

# Ukrainian Drones Strike Major Military Depot in Northwest of Moscow



Flames rise during an explosion in Toropets, Tver region, Russia in this screen grab obtained from a social media video released on Sept. 18, 2024.

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian drones struck a large military depot in a town deep inside Russia overnight, causing a huge blaze and prompting the evacuation of some local residents, a Ukrainian official and Russian news reports said Wednesday.

Ukraine claimed the strike destroyed Russian military warehouses in Toropets, a town in Russia's Tver region about 380 kilometers (240 miles) northwest of Moscow and about 500 kilometers (300 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

The attack was carried out by Ukraine's Security Service, along with Ukraine's Intelligence and Special Operations Forces, a Kyiv security official told media.

According to the official, the depot housed Iskander and Tochka-U missiles, as well as glide bombs and artillery shells. He said the facility caught fire in the strike and was burning across an area 6 kilometers (4 miles) wide.

More than 100 domestically-produced kamikaze drones were deployed in the

attack on the depot, the Ukrainian Intelligence Office official added.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted regional authorities as saying air defense systems were working to repel a "massive drone attack" on Toropets, which has a population of around 11,000. The agency also reported a fire and the evacuation of some local residents.

Ukrainian strikes on targets deep inside Russia have become more common as the war has progressed and Kyiv developed its drone technology.

Zelensky is also seeking approval from Western nations for Ukraine to use the sophisticated weapons they are providing to hit targets inside Russia. Some Western leaders have balked at that possibility, fearing they could be dragged into the conflict.

Ukraine's targeting of Russian military equipment, ammunition and infrastructure deep inside Russia, as well as making Russian civilians feel some of the consequences of the war that is being fought largely

inside Ukraine, is part of Kyiv's strategy.

On Wednesday, the Kremlin described as "dangerous" comments by Jens Stoltenberg, the outgoing head of NATO, that a decision by the West to allow Ukraine to use Western long-range weapons to strike Russia would not be a red line that would prompt an escalation by Moscow.

In an interview with The Times published on Tuesday, Stoltenberg dismissed a warning by Russian President Vladimir Putin last week that letting Ukraine use such weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory would mean the West was directly fighting Russia.

"There have been many red lines declared by him before, and he has not escalated, meaning also involving NATO allies directly in the conflict," said Stoltenberg, whose tenure as head of the military alliance ends in October, Reuters reported.

"He has not done so, because he realizes that NATO is the strongest military alliance in the world. They also realize that nuclear weapons, nuclear war, cannot be won and should not be fought. And we have made that very clear to him several times."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Stoltenberg's remarks were dangerous.

"This ostentatious desire not to take seriously the Russian president's statements is a move that is completely short-sighted and unprofessional," said Peskov.

Stoltenberg's position is "extremely provocative and dangerous," Peskov added.

A senior NATO military official said over the weekend that Ukraine would have good military reason to strike deeper into Russia using Western weapons. Kiev's allies, including the United States and Britain, are currently discussing whether to give Kiev a green light to do so.

## Over Arms Sales to Taiwan China to Take Measures Against U.S. Military Firms



Taiwan's F-16 fighter jets fly in close formation over President Office during National Day celebrations in front of the Presidential Building in Taipei, Taiwan, Oct. 10, 2021.

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China has decided to impose countermeasures against nine U.S. military companies for arms sales to the Taiwan region, according to a decision published on the Foreign Ministry's website on Wednesday.

The decision pointed out the United States recently has once again announced plans for arms sales to the Taiwan region, which has seriously violated the one-China principle and three China-U.S. joint communiques, interfered in China's internal affairs and undermined China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Pursuant to Articles 3, 4, 6, 9 and 15 of China's Anti-Foreign Sanc-

tions Law, China decided to take the following countermeasures against Sierra Nevada Corporation, Stick Rudder Enterprises LLC, Cubic Corporation, S3 AeroDefense, TCOM, Limited Partnership, TextOre, Planate Management Group, ACT1 Federal and Exovera.

Movable, immovable and all other types of properties in China will be frozen.

Organizations and individuals in China are prohibited from engaging in transactions, cooperation and other activities with the above-mentioned enterprises.

The decision will be effective from Sept 18, 2024.

## Kashmir Votes in First Regional Election in Decade



People queueing to vote at a polling station during the first phase of a legislative assembly election in south Kashmir's Kokernag town.

NEW DELHI (AFP) - The three-phased regional election started in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, with voters casting their ballots for the first time in a decade and in a new political setting after the Indian government stripped the region of its autonomy.

Some 8.7 million registered voters queued outside polling stations across the disputed Himalayan region on Wednesday to choose members for its 90-seat legislature under heavy security in the three-phased elections.

The mountainous territory is witnessing first assembly election in ten years, with the first phase being currently held for 24 seats in six districts. The other two phases will be held on September 25 and October 1.

"We have been waiting for this for the last 10 years because there are a lot of problems here in terms of healthcare, education and development. We will now be able to choose a good representative," local resident Shahnawat was quoted as saying by AFP, who did not provide his last name.

"Voting is everyone's right and if people are getting this great opportunity after 10 years to select an elected body or representative, someone who listens to your problems and issues, help you and the state progress, I think it is a good moment, good opportunity," said another voter, Subhash.

About 500,000 Indian troops are deployed in the region, which has witnessed a 35-year violence that has killed tens of thousands, including civilians and soldiers.

A federally appointed governor has controlled the disputed territory since August 2019 when the Hindu-nationalist government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered the abrogation of the region's special status under Article 370.

Modi urged people in all constituencies in a post on X to vote in large numbers

and strengthen what he claimed to be the "festival of democracy."

"I particularly call upon young and first-time voters to exercise their franchise," he added.

The turnout is projected by analysts to be high but key decisions will remain in New Delhi's hands, including security and appointment of Kashmir's governor. Modi's government will also have the power to override legislation passed by the 90-seat assembly.

Votes will be counted on October 8 and the results are expected to be released on the same day.

Anger rises among Kashmiris over the restrictions on civil liberties imposed after 2019, and as Modi's BJP is only fielding candidates in a minority of seats concentrated in Hindu-majority areas in order to split the vote.

Unemployment is also skyrocketing in the region, which has a jobless rate of 18.3 percent, more than double the national average.

"My biggest concern is unemployment," said Madiha, 27, a jobless graduate who gave only one name. "The cost of living has reached the sky."

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since their partition in 1947. Both countries claim all of Kashmir in its entirety and have fought at least three wars over the territory.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of supporting pro-independence fighters, an allegation rejected by the Pakistani government. Islamabad, in turn, is critical of India's heavy military deployment to Kashmir and its crackdown on the region's Muslim population.

Pakistan has described the move by the government in New Delhi to revoke the self-autonomy of Kashmir as illegal. Since the revocation, India has imposed more internet shutdowns and other restrictions in the region.

## News in Brief

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's government has announced the arrest of a fourth U.S. citizen in connection with an alleged plot to kill President Nicolás Maduro in which authorities claim the CIA, Spain's intelligence agency, organized crime groups, sex workers and members of the opposition are involved. Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello revealed the arrest and details of the plot during a speech before the National Assembly, whose members applauded the detention. Cabello did not identify the most recently detained American. "Those who try to mess with Venezuela, we will screw them, regardless of their name," Cabello said.

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union on Wednesday began the process of clawing back hundreds of millions of euros in funds meant to go Hungary after its anti-migrant government refused to pay a huge fine for breaking the bloc's asylum rules. In June, the EU's top court ordered Hungary to pay 200 million euros (\$223 million) for persistently depriving migrants of their right to apply for asylum. The court imposed an additional fine of 1 million euros for every day it failed to comply. The European Court of Justice described Hungary's actions as "an unprecedented and extremely serious infringement of EU law." Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán slammed its ruling as "outrageous and unacceptable."

NEW YORK (Xinhua) - An estimated 3.4 million children under five are at high risk of deadly epidemic diseases in Sudan, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said in a statement. With heavy rains and flooding in the country, diseases such as cholera, malaria, dengue fever, measles and rubella "can spread more rapidly and severely worsen the outlook for the children in the affected states and beyond," UNICEF Representative to Sudan Sheldon Yett was quoted as saying in the statement. The crises stem from significant declines in vaccination rates and the destruction of health, water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure due to the ongoing internal conflict, he said, adding that the deteriorating nutritional status of many children in Sudan puts them at even greater risk.

CARACOLLO, Bolivia (AP) — Thousands of anti-government demonstrators marching in support of Bolivia's former president Evo Morales have clashed with counterprotesters blocking their way, a stark sign of an escalating power struggle in the volatile Andean nation. In his most brazen show of force yet against current President Luis Arce, Morales sent word to his followers to mobilize what he called a "March to Save Bolivia," a 190-kilometer (118 mile)-trek from the small village of Caracollo to the capital, La Paz, denouncing the government of his protege-turned-bitter rival. Morales, a former coca grower, has retained significant support among poor and Indigenous Bolivians despite his resignation in 2019 amid mass protests over his disrupted reelection. The march in solidarity with him began peacefully Tuesday morning, but turned violent hours later when hundreds of counterprotesters, armed with tear gas bombs, stones and firecrackers, spread across the highway waiting to confront the nearly 10,000 marchers. Some of them set a giant effigy of Morales on fire.

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — More than 100 wildfires stretched thousands of firefighters to the limit in northern Portugal on Wednesday, with seven deaths since the worst spate of fires in recent years spread out of control over the weekend. Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro declared a state of calamity for the hardest-hit areas late on Tuesday, invoking powers to mobilize more firefighters and civil servants. He also called on police investigators to redouble their efforts to find those who started the fires and pledged help for those who have lost their homes or have been evacuated. The European Copernicus satellite service said that over 15,000 hectares (37,000 acres) had been scorched and a combined 13 kilometers (8 miles) of fire fronts had been detected as on Tuesday night. It added that an area home to 210,000 people was exposed to the fire risk.

## Boeing to Start Large Temporary Furloughs Amid Seattle Strike



Workers have been picketing 24 hours a day outside Boeing factories in the Seattle area since late last week.

NEW YORK (AFP) - Boeing said Wednesday it would start temporary furloughs of professional and white-collar staff as it seeks to conserve cash amid a labor strike that has shuttered Seattle manufacturing plants.

The furloughs, which pertain to executives, managers and employees, will be initiated in the coming days and affect tens of thousands of Boeing employees, company officials said.

Boeing plans for "selected

employees to take one week of furlough every four weeks on a rolling basis for the duration of the strike," said a message to employees from CEO Kelly Ortberg.

The new Boeing boss added that he and the rest of the leadership team "will take a commensurate pay reduction for the duration of the strike."

Boeing had said that furloughs were on the table earlier in the week when it announced a hiring freeze, travel budget austerity

measures and a reduction of supplier expenditures.

About 33,000 Seattle area Boeing workers with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 751 walked off the job Friday after overwhelmingly rejecting a contract renewal.

The two sides resumed talks Tuesday with the assistance of mediators from the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service.

The IAM blasted Boeing in a bargaining update posted late Tuesday. "We are frustrated," the IAM said. "The company was not prepared and was unwilling to address the issues you've made clear are essential for ending this strike: Wages and Pension. The company doesn't seem to be taking mediation seriously."

Ortberg's message to employees reiterated his commitment to "resetting our relationship with our represented employees and continuing discussions with the union to reach a new agreement that is good for all of our teammates and our company as soon as possible."

## North Korea Fires Short-Range Ballistic Missiles for Second Time in a Week

SEOUL (AFP) - North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles on Wednesday toward its east coast, South Korea and Japan said, days after Pyongyang unveiled a uranium enrichment facility.

The missiles lifted off from Kaechon, north of the capital Pyongyang, at around 6:50 a.m. (2150 GMT Tuesday) in a northeast direction and flew about 400 km (249 miles), South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said, without specifying how many were fired and where they landed.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Ki-hara said at least one of the missiles fell near the North's eastern inland coast and that the launches "cannot be tolerated."

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's office held a meeting to assess the security situation and told Pyongyang to halt all provocations, including its ongoing

release of balloons carrying trash into the South.

On Thursday, the North fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula. This was the first major weapons test by the nuclear-armed country since early July.

North Korea stated media later reported that this had been a test of a "new-type 600mm multiple rocket launcher."

North Korea has staged dozens of nuclear tests this year. Pyongyang declared South Korea its "principal enemy" this year and recently moved nuclear-capable weapons to border areas.

On Friday, North Korea released images of its uranium enrichment facility for the first time, showing leader Kim Jong-un touring a nuclear facility.

uranium enrichment to increase the nation's nuclear arsenal for self-defense.

The country, which conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, has never publicly disclosed details of its uranium enrichment facility.

Such facilities produce highly enriched uranium by spinning the original material in centrifuges at high speeds.

Kim toured the Nuclear Weapons Institute and the "production base of weapon-grade nuclear materials," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The KCNA did not provide the facility's location or visit date.

Pyongyang, which has been under harsh sanctions by the United States and the United Nations Security Council for years over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, says such military maneuvers amount to a rehearsal for invasion.