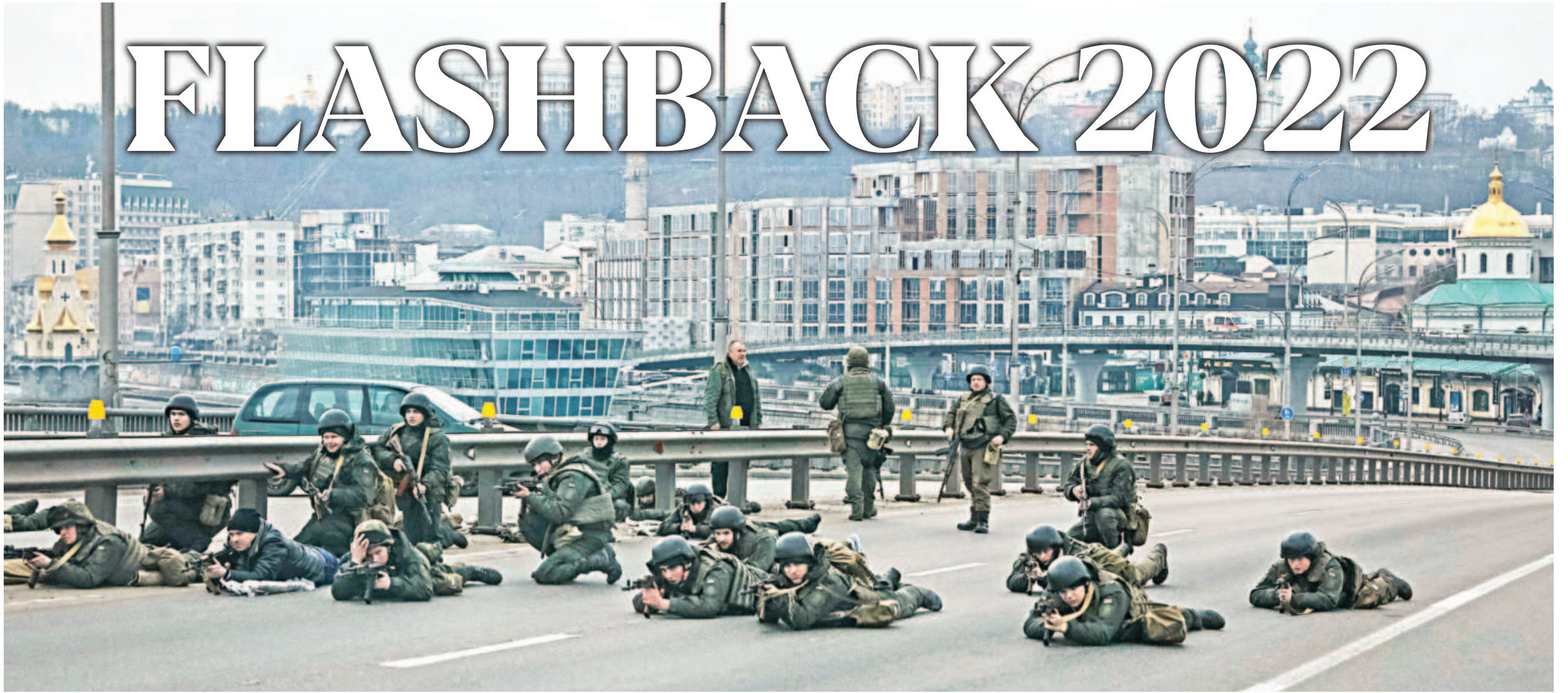


FLASHBACK 2022



WAR IN UKRAINE

Russian President Vladimir Putin launches the biggest invasion in Europe since World War II when he sends troops into Ukraine on February 24, causing millions of Ukrainians to flee abroad. The West imposes unprecedented sanctions on Moscow and sends billions of dollars in aid to Ukraine. Russian forces failed to capture Kyiv and topple the government of President Volodymyr Zelensky. In the south, Russian forces capture most of Ukraine's Black Sea coastline, including the port of Mariupol. By September, Ukrainian forces are regaining ground in the northeast and south. Putin hastily annexes four Ukrainian regions partly controlled by Russia, a move condemned as illegal by the United Nations. In November, Russian forces retreat from the southern port of Kherson. As the year ends, Russian strikes relentlessly batter Ukraine's energy infrastructure, causing power cuts across the country as winter sets in.



NOTABLE DEATHS

February 6:
Lata Mangeshkar, legendary Indian singer dies at 92



March 23:
Madeleine Albright, 84, first female US



secretary of state

May 11:
Shireen Abu Akleh, 51, American-Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist killed during an Israeli army raid in the West Bank



July 8:
Shinzo Abe, 67, Japan



former premier, shot dead by a gunman at a campaign rally

August 30:
Mikhail Gorbachev, 91, last Soviet leader, whose reforms and outreach to the West set in motion the collapse of the USSR



September 8:
Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest-serving monarch dies at 96



December 28:
Edson Arantes do Nascimento popularly known as **Pele**, one of the greatest football players, dies aged 82.



Future historians may come to regard 2022 as a hinge in history, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another. Major war returned to Europe, with the attendant threats of nuclear strikes, and the door closed firmly shut on the US policy of strategic engagement with China. Yes, the past twelve months did bring some good news. Most notably, the Covid-19 pandemic eased in many countries. But overall, 2022 brought more bad news than good news.



UK TURMOIL

Britain gets its fifth conservative prime minister in six years. Rishi Sunak takes office in October after his tax-cutting predecessor Liz Truss self-combusts in just 44 days -- the shortest-ever tenure for a British leader. Truss's lightning fall from grace, sparked by a disastrous mini budget, caps a tumultuous 2022 in Britain. The year is marked by the death of its longest-serving monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, at the age of 96 and the forced resignation of Brexiteer premier Boris Johnson after a series of scandals.

GOODBYE, COVID-19

Much of the world emerged from Covid-19 in 2022. Masks came off, schools resumed in-person classes, and holiday travel and large celebrations became possible once again. The focus now is on China. After years of pursuing a zero-tolerance approach to combating the coronavirus, China abruptly lifted nearly all health restrictions in December. Though the number of cases is exploding across the country, the country has so far reported minimal deaths related to the disease.

FAR-RIGHT RISES IN EUROPE, LEFT GAINS IN LATAM

The far-right makes unprecedented gains in Europe. Voters in Italy elect their most right-wing leader since World War II in post-fascist firebrand Giorgia Meloni. The anti-immigration Sweden Democrats are the big winners of a general election that brings conservatives to power in that country. In France, a surge by both the far right and hard left strips centre-right President Emmanuel Macron of his parliamentary majority. But in Latin America, the right is in decline. Veteran left-winger Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva makes a stunning comeback in Brazil, ousting far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro. Left-wing leaders also come to power in Colombia and Honduras.



TURMOIL IN SOUTH ASIA

Pakistan's Imran Khan stepped down as prime minister in April after losing in a stand-off with Parliament. Then Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, meanwhile, was forced to flee his country after protesters stormed his official residence. In both cases, the two nations' crashing economies -- double-digit inflation, mounting public debts, and food and fuel shortages, caused in part by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, but also by government's ineptitude -- were the catalyst.

IRAN'S GREAT UNVEILING

In Iran, the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini following her arrest for alleged violations of the country's Islamic dress code sparks the biggest protests in years. On the street and on social media women and girls defiantly remove their headscarves in an unprecedented challenge to the country's clerical leadership. Iran seeks to quell the protests by sentencing some of the protesters to death. The Oslo-based monitor Iran Human Rights on December 19 says Iran's security forces have killed at least 469 people in the protests while at least 14,000 people have been arrested, according to the UN.

US-CHINA TENSIONS

The great power competition between China and the United States is fully underway. The Joe Biden administration's National Security Strategy, released in October 2022, made the point bluntly. The administration pointed to Beijing's militarization of the South China Sea, its support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, its efforts to intimidate Taiwan, and its rampant theft of intellectual property as evidence that Beijing's behavior had forced the United States to abandon its policy of welcoming China's rise. With President Xi Jinping cementing his control in China after winning a historic third term in November, the tensions between the two great powers are likely to dominate world affairs in years to come.



CLIMATE CRISIS

Europe swelters through the hottest summer in its recorded history, with the mercury topping 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) for the first time in Britain. Parts of the Arctic and Antarctic, China and the US also experience record temperatures. Extreme weather events linked to climate change continue to wreak havoc in developing countries. Flooding in Pakistan affects vast swathes of the country, Nigeria suffers its worst floods in a decade and parts of drought-hit Somalia face the threat of famine. At the United Nations climate summit in Egypt (COP27), developing nations finally succeed in getting wealthy polluters to agree to pay into a "loss and damage" fund to compensate poorer countries for climate damage.



INFLATION BITES

The invasion of Ukraine and resulting sanctions on Russia create an energy crisis of a magnitude unseen in half a century, with costs for gas and electricity soaring globally. Britain sees its energy bills double over the space of a year. Soaring energy prices are also a factor in Sri Lanka's cost-of-living crisis, which in August forces then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee abroad. Inflation soars globally, prompting central banks to aggressively hike interest rates, raising fears of another major debt crisis.

