

Ukraine repels Russian attacks

In first, Kyiv says it shoots down multiple hypersonic Kinzhal missiles; Moscow says 'all targets hit'

REUTERS, Kyiv
Ukraine said yesterday it had shot down six Russian hypersonic Kinzhal missiles in a single night, thwarting a superweapon Moscow had previously touted as all but unstoppable.

It was the first time Ukraine had claimed to have struck an entire volley of multiple hypersonic missiles, and it confirmed would be a dramatic demonstration of the effectiveness of newly deployed Western air defences.

The six Kinzhals, ballistic missiles which travel at up to 10 times the speed of sound, were among a volley of 18 missiles Russia launched at Ukraine overnight, lighting up Kyiv with flashes and raining debris after they were blasted from the sky.

The commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi said all had been successfully intercepted. However, Russia said that all the targets assigned by its military in an overnight missile barrage on Ukraine had been hit.



Police stand guard as university students shout slogans demanding the closing of private medical universities during an anti-government demonstration in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday.



City authorities in the Ukrainian capital said three people were wounded by falling debris.

"It was exceptional in its density - the maximum number of attack missiles in the shortest period of time," Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv's city military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Zaluzhnyi said his forces had intercepted the six Kinzhals launched from aircraft, as well as nine Kalibr cruise missiles from ships in the Black Sea and three Iskanders fired from land.

Earlier this month, Ukraine claimed to have shot down a single Kinzhal missile over Kyiv for the first time, using a newly deployed U.S. Patriot air defence system.

Previously, the ability of Patriots to intercept Kinzhal missiles was theoretical. Hitting six at once would suggest it could be a reliable defence, rather than a lucky shot.

President Vladimir Putin, who unveiled the Kinzhal as one of six "next generation" weapons in 2018, has frequently touted it as proof of world-beating Russian military hardware, capable of taking on Nato.

The Kinzhal, whose name means dagger, can carry conventional or nuclear warheads up to 2,000 km. Russia used them in warfare for the first time in Ukraine last year and has only acknowledged firing them on a few occasions.

With Ukrainian forces preparing to go on the offensive for the first time in six months, Russia is now launching long-range air strikes. Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said yesterday Ukrainian forces have taken back about 20 square km of territory from Russian forces around the eastern city of Bakhmut in recent days.

SUDAN CONFLICT
Air strikes, artillery fire escalate

Residents say Khartoum situation 'unbearable'

REUTERS, Dubai
Air strikes and artillery fire intensified sharply across Sudan's capital early yesterday, residents said, as the army sought to defend key bases from paramilitary rivals it has been fighting for more than a month.

The air strikes, explosions and clashes could be heard in the south of Khartoum, and there was heavy shelling across the River Nile in parts of the adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman, witnesses said.

The fighting between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has triggered unrest in other areas of Sudan, especially in the western region of Darfur, but is concentrated in Khartoum.

It has caused a humanitarian crisis that threatens to destabilise the region, displacing over 700,000 people inside Sudan and forcing about 200,000 to flee into neighbouring countries.

Those who have remained in the capital are struggling to survive as food supplies dwindle, health services collapse and lawlessness spreads.

Officials have recorded 676 deaths and more than 5,500 injuries, but real toll is expected to be far higher with



many reports of bodies left in the streets and people struggling to bury dead.

"The situation is unbearable. We left our house to go to a neighbour's house in Khartoum, escaping from the war, but the bombardment follows us wherever we go," said Ayman Hassan, a 32-year-old resident.

"We don't know what the citizens did to deserve a war in the middle of the houses."

Fighting has surged both in Khartoum and in Geneina, capital of West Darfur, since the two warring parties began talks in Jeddah brokered by Saudi Arabia and the United States more than a week ago.

The talks have produced a statement of principles about providing access for aid supplies and protecting civilians, but mechanisms for setting up humanitarian corridors and agreeing to a ceasefire are still being discussed.

Iran, Russia expanding military co-op: US

AFP, Washington

The United States said Monday that Iran and Russia are "expanding their unprecedented defense partnership," as Moscow ramps up ties with Tehran after being hit with Western sanctions.

Russia, one of the world's top military powers, has been obliged to rely on Iran for supplies as it suffers battlefield losses in its invasion of Ukraine, according to US intelligence.

US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby cited Moscow's desire to acquire more sophisticated unmanned military drones as a key part of the growing cooperation.

"Interactions between Iran and Russia in matters regarding the selling of advanced weapons, especially more advanced UAVs, are now continuing," he told reporters. "This is a full scale defense partnership that is harmful to Ukraine, to the region in the Middle East, and to the international community," he said.

Tunisia jails opposition leader

AFP, Tunis

The Tunisian Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party yesterday condemned the one-year prison sentence handed to its leader Rached Ghannouchi, calling it an "unjust political verdict". Ghannouchi, a leading opponent of President Kais Saied, was sentenced on Monday on terrorism-related charges following his April 17 arrest. He had appeared in court at the end of February on the charges after being accused of calling police officers "tyrants". The case was one of several levied by authorities against Ghannouchi, whose party was the largest in parliament before Saied dissolved the chamber in July 2021 as part of a power grab allowing him to rule by decree.

Join alliance with election winners

Thai opposition figure urges holdout parties

REUTERS, Bangkok

Srettha Thavasin, an opposition leader in Thailand, yesterday urged holdout parties to join an alliance with election winners to block defeated military-backed parties from forming a minority government. The progressive Move Forward Party staked a claim as the new force in Thai politics on Sunday, winning most seats in a general election, including in some conservative strongholds, and coming within just four votes of a clean sweep of the capital, Bangkok.

Don't use artificial sweeteners: WHO

AFP, Geneva

Artificial sweeteners, used to replace sugar in a vast range of products, do not help in losing weight and can have serious health effects, according to the World Health Organization. The United Nations' health agency released new guidelines on Monday advising against using so-called non-sugar sweeteners or NSS. A systematic review of available evidence "suggests that use of NSS does not confer any long-term benefit in reducing body fat in adults or children", the WHO said. In addition, results from the review "suggest that there may be potential undesirable effects from long-term use of NSS, such as an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases". Sweeteners are consumed by millions every day in products like diet soda or to sweeten coffee.

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Dead woman wins local polls in India

AFP, Lucknow

A woman won a local election in India almost two weeks after her death as supporters kept their pledge to back her in a sign of respect, officials said.

Ashiya Bi polled at nearly 44 percent in the race for a municipal civic body seat in Uttar Pradesh this month, and was declared victorious posthumously.

The popular 30-year-old first-time candidate fell ill, reportedly from an acute infection, and died just 12 days before the poll. Her husband informed election officials, but district officer told AFP yesterday that there was no procedure in place to remove her name from the ballot.

MAY 9 ATTACKS CASES

Pak court reserves verdict on Imran's plea against arrest

DAWN ONLINE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) yesterday reserved its verdict on former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's plea against his arrest in any case registered on or after May 9, when he was arrested from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The petition, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, named the Punjab inspector general and the state through the Punjab advocate general as respondents.

The plea called on the court to direct the Punjab inspector general to provide a fresh report regarding the registration of "undisclosed/new FIRs" in Lahore on or after May 9.

It also called on the court to give Imran "protection of law" and to bar the respondents from arresting the PTI chief in any new criminal case

registered on or subsequent to May 9 without the court's prior permission.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) extended bails of Imran in two cases - one pertaining to allegations against top officers of state institutions and the other on the manhandling of PML-N leader Mohsin Ranjha by party workers - until June 8.

In a video message on Twitter yesterday, Imran lamented that his supporters, including women, were being tormented in a manner never seen before.

He said that fear was being spread among the public to oppress them as he likened the situation in the country today to the atrocities during the rule of Genghis Khan.

He called on the people to take to the streets and hold peaceful protests whenever a call is given by the PTI.

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