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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Zelenskiy shows up stuttering Russian offensive by visiting frontline city

KYIV, Dec 20 (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin acknowledged on Tuesday that conditions in Russian-held areas of Ukraine were "extremely difficult" and Ukraine's leader showed up Russia's faltering war by visiting a shattered frontline town that has long eluded capture by Moscow.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he made the surprise trip to rally Kyiv's "superhuman" troops in Bakhmut, so blasted by continuous Russian shelling and brutal fighting nearby it has been nicknamed "the meat grinder". Zelenskiy arrived in the eastern town after Putin told Russia's security services they needed to significantly improve their work, one of his clearest public admissions yet that the invasion he launched almost 10 months ago is not going to plan.

Putin's address followed a visit to close ally Belarus that stoked fears, dismissed by the Kremlin, that Russia's fellow former Soviet republic could help it open a new invasion front against Ukraine, where fighting has been concentrated hundreds of miles (km) away in the east and south of the country. Struggling to afford heating bills, Britons turn to 'warm banks' to keep out the cold UK extends support for high loan-to-value mortgages World Bank approves additional \$610 million in financing for Ukraine The most destructive fighting in recent weeks has taken place around Bakhmut, where Zelenskiy, dressed in combat khaki, handed out medals to soldiers in a tumbledown industrial complex to loud applause, video released by his office showed.

With the boom of artillery audible in the distance, he urged them to keep up their spirits as the battle for Bakhmut, one that has come to symbolise the grinding brutality of the war, enters its fifth month.

"The East is holding out because Bakhmut is fighting. In fierce battles and at the cost of many lives, freedom is being defended here for all of us," Zelenskiy wrote on Telegram.

"That's why I am with them today. They are superhumans. They are our strength and our heroes."

Earlier, he repeated calls to the West for more weaponry including air defence systems after Russian drones hit energy targets in a third air strike on power facilities in six days.

PUTIN ACKNOWLEDGES 'DIFFICULT' SITUATION
In a break with the official line that the invasion is going smoothly, Putin conceded serious problems in regions of Ukraine that Moscow unilaterally claimed to annex in September, and he ordered the Federal Security Services (FSB) to ensure the "safety" of residents there.

"The situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions is extremely difficult," he said in a video address to security



workers translated by Reuters.

He was later shown awarding medals to the Russian-appointed leaders of the four regions in a televised Kremlin ceremony.

In another move on the 300th day of his invasion, Putin ordered the FSB to step up surveillance of Russian society and borders to combat the "emergence of new threats" from abroad and traitors at home.

Western countries have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia and the rouble slumped to a more than seven-month low against the dollar on Tuesday after the European Union agreed to cap prices of natural gas, a major Russian export.

In Washington, a senior U.S. State Department official told reporters there were conflicting views in Russia on what the next steps in Ukraine should be, with some seeking new offensives and others doubting Russia's capacity to wage them.

Ukraine's President Zelenskiy visits Ukrainian service members in Bakhmut

Putin's proclaimed annexations, condemned as illegal by Ukraine and its Western allies, were an attempt to turn the tide after a series of battlefield losses to a Ukrainian counter-offensive since the summer.

But Russian forces later drew back in one of the newly claimed regions - Kherson - and have gained no ground elsewhere, while targeting the energy grid in aerial strikes across Ukraine in what Moscow says is a bid to degrade the military.

The air attacks, which Kyiv says are clearly aimed at civil-

ians to break their will to resist, have repeatedly cut power and water supplies amid subzero winter cold.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said Ukrainians should prepare for new Russian attacks on energy infrastructure because Moscow wanted them to spend Christmas and New Year in darkness.

BELARUS ACTIVITY

On Monday, Putin visited Belarus for the first time since 2019 and he and his counterpart extolled ever-closer ties while barely mentioning the conflict in Ukraine.

Russian troops used Belarus as a springboard for their abortive attack on the Ukrainian capital Kyiv to the south in February and there has been Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus for months.

Kyiv says Russian forces have continued using airfields in Belarus for strikes on Ukraine since the Feb. 24 invasion.

But Lukashenko insists he has no intention of sending Belarusian troops into Ukraine. The Kremlin dismissed the idea of a more active Belarusian role as "groundless" and "stupid".

On Tuesday, Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said Russia could prepare a force in Belarus to start a new offensive on Ukraine but he hoped Minsk's troops would not take part as it was not in its interest to "waste its military potential".

MORE CASUALTIES

The conflict in Ukraine has killed tens of thousands of people, driven millions from their homes and reduced cities to ruins, with no end in sight.

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

12/19/2022

We Are The Family



Shern-min Chao, the famous TV news anchor, wrote on her Facebook page after attending our old friends reunion party. She said, "This picture tells the story of 3 generations of Chinese Americas in H-town. From humble beginnings, living above the family grocery store, newly arrived immigrants & restaurant workers, to owning law firms, banks & businesses. This is a snapshot of Houston and all that is possible here."

"Thank you Wea & Catherine Lee for hosting a wonderful Christmas celebration as we count our blessings & remember our journeys."

I saw many fans of her' s respond enthusiastically and saying bluntly, "We thank Chinese Americans for your contribution to Houston and wish your three generations of happy family forever. "

We have been thinking about it for long time. We really are a Chinese American family with three generations, and the party

really shocked our hearts. I held the hand of lawyer William Sims who told me that he is 90 years old. Gordon Quan' s mom is 97, almost reaching 100. Many old friends, Richard Lin, Ben Chiang, Ted Hsieh, Harry Sun and the Mayor of Chinatown, Kenneth Li. All of them were here.

We visited Taiwan many years ago with Eddy Lim and his wife. Director Wang of the Overseas Chinese Service Center, our classmate Tammy Cheng, Christiana Lee and Dr Cheng, they all enjoyed the reunion party very much. My daughter, Margaret, son-in-law Jack, grandson Andy and granddaughter. All all of them helped to greet our friends and hand out roses to them.

We spent a very happy and touching gathering of three generations of old, middle-age and young people together in laughter and witnessed the process of our Chinese Americans working hard to grow up in America.



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Republic of Guiana Honorary consul at Houston Texas



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Argentina's Lionel Messi with the trophy during the team's arrival at Ezeiza International Airport, Buenos Aires, Argentina. REUTERS/Agustin Marcarian



Pope Francis greets a child during a meeting with CGIL executives and delegates at the Vatican, December 19, 2022. REUTERS/Yara Nardi



A girl walks outside a migrant camp near the El Chaparral border crossing in Tijuana, Mexico November 8, 2021. REUTERS/Toya Sarno Jordan



Migrants ride in the back of a truck as others walk in a caravan heading to the northern border, in Santo Domingo Zanatepec, Mexico November 11, 2021. REUTERS/Jacob Garcia



A woman has her mouth painted in red during a protest against Iran's ruling theocracy following the death of young Kurdish Iranian woman Mahsa Amini demanding authorities to free thousands of detained protesters and to stop executions, outside Iran's embassy, in Mexico City, Mexico. REUTERS/Raquel Cunha



Fans gather outside the Association of Argentinian Football Headquarters ahead of the Argentina team bus arrival in Buenos Aires, Argentina. REUTERS/Mariana Nedelcu

BUSINESS

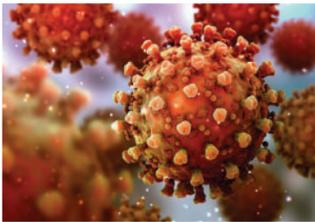
Several Countries Detect New COVID-19 Mutation



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The highly contagious mutation of the coronavirus first detected in the United Kingdom continues to spread, now being reported in parts of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and Canada. On Monday, South Korea became the latest country to report COVID-19 infections with the variation that could be more easily passed between people, according to the Korean Herald. Most cases have been linked to travel from Great Britain, where the variant was first detected, the newspaper reported. The United Kingdom initiated a lockdown, and several countries banned travelers from Great Britain last week, but researchers are concerned that the variation could have been circulating undetected in other countries for weeks. "Unfortunately, this is another twist in the plot," Alessandro Vespignani, director of the Network Science Institute at Northeastern University in Boston, told the New York Times. Canadian officials have detected at least two cases in Ontario, according to The Washington Post. A couple from a town north of Toronto contracted the variant but had no travel history, which means it like-

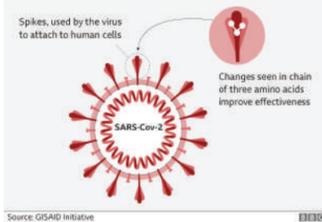
ly came from community spread.



The mutation has been found in seven people in Japan who had either traveled to Great Britain or been in contact with someone who did. Japan will close its borders to non-residents on Monday, a ban that will last through the end of January, according to the BBC. In Spain, the variant has been found in Madrid, where four cases have been confirmed and three are probable, according to The Guardian. All these cases are linked to recent travel to Great Britain. The first case in France was found in Tours, about 150 miles southwest of Paris, according to Reuters. The French citizen was living in Great Britain and traveled from London to central France on Dec. 19, a day before the British government

started the lockdown. The man doesn't have symptoms and is isolating at home. Sweden also detected its first case this weekend, Reuters reported. The traveler visited the country from Great Britain for Christmas and is isolating in Sormland, a city south of Stockholm. Viruses mutate often. Several coronavirus mutations have been detected this year, but they were minor, The New York Times reported.

One coronavirus mutation has become dominant



The latest version of the virus found in Great Britain has 23 mutations, which may change how it is transmitted. A new study published by British researchers last week found that the variant may be 56% more contagious, but they didn't find any evidence that it causes more severe COVID-19. Vaccine specialists say that current COVID-19 vaccines should be able to block the new variant.

"The preliminary findings are pretty convincing that more rapid vaccination is going to be a really important thing for any country that has to deal with this or similar variants," Nicholas Davies, the lead author and an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told the newspaper. Additional variants have been identified in South Africa, Nigeria, and other countries as well, according to CBS News. The U.S. hasn't yet reported any cases of the mutation. However, the U.S. will require airline passengers from the United Kingdom to test negative within 72 hours of their departure, the CDC announced. The new rule will begin on Monday. (Courtesy <https://www.webmd.com>)

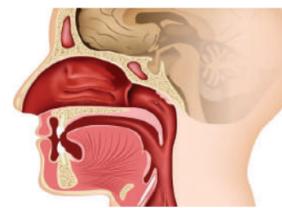
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How COVID-19 Affects Your Body

Doctors continue to learn about the short-term and long-term effects of COVID-19 on your body. For some people, it starts with basic flu symptoms. But it could eventually affect your lungs, liver, kidneys, and even your brain.



How It Spreads Usually the virus makes contact with you when a nearby infected person sends droplets into the air by coughing, sneezing, or talking. It spreads easily between people within about 6 feet of each other. An infected person can spread these droplets, even if they don't feel sick. The virus may infect you after you touch an object, like a doorknob, that has the virus on it. But that's not as common.



Upper Respiratory Infection Once the virus enters the body, it usually settles in the cells that line your nose, sinus cavity, and throat. For most people, this is where it stays. Symptoms often follow, but you may not feel anything for up to 2 weeks, as the virus starts to invade healthy cells and reproduce. You can transmit it to others even if you don't show any symptoms.



Other Common Symptoms The first

symptoms that typically appear include a fever, headache, sore throat, and dry cough. But what you'll feel can vary widely in this early stage. You may also have:

- Shortness of breath
- Chills, fever, body aches
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Unusual tiredness
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Nausea or diarrhea



Lower Respiratory Infection If your immune system can't subdue COVID-19 in the first week or so, the virus may move down into your lungs. There, it attacks cells that line them. Fluid and mucus build up and make it harder to get oxygen to your blood. It gets tough to breathe. This is pneumonia. Most people recover in a week or two, but it can take longer. (Courtesy [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com))



COMMUNITY

Genetic Testing Firm Shows Specific Blood Types Are Less Likely To Contract COVID-19



The research found that individuals with type O blood are between 9 per cent and 18 per cent less likely than individuals with other blood types to have tested positive for the virus. (Photo/ Handout)

KEY POINTS

The company in April launched a study using the millions of profiles in its DNA database to shed light on the role genetics play in the disease. Preliminary results from more than 750,000 participants suggests type O blood is especially protective against the coronavirus.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Research from genetic testing giant 23andMe found differences in a gene that influences a person's blood type can affect a person's susceptibility to Covid-19. Scientists have been looking at genetic factors to try to determine why some people who contract the new coronavirus experience no symptoms, while others become gravely ill. In April, 23andMe launched a study that sought to use the millions of profiles in its DNA database to shed light on the role genetics play in the disease. Preliminary results from more than 750,000 participants suggests type O blood is especially protective against Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, the company said on Monday. The findings echo other research that

has indicated a link between variations in the ABO gene and Covid-19. Many other groups, including 23andMe competitor Ancestry, are combing the genome to help make sense of the virus. It is known that factors such as age and underlying health conditions can determine how people fare once they've contracted Covid-19. But those factors alone don't explain the wide diversity of symptoms, or why some people contract the disease and others don't. Studying the genetics of the people who are more susceptible to Sars-CoV-2 could help identify and protect those more at risk, as well as help speed treatment and drug development. Several other studies looking at both severity of illness and susceptibility to disease have also suggested blood type plays a role.



A researcher works in a lab at Singapore's Duke-NUS Medical School, which is developing a way to track genetic changes that speed testing of vaccines. (Photo: Reuters)

"There have also been some reports of links between Covid-19, blood clotting, and cardiovascular disease," said Adam Auton, lead researcher on the 23andMe study. "These reports provided some hints about which genes might be relevant."

The 23andMe study, which looked at susceptibility rather than severity of illness, included 10,000 participants who told the company they had Covid-19. The research found that individuals with type O blood are between 9 per cent and 18 per cent less likely than individuals with other blood types to have tested positive for the virus. However, there was little difference in susceptibility among other blood types, the study found.

When the researchers adjusted the data to account for factors like age and pre-existing illnesses, as well as when it restricted the data to only those with high probability of exposure like health care workers, the findings were the same. Auton said that while this evidence is compelling, there is still a long way to go.



"It's early days; even with these sample sizes, it might not be enough to find genetic associations," he said. "We're not the only group looking at this, and

ultimately the scientific community may need to pool their resources to really address questions surrounding the links between genetics and Covid-19." Research published last week prior to peer review suggested blood type may play a role in the severity of patients' reactions to Sars-CoV-2. That study looked at the genes of more than 1,600 patients in Italy and Spain who experienced respiratory failure and found that having type A blood was linked to a 50 per cent increase in the likelihood a patient would require a ventilator. An earlier Chinese study turned up similar results regarding a person's susceptibility to Covid-19. (Courtesy <https://www.scmp.com/>)

Related

How your blood type could influence your risk of getting COVID-19

Some people are more at risk of getting COVID-19. More men seem to get the virus than women. People between 30 and 79 years old seem to get the virus more than people in their 20s. And people in their 20s get it more than teens and children. All that said, there's still a lot we don't know about the virus and risk factors, which is why researchers are working around the clock to get this virus figured out. And the good news is, they're uncovering more information every day. But some of the information that's coming to light is surprising.



People with this blood type may have a bigger risk

A recent study from researchers in

China shows that people with type A blood have a significantly higher risk of COVID-19 than people with other blood types. The study included data from 2,173 people with COVID-19 who were admitted to three hospitals in Wuhan and Shenzhen. Researchers looked at blood type distribution among the general population in those areas and compared it to blood type distribution among people with COVID-19. Here's what they found. People with type A blood had the highest risk. People with type B blood had the second-highest risk. People with type AB blood had the third-highest risk. And people with type O blood had the lowest risk.



Now, this study is preliminary. It hasn't been peer-reviewed, and it's far from the last word on the matter. But it appears that having type A blood could put you at an elevated risk for COVID-19. And actually, the connection between blood type and viral susceptibility has been demonstrated before. Blood type is determined by the antigens (molecules) on the surface of blood cells. Certain viruses require certain antigens to latch on to. Norovirus, the virus that causes stomach flu, is one example. It affects people with type B blood less because that blood doesn't have the antigens it needs to do its dirty work. There may be something similar happening with COVID-19, but it's far too early to know for sure. (Courtesy <https://easy-healthoptions.com/>)