

After Russian drone attack, parts of Ukraine plunge into darkness

Kyiv: Russia carried out a major drone attack on Ukraine overnight, hitting infrastructure facilities and causing power outages in more than 400 towns and villages in the south, southeast, and north of the country, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday.

Ukraine air defences shot down 29 out of 38 Iranian-made Shahed drones launched from Russian territory, the air force said. In a statement, the air force said the attack on several Ukrainian regions lasted from 8pm on Friday to 4am Saturday. The energy ministry said 416 settlements in the Odesa region in the south and in the Zaporizhzhia region in the southeast were cut off from electricity after networks were damaged in the

Russian ministry moves court, seeks ban on 'extremist int'l LGBT public movement'

Moscow: Russia's justice ministry has filed a motion with the country's Supreme Court to label what it called the "international LGBT public movement" as extremist and to ban its operation within Russia, the state TASS news agency reported late on Friday. Russia toughened its anti-LGBT laws last year, allowing the authorities to fine any individual or organisation found to have promoted homosexuality in public, online, or in films, books or advertising. That law expanded Russia's previous law against LGBT propaganda that had banned the "demonstration" of LGBT behaviour to children. REUTERS

strikes. Last winter, Russia pounded Ukraine with hundreds of missiles and drones, leaving millions without electricity, heating, and water during the coldest months.

Ukraine said two first responders were killed and at least seven injured in Russian

rocket strikes on the southeastern region of Zaporizhzhia on Saturday. Ukrainian police said Russian rockets fell on the village of Komyshevakh, close to the frontline in the Zaporizhzhia region, which Russia claimed to have annexed last year. REUTERS, AFP

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'Withdraw military personnel from Maldives'

MALE, Nov 18 (PTI)

LESS than 24 hours after taking oath as the President of Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu on Saturday formally requested India to withdraw its military personnel from his country, saying the Maldivian people have given him a "strong mandate" to make this request to New Delhi.

Muizzu's request came when India's Union Minister Kiren Rejju paid a courtesy call on the new President at the latter's office, the Maldivian President's Office said in a press release. The exact number of Indian military personnel in the Maldives is not known.

Muizzu, an engineer-turned-politician, took oath on Friday as the eighth President of the

strategically-located archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean. Underscoring India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy', Rejju represented the country at Muizzu's inauguration ceremony.

A close associate of former Maldives President Abdulla Yameen, who forged close ties with China during his Presidency from 2013 to 2018, Muizzu, 45, defeated India-friendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential runoff held in September. Muizzu had repeatedly indicated during the election campaign that the



Rejju

withdrawal of Indian military troops from the island nation is among the issues that need to be resolved by the two countries. While discussing the matter



Muizzu

with Rejju, Muizzu also acknowledged the significant role of the two helicopters in providing numerous emergency

medical evacuations in the Maldives. Rejju conveyed his best wishes to the President, representing the sentiments of the Government and the people of India, the statement said. Rejju expressed his aspiration to foster a constructive relationship with the Maldives.

Navy chief: Assets deployed, ready for W Asia evacuation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief of naval staff Admiral R Hari Kumar on Saturday said the Indian Navy is on "standby and has deployed assets to undertake evacuation operations, if the need arises", because of the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Fielding questions on the Indian Navy's role in West Asia in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Admiral Kumar said: "We have units deployed in the Gulfs of Oman and Aden, and the Red Sea for any assistance. The country is already providing relief materials to Gaza. The Navy is ready to undertake any task given by the government."

He was in Bengaluru to deliver a keynote address at the Synergia Conclave-2023.

Emphasising the Navy's role in protecting, preserving, promoting and pursuing national interests, Admiral Kumar outlined plans for the force's growth, projecting around 165-170 ships and submarines by 2035 from the current 130, and around 220 aircraft.

"We have adequate resources and are reasonably well funded... We have 67 ships and submarines under construction of all sizes. By 2035, we should have about 165-170 ships and submarines, along with an increase in the number of air assets. An acceptance of necessity has been given for another 45 ships and submarines," he said.

He said complete take-over of artificial intelligence by 2045 — as estimated by domain experts — looks a little far off and that the immediate focus would be manned-unmanned teaming. "We've set up an unmanned squadron in Karwar and there is a lot of work happening with unmanned air assets, unmanned surface water vessels, unmanned underwater vessels," Admiral Kumar said.



Navy is ready to undertake any task given by the government, said Admiral R Hari Kumar

Bibi should be killed sans trial: Cong MP

Amid the ongoing Israeli ground offensive against Hamas in the besieged Gaza Strip, in the wake of the October 7 terror attacks, Congress MP Rajmohan Unnithan came up with a shocker on Saturday, saying that Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu "should be shot and killed without a trial".

Speaking at a rally to demonstrate solidarity with Palestine in Kasargod, Kerala, Unnithan openly advocated the "Nuremberg model" (invoking the trial of Nazis in Nuremberg for the holocaust) against the Israeli PM. "Today, Netanyahu is standing before the world as a war criminal. It's high time that Netanyahu was shot and killed without a trial because of the atrocities that his forces are committing on Palestinians," he said. ANI

In his virtual address, Chief of defence staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan identified future security challenges driven by changes in global geopolitics and technology. He emphasised the evolving nature of diplomacy and the emergence of new rules, noting the increasing proclivity for conflicts without clear end states or exit strategies.

Flexibility in Armed Forces | Operate in environment that is reshaped by turn of geopolitical events rapidly: CDS

BENGALURU, Nov 18 (PTI)

THE Indian Armed Forces will have to operate in an environment that is rapidly reshaped by turn of geopolitical events and advancements in technologies that will require flexibility in organisational structures as well as in mindsets, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan said on Saturday.

Virtually delivering the keynote address on Global Future Security Challenges at the Synergia Conclave 2023, he said the path taken today will decide where India will be in 2047.

Chauhan said the Indian armed forces will have to operate in an environment that is rapidly reshaped by the turn of geopolitical events and advancements in technologies.

"This will require flexibility in our organisational structures as well as in our mindsets," he said.

Reflecting on the need for a comprehensive approach, Chauhan stated, "We should be able to usher a thorough Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) along with other nations to remain ahead or at par with this transformative curve."



Chief of Defence Staff
General Anil Chauhan

"Our organisational structures must be capable of multi-domain operations... They must be structured for integrated rapid response through

Navy plays key role in supporting free Indo-Pacific region: Admiral Kumar

BENGALURU, Nov 18 (PTI)

THE Indian Navy is playing a key role in supporting a free, open, rule-based and inclusive Indo-Pacific region where no country gets excluded, chief of the Indian Navy Admiral R Hari Kumar said on Saturday.

The Navy will remain persistent and patient in its efforts while ensuring a reg-

ular presence in the wider Indo-Pacific region, Kumar added.

Addressing a session on 'Indo-Pacific Challenges and Way Ahead' at the Synergia Conclave, Kumar said the Indian Navy acts as a uniting force for bringing friends together to exchange views and address the common concerns for holistic maritime security.

a correct balance between contact, non-contact, kinetic, as well as non-kinetic options. They must be flexible and adaptive enough to absorb and harness niche, emerging, and destructive technology," he said.

Chauhan also addressed the increasing proclivity among

nations to enter into conflicts to protect perceived national interests. He pointed out the challenges associated with conflicts initiated by major powers, citing examples like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Ukraine, where clear end stages or exit strategies were often lacking.

Second Ind-Aus 2+2 tomorrow, focus on Indo-Pacific & Quad

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Reuters

New Delhi: Defence minister Rajnath Singh and external affairs minister S Jaishankar will hold the second India-Australia 2+2 defence and foreign ministerial dialogue with their visiting counterparts, Richard Marles and Penny Wong, on Monday, the government said in an official announcement.

The ministers are expected to discuss a wide range of strategic, defence and security issues. Indo-Pacific and Quad cooperation, amid increasing Chinese assertiveness, is expected to figure prominently in the talks that will follow the recent India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue. Marles, who is also the deputy PM, will travel to Ahmedabad to watch the World Cup Final on Sunday.

"These discussions would cover bilateral, regional and global matters mutual inter-



A billboard of PM Modi & Australia deputy PM Richard Marles, who is set to visit Ahmedabad for the World Cup final on Sunday

est, to further advance cooperation under the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both sides will also exchange views on shared priorities for strengthening minilateral and multilateral cooperation," said the government. Jaishankar and Wong will also hold the 14th Foreign Ministerial Framework Dialogue on Tuesday to take stock of cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exchange views on regional and global issues.

With end of communication blackout, UN hopes to resume aid services to Gaza

KHAN YOUNIS, Nov 18 (AP)

INTERNET and phone service was partially restored to the Gaza Strip on Saturday, ending a telecommunications blackout that forced the United Nations to shut down critical humanitarian aid deliveries because it was unable to coordinate its convoys.

Meantime, an Israeli airstrike hit a residential building on the outskirts of the town of Khan Younis, killing at least 26 Palestinians, according to a doctor at the hospital where the bodies were taken.

Early in the war, the Israeli military told civilians to flee northern Gaza, the target of its ground offensive, but also kept up its bombardment in the southern evacuation zone where Khan Younis is located.

Israel has signalled plans to expand its offensive south while continuing operations in the north, including Gaza City, where troops were still searching the territory's biggest hospital, Shifa, for traces of a Hamas command centre that Israel alleges was located under the building - a claim Hamas and the hospital staff deny.

In Khan Younis, the attack on early Saturday hit Hamad City, a middle-class housing development built in recent years with funding from Qatar. In addition to the 26 people killed, another 20 were wounded, said Dr Nehad Taeima at Nasser Hospital.

Israel rarely comments on individual strikes, saying only

that it is targeting Hamas and trying to avoid harm to civilians. In many of the Israeli strikes, women and children have been among the dead.

The war, now in its seventh week, was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack in southern Israel, in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted some 240 men, women and children.

More than 11,400 Palestinians have been killed in the war, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

The UN has warned that Gaza's 2.3 million people are running critically short of food and water, but it was not immediately clear when the agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, would be able to resume the delivery of aid that was put on hold Friday.

The Palestinian telecommunications provider said it was able to restart its generators after UNRWA donated fuel. The end of the communications blackout meant a return to news and messages from journalists and activists in the besieged enclave on social media platforms as service began to return late Friday night. Gaza's main power plant shut down early in the war and Israel has cut off electricity.