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The Kharkiv region in Ukraine on Saturday after the Russian military retreated. The occupiers continued to fall back on Sunday.

STUNNED MOSCOW ADMITS TO LOSING MOST OF KHARKIV

Retreat Dents Image of a Mighty Putin

An Emboldened Kyiv Wants More Arms

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI

Ukraine's rout of Russian forces this weekend is creating a new kind of political challenge for President Vladimir V. Putin: It undercuts the image of competence and might that he has worked for two decades to build.

On Sunday, the Russian military continued to retreat from positions in northeastern Ukraine that it had occupied for months. State television news reports referred to the retreat as a carefully planned "regrouping operation," praising the heroism and professionalism of Russian troops.

But the upbeat message did little to dampen the anger among supporters of the war over the retreat and the Kremlin's handling of it. And it hardly obscured the bind that Mr. Putin now finds himself in, presiding over a six-month war against an increasingly energized enemy and a Russian populace that does not appear to be prepared for the sacrifices that could come with an escalating conflict.

"Strength is the only source of Putin's legitimacy," Abbas Gallyamov, a former speechwriter for Mr. Putin who is now a political consultant living in Israel, said in a phone interview. "And in a situation in which it turns out that he has no strength, his legitimacy will start dropping toward zero."

As Ukraine pressed its advantage on Sunday, seizing towns and territory, Mr. Putin escalated the brutality of his campaign, a concession to the pro-war voices on Russian television and social media. Missile strikes on infrastructure across eastern and central Ukraine plunged parts of the country into darkness.

But it was unclear how far Russia — with its cyber, chemical and nuclear arsenals — might be willing to go to halt Ukraine's momentum, even as the scale of the battlefield setback became clearer and more evidence emerged of disarray inside Russia's ruling class.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the Chechnya region in southern Russia that has sent thousands of its own troops to Ukraine, accused the Russian mil-

By ANDREW E. KRAMER
and ANDREW HIGGINS

KHARKIV, Ukraine — Stunned by a lightning advance by Ukrainian forces that cost it over 1,000 square miles of land and a key military hub, Russia on Sunday acknowledged that it had lost nearly all of the northern region of Kharkiv after a blitzkrieg thrust that cast doubt on a premise — widely held in Moscow and parts of the West — that Ukraine could never defeat Russia.

Russia's pell-mell retreat from a wide section of Ukrainian territory it seized in the early summer rattled Kremlin cheerleaders and amplified voices in the West demanding that more weapons be sent to Ukraine so that it could win.

Victory for Ukraine is still far from certain, particularly with a second Ukrainian offensive in the south making far less rapid progress. Russian forces are dug into strong defensive positions near the Black Sea port city of Kherson, forcing Ukrainian troops to pay heavily for every foot of territory they retake.

But the speed of Ukraine's advances over the weekend in the northeast — an area used by Russia as a stronghold — has muted the gung-ho bluster of Kremlin cheerleaders. It has also undermined arguments in places like Germany that providing more and better arms to Ukraine would only lead to a long and bloody stalemate against a Russian military destined to win.

Late Sunday, in a strike that Ukrainian officials condemned as a fit of pique over its losses, Moscow attacked infrastructure facilities in Kharkiv, leaving many civilians without power and water. President Volodymyr Zelensky said there was a "total blackout" in the regions of Kharkiv and Donetsk.

"No military facilities," he wrote on Twitter. "The goal is to deprive people of light and heat."

Russia's retreat in the northeast is the biggest embarrassment for President Vladimir V. Putin's larger and better equipped forces since their attempt to seize Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, was re-

Continued on Page A10

Poorer Nations Get Little Help On Monkeypox

By STEPHANIE NOLEN

For the past month, a couple of patients a day have sat across from Dr. Alberto Mendoza at the H.I.V. clinic where he works in Lima, Peru, to hear him confirm what they had feared: They have monkeypox. The men are tormented by the painful lesions the virus causes. They're also afraid, because the visible sores mark them as men who have sex with men, a dangerous identity in Peru, where there is intense discrimination against homosexuality.

But Dr. Mendoza, an infectious disease specialist, has little to offer. "I have no options," he said in an interview. Neither the antiviral drug nor the vaccine being used against monkeypox in the United States and Europe is available in Peru.

"We have nothing, even though we are the country with one of the highest numbers of cases by population," said Dr. Mendoza, who works with the medical charity Partners in Health.

Neighboring Brazil, which, according to the World Health Organization, has close to 10 percent of global monkeypox cases, currently has no vaccine or treatment either. Nor do the countries in West and Central Africa that have struggled with monkeypox outbreaks for decades.

The scramble for monkeypox vaccines and treatments has been centered in the United States and Europe, where supplies of shots have stretched thin or nearly run out. But more than 100 countries are now reporting monkeypox cases, and a vast majority of those have had no vaccine or treatments at all.

They have been shut out by the prohibitive cost and by wealthy nations who bought up most of the available doses. The United States already controlled most of the vaccine, which was originally developed for smallpox, as part of its bioweapons strategy after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Some public health groups are also criticizing the W.H.O. for not doing more to ensure swift movement on equitable access to tests, treatments and vaccines, after it declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern on July 23. They say the issues echo those seen with Covid, but without any of the mechanisms that were developed to try to right the balance during the co-

Continued on Page A12

A Quiet, Dramatic Blow to Childhood Poverty

By JASON DePARLE

WASHINGTON — For a generation or more, America's high levels of child poverty set it apart from other rich nations, leaving millions of young people lacking support as basic as food and shelter amid mounting evidence that early hardship leaves children poorer, sicker and less educated as adults.

But with little public notice and accelerating speed, America's children have become much less poor.

A comprehensive new analysis shows that child poverty has fallen 59 percent since 1993, with need receding on nearly every front. Child poverty has fallen in every state, and it has fallen by

Broadened Safety Net Drives 59% Decline Over 30 Years

about the same degree among children who are white, Black, Hispanic and Asian, living with one parent or two, and in native or immigrant households. Deep poverty, a form of especially severe deprivation, has fallen nearly as much.

In 1993, nearly 28 percent of children were poor, meaning their households lacked the income the government deemed necessary to meet basic needs. By 2019, before temporary pandemic aid drove it

even lower, child poverty had fallen to about 11 percent.

More than eight million children remained in poverty, and despite shared progress, Black and Latino children are about three times as likely as white children to be poor. With the poverty line low (about \$29,000 for a family of four in a place with typical living costs), many families who escape poverty in the statistical sense still experience hardship.

Still, the sharp retreat of child poverty represents major progress and has drawn surprisingly little notice, even among policy experts.

It has coincided with profound changes to the safety net, which at once became more stringent and

Continued on Page A16



KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Teenager Rules Tennis

Carlos Alcaraz, 19, won the U.S. Open, gained the No. 1 ranking and ushered in a new era. Page D1.

Atlanta D.A. Takes On Crime and a President

By RICHARD FAUSSET

ATLANTA — Fani T. Willis strode up to a podium in a red dress late last month in downtown Atlanta, flanked by an array of dark suits and stone-faced officers in uniform. Her voice rang out loud and clear, with a hint of swagger.

"If you thought Fulton was a good county to bring your crime to, to bring your violence to, you are wrong," she said, facing a bank

Longtime Prosecutor Is Unruffled by Critics

of news cameras. "And you are going to suffer consequences."

Ms. Willis, the district attorney for Fulton County, Ga., had called the news conference to talk about a street gang known as Drug Rich, whose members had just been indicted in a sprawling racketeering

case. But she could have been talking about another crew that she is viewing as a possible criminal enterprise: former President Donald J. Trump and his allies who tried to overturn his narrow 2020 election loss in Georgia.

In recent weeks, Ms. Willis has called dozens of witnesses to testify before a special grand jury investigating efforts to undo Mr. Trump's defeat, including a number of prominent pro-Trump fig-

Continued on Page A15



INTERNATIONAL A4-12

Food Crisis Envelops Pakistan

Monthslong flooding has crippled the agricultural sector as the country reels from double-digit inflation. PAGE A8

Buzzing Taiwan's Defenses

Drones are increasingly testing Taiwan's capacity to respond to China's growing military pressure. PAGE A4

BUSINESS B1-6

It's 'Pretty Loud' in the Office

Some employees who are back in the office are nostalgic for the silence they had at home, especially since in-person perks, aimed at luring people back, can make it harder to concentrate. PAGE B1

Disney Chief Reboots Image

At the D23 Expo in Southern California over the weekend, Bob Chapek, Disney's chief executive since 2020, worked to rebrand himself after a difficult start to his tenure. PAGE B1

OPINION A20-21

Pamela Paul

PAGE A21



NATIONAL A13-17

Somber Remembrances of 9/11

Members of the Biden administration fanned out to honor the nearly 3,000 victims of the 2001 attacks. PAGE A13

Weather Aids in Wildfire Fight

Lower temperatures and higher humidity helped California firefighters confront blazes around the state. PAGE A14

ARTS C1-6

Tales From Canada's Oil Fields

At 21, the cartoonist Kate Beaton went to the tar sand fields of Alberta to get a job. Now she has written a book about the two years she spent there. PAGE C1

Making Art About Abortion

An art taboo of sorts is falling, from the Whitney Museum to the Armory Show to blue-chip galleries. PAGE C1

OBITUARIES A18-19

Lars Vogt, Acclaimed Pianist

Piano technique was a means to expression, not an end in itself, for the musician and conductor. PAGE A18



SPORTS D1-7

Almost Defeating His Past

Baker Mayfield rallied his new team, the Panthers, to a late lead. But his old team, the Browns, still won on the first Sunday of the N.F.L. season. PAGE D2

