

1945

Marshal Philippe Pétain, leader of France's Vichy collaborationist regime during World War II, arrested for treason

1956

First modern container ship, the Ideal X, leaves Port Newark, New Jersey for Houston, Texas



1986

World's worst nuclear disaster: 4th reactor at Chernobyl nuclear power station in USSR explodes, 31 die, radioactive contamination reaches much of Western Europe

2005

Under international pressure, Syria withdraws the last of its 14,000 troop military garrison in Lebanon, ending its 29-year military domination of that country.

# sending more arms to Ukraine

iv embassy soon, says Russia has failed in war aims



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy poses for a picture with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin

we're back is because of you, because of the extraordinary courage, leadership and success that you've had in pushing back this horrific Russian aggression."

The meeting between the US delegation and Ukraine's leaders ran for three hours, more than double the allotted time, a US official said.

"In terms of Russia's war aims, Russia has already failed and Ukraine has already succeeded," Blinken told a briefing in Poland after returning.

US officials said Austin and Blinken pledged new assistance worth \$713 million for Zelenskyy's government and other countries in the region. An extra \$322 million in military aid for Ukraine would take the total U.S. security assistance since the

invasion to about \$3.7 billion, one official said.

"It will provide support for capabilities Ukraine needs, especially the fight in the Donbas," the official said. It would also help Ukraine's armed forces transition to more advanced weapons and air defense systems that were essentially NATO compatible, the official added.

Today, the nearest Russian troops are hundreds of miles away, normal life is returning to the capital, Western leaders have been visiting and countries are reopening their embassies.

Blinken said US diplomats would first return to Lviv and should be back in Kyiv within weeks. The White House announced President Joe Biden had nominated Bridget Brink,

now US ambassador in Slovakia, to be the new envoy to Kyiv.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow had thwarted an attempt to assassinate a high profile Russian journalist by Ukrainian agents backed by the West. The FSB security service said it had arrested a group planning to kill Vladimir Solovyov, host of a talk show on Russia's main state television station and one of the most prominent voices in support of the invasion.

In a daily update on the conflict, Britain's defence ministry said Russia had made only minor advances in parts of Donbas.

"Without sufficient logistical and combat support enablers in place, Russia has yet to achieve a significant breakthrough," it said.

The relative calm in Kyiv is a contrast with the south and east of the country, where the war grinds on relentlessly.

Some 320 km (200 miles) southeast of Kyiv, Russian missile strikes on an oil refinery and power plant in Kremenchuk killed one person and wounded seven, the governor of the Poltava region said. Moscow said it had destroyed oil production facilities.

Russia also fired rockets at two towns in the central Vinnytsia region, causing an unspecified number of deaths and injuries, regional Governor Serhiy Borzov reported.

financing for Ukraine, taking total US security assistance since the invasion to about \$3.7 billion, a US official said.

President Vladimir Putin says the "special military operation" in Ukraine is necessary because the

United States was using Ukraine to threaten Russia and Moscow had to defend against the persecution of Russian-speaking people.

Putin, who says Ukraine and Russia are essentially one people,

casts the war as an inevitable confrontation with the United States, which he accuses of threatening Russia by meddling in its backyard and enlarging the NATO military alliance.

Ukraine says it is fighting an

## NATO warships arrive at Finnish port for training exercises



Three NATO warships from the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1 group), EML Sakala from Estonia, Dutch HNLMS Schiedam and the flagship LVNS Virsaitis from Latvia, arrive to a harbour, to train with Finland's coastal fleet, in the Finnish southwestern coastal city of Turku, Finland

Reuters | Helsinki

Three NATO warships arrived in the southwestern Finnish port of of Turku yesterday to train with Finland's navy as Helsinki considers the possibility of joining the US-led alliance amid increased tensions with Russia over Ukraine.

Latvian minelayer LVNS Virsaitis and minehunters Estonian ENS Sakala and Dutch HNLMS Schiedam will train with two minehunters from Finland's coastal fleet, the Finnish defence forces said in a statement.

The two-day exercise, set to commence on April 28, will prepare the Finnish ships to take part in NATO response forces in 2022 and focus on "mine countermeasures and working in a

multinational framework", the statement said.

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin said on April 13 that her country would take a decision in the next few weeks about whether to apply to join NATO, prompting an angry response from Russia.

Finland and neighbouring Sweden are close partners with NATO but have shied away from joining the 30-member alliance, founded in 1949 to counter the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Marin said the option to join NATO had to be carefully analysed but that everything had changed since Russian forces invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. Finland shares a 1,300-km (810-mile) land border with Russia.

imperial-style land grab and that Putin's claims of genocide are nonsense. Putin warned in February that there would be no

winners in a conflict between NATO and Russia, which has the world's biggest arsenal of nuclear warheads.

## Israel's Strauss recalls chocolate after salmonella found

Reuters | Jerusalem

Israeli foodmaker Strauss Group said yesterday it was recalling more than a dozen types of Elite brand chocolate after a routine inspection at its plant in northern Israel found traces of salmonella.

Strauss disclosed in a regulatory filing the discovery of the bacterium, which can cause intestinal disease.

Strauss recalled products made after Feb. 20 and the Nazareth-area plant has been shut to find the source of the problem, the company said, adding it was coordinating with Israel's Health Ministry.

The company said it was not aware of any customer contracting salmonella from one of its products.

It said that while it was not yet able to assess the impact of the recall and plant shutdown on its financial results, it may have a material effect on 2022 profits.

Earlier this month, Belgian health authorities ordered Italian confectionary group Ferrero to suspend production at its plant in Belgium, after an investigation into dozens of cases of salmonella linked to the company's Kinder chocolates.

## Panic buying in Beijing stores amid COVID lockdown fears

Reuters | Beijing/Shanghai

A mass COVID-19 testing order in Beijing's biggest district prompted residents in the Chinese capital to stock up on groceries, fearing they could be destined for a lockdown similar to that of Shanghai, which entered a fourth week of bitter isolation.

Authorities in Chaoyang, home to 3.45 million people, late on Sunday ordered those who live and work there to be tested three times this week as Beijing warned the virus had "stealthily" spread for about a week before being detected.

Knowing how Shanghai residents struggled to source food and other essentials while locked indoors, shoppers in Beijing crowded stores and online platforms to stock up on vegetables, fresh meat, instant noodles and toilet paper.

A 63-year-old Chaoyang resident surnamed Di bought two bags of vegetables - enough for 8-10 days, he said - just in case his building is added to more than a dozen put under lockdown.

"Shanghai was a lesson," he said, adding that he doesn't believe Beijing will suffer the same



A staff member takes notes of goods at a half empty freezer for fruits at a supermarket in Beijing

fate.

In the financial hub, the lack of enough couriers to make deliveries to homes has been the main supply bottleneck, fuelling widespread anxiety and anger.

In Beijing, supermarket chains including Carrefour and Wumart said they had more than doubled inventories, while Meituan's (3690.HK) grocery-focused e-commerce platform increased stocks and the number of staff for sorting and delivery, state-backed Beijing Daily reported.

Research by Gavekal Dragomics published on Friday estimated that out of China's top 100 cities by economic output, 57 had "relatively tough" COVID-19 restrictions in place last week, down from 66 the week before.

Beijing's case load is small compared with those globally and the hundreds of thousands in Shanghai. Most Chaoyang schools, stores and offices remained open.

The district is home to many wealthy residents, most foreign embassies as well as entertain-

ment venues and corporate headquarters. It has little manufacturing.

In Shanghai, draconian restrictions were still enforced widely across the city, but officials raised hopes of some respite by saying they would look into reserving the harshest curbs for smaller areas around confirmed cases.

"Every compound, every gate, every door must be strictly managed," Qi Keping, vice-head of Shanghai's northeastern commercial district of Yangpu, told a daily news conference, describing the new, more targeted approach, and saying it would "better achieve differentiated prevention".

Over the weekend, authorities sealed off entrances of many public housing blocks and even entire streets with two-metre-tall green wire mesh fences, with videos online showing residents protesting from their balconies as frustration reached new heights among the city's 25 million residents.

Police in hazmat suits have been patrolling the streets, setting up road blocks and asking pedestrians to go home.



TOP  
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TWEETS

01



Congratulations to @EmmanuelMacron on his re-election. France is our oldest ally and a key partner in addressing global challenges. I look forward to our continued close cooperation – including on supporting Ukraine, defending democracy, and countering climate change.

@JoeBiden

02



Congratulations to @EmmanuelMacron on your re-election as President of France. France is one of our closest and most important allies. I look forward to continuing to work together on the issues which matter most to our two countries and to the world.

@BorisJohnson

03



Congratulations to my friend @EmmanuelMacron on being re-elected as the President of France! I look forward to continue working together to deepen the India-France Strategic Partnership.

@narendramodi

04



Malaria is preventable & treatable - yet it continues to claim the lives of more than 600,000 people every year. On #WorldMalariaDay, I urge countries to step up investments and innovation to accelerate progress towards a malaria-free future.

@BorisJohnson

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