

241 BC

First Punic War: Battle of the Aegates Islands - The Romans sink the Carthaginian fleet bringing the First Punic War to an end

1783

USS Alliance under Captain Barry fights and wins last naval battle of US Revolutionary War off Cape Canaveral

1952

Military coup led by General Fulgencio Batista in Cuba



2000

The NASDAQ Composite stock market index peaks at 5132.52, signalling the beginning of the end of the dot-com boom

# Missiles pound Ukraine with 'retaliation' strikes

Missiles strike cities across Ukraine killing at least nine



Emergency service workers search through the rubble for injured civilians in Ukraine's western Lviv Oblast

border. "We thought we were safe here," said Oksana Ostapenko, who lost her sister and two brothers-in-law when the missile struck. For months Russia has pummeled key infrastructure in Ukraine with missiles and drones -- disrupting water, heating and electricity supplies for millions of people.

Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said two people were wounded yesterday and 40 percent of the population had been left without power for several hours. On Prospekt Peremogy, in the west of Kyiv, three cars parked near a high-rise apartment building were charred and the ground was littered with shattered glass

from windows, an AFP reporter said.

## 'Very scary'

"I'd seen (the missile) flying towards my block of flats and when I got there I saw a big fire," said resident Igor Yezhov, 60, a car dealer.

"I was very scared."

A 34-year-old man died in the eastern city of Dnipro, local authorities said.

At least three others were killed when shelling hit a bus stop in the southern city of Kherson, said Andriy Yermak, Ukraine's presidential chief of staff.

The Russian missile strikes also left the country's second city of Kharkiv in the northeast without power, water or heating, the re-

Each day of the defense of the town (Bakhmut) allows us to gain time to prepare reserves and prepare for future offensive operations. The enemy loses the most prepared and combat-capable part of his army

OLEKSANDR SIRSKIY, COMMANDER OF UKRAINE'S GROUND FORCES

gional governor said.

Ukraine said the strikes cut off electricity supplies to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant -- in Russian occupied territory -- forcing it to operate on diesel generators before power was restored later yesterday.

Ukraine said it was the sixth time that the facility had been disconnected from the electricity grid since Russian forces captured the plant last year.

The UN nuclear agency chief Rafael Grossi warned of the danger of the outages, saying "each time we are rolling a dice".

"If we allow this to continue time after time then one day our luck will run out," he warned.

The Russian army called the strikes "massive retaliation" in response to "terrorist actions organised by the Kyiv regime in the Bryansk region" and said that

it had used Kinzhal hypersonic missiles.

## Transnistria claims

It referred to claims that Ukrainian nationalists had crossed into the southern Bryansk region and killed two civilians, which Kyiv dismissed as a provocation.

Russia also called a vital UN-brokered grain deal -- that ensures supplies to large parts of the developing world -- "complicated" and not properly implemented.

It said it would discuss the renewal of the deal -- which expires on March 18 -- with the UN on Monday in Geneva.

The year-long Russian invasion of Ukraine has revived tensions in the pro-Russian separatist region of Transnistria in Moldova, where Moscow-backed authorities accused Ukraine of plotting a "terror attack".

Local authorities said the plot was "directed by Ukrainian security services, being prepared against a number of officials."

Ukraine denied the claims as a "provocation orchestrated by the Kremlin" while Moldova's government said it was investigating the claim but could not yet confirm it.

On the ground, Russia reported gains in the battle for the industrial city of Bakhmut, which has been the focus of months of fierce combat.

## Georgia drops 'foreign agent' bill but faces more protests



A protesters wave the Georgian, Ukrainian and European flags during a demonstration in Tbilisi

Georgia was gearing up for fresh anti-government protests on Thursday as popular anger showed no signs of cooling in the pro-Western Black Sea nation, despite the ruling party's promise to drop a "foreign agent" law reminiscent of Russian legislation.

Concerns have been mounting that the mountainous ex-Soviet country, which aspires to join the EU and NATO, is taking an authoritarian turn and maintaining links with Moscow.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Georgia has hosted an influx of anti-war Russians. But in recent weeks authorities have barred some Kremlin critics from entering the country, with observers warning of a drift towards Moscow.

The ruling Georgian Dream party has insisted it remains committed to Georgia's EU and NATO membership bid enshrined in the constitution and supported -- according to opinion polls -- by at least 80 percent of the population.

## Governor of Afghan province killed in suicide attack



Men shift a wounded man inside a hospital in Mazar-i-Sharif

It was a suicide attack. We don't have information as to how the suicide bomber reached the office of the governor

LOCAL POLICE SPOKESMAN ASIF WAZIRI

in his office, said Khairuddin, who was wounded in the incident and in a hospital in Mazar-i-Sharif.

"There was a bang. I fell on the ground," he said, adding that he witnessed a friend lose a hand in the blast.

Authorities deployed extra security at the governorate, who

forbade journalists from taking photos.

Muzammil was "martyred in an explosion by the enemies of Islam", tweeted government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Several attacks have rocked Balkh, including in Mazar-i-Sharif last year, some claimed by IS. In January, a suicide bomber killed at least 10 people when he blew himself up near the foreign ministry in Kabul, in an attack claimed by IS.

The Taliban and IS share an austere Sunni Islamist ideology, but the latter are fighting to establish a global "caliphate" instead of the Taliban's more inward-looking goal of ruling an independent Afghanistan.

IS has emerged as the biggest security challenge to the Taliban

**YOU KNOW WHAT**

IS has emerged as the biggest security challenge to the Taliban government since last year, carrying out attacks against Afghan civilians as well as foreigners and foreign interests

## Health warnings as Bangkok chokes on pollution



The 69-meter tall giant Buddha statue of Wat Paknam Phasi Charoen temple is seen amid smoggy conditions due to air pollution in Bangkok

AFP | Bangkok

Nearly 200,000 people in Thailand have been admitted to hospital because of air pollution this week, officials have said, with Bangkok shrouded in a harmful haze.

The Thai capital, home to an estimated 11 million people and one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, has been blanketed for days by an unpleasant yellow-grey mix of vehicle fumes, industrial emissions and smoke from agricultural burning.

More than 1.3 million people have fallen sick in the kingdom

since the start of the year as a result of air pollution, with nearly 200,000 admitted to hospital this week alone, according to the public health ministry.

Kriangkrai Namthaisong, a doctor at the ministry, on Wednesday urged children and pregnant women to stay indoors.

Anyone going outside should wear a high-quality N95 anti-pollution mask, he added.

During another pollution peak in late January and early February, city authorities urged people to work from home.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



We are living in a period of great uncertainty and the risks that we face are growing and becoming more complex. Enhanced international cooperation is the only way we can adequately respond to complex global shocks.

@antoniogetterres

02



Financing is the lifeblood of our EU businesses. It will power forward our green & digital transitions, create jobs, and make us more sovereign. We need to speed up progress on the Capital Markets Union. We are up to the challenge.

@eucopresident

03



Together, #C5plus promotes a more prosperous and peaceful Central Asia and beyond. Thankful to my Central Asian counterparts for a great Ministerial in Astana to advance our work together on economic, energy, environment, and security cooperation.

@SecBlinken

04



International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate women's achievements, and also a time to remember the women and girls of Afghanistan who have lost access to schooling. Education is a universal human right.

@GitaGopinath

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