

North Korea holds rallies denouncing U.S., warns of nuclear war

North Korea held mass rallies in Pyongyang where people shouted slogans vowing a "war of revenge" to destroy the United States, as it marked the 73rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, state media reported on Monday.

About 120,000 working people and students took part in the rallies held across the capital on Sunday, state news agency KCNA reported.

Photos released by state media showed a stadium crowded with people holding placards reading "The whole U.S. mainland is within our shooting range" and "The imperialist U.S. is the destroyer of peace," Reuters reported.

Sunday's anniversary came amid Western concerns Pyongyang could soon conduct another launch of its first military spy satellite to boost monitoring of U.S. military activities after its first attempt ended in failure on May 31.

North Korea now had "the strongest absolute weapon to punish the U.S. imperialists" and the "avengers on this land are burning with the indomitable will to revenge the enemy," KCNA said.

Nuclear-armed North Korea has been testing various weapons including its biggest intercontinental ballistic missile, ramping up tension with the South and the South's main ally, the United States.

In a separate foreign ministry report, North Korea said the U.S. was "making desperate efforts to ignite a nuclear war," accusing Washington of sending strategic assets to the region.

North and South Korea remain technically at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a treaty.



People attend a mass rally denouncing the U.S. in Pyongyang, North Korea, on June 25, 2023. **KCNA via REUTERS**

Hezbollah fighters down Israeli drone in southern Lebanon

Fighters from the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah shot down an Israeli drone, which was hovering over the southern part of Lebanon in violation of the Arab country's sovereignty.

Hezbollah said in a brief statement carried by Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Manar television network that it downed an Israeli drone that had entered the Lebanese skies on Monday afternoon, Press TV reported.

The statement added the Israeli aircraft was brought down as it was flying over Wadi Aaziyeh area close to Zibqine town, located 103 kilometers south of the capital Beirut and four kilometers from the border with the Israeli-occupied territories. In September 2021, Hezbollah said it had separately intercepted and struck an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle as it crossed into Lebanon's airspace over Maryamin Valley on the outskirts of the southern town of Yater.

The Israeli aircraft was targeted with "suitable weapons," according to a Hezbollah statement at the time. The Israeli army, meanwhile, alleged that the drone "fell during routine activity" and that the incident was being "investigated."

Israel frequently violates Lebanon's airspace. Lebanon's government, Hezbollah, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have repeatedly condemned Israel's overflights, saying they are in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the country's sovereignty.

The resolution, which brokered a ceasefire in the war Israel launched against Lebanon in 2006, calls on the Israeli regime to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.



This file picture, released by the media office of Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah on February 1, 2021, shows a downed Israeli spy drone on display at an undisclosed location. **PRESS TV**

NEWS IN BRIEF

NATO to hold talks on Sweden entry



AFP - NATO will hold talks on Sweden joining the alliance before its summit next month, with the agreement of Turkey which has been holding up the bid, its chief said Monday.

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he had spoken to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and "agreed to convene a high-level meeting in Brussels before the summit."

Japan protests Russia's declaration of victory day



REUTERS - Japan has lodged a protest against Russia over the country's decision to declare Sept. 3 a day of victory over "militaristic Japan" - a move it said would fan mutual antagonism, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said on Monday.

"The passage of this law could not only stir anti-Japanese sentiment among the Russian people, but may also lead to anti-Russian sentiment among the Japanese people," the government spokesperson said.

Pakistan army general among three sacked over violence by Imran Khan's party

Pakistan's army has sacked three senior officers, including a lieutenant general, for failing to prevent violent attacks on military assets by ex-prime minister Imran Khan's supporters protesting his arrest, the army's spokesperson said on Monday.

It was a rare public announcement by the army of an internal inquiry and its outcome, Reuters reported.

At least 102 people are on trial in military courts over last month's violence, Major General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry told a press conference in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

Chaudhry gave no details regarding how many of them were civilians or military officials. He also declined to name the senior officers who had been fired.

Human rights groups have raised concerns about military trials of civilians in Pakistan that they say cannot ensure a fair defence. The trials have also been challenged in Pakistan's Supreme Court in three petitions, including one by Khan's party.

In May, thousands of Khan's supporters rampaged through military installations across the country and vandalised them, including an air

base, several military garrisons, the house of a general and the army's headquarters. Over 5,000 of them were arrested, though most were later released.

"We had to determine why security was breached at army installations. We had to find out what had gone wrong," Chaudhry said.

He said two departmental inquiries were conducted, headed by major generals, and punishments were given according to their recommendations.

Strict departmental action had also been taken against another 15 army officers, including three major generals and sev-

en brigadiers, Chaudhry said, as part of internal accountability in the military. He did not specify what action had been taken.

Chaudhry added that several relatives, including women, of senior army officers were also facing trials for allegedly being facilitators of the violence. The army has said the arson was pre-planned by leaders of Khan's party, and have named him in at least two criminal cases as abetting the violence.

[He denies wrongdoing?] Khan, 70, a former international cricket hero turned politician, has faced a slew of cases since he was ousted from



power in a vote of no confidence last year, which he blames on the military's generals, a charge the army denies.

Khan's party has been subjected to a massive security crackdown since the May 9 violence.

Supporters of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan block a highway, during a protest against his arrest, in Karachi, Pakistan, on May 9, 2023. **AKHTAR SOOMRO/REUTERS**

Ukraine says it has retaken another village from Russian forces



Ukraine said on Monday its forces had regained control of the southeastern village of Rivnopol as they continue to advance against Russian forces after launching a counteroffensive.

The village appeared to be the ninth recaptured by Ukraine this month in the early stages of an offensive in which Ukrainian officials have signalled that the main push is yet to come, Reuters reported. "(Ukrainian) Defence forc-

es have brought Rivnopol back under our control," Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar wrote on the Telegram messaging app. She did not say when Ukrainian forces had recaptured Rivnopol, which lies just to the west of a cluster of villages that Kyiv says it recaptured earlier in the counteroffensive.

An unverified 13-second video posted on Telegram by Ukrainian land forces, showing a group

of Ukrainian soldiers in front of the remains of a building with a Ukrainian flag flying from a post, indicated the village was retaken on Sunday.

Russia, which launched its full-scale "military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022, still holds swathes of territory in the east and south. It did not immediately comment on events in Rivnopol, and Reuters was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield.



AP - Gunmen burst into a pool hall in northern Honduras and opened fire, killing 11 people and prompting President Xiomara Castro to announce security measures including curfews in the area amid a wave of drug trafficking-linked violence. The attack occurred in the city of Choloma in Cortes province late Saturday night. It left 10 men and one woman dead.