

News in brief

◆ **A hotel and casino resort** in the world's biggest gambling hub of Macau was locked down by authorities with 700 people inside yesterday due to a coronavirus infection outbreak on the property, local broadcaster TDM reported. The lockdown comes as the Chinese special administrative region carries out a two-day mass testing of its more than 600,000 population after dozens of locally transmitted coronavirus cases were discovered over the weekend. Footage obtained by the broadcaster and industry publications showed police officers in protective gear sealing the complex to prevent people from entering or leaving. Government officials were also preparing COVID-19 tests for the hundreds of people inside.

Macau hotel locked down after COVID case, 700 people to be quarantined-media

◆ **A small Chinese study** detailed in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal showed neutralising antibodies against some Omicron sub-variants were largely undetectable after two doses of a Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine, with a booster shot only partly restoring them. The vaccine, BBIBP-CorV, is one of the two Sinopharm COVID shots approved for use in China, and is also the main shot that the state-owned firm has exported. Among 25 individuals who received two doses of BBIBP-CorV vaccine, the neutralising activity against sub-variants such as BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 "was not or only minimally detectable", researchers said in correspondence published on Monday.

Some Omicron sub-variants escaping antibodies from Sinopharm shot, Chinese study says

◆ **The Kremlin** said yesterday it did not know the location of two Americans captured while fighting in eastern Ukraine, but that they were mercenaries and could be sentenced to death in Russian-backed breakaway territories. Americans Alexander Druke, 39, and Andy Huynh, 27, went missing this month while fighting near Kharkiv. Russian state media later showed video interviews with the pair, saying they had been captured by Russian-backed forces. Citing an unidentified source, the Interfax news agency reported that the men were in the separatist self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) in eastern Ukraine.

Kremlin says it does not know location of captured US 'mercenaries'

◆ **Thousands walk out** in Britain's biggest rail strike in 30 years as Johnson vows to stay firm on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday gathered at picket lines from dawn, causing major disruption across the network and leaving major stations deserted. The London Underground metro was also mostly closed due to a separate strike.

◆ **Taiwan scrambled jets** yesterday to warn away 29 Chinese aircraft in its air defence zone, including bombers that flew to the south of the island and into the Pacific, in the latest uptick in tensions and largest incursion since late May. Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, has complained for the past two years or so of repeated missions by the Chinese air force near the democratically governed island, often in the southwestern part of its air defence identification zone, or ADIZ, close to the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands. The latest Chinese mission included 17 fighters and six H-6 bombers, as well as electronic warfare, early warning, antisubmarine and an aerial refuelling aircraft, Taiwan's defence ministry said.

Taiwan scrambles 29 jets to warn away Chinese planes in its air defence zone

Russian journalist's Nobel Peace fetches record \$103.5 million at

◆ **Muratov, who pledged to donate about \$500,000 of that prize money to charities**

Reuters

Dmitry Muratov, the co-winner of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize and the editor of one of Russia's last major independent newspapers, auctioned off his Nobel medal for a record \$103.5 million to aid children displaced by the war in Ukraine.

All proceeds from the auction, which coincided with the World Refugee Day on Monday, will benefit UNICEF's humanitarian



Dmitry Muratov poses with his 2021 Nobel Peace Prize medal

response for Ukraine's displaced children, Heritage Auctions, Muratov's Novaya Gazeta newspaper, which conducted the sale in New

York, said in a statement. Muratov's Novaya Gazeta newspaper, fiercely critical of

President Vladimir Putin and his government, suspended operations in Russia in March after warnings from the state over its coverage of the war in Ukraine. According to US media reports, the auction of Muratov's prize shattered the record for any Nobel medal that has been auctioned off, with reports saying that the previous highest sale fetched just under \$5 m.

"This award is unlike any other auction offering to present," Heritage Auctions said in a statement before the sale.

"Mr. Muratov, with the full support of his staff at Novaya Gazeta, is allowing us to auction his medal not as a collectible but as an event that he hopes will positively impact the lives of m of Ukrainian

Russia warns Lithuania of 'consequences' over bloc

◆ **Russia fumes over ban on transit of goods to Kaliningrad**

◆ **Putin ally warns Lithuania of retaliatory measures**

◆ **Russian-backed separatists claim advance in Ukraine's east**

◆ **US Attorney General, in Ukraine, vows action on war crimes**

Reuters | Kyiv

Russia threatened yesterday to punish Lithuania with measures that would have a "serious negative impact" for blocking some shipments by rail to Moscow's Baltic Sea enclave of Kaliningrad, the latest dispute over sanctions imposed over war in Ukraine.

Within Ukraine, Russian forces and their separatist proxies made further advances in the east,



A view shows railway tracks at a commercial port in the Baltic Sea town of Baltiysk in the Kaliningrad region, Russia

pushing towards Lysychansk, now Kyiv's main bastion in the area of heaviest fighting in the eastern Donbas region that Moscow claims for the separatists.

Ukraine, its forces and weaponry dwarfed by Russia's, has begged the West to send more and better artillery. Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov announced yesterday the arrival of powerful German self-propelled howitzers.

Blaming Western sanctions, Russia has begun pumping reduced volumes of gas to Europe via Ukraine. German Economy Minister Robert Habeck said the diminished flows amounted to an economic attack on Germany that "cannot be allowed to succeed".

Diplomatic attention has turned towards Russia's Kaliningrad enclave, a Baltic Sea port and surrounding countryside where

nearly a million Russians live, connected to the rest of Russia by a rail link through EU- and NATO-member Lithuania.

Lithuania has shut the route for transport of steel and other ferrous metals, which it says it is required to do under EU sanctions that took effect on Saturday. Russian officials say other basic goods have been blocked too.

'HOSTILE'

Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of Russia's Security Council, visited the enclave yesterday to chair a security meeting there. He said Lithuania's actions showed that Russia could not trust the West, which he said had broken written agreements over Kaliningrad.

"Russia will certainly respond to such hostile actions," Patrushev was quoted as saying by state

news agency RIA. "Appropriate measures" were being worked out, and "their consequences will have a serious negative impact on the population of Lithuania", he said without elaborating.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte said it was "ironic" to hear Russia complain about alleged violations of internation-



A view shows a crater in the courtyard of street following recent shelling in the co Ukraine

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	88,054,080	1,038,385
2 India	43,320,845	524,890
3 Brazil	31,756,118	669,217
4 France	30,181,415	149,106
5 Germany	27,334,463	140,357
6 UK	22,508,928	179,601
7 Russia	18,403,427	380,577
8 S. Korea	18,289,373	24,463
9 Italy	17,959,329	167,842
10 Turkey	15,085,742	98,996
11 Spain	12,563,399	107,482
12 Vietnam	10,738,909	43,083
13 Argentina	9,341,492	129,016
14 Japan	9,159,940	31,045

Global tally

545,202,217

Deaths

6,342,280

Recovered:

520,380,130

New cases

+369,245

New deaths

+495

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	515,645		24,613		442,182	48,850
Saudi Arabia	787,212	+1,143	9,191	+2	768,087	9,934
UAE	930,475	+1,556	2,309		911,226	16,940
Kuwait	639,290		2,555		632,789	3,946
Oman	389,758		4,260		384,669	829
Qatar	376,811	+662	678		372,134	3,999



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy attends a meeting with local authorities during a visit to the southern city of Mykolaiv