

Putin slams Kyiv as drones attack Moscow's buildings China town tense after clashes over mosque razing

Russian Def Ministry says five drones were shot down in the capital

KYIV

A rare drone attack jolted Moscow early Tuesday, causing only light damage but forcing evacuations as residential buildings were struck in the Russian capital for the first time in the war against Ukraine.



The image shows a damaged part of an apartment building which was attacked by an Ukrainian drone in Moscow, Russia on Tuesday | AP

The Russian Defence Ministry said five drones were shot down in Moscow and the systems of three others were jammed, causing them to veer off course.

Putin said that Moscow's air defence had worked in a satisfactory manner, noting that the attacks were Kyiv's "response" to a Russian strike on Ukraine's army intelligence headquarters.

"We have spoken about hitting command centres (in Ukraine)," the Russian president said. "In response, the Kyiv regime has chosen a different path, the path of trying to frighten Russia, frighten the citizens of Russia and of strikes on residential buildings."

While Putin claimed Tuesday's Kyiv attack was in response to Russia striking Ukraine's military intelligence headquarters days earlier, Andrii Cherniakh, a Ukrainian intelligence representative, said the Kremlin's forces failed to hit the building because its

US says does not support attacks inside Russia

Stockholm: The United States said on Tuesday that it does not back attacks inside Russia, but said Russia bore responsibility for the war with Ukraine.

"As a general matter, we do not support attacks inside of Russia. We have been focused on providing Ukraine with the equipment and training they need to retake their own sovereign territory," a State Department spokesperson said.

Two persons received treatment for unspecified injuries but did not need hospitalisation, he said, adding that residents of two high-rise buildings were evacuated.

Andrei Vorobyov, governor of the wider Moscow region, said some of the drones were "shot down on the approach to Moscow."

Ukraine made no direct comment on the attack, which would be one of its deepest strikes into Russia.

Moscow residents reported hearing explosions before dawn. Police were seen working at one site of a crashed drone in southwest Moscow.

An area near a residential building was fenced off, and police put the drone debris in a cardboard box before carrying it away.

When asked if Khan would be tried in military court, he said, "Absolutely, why shouldn't it? The programme that he made to target the military installations and then had it executed, in my understanding it absolutely is a case of a military court."

"His supporters chanted a slogan that 'Imran Khan is our red line,' and the planning and preparation were done on Imran Khan's initiative and instigation...He is the architect of all this discord," he said.

Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz Sharif hinted that his government was unwilling to talk with Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, saying the "anarchists and arsonists" who wear the garb of politicians and attack the symbols of the state do not qualify for a dialogue.

BEIJING

CHINA deployed hundreds of police and made arrests in a mostly Muslim southwestern town after clashes erupted over the planned partial demolition of a mosque.

The town of Nagu, Yunnan province, recently pushed ahead with plans to raze four minarets and the dome roof of the Najaying Mosque.

The area is home to a sizable enclave of Hui, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group who have come under pressure in the face of a broad crackdown.

On Saturday, dozens of officers wielding truncheons and riot shields repelled a crowd outside the mosque that was hurling objects at them, videos circulating on social media and the witness said.

Police have made an unspecified number of arrests over the incident and several hundred officers remained in the town as of Monday.

People in areas around the mosque had struggled intermittently with internet outages and other connectivity issues since the clashes.

A notice issued Sunday by



Najaying Mosque

the Tonghai government—which administers Nagu—said it had opened an investigation into "a case that severely dis-

rupted social management and order." The notice ordered those involved to "immediately stop all illegal and criminal acts," vowing to "severely punish" anyone who refuses to turn themselves in.

Those who voluntarily surrender before June 6 will be treated with leniency, the notice added.

Elsewhere, Xi's government has demolished mosques or removed domes, minarets and other distinctive Muslim features to transform them into nondescript, Chinese-style buildings.

Imran to be tried in military court; PM rules out talks

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday said that Imran Khan will be tried in a military court as he was the "architect" of the May 9 incidents.

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Court backs same-sex marriage, says govt's policy is unconstitutional

TOKYO

A Japanese court ruled on Tuesday that the government's policy against same-sex marriage is unconstitutional, in a closely watched decision that supporters say is a step toward marriage equality.



People celebrate in front of the Nagoya District Court in Nagoya, Japan | AP

The Nagoya District Court in central Japan, however, rejected a request by a male couple that the government pay them \$7,100 each in compensation for the unequal treatment they face because the current system does not recognise them as legally married.

The ruling is the second that found that the government's denial of same-sex marriage violates the constitution, while two other decisions did not. The rulings can be appealed to the Supreme Court.

In his ruling, Judge Osamu Nishimura said the current system that excludes same-sex couples with no legal protection for their relationship is unconstitutional and there is no room for government discretion, Kyodo News reported.

Supporters cheered outside the court, waving rainbow flags and holding signs saying, "Another step toward marriage equality."

Asato Yamada, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the court's ruling said clearly that not allowing same-sex marriage violates the guarantee of equal rights under Article 14 of the constitution, and that Article 24 provides freedom to marry by not specifying a prohibition on same-sex marriage. "It's a major step toward achieving marriage equality," he said.

"The judicial branch, on behalf of the rights of minorities, raised its voice and it will be a strong message to the government," he said. "The message is that the government should resolve problem immediately."

Japan is the only member of the G7 industrialised countries that does not recognise same-sex marriage. AP

EXPRESS READ

NATO deploys more forces, EU urges calm after clashes

ZVECAN: NATO said on Tuesday it was deploying more forces to northern Kosovo after 30 of its peacekeepers were injured in clashes with ethnic Serb protesters, while the EU called for an urgent de-escalation of tensions.

The commander of the Allied Force Command in Naples, Admiral Stuart Munsch, said the move was a "prudent measure to ensure that KFOR (the NATO-led Kosovo Force) has the capabilities it needs to maintain security."

An extra multinational battalion of reserve forces had also been put on notice to be ready to reinforce KFOR if necessary, NATO said. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Tuesday urged the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia to immediately de-escalate tensions, saying the clashes were "unacceptable." AFP

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