

NATO, G7, EU SUMMITS

WEST TO SEND MORE AID TO UKRAINE

Kyiv to get nuclear, biological and chemical warfare defensive gear

BRUSSELS

Ukraine's plight, people were burying their dead and queuing for rations in pauses in the bombing.

One woman there, Viktoria, buried her 73-year-old stepfather, Leonid, killed when the car ferrying him to a hospital was blown up 12 days ago.

"This guy had taken a seat in-



A Russian soldier standing next to Mariupol residents queuing for humanitarian aid in the besieged southern Ukrainian port city on Wednesday. REUTERS PIC

WESTERN leaders meeting here yesterday will agree to strengthen their forces in Eastern Europe and increase military aid to Ukraine as the Russian assault on its neighbour entered its second month.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged people around the world to take to the streets in solidarity with his country, where thousands of people have been killed, millions become refugees, and cities have been pulverised since Russian President Vladimir Putin unleashed his invasion on Feb 24.

In Mariupol, the southern port city that has come to symbolise

“I thought I had taken a seat instead of me and then they all got blown up in that car,” she said, pointing to the mangled remains of the vehicle. “It could have been me,” she sobbed.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been hiding in basements in Mariupol with no running water, food, medicine or power.

Reuters reached a part of the city captured by Russian forces. No independent journalists have reported from the Ukrainian-held part of the besieged city in more than a week.

Ukrainian officials said they had pushed back the invaders in other areas, including around the capital Kyiv, thwarting Russian hopes of a swift victory.

In Brussels, Western leaders were expected to warn Putin his country would pay “ruinous” costs for invading Ukraine during a series of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato), G7 and European Union summits yesterday and today. United States President Joe Biden is among those attending.

Alarmed by the prospect that Russia might escalate the war, Nato nations will agree to send Kyiv equipment to defend against biological, chemical and nuclear attacks.

“We must ensure that the decision to invade a sovereign independent country is understood to be a strategic failure that carries with it ruinous costs for Putin and Russia,” Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the EU Parliament.

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance would boost its forces in Eastern Europe by deploying four new battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia.

Zelenskyy, who will address the Nato and EU summits by video conference, said he expected “serious steps” from Western allies. He repeated his call for a no-fly zone, although Western leaders have rejected this as a move that would drag them directly into the war.

The Ukrainian leader, who has won admiration across the West for his leadership under fire, also called on people around the world to demand an end to the



A man salvaging items from a damaged house in the city of Zhytomyr, northern Ukraine, on Wednesday. AFP PIC

bloodshed.

“Come from your offices, your homes, your schools and universities, come in the name of peace, come with Ukrainian symbols to support Ukraine, to support freedom, to support life,” he said in a video address.

Meanwhile, Beijing yesterday accused the Nato chief of “spreading disinformation” with claims that China had backed Russia’s war against Ukraine, amid growing international pressure to distance itself from Moscow.

China has refused to condemn close ally Russia over the bloody invasion of Ukraine and lagged behind many other countries in

providing humanitarian aid to the war-stricken country.

Stoltenberg on Wednesday accused China of giving political backing to Russia as it invades Ukraine by “spreading blatant lies”, and warned Beijing against providing material support to Moscow’s war effort.

Beijing’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said that “accusing China of spreading false information about Ukraine is itself spreading disinformation”.

“China’s position is consistent with the wishes of most countries. Any unwarranted accusations and suspicions against China will be defeated,” he said yesterday. **Reuters**



Britain Prime Minister Boris Johnson, France President Emmanuel Macron and United States President Joe Biden talking as they arrive at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, yesterday. REUTERS PIC