

‘West Playing With Fire’

Russia Launches ‘Largest Drone Attack’ on Kiev



Russia unleashed waves of air strikes on Kyiv overnight in what officials said appeared to be the largest drone attack on the city since the start of the war.

KIEV (Dispatches) – Ukraine’s capital was subjected to the largest drone attack since the start of the war on Ukraine, local officials said, as Kiev prepared to mark the anniversary of its founding on Sunday. At least one person was killed.

Russia launched the “most massive attack” on the city overnight Saturday with drones, said Serhii Popko, a senior Kiev military official. The attack lasted more than five hours.

A 41-year-old man was killed and a 35-year-old woman was hospitalized when debris fell on a seven-story nonresidential building and started a fire, Kiev Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Ukraine’s air force said that Saturday night was also record-breaking in terms of drone attacks across the country.

Since Russia launched its special military operation in Donbas, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky has been asking the United States to provide F-16s fighter jets alongside a wide range of other weapons.

So far, there have only been offers by the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark France, Italy, Germany, Japan and Canada to do pilot training courses.

They have all announced their readiness to train Ukrainian pilots, but it is yet unclear who will provide the U.S.-made F-16s.

Western nations have already supplied Ukraine with tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons, including rocket systems, drones, tanks and armored vehicles and communication systems.

Russia has repeatedly said that the collective Western nations are engaged in a proxy war with Russia over Ukraine, warning that the conflict could escalate into a much bigger fight.

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has warned Western nations that they are “playing with fire” by supplying U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, Western countries willing to give Ukraine U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets are “playing with fire,” Lavrov said on Sunday, describing the move as an “unacceptable escalation” of the persisting conflict.

The Russian top diplomat further slammed the move as an attempt by “Washington, London and their satellites in the EU” to “weaken Russia.”

Earlier, Russia had warned against sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, saying the move would raise the question of the U.S.-led NATO forces’ direct military involvement in the war.

Initially, U.S. President Joe Biden had said that the U.S. would not provide Ukraine with the F-16 fighter jets much sought by Kiev.

Earlier this month, however, he told leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries gathered in Japan that Washington was prepared to help train the Ukrainian pilots of F-16 fighter jets that were to be donated to Kiev.

Moscow also insists that Western nations must refrain from the direct military confrontation between the U.S.-led NATO forces and Russian troops.

Netherlands Arrests Over 1,500 Climate Activists

THE HAGUE (AFP) – More than 1,500 people have been arrested during a demonstration by the Extinction Rebellion climate group in The Hague, Dutch police said.

Activists blocked a section of a motorway in the center of the city, in protest against Dutch fossil fuel subsidies.

Police said they had used water cannon to disperse activists blocking a major road in the city and arrested “a total of 1,579 people ... 40 of whom will be prosecuted” on charges including vandalism.

One of the activists bit a policeman during his arrest, police said.

Several Dutch celebrities were among the protesters.

The protests marked the seventh organized by Extinction Rebellion in this area of The Hague, but the highest number of people arrested so far, according to ANP.

The environmental campaign group has in recent years garnered media attention through disruption, hitting roads, airports and other public transport networks with direct action protests against climate change.

Extinction Rebellion accused police of using water cannon just 15 minutes after the start of the blockade – but police said they had asked the activists to leave and gave them a chance to do so before using the water cannon.

Verified video footage captured at the event showed the police used water cannons on the protesters for several hours and later managed to clear the road using police vans.

The 1,579 people who refused to leave were then arrested and many of them were lifted and carried onto buses. Some 850 demonstrators



Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists shout slogans while holding a placard as police officials attempt to prevent a demonstration to block the A12 autoroute in The Hague on May 27, 2023, to show the activists opposition to fossil subsidies given by the Dutch government.

have already been released without charge. While some sustained minor injuries, the protest remained mostly peaceful. Also, police said that one of the activists bit a police officer during his arrest.

Anticipating the water cannon, some protesters wore raincoats or carried umbrellas to face the water cannon as they sat in protest across the motorway, holding banners and signs.

Aaron Pereira, a spokesman for Extinction Rebellion, said that the group has organized six other protests blocking the same motorway. Protesting on this road is banned under rules brought in by the mayor.

“There is broad popular support for real climate action and people are waking up to the fact that the government is actively going against this by subsidizing the fossil fuel industry,”

Pereira was quoted as saying.

On Friday, dozens of climate demonstrators gathered in Paris to raise their voices against an annual general meeting of oil company TotalEnergies. French police officers fired tear gas to disperse them.

In April, XR held a four-day campaign outside the UK parliament in order to “highlight the environmental failures” of the government.

The fossil fuel industry threatens global ecosystems and human livelihoods, and scientists have repeatedly warned of its catastrophic climate change effects.

Last month, the world’s leading climate scientists wrote in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that the climate time bomb was “ticking” as records for sea level rise, glacier melt, and temperatures were broken.

wings of each party.

To win the speaker’s gavel, McCarthy agreed to enable any single member to call for a vote to unseat him, which could lead to his ouster if he seeks to work with Democrats.

Roy complained on Twitter on Sunday that the agreement would leave intact an expansion of the tax-collecting Internal Revenue Service set in place when Democrats controlled both chambers of Congress.

Senator Lindsey Graham also expressed concern about the deal’s potential effect on U.S. military and Washington’s support for Ukraine. “Do not intend to default on debt,

Shooting in New Mexico Leaves Several Dead, Injured



At least three people were killed and multiple others were injured in a shooting during a popular motorcycle rally at a New Mexico resort town, according to state police and the town’s mayor.

RED RIVER (AP) – Three people were killed and five were wounded in a shooting at an annual motorcycle rally in a New Mexico town late Saturday afternoon.

Red River Mayor Linda Calhoun said in a video posted on Facebook that the shooting around 5 p.m. resulted in three fatalities and five victims were transported to hospitals in Denver, Albuquerque and nearby Taos.

The 41st annual Red River Memorial Motorcycle Rally drew about 20,000 bikers to the town, Calhoun said.

The violence occurred between two retail stores and involved members of motorcycle gangs, Calhoun said.

“The shooters have all been apprehended,” she said. “There is no threat to the community at all.”

The New Mexico State Police previously said in a Twitter post that two people were killed and six were wounded in the shooting.

Most of Main Street in Red River, where the shooting occurred, was closed to the public for the investigation and law enforcement re-

quested businesses in the area remain closed on Sunday, Calhoun said in a statement.

“Our number one priority is the safety and wellbeing of our local community,” Calhoun said. “We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work through this very difficult time together.”

Some of the victims were being treated at Holy Cross Hospital in Taos, about 36 miles (58 kilometers) southeast of Red River. The Taos Police Department and the Taos County Sheriff’s Office secured the hospital, the state police said on Twitter.

One victim was airlifted to a hospital in Denver, the state police said.

Victims also were transported to the University of New Mexico Hospital, which was secured by the Albuquerque Police Department, KRQE reported.

Taos Mayor Pascual Maestas issued an emergency proclamation placing the town under a curfew from 10 p.m. Saturday until 4 a.m. Sunday on an immediate prohibition on alcohol sales.

Parties Scramble to Extend Sudan Ceasefire

DUBAI (Reuters) – Saudi Arabia and the United States called on Sunday for the extension of a ceasefire deal that has brought some let-up in a six-week war between military factions but little humanitarian relief for civilians.

Clashes could be heard overnight and on Sunday in the capital Khartoum, residents said, while human rights monitors reported deadly fighting in El Fashir, one of the principal cities in the western region of Darfur.

The conflict between Sudan’s army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that erupted on April 15 has left the capital reeling from heavy battles, lawlessness and a collapse in services, driving more than 1.3 million people from their homes and threatening to destabilize the region.

A week-long ceasefire brokered in Saudi and U.S.-led talks in Jeddah is due to run until Monday evening. Both countries are remotely monitoring the truce, which has been repeatedly violated, and called on the army and the RSF “to continue discussions to reach agreement on extending the

ceasefire”.

“While imperfect, an extension nonetheless will facilitate the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people,” Saudi Arabia and the U.S. said in a joint statement.

The RSF has said it is ready to discuss the possibility of renewal and that it would continue to monitor the truce “to test the seriousness and commitment of the other party to proceed with the renewal of the agreement or not”.

The army said it was discussing the possibility of an extension.

More than 300,000 people have crossed Sudan’s borders since the fighting erupted, with the largest numbers heading north to Egypt from Khartoum or west to Chad from Darfur.

In Khartoum, factories, offices, homes and banks have been looted or destroyed. Power, water and telecommunications are often cut, there are acute shortages of medicines and medical equipment, and food supplies have been running low.

The truce deal has brought some respite from heavy fighting but sporadic clashes and air strikes have carried on.

The United Nations and aid groups say that despite the truce they have struggled to get bureaucratic approvals and security guarantees to transport aid and staff to Khartoum and other places of need. Warehouses have been looted.

Violence has flared in several parts of Darfur, already scarred by conflict and displacement, with hundreds of deaths recorded in El Geneina near the border with Chad during attacks that residents blamed on “Janjaweed” militias drawn from nomadic tribes with links to the RSF.

News in Brief

MANAGUA (Reuters) – Nicaraguan police say they are investigating several dioceses of the Catholic Church for money laundering, a day after local media reported that the bank accounts of parishes in the Central American country had been frozen. The police, loyal to the government of President Daniel Ortega which has clashed fiercely with Nicaragua’s bishops, said that since May 19 they found “hundreds of thousands of dollars” in Church facilities in various parts of the country. Investigations “confirmed the unlawful removal of resources from bank accounts that had been ordered by law to be frozen,” the police said in a statement. Ortega’s government has intensified attacks against the Catholic Church in the wake of 2018 anti-government protests in which some 360 people died after what human rights groups call police repression. The government accused the bishops, who mediated talks between the government and protesters, of attempting a coup. The police statement said the bank accounts were linked to religious figures convicted of treason and other crimes, and that the investigations confirmed the funds entered the country irregularly.

NEW DELHI (AP) – India’s major opposition parties on Sunday boycotted the inauguration of a new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a rare show of unity against his Hindu nationalist ruling party, which has ruled for nine years and is seeking a third term in next year’s elections. Modi inaugurated the new Parliament in the capital of New Delhi by offering prayers as Hindu priests chanted religious hymns. Opposition parties criticized the event saying Modi had sidelined President Droupadi Murmu, who has only ceremonial powers but is the head of state and highest constitutional authority. Shortly after the inauguration, a visibly beaming Modi entered Parliament amid a rousing applause by his party lawmakers who chanted “Modi, Modi.” He delivered an almost 40-minute speech. The opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted: “Parliament is the voice of the people. The Prime Minister is considering the inauguration of the Parliament House as a coronation.” At least 19 opposition parties skipped the event, which coincided with the birth anniversary of a Hindu nationalist ideologue.

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) – More than 90 percent of respondents in a global survey strongly oppose NATO’s involvement in the Asia-Pacific region, describing the U.S.-led Western military alliance’s activities in the region as cause for great alarm. According to a poll conducted by CGTN, 93 percent of the respondents strongly agree that the actions of NATO in recent years have violated its stated defense position. More than 92 percent believe NATO has become a tool for the U.S. to maintain hegemony and pursue political interests, according to the poll. “NATO stirs up trouble everywhere and keeps interfering in the affairs of other regions, which will only end up with its own consequences,” said a respondent, as cited by CGTN. The survey was conducted after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said his country was considering the establishment of a NATO liaison office. The news sparked widespread concern and great vigilance in the global community, especially among countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan hosted a delegation from the military alliance early this month to discuss ways to step up cooperation. News also emerged back then that the military bloc intends to open a liaison office in Tokyo next year. Both Tokyo and NATO have confirmed the plans.

ISLAMABAD (AP) – At least 11 people have been killed after an avalanche hit members of a nomadic tribe as they crossed a mountainous area in northern Pakistan, the country’s disaster management agency has said. “Such incidents are rising in Pakistan due to the impact of climate change,” Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a statement. Pakistan, which in recent years has faced record monsoon rains and glacier melt in northern mountains, is among the top 10 countries at risk of natural disasters due to rising temperatures. Sharif called on the international community to fulfill its responsibility to save developing countries facing economic challenges from adverse effects of climate change. The incident took place near the Shoumar Pass that connects the Gilgit-Baltistan region with Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Gilgit, Baltistan, sometimes referred to as the land of glaciers, has frequently seen avalanches and snow landslides in recent years due to glacial melting.

NEW DELHI (AI Jazeera) – A government official in central India has been suspended from his job after he ordered a water reservoir to be drained to retrieve his smartphone, which he had dropped while taking a selfie. Food inspector Rajesh Vishwas was charged with Kharkatta Dam in Kanher district of Chhattisgarh state last week. The Times of India newspaper reported. Vishwas first asked local divers to jump into the reservoir to find the device, claiming it contained sensitive government data. But after the initial efforts to retrieve his phone failed, he asked for the reservoir to be emptied using diesel pumps. Over the next three days, more than 2 million liters of water was pumped out from the reservoir, which was enough to irrigate at least 1,500 acres (607 hectares) of land during India’s scorching summer, local media reported. In videos that went viral on social media, Vishwas is seen sitting under a red umbrella as diesel pumps run to drain water from the reservoir.

PARIS (AFP) – French medical bodies on Sunday called on authorities to punish researcher Didier Raoult for “the largest ‘unauthorized’ clinical trial ever seen” into the use of hydroxychloroquine to treat Covid-19. Raoult, the former head of the IHU Mediterranee research hospital, and his subordinates engaged in “systematic prescription of medications as varied as hydroxychloroquine, zinc, ivermectin and azithromycin to patients suffering from Covid-19... without a solid pharmacological basis and lacking any proof of their effectiveness,” a group of 16 research bodies wrote in an op-ed piece on daily Le Monde’s website. The drugs continued to be prescribed “for more than a year after their ineffectiveness had been absolutely demonstrated,” they added. Endorsement from respected tropical disease specialist Raoult helped push anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine into the public consciousness in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, feeding into its promotion by former U.S. President Donald Trump and Brazil’s then-leader Jair Bolsonaro.

Republicans Criticize McCarthy, Biden Debt Ceiling Deal

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – After tough negotiations to reach a tentative deal with the White House on the U.S. borrowing limit, the next challenge for House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is pushing it through the House, where hardline Republicans are already threatening to sink it.

As Democratic and Republican negotiators iron out the final details of an agreement to suspend the federal government’s \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling in coming days, McCarthy may be forced to do some behind-the-scenes wrangling.

“We’re going to try” to stop it from passing the House, Representative

Chip Roy, a prominent member of the hardline House Freedom Caucus, said on Twitter. House and Senate Republicans were critical of the deal’s time frame and emerging terms.

A failure by Congress to deal with its self-imposed debt ceiling before June 5 could trigger a default that would shake financial markets and send the United States into a deep recession.

Republicans control the House 222-213, while Democrats control the Senate 51-49. These margins mean that moderates from both sides will have to support the bill, as any compromise will almost definitely lose the support of the far left and far right