

NATION & WORLD

DIGEST

Ukraine wants response to POW execution claims

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's human rights ombudsman urged international organizations Sunday to respond to a claim that several Ukrainian prisoners of war were executed in Russia's Kursk region, where Kyiv launched an incursion in August.

DeepState, a Ukrainian battlefield analysis site close to Ukraine's Defense Ministry, said Russian troops shot and killed nine Ukrainian "drone operators and contractors" on Oct. 10 after they surrendered.

Dmytro Lubinets said on Telegram that he sent letters to the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross regarding the case, calling it "another crime committed by the Russians."

Man with loaded gun arrested near rally

LOS ANGELES — A Nevada man with a shotgun, loaded handgun, ammunition and several fake passports in his vehicle was arrested at a security checkpoint outside Donald Trump's rally Saturday night in the Southern California desert, authorities said. He was released the same day on \$5,000 bail.

The suspect, a 49-year-old resident of Las Vegas, was driving an unregistered black SUV with a "homemade" license plate that was stopped by deputies assigned to the rally in Coachella, east of Los Angeles, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco said at a news conference Sunday afternoon.

The man was arrested on suspicion of possessing a loaded firearm and possession of a high-capacity magazine, the department said in a statement.

BRIEFLY

KOREAS: North Korea said Sunday its front-line army units are ready to launch strikes on South Korea, ramping up pressure on its rival that it said flew drones and dropped propaganda leaflets over its capital, Pyongyang.

TENNESSEE: Gunfire broke out among a crowd near Tennessee State University's homecoming celebrations in Nashville, killing one person and wounding nine others, police said. The football game was taking place in another part of town when the gunfire happened.

MILWAUKEE: A 47-year-old person was fatally shot at a youth flag football game Saturday in Milwaukee, according to Milwaukee Common Council President José Pérez, who said in a statement that a person was killed during a game in his district.

PAKISTAN: Pakistani police fired tear gas and swung batons at thousands of protesters Sunday in Karachi after the demonstrators tried to break through a security barricade. About 2,000 supporters of a far-right Islamist party tried to reach the city's press club to oppose another demonstration.

LITHUANIA: Lithuanians voted Sunday in the first round of parliamentary elections that could lead to the center-right governing coalition being replaced by the opposition Social Democrats and smaller center-left parties. Despite economic successes, strict COVID-19 measures and an influx of migrants have cast shadows over conservative Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė's government.

VIETNAM: China agreed Sunday to help Vietnam on cross-border railway development and take steps to expand agricultural imports from its smaller neighbor, Vietnam's official media said. Premier Li Qiang, on an official visit to Vietnam, pledged that China would further open its market to Vietnamese products, state media reported.

— Associated Press

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MIDDLE EAST

Drone strike hits Israel

US says it will send air defense system and troops to operate it

WFAA SHURAFU AND SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — A Hezbollah drone attack on an army base in central Israel killed four soldiers and severely wounded seven others Sunday, the military said, in the deadliest strike by the militant group since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon nearly two weeks ago.

The military statement came shortly after Israel's national rescue service said the drone attack wounded 61 people.

The Lebanon-based Hezbollah earlier claimed responsibility and called the attack on the base next

to Binyamina city retaliation for Israeli strikes on Beirut on Thursday that killed 22 people.

Hezbollah and Israel have traded fired almost daily in the year since the war in Gaza began, and fighting has escalated.

With Israel's advanced air-defense systems, it's rare for so many people to be hurt by drones or missiles. Israeli media reported that two drones were launched from Lebanon, and the military said one was intercepted.

Also on Sunday, the Pentagon announced it will send a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery to Israel, along with the troops needed to operate it, even as Iran warned Washington to keep American military forces out of Israel.

Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement that Defense Secretary Lloyd Aus-

tin authorized the deployment of the THAAD battery at the direction of President Joe Biden. He said the system will help bolster Israel's air defenses following Iran's recent ballistic missile attacks.

The delivery of the sophisticated missile defense system risks inflaming the conflict in the Middle East despite widespread diplomatic efforts to avoid an all-out war. The Iranian warning came in a post on the social platform X long associated with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who noted the earlier reports that the U.S. was considering the deployment.

Israel is now at war with Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon — both Iran-backed militant groups — and is expected to strike Iran in retaliation for a missile attack earlier this month, though it has not said how or when.

A year into the war with Hamas,

Israel continues to strike what it says are militant targets in Gaza nearly every day. One strike late Saturday hit a home in the Nu-seirat refugee camp, killing the parents and their six children, ages 8 to 23, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in nearby Deir al-Balah. An Associated Press reporter counted the bodies there.

"They were safe, while he was sleeping, and he and all his children died," said the man's brother, Mohammad Abu Ghali.

Israel's military says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas and other armed groups because they operate in densely populated areas.

International criticism is growing after Israeli forces have repeatedly fired on U.N. peacekeepers since the start of the ground operation in Lebanon.

SPACEX | STARSHIP ROCKET



SPACEX

SpaceX's mega rocket booster returns to the launch pad to be captured during a test flight Sunday in Boca Chica, Texas.

‘Science fiction without fiction’

After liftoff, mechanical arms catch booster back at launch pad

MARCIA DUNN
Associated Press

SpaceX pulled off the boldest test flight yet of its enormous Starship rocket on Sunday, catching the returning booster back at the launch pad with mechanical arms.

A jubilant Elon Musk called it "science fiction without the fiction part."

Towering almost 400 feet, the empty Starship blasted off at sunrise from the southern tip of Texas near the Mexican border. It arced over the Gulf of Mexico like the four Starships before it that ended up being destroyed, either soon after liftoff or while ditching into the sea. The previous one in June had been the most

successful until Sunday's demo, completing its flight without exploding.

This time, Musk, SpaceX's CEO and founder, upped the challenge for the rocket that he plans to use to send people back to the moon and on to Mars.

At the flight director's command, the first-stage booster flew back to the launch pad where it had blasted off seven minutes earlier. The launch tower's monstrous metal arms, dubbed chopsticks, caught the descending 232-foot stainless steel booster and gripped it tightly, dangling it well above the ground.

"The tower has caught the rocket!!" Musk announced via X. "Big step towards making life multiplanetary was made today."

Company employees screamed in joy, jumping and pumping their fists into the air. NASA joined in the celebration, with Administrator Bill Nelson sending con-

gratulations.

Continued testing of Starship will prepare the nation for landing astronauts at the moon's south pole, Nelson noted. NASA's new Artemis program is the follow-up to Apollo, which put 12 men on the moon more than a half-century ago.

"Folks, this is a day for the engineering history books," SpaceX engineering manager Kate Tice said from SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California.

"Even in this day and age, what we just saw is magic," added company spokesman Dan Huot from near the launch and landing site. "I am shaking right now."

It was up to the flight director to decide, in real time with a manual control, whether to attempt the landing. SpaceX said both the booster and launch tower had to be in good, stable condition. Otherwise, it was going to end up in the gulf like the

previous ones. Everything was judged to be ready for the catch.

The retro-looking spacecraft launched by the booster continued around the world, soaring more than 130 miles (212 kilometers) high. An hour after liftoff, it made a controlled landing in the Indian Ocean, adding to the day's achievement. Cameras on a nearby buoy showed flames shooting up from the water as the spacecraft impacted precisely at the targeted spot and sank, as planned.

The June flight came up short at the end after pieces came off. SpaceX upgraded the software and reworked the heat shield.

SpaceX has been recovering the first-stage boosters of its smaller Falcon 9 rockets for nine years, after delivering satellites and crews to orbit. But they land on floating ocean platforms or on concrete slabs several miles from their launch pads — not on them.

Biden gets firsthand look at Fla. hurricane damage

ASSOCIATED PRESS

VENICE, Fla. — President Joe Biden surveyed damage from Hurricane Milton on a helicopter flight Sunday between Tampa and St. Pete Beach on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

From the air, he saw the torn-up roof of Tropicana Field, home of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team. On the ground, the president saw waterlogged household furnishings piled up

outside flooded homes. Some houses had collapsed.

The president said he was thankful that Milton was not as bad as officials had anticipated, but that it still was a "cataclysmic" event for many people, including those who lost irreplaceable personal items. He also praised the first responders, some of whom had come from Canada.

"It's in moments like this we

come together to take care of each other, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans," Biden said after he was briefed by federal, state and local officials, and met some residents and responders. "We are one United States, one United States."

A swath of the state still was coming to terms with damage from the unusual dual strike of hurricanes Helene and Milton in such close proximity. Many

residents, some returning home after evacuating, spent much of Saturday searching for gas as a fuel shortage gripped the state.

Milton killed at least 11 people after it made landfall as a Category 3 storm, tearing across central Florida, flooding barrier islands and spawning deadly tornadoes.

Officials say the toll could have been worse if not for the widespread evacuations.