

1260

Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, becomes ruler of the Mongol Empire



1955

West Germany is granted full sovereignty by its three occupying powers

1965

First large-scale US Army ground units arrive in South Vietnam

1980

Siege at Iranian Embassy in London ends as the SAS and police storm the building

Putin May 9



Putin has used previous Victory Day speeches to needle the West and showcase the firepower of Russia's post-Soviet armed forces.

Ukraine says it is 'ready' if Belarus joins Russian war effort



A view shows the Senkivka checkpoint near the border with Belarus and Russia in the Chernihiv region, Ukraine
Reuters | Kyiv

Kyiv will be ready if Belarus's armed forces join Russia's war effort in Ukraine, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian State Border Service said on Wednesday.

Belarus, a close ally of Russia, said its military had begun large-scale drills on Wednesday to test their combat readiness and that they posed no threat to its neighbours.

"We do not rule out that the Russian Federation could at some point use the territory of Belarus, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, against Ukraine," said Andriy Demchenko, spokesperson for Ukraine's State Border Service. "Therefore, we are ready," he said, adding that the border with Belarus had been strengthened since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russian Orthodox Church scolds Pope Francis after 'Putin's altar boy' remark



Patriarch Kirill has been a key pillar of Russia's ruling apparatus, championing conservative religious values

● Pope took the wrong tone - Russian Orthodox Church

● Kremlin says: no agreement on pope meeting

● Pope said Kirill should not be Putin's altar boy

● Patriarch Kirill: my flock is divided

Reuters | London

The Russian Orthodox Church scolded Pope Francis yesterday for using the wrong tone after he urged Patriarch Kirill not to become the Kremlin's "altar boy", cautioning the Vatican that such remarks would hurt dialogue between the churches.

Francis told Italy's Corriere Della Sera newspaper that Kirill, who has given the Ukraine war his backing, "cannot become [President Vladimir] Putin's altar boy".

The Russian Orthodox Church said it was regrettable that a month and a half after Francis and Kirill, the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, had spoken directly, the pope had adopted such a tone.

"Pope Francis chose an in-



correct tone to convey the content of this conversation," the Moscow Patriarchy said, though it did not explicitly mention the "altar boy" comment.

"Such statements are unlikely to contribute to the establishment of a constructive dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches, which is especially necessary at the present time."

Kirill, 75, a close ally of Putin, sees the war as a bulwark against a West he considers decadent, particularly over the acceptance of homosexuality.

But Kirill also expressed sorrow over the conflict.

"Of course, this situation is associated with great pain for me. My flock is on both sides of the confrontation, they are mostly Orthodox people," the Patriarchy quoted him as saying.

"How can we foster the pacification of those fighting with the single goal of achieving the consolidation of peace and justice?"

Russian offensive intensifies

eastern Ukraine. "Russia's military command is attempting to increase the tempo of its offensive operation in eastern Ukraine," Ukrainian Defence Ministry spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk said.

The European Commission proposed phasing out supplies of Russian crude oil within six months and refined products by the end of 2022. The price of Brent crude jumped 4% to more than \$109 a barrel after the news.

The plan, if agreed by EU governments, would be a watershed for the world's largest trading bloc, which remains dependent on Russian energy and must find

A view shows a residential building heavily damaged during Ukraine-Russia conflict in the southern port city of Mariupol, Ukraine

alternative supplies.

Hungary and Slovakia want to be exempted from the ban for now, sources said. An official familiar with the talks said there was no immediate deal, with EU envoys expected to move closer to agreement when they meet again on Thursday.

Von der Leyen also announced sanctions targeting Russia's largest bank Sberbank, two other lenders, three state broadcasters as well as army officers and other individuals accused of war crimes.

The EU has yet to target Russian natural gas, used to heat homes and generate electricity across the bloc.

On the war front, Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said the United States and its NATO allies were continuing to pump weapons into Ukraine and reit-

erated a warning that Moscow would seek to hit those shipments.

Road accident kills 26 in western Ukraine

Twenty-six people were killed in a collision in the Rivne region of western Ukraine involving a bus, a minibus and a fuel truck that exploded after the crash, the interior ministry said yesterday.

The bus had been heading to Poland, the ministry said on Facebook. It did not say whether it was carrying any people fleeing the war in Ukraine following Russia's invasion.

The dead from Tuesday's collision included 24 passengers and the drivers of both the bus and the minibus. Twelve others were hurt including the driver of the fuel truck, the ministry said.

Opening for possibility of women Swiss Guards



Swiss guards march at the Vatican

women into the guard," Boscardin said. "But this decision is not ours, but exclusively that of the Vatican and the pope," he said.

The Foundation of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, which supports the guard financially, has already raised about 37 million francs and

needs to raise about 7.5 million more, Boscardin told Reuters.

He said work was due to start in January, 2026 so the guards would not be displaced during the 2025 Holy Year, when millions of pilgrims are expected to visit the Vatican.



The force, whose principal mission is to protect the pope, has been exclusively male since its founding in 1506. The men are all Swiss citizens.

Beijing steps up COVID curbs as virus spreads in China

● Beijing shuts scores of metro stations, bus routes

● Extends curbs on restaurants, other venues

● Zhengzhou to enforce some COVID curbs next week

Reuters | Beijing/Shanghai

Beijing shut scores of metro stations and bus routes and extended COVID-19 curbs on many public venues yesterday, focusing efforts to avoid the fate of Shanghai, where mil-

lions have been under strict lockdown for more than a month.

The central city of Zhengzhou earlier also announced restrictions, joining dozens of big population centres under some form of lockdown as China seeks to eliminate a virus believed to have first emerged in Wuhan city in late 2019.

But that uncompromising battle is undermining its growth and hurting international companies invested there, data shows, and has also fuelled rare public outbursts of discontent. With dozens of new cases a day, Beijing is hoping mass testing will find and isolate the virus before it spreads. Twelve of 16 city districts held the second of three rounds of tests this week.



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TWEETS

01



Today in Niger I met with victims of terrorism & violent extremism, and the generous host communities offering them support & solidarity. The international community must quickly recognise that this is not only an issue for the Sahel, but a threat to the entire world.

@antoniouterres

02



My Denmark visit has been excellently productive. The programmes covered different spheres ranging from diplomatic meetings, boosting cultural and commercial linkages and engagement with the Indian community. I thank PM Frederiksen, the Government and people of Denmark. @Statsmin

@narendramodi

03



If the Court overturns Roe, it will fall on our nation's elected officials at all levels of government to protect a woman's right to choose. And it will fall on voters to elect pro-choice officials this November.

@JoeBiden

04



"A pro-junta militia that recently claimed responsibility for the slaying of opposition party members is now openly threatening to kill journalists and their families over content the military regime has dubbed 'destructive to the state.'"

@KenRoth

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