kumagai, "[More Ocean Protection: New Indicators for Marine Ecosystem Protection Developed](#)," *Senckenberg*, 07 July 2022)

SPACE

Russia to withdraw from the ISS project

On 26 July, the newly appointed Roscosmos

chief Yuri Borisov announced that Russia will be withdrawing from the International Space Station (ISS) "after 2024" and building its own orbiting station. He further mentioned that the agency will also provide space services regarding navigation, communication, and data transmission. The project is viewed as one of the last standing cooperation in space between the US and Russia. Although the withdrawal was scheduled to happen in the future, with the Ukraine war, the pullout has been fastened. According to US president Joe Biden: "We estimate that we'll cut off more than half of Russia's high-tech imports. That will strike a blow to their ability to continue to modernize their military. It'll degrade their aerospace industry, including their space program." ("Russia signals space station pullout; NASA says it's not official yet," *Reuters*, 26 July 2022)

Europe's Mars rover to be prepared for the Moon

On 28 July, a *BBC* report spoke about how a rover assembled by the UK and meant for Mars, will now be redesigned to be sent to the moon instead. This is part of an agreement between the US and the UK. NASA's Perseverance rover is currently drilling rocks in a large crater on Mars. According to the original plan, these rocks, stored in titanium tubes were supposed to be brought to the rocket by the UK rover from wherever Perseverance had dropped it. However, now that NASA is confident that Perseverance will function long enough to carry out the entire operation by itself, European Space Agency has suggested that they repurpose their rover to a bigger one to carry cargo and payloads to the moon. (Jonathan Amos, "UK Mars rover will have to aim for the Moon," *BBC*, 27 July 2022)

Use of Satellite images and ground data predicts amount of harvest

On 15 July, *BBC* reported on the analysis shared by Kayrros and EarthDaily on the health of crops worldwide. The analysis uses satellite images to determine the crops health by calculating how much infrared light the plants reflect back. The study examined data from satellite photographs, which can reveal a plant's health by

measuring the amount of infrared light it reflects back at the satellites' cameras. The probable harvest is then shown by cross-referencing that data with information on the weather and soil moisture.

BBC examined this data and discovered that the major wheat producing countries will be producing less than usual because of unfavorable weather. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that prices for wheat are reducing marginally as harvests begin but are still 48.5 per cent higher than they were at this time in 2021. (Stephanie Hegarty, "Satellites give clues about the coming global harvest," *BBC*, 15 July 2022)

ESA launches its first Vega-C rocket into space to deliver satellites

On 13 July, the European Space Agency's Vega-C rocket was lifted up to space from the French Guiana launch pad to deliver seven satellites to the orbit. Vega-C is a single body rocket that is 35 meters tall and weighs 210 tonnes. It has the capacity to launch around 2200 kilograms into a 700 kilometer polar orbit. The director general of the ESA, Josef Aschbacher "The launch demand in Europe in the next couple of years and beyond is going to be high, and Vega-C and Ariane-6 are going to be our workhorses." Vega-C will be able to carry a variety of payloads, from several small satellites weighing as little as one kilogramme up to a single huge payload, using a new range of payload carriers. Vega-C's capabilities will be expanded by incorporating in-orbit operations and return missions using the fully integrated Space Rider vehicle. (Jonathan Amos, "Successful debut flight for Europe's Vega-C rocket," *BBC*, 13 July 2022)

James Webb Space Telescope brings the first fully colored images of the universe

On 11 July, NASA revealed the first full-coloured image of the universe through the James Webb Space Telescope. The images released were live-streamed on the European Space Agency webpage that can be viewed by anyone. These were the first deepest images of the universe. The images consist of two nebulas, two galaxy clusters, two vast interstellar clouds that form stars,

a gaseous exo-planet revolving around a star outside our solar system and Stephan's Quintet. After the Hubble telescope, James Webb Space Telescope is the second most powerful device used to study cosmology. It uses infrared thermal cameras to sort through space dust clouds to view extraterrestrial objects. The advancement of the telescope will further widen human knowledge and understanding of the universe. (Fred Schwaller, "[NASA reveals James Webb Space Telescope's first image of cosmos](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 11 July 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

US treasury terminates 1979 tax treaty with Hungary

On 08 July, the US Treasury announced it will be dissolving a 1979 tax treaty with Hungary in response to Budapest's decision to obstruct the implementation of a new, 15 per cent global minimum tax by the EU. According to a Treasury spokesperson, Hungary gains solely from the tax agreement since it cut their corporation tax rate from 21 per cent to nine per cent, which is less than half the US rate. However, the foreign minister of Hungary Peter Szijjarto reaffirmed the stance of the Hungarian government, claiming that the global minimum tax will destroy Europe's competitiveness and jeopardize jobs in Hungary. After the US Treasury sends a notice to the Hungarian government, the treaty termination is expected to be completed in six months. ("[US Treasury to end 1979 treaty with global minimum tax holdout Hungary](#)," *Reuters*, 09 July 2022)

Finland, UK, and US conduct joint military exercise

On 29 July, 150 troops from the UK joined Finland and the US forces in Finland for "high-readiness" exercises. The exercise will be conducted over four days and involved 750 troops. UK's troops stationed in Estonia were also flown in for the exercise which comes weeks after Finland and Sweden signed the accession protocol for NATO. UK Wing Commander, Stephen Boyle said: "As Finland moves towards full NATO Membership, we will continue to seek opportunities like this to show solidarity

with Finland, learn from each other and improve our ability to operate together." (Kathryn Snowden, "[UK troops in Finland exercise amid Russia threat](#)," *BBC*, 30 July 2022)

Saudi prince visit to France face lot of heat from Jamal Khashoggi's relatives

On 28 July, Saudi prince Mohammed bin Salman met with France's president Emmanuel Macron when he visited Paris. Amid the rising energy crisis, talks for energy trade between Saudi Arabia and France were discussed between the two leaders. The welcoming of prince bin Salman met with criticisms from many people including the relatives of the deceased journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Khashoggi was killed by some Saudi agents in their consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. Speculations of prince bin Salman being involved in the murder have led to outrages against the meeting between Macron and Mohammed bin Salman. Relatives of the journalist are pleading with France to arrest the Saudi prince. But due to the necessity of energy trade between the OPEC country and France, no actions are taken against prince bin Salman. ("Paul Kirby, "[Saudi Crown prince's lavish Macron visit prompts outcry](#)," *BBC*, 28 July 2022)

Saudi Arabia and Greece agree to build data cable to share green energy

On 26 July, Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman agreed to a deal to lay an undersea data cable with Greece during his visit to Athens. Greece and Saudi Arabia agreed to build a data cable that will connect Europe with Asia. The East to Med data corridor will be used for supplying cheaper and greener energy to Europe. Mohammed's visit to Athens was the first to an EU member nation since the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. The linkage with Saudi's electricity grid will provide Greece and southwest European nations with cheaper renewable energy through Athens. Both countries also signed bilateral agreements relating to energy, military, and economic cooperation. Saudi Arabia initially denied the request of the US and EU on increasing its output since it followed the benchmark set by

OPEC. ("Greece, Saudi Arabia seal deal on data cable, discuss power grid link," *Reuters*, 27 July, 2022)

Monkeypox declared a global public health emergency by WHO

On 23 July, the WHO declared the ongoing monkeypox outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Despite there being no agreement within the WHO's emergency committee, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made the declaration for the first time. Since the first cases were recorded in May, the outbreak has spread to 75 countries with over 16,000 cases. The current outbreak is centered in Europe, and the highest number of cases have been recorded in Spain, followed by the UK. (Sonya Angelica Diehn, "Monkeypox: WHO declares outbreak a global public health emergency," *Deutsche Welle*, 23 July 2022)

Leak of Uber files expose unethical operations of the firm during 2013-2017

On 10 July, a hoard of confidential files was leaked to *the Guardian* and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists revealing the US firm's mobility service provider Uber's illegal operations and lobbying politicians for its aggressive expansion. The leaked trove consisted of more than 124,000 documents known as Uber files, covering its unethical operations across the 40 countries it serves between the years 2013 and 2017. One of the documents stated that Uber allotted USD 90 million in 2016 to amend taxi and labor laws by lobbying politicians. The document also claims the firm brought academicians to produce research that supports the benefits of its economic model. The leak also exposed conversations between the co-founder of Uber Kalanich and Emmanuel Macron who was the economy minister at that time. The conversations revealed that Macron extensively helped Uber's lobbyist and executives by framing laws favorable to the firm. The files also revealed the informal support former vice-president of European Commission Neelie Kroes had with Uber. (Uber Files reporting team, "Uber Files: Massive leak reveals how top politicians secretly helped Uber," *BBC*, 10 July 2020)

FBI and MI5 join hands to tackle Chinese espionage threats

On 06 July, heads of the US investigation agency FBI and the UK intelligence MI5 met with business leaders in London to caution them about Chinese spying on them to disrupt the western economy and national security. They also warned about the Chinese government stealing western technologies for their gain. Both FBI Director Christopher Wray and MI5 Director-General Ken McCallum had called for unity against Chinese espionage and they had thought about the consequences it brings about to the western nations. They are ready to defend Taiwan if the need arises in the future. The democratic island was said to be under communist China's control due to the 'One China' policy but if it decides to invade Taiwan, both nations would support the island. As China is preparing its economy for sanctions by insulating it, the US and the UK are ready to face any threats that the communist nation might throw at them. (Amanda Rivkin, "FBI, MI5 warn Western business leaders about Chinese espionage," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 July 2022)

China issues warning to the UK about having trade talks with Taiwan

On 04 July, China issued a warning to the UK about having trade talks with Taiwan. Taiwan's chief trade negotiator met with his counterpart from the UK to discuss bilateral trade relations between the two countries and also about joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade bloc. China sent a clear signal to the UK stating that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China. Taiwan had submitted a formal application to be a member of the CPTPP just a week after China submitted its application. The UK is also aiming to become a member of the trade bloc and had talks with the minister of Taiwan John Deng. The UK's foreign secretary Liz Truss said on a radio show that the world needed to learn from Ukraine and also that Taiwan be made sure of having the ability to defend itself so that it can maintain peace. (Graham Lanktree, "UK risks Chinese anger over trade talks with Taiwan," *POLITICO*, 04 July 2022)

Israel and Poland to improve their deteriorated relation

On 04 July, relations between Israel and Poland resumed after they had fallen apart due to the world war two-property incident. Poland introduced a law that limited the chance of the Jews recovering their world war two properties. The bill affected the properties that were confiscated by the Nazi German occupiers and secured by Poland's communist rulers after the war. Leaders of both nations agreed to restore their relations and improve them. Both countries would send official ambassadors to each other. If any problems arise between the two nations, they would be solved through sincere and open dialogue and in a spirit of mutual respect. ("Israel, Poland to restore relations strained by Holocaust restitution row," *Reuters*, 05 July 2022)

Macron wants to conserve the oceans by stopping deep-sea mining

On 30 June, France's president Emmanuel Macron urged fellow members of the UN to stop deep-sea mining and start investing in scientific research to protect the oceans. He urged for a new legal framework to stop ocean mining and put an end to the activities that might harm the marine environment. He also said the countries should invest in scientific exploration to find ways to protect the ocean. Countries like China, which is the leader in deep-sea mining exploration, and other small Pacific

nations are against the idea of stopping it and have asked the UN to fast track the regulations towards sea-bed mining. According to the UN, until the regulations are adopted, seabed mining will be illegal on the high seas. ("Stop deep-sea mining, says Macron, in call for new laws to protect ecosystems," *The Guardian*, 01 July 2022)

Germany signs a restitution agreement with Nigeria

On 01 July, an agreement was signed in Berlin between Germany and Nigeria for the return of the Benin Bronze artifacts. Germany becomes the first European country to return a large number of relics that were stolen in the colonial period to their rightful owner. The agreement formally transferred ownership of the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria with immediate effect. More than 1,130 artifacts were taken from five museums in Germany to be returned to the people of Benin and Nigeria. The items were auctioned in London and Germany acquired the second-largest collection in the world. Only the ownership was transferred through the contract, the artifacts would be slowly moved to Nigeria. It would be placed in museums, institutions, galleries, and in the rebuilt royal palace in Benin City. (Annabelle Steffes-Halmer, "Germany returns Benin Bronzes to Nigeria," *Deutsche Welle*, 01 July 2022)

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