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In Figures

A QUARTER of the world's children – about 535 million – are living in a country affected by conflict or disaster, the head of the UN children's agency said. Henrietta Fore told a Security Council meeting on children and armed conflict that it is "almost beyond comprehension" that one of every four young people are caught in that situation.



PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi in a group photo with Egyptian athletes who took part in the Mediterranean Games 2018.

More facilities to host int'l sports events

Sisi praises athletes' performance at Med. Games 2018

Ashraf Sadek

PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi yesterday confirmed the importance of the role being played by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in encouraging the country's young people to be more creative and helping them participate, not only in the decision-making process, but also in Egypt's development.

During his meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr Moustafa Madbouli, and the Minister of Youth and Sports, Dr Ashraf Sobhi, President Sisi called for

providing young people, whom he called the main manpower and human capital of the country, with the kind of empowering environment that would help them meet Egypt's future requirements.

President Sisi said that the government must mobilise all its efforts to implement all the projects aimed at upgrading the quality of services that were being offered to Egyptian youth, whom he described as the most solid resource base, with an important role to play in building the country's future.

He said that the government must continue building and equipping sports centres for the young people in each newly-built city.

During the meeting, President Sisi and Minister Sobhi reviewed plans for a set of social, cultural, and sports compounds that would be built to serve young people and to qualify Egypt to host international sports events either now or in the future, Presidency Spokesman Ambassador Bassam Radi said.

President Sisi issued instruc-

tions to the government to upgrade the Cairo Stadium and its surroundings, in preparation for hosting international sports events.

He highlighted the importance of training the sports men and women who would represent Egypt at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo and the importance of thoroughly preparing for the Handball Championship that would be hosted by Egypt in 2021, Ambassador Radi said.

Earlier in the day, President Sisi thanked the young Egyptian sports men and women for the good results they had achieved

at the Mediterranean Games 2018 that were held in Tarragona, Spain, recently.

To express his appreciation, President Sisi received the athletes at the Presidential Palace and praised them for gladdening the hearts of all Egyptians with their success at the games.

The president told the team members that he appreciated each one of them and held them in high esteem for their honourable performance. He added that they had earned the respect and appreciation of all Egyptians and of sports fans all over the world,

according to the spokesman for the presidency. The president confirmed that the dedication and loyalty to their country demonstrated by the athletes would enable them to achieve more success at future championships.

At the end of the meeting, President Sisi awarded state medals, second class, to the men and women champion athletes who had distinguished themselves at the Mediterranean Games.

They won medals in weightlifting, karate, swimming, free wrestling, athletics, taekwondo, judo, table tennis, and boxing.

Annual urban inflation down in June

THE annual urban consumer inflation dropped to 10.9 per cent in June from 11.1 per cent in May, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) said yesterday.

The CBE on June 28 kept its key interest rates unchanged, expressing concern that inflation would rise after the fuel and electricity prices increased earlier that month.

The bank said the Monetary Policy Committee had decided to keep its deposit and lending rates at 16.75 and 17.75 per cent respectively.



VOLUNTEERS reacting after hearing all boys were rescued from the Tham Luang cave in the northern province of Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Entire Thai soccer team out of cave

MAE SAI (AP) – A daring rescue mission in the treacherous confines of a flooded cave in northern Thailand has saved all 12 boys and their soccer coach who were trapped deep within the labyrinth, ending a grueling 18-day ordeal that claimed the life of an experienced volunteer diver and riveted people around the world.

Thailand's Navy SEALs, who were central to the rescue effort, said on

their Facebook page that the remaining four boys and their 25-year-old coach were all brought out safely yesterday. Eight of the boys were rescued by a team of Thai and international divers on Sunday and Monday.

"We are not sure if this is a miracle, a science, or what. All the thirteen Wild Boars are now out of the cave," the SEALs said, referring to the name of the boys' soccer team. "Everyone is safe."

FM: Egypt, Arab states ready to co-operate with China in 'Belt and Road Initiative'

FOREIGN Minister Sameh Shoukri said yesterday that Egypt and the other Arab countries were willing to co-operate with China to implement the Belt and Road Initiative.

In his speech at the 8th session of the ministerial meeting of the Sino-Arab Co-operation Forum, he said that Arab-Chinese relations had advanced remarkably since 2004.

He confirmed that China has always supported national liberation movements in Arab countries.

"Furthering economic relations between both sides is very important for co-operation since China ranks second on the Arab World's list of trade partners," he pointed out.

"The Arab countries are the major oil exporters to China," he said, "and the Belt and Road Initiative will help increase trade exchange."

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday pledged a package of \$20 bil-

lion in loans, and about \$106 million, in financial aid, to Middle East nations, as part of what he called an "oil and gas plus" model to revive economic growth in the region, according to a Reuters report.

Beijing has ramped up engagement in the Middle East in recent years as Arab nations play an important role in Xi's signature Belt and Road foreign policy plan for strong trade routes linking China with central and Southeast Asia.

Development was key to resolving many security problems in the Middle East, Xi told a gathering attended by 21 Arab nations in the Chinese capital.

"We should treat each other frankly, not fear differences, not avoid problems, and have ample discussions on each aspect of foreign policy and development strategy," he said.

"China will offer aid worth 100

million yuan (\$15 million) to Palestine to support economic development and will provide a further 600 million yuan (\$91 million) to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen," he added.

"A consortium of banks from China and Arab nations, with a dedicated fund of \$3 billion, will also be set up," he said.

It was unclear what the relationship between the bank consortium, financial aid and the overall loan package would be.

"The loans will fund a plan of economic reconstruction and industrial revival that will include co-operation on oil and gas, nuclear and clean energy," Xi said.

He urged the "relevant parties" to respect the international consensus on the Israel-Palestine dispute, and called for it to be handled in a just manner, so as to avoid regional disruption.

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