



A view shows a site of a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Chernihiv, Ukraine, on August 19, 2023.
● NATIONAL POLICE/REUTERS

Russia thwarts flurry of drone attacks, says warplane damaged

Russia's Defence Ministry reported a flurry of Ukrainian drone attacks on Saturday targeting the regions of Moscow, Novgorod to the northwest of the Russian capital, and Belgorod that borders Ukraine.

It said nobody was hurt in the attacks but said the drone targeting the Novgorod region had damaged a warplane and caused a fire at a military airfield. The Novgorod region lies hundreds of km from Russia's border with Ukraine, Reuters reported. "As a result of the terrorist attack on the territory of the airfield, a fire broke out in the parking lot of aircraft, which was quickly eliminated by fire fighters. One aircraft was damaged," the ministry said. It later reported that air defence forces had jammed an aircraft-type drone on the northwestern outskirts of Moscow, forcing it to crash near the settlement of Putilkovo.

Drone air strikes deep inside Russia have increased in recent months. One smashed into a building in central Mos-

cow on Friday after Russian air defences shot it down, disrupting air traffic at all civilian airports of the Russian capital. The Defence Ministry also reported a thwarted attack by an aircraft-type drone on Saturday in the Belgorod region, which now sees such incidents on an almost daily basis. It caused no casualties or damage, the ministry added.

Overnight, Russia's air defence forces also shot down a Ukraine-launched missile over the Crimean Peninsula, the Defence Ministry said earlier.

Also, according to Reuters, seven people were killed and 90 wounded when a Russian missile struck a central square in the historic northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv, the interior ministry said on Saturday.

"A Russian missile hit right in the centre of the city, in our Chernihiv. A square, the polytechnic university, a theatre," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who was on a working visit to Sweden, posted on Telegram.

China launches drills in response to Taiwan VP's US visit

China launched military drills around Taiwan on Saturday as a "serious warning" to separatist forces in an angry response to Vice President William Lai's visit to the United States, drawing condemnation from Taipei.

Lai, the front-runner to become Taiwan's president in elections in January, returned from the United States on Friday. He officially made only stopovers on his way to and from Paraguay but gave speeches while in the US, Reuters reported.

China considers Taiwan as its own territory.

The People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command, said in a brief statement it was carrying out joint naval and air combat readiness patrols around the island.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said it had detected 42 Chinese aircraft and eight ships involved in drills around the island from Saturday morning and that it had deployed ships and aircraft in response.

Twenty-six Chinese aircraft crossed the median line of the 100-km wide Taiwan Strait, or areas beyond each end of the line, the ministry said in a statement. For decades, the line served as an unofficial barrier between the two militaries.

The PLA's Eastern Theatre Command said it was holding joint exercises and training of naval and air forces, focusing on ship-aircraft coordination, seizing control and anti-submarine

drills to the north and southwest of Taiwan to test the forces' "actual combat capabilities".

"This is a serious warning against Taiwan independence separatist forces colluding with external forces to provoke," it said.

The command released video footage purportedly taken on Saturday, showing J-16 and J-10 fighter jets and a naval destroyer on patrol.

In text accompanying the footage, set to a thumping orchestral score, it said the drills were to "test the actual combat capabilities of joint operations of forces in the theatre".

Equipment deployed included destroyers, frigates and fast attack missile boats as well as fighters, early warning and jamming aircraft that "assembled in a predetermined area", it said, without giving details.

The forces carried out "omnidirectional encirclement of the island", the command said.

Taiwan strongly condemned the drills, with the defence ministry saying it had the ability, determination, and confidence to ensure national security.



An Air Force aircraft takes part in military drills by the Eastern Theatre Command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) around Taiwan, in this screenshot from a handout video released on August 19, 2023.
● EASTERN THEATRE COMMAND/REUTERS



NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli air force suspends senior reservists



PRESS TV – Chief of Israel's air force has suspended a number of senior military reserve forces amid persisting protests against prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right cabinet and its policies, including the so-called judicial overhaul plan. Major General Tomer Bar agreed to suspend the service of several brigadier generals, without identifying them or revealing the number of sacked officers, Israeli media outlets reported, Press TV reported.

Thousands flee raging wildfire in Canada



AP – The capital of Canada's Northwest Territories was virtually deserted after nearly all the residents of the city of just over 20,000 fled as a huge wildfire burned nearby. To the south, in British Columbia, thousands more people were told to leave their homes while firefighters battled a growing fire that set homes ablaze. Officials in Northwest Territories said Friday evening that about 19,000 people had left Yellowknife in less than 48 hours, with about 15,000 driving out in convoys and 3,800 leaving on emergency flights.

Trump expected to surrender to jail Thursday or Friday



Former US president Donald Trump speaks to supporters at the Iowa State Fair, on August 12, 2023.
● CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP



Former US president Donald Trump is expected to surrender himself to the Fulton County jail at the end of next week – on Thursday or Friday, a senior law enforcement official with knowledge of the surrender told CNN.

Trump and 18 co-defendants were charged on Monday in connection with a plot to subvert the 2020 election results in Georgia. After the 41-count indictment was unsealed, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis set an August 25 deadline for their surrender, CNN reported.

Negotiations between Trump's lawyers and Willis' prosecutors are expected to continue into next week, ahead of the surrender deadline. The exact timing of Trump's surrender remains unclear.

Trump's expected surrender in Georgia comes the same week as the first Republican presidential debate of the 2024 election cycle. The former president, however, is planning to skip the event and instead sit for an interview with former Fox News Host Tucker Carlson, multiple sources familiar with his plans told CNN on Friday – though he could change his mind.

Trump now faces a total of 91 charges across four criminal cases. His surrender

and arraignment in Georgia are expected to look different from those in his previous three criminal cases. Fulton County Sheriff Pat Labat has previously suggested he wants to treat Trump and the others named in the indictment similar to any other defendant. This could mean that they would have mugshots taken and be fingerprinted. According to the indictment, Trump is accused of being the head of a "criminal enterprise" that was part of a broad conspiracy to overturn his 2020 electoral defeat. The group of defendants named in the Georgia indictment includes former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and ex-Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani.

The US Secret Service has been onsite at the Fulton County Jail for the last several weeks working with the Fulton County Sheriff Department and the city of Atlanta in planning for the former president's surrender, a USSS spokesperson told CNN.

N Korea slams UN HR meeting as a US 'scheme'

REUTERS – North Korea slammed a recent United Nations meeting about its human rights record, asserting the United States used the international organisation for a "scheme" against Pyongyang, state media KCNA reported on Saturday.

The UN Security Council discussed human rights abuses in North Korea on Thursday, with the US ambassador criticising leader Kim Jong-un for using "repression and cruelty" to develop nuclear weapons and missiles.