



US cutting 'a lot' more than 5,000 troops from Germany

President Donald Trump on Saturday doubled down on Washington's decision to withdraw 5,000 US troops from Germany...

The move follows a spat between Trump and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz...

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said Friday the withdrawal was expected to be completed over the next six to twelve months.

There were 36,436 active-duty US troops in Nato ally Germany as of December 31, 2025...

Trump appears set to punish allies who have failed to back the Iran war or contribute to a peacekeeping force in the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Kyiv hits Russian oil sites

Drones hits port, oil tankers, military ships; five killed in both countries

AGENCIES

Ukraine yesterday said it had hit several Russian ships -- a cruise missile carrier and three shadow fleet tankers -- as both sides fired hundreds of drones in a spree that killed at least five people.

Three were killed in Ukraine, one in Russia and one in Russian-occupied southern Ukraine, according to statements by local officials.

The two neighbours have been firing hundreds of explosive-packed drones at each other on a daily basis throughout the four-year war, as talks to end the conflict have gone nowhere.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday vowed to step up Kyiv's retaliatory strikes on Russian energy sites if Moscow did not halt its invasion.

The Ukrainian leader said his troops had struck a vessel equipped with cruise missiles at the port of Primorsk, in Russia's northwestern Leningrad region.



The region's oil export terminals have been hit several times in recent weeks, knocking out billions of dollars' worth of exports, according to Kyiv.

Zelensky said three of Russia's so-called shadow tankers -- ageing vessels that ferry its sanctioned oil around the world -- were struck, one at Primorsk and two off the southern Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.

He posted black-and-white night-vision footage of a naval drone approaching one tanker at Novorossiysk.

Oil and gas revenues -- boosted by the war in the Middle East -- are critical for Russia's economy and funding its army.

Ukrainian attacks.

The extent of the damage was not immediately clear and Russian officials gave no details.

Russian attacks on Ukraine's southern Odesa region -- a key maritime logistics hub -- killed two people, and one person was killed in the frontline Kherson region.

Russia fired 268 drones and one ballistic missile in the overnight barrage, Kyiv's air force said.

Ukraine's army launched 334 drones at Russia, Moscow's defence ministry said.

Kyiv's attacks killed a 77-year-old man in the Moscow region, which surrounds the capital, and a 15-year-old boy in the Russian-occupied part of Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, the local governors said.

Kyiv calls its attacks on Russia fair retaliation for Russia's nightly barrages of its cities.

Militias kill dozens of Fulani herders

AFP, Kano

A state-backed Nigerian militia, operating alongside the military, killed scores of ethnic Fulani herders in a raid, local sources have told AFP.

The herders were killed in an operation that also involved vigilantes from Benin, just across the border from Niger state, after the herders were accused of being informants for the jihadist group Ansaru, the sources said.

The Nigerian vigilantes from Bussa district raided herding Fulani settlements around Kabe, in neighbouring Borgu, in a massacre that also saw sweeping mass arrests, the sources said.

On Thursday, security personnel went door-to-door in Fulani herding settlements, arresting young men suspected of being informants for the al-Qaeda-linked Ansaru group, shooting those who resisted, the sources said.

"Security personnel killed 41 suspected Ansaru informants in the raids in which many others were arrested," said Ahmad Ali, a community leader from the nearby village of Konkoso.

"It was a joint operation between community vigilantes and those from neighbouring Benin, with the help of Nigerian soldiers," Ali added.

A Nigerian military spokesman declined to comment and said he would seek more details of the alleged incident.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Pope laments violations and honours slain journo

AGENCIES

Pope Leo yesterday marked World Press Freedom Day by condemning persistent violations of media freedom around the world and paying tribute to journalists killed while reporting from conflict zones.

Speaking at the end of his weekly Sunday prayer, in a sun-flooded Saint Peter's Square, the pontiff said the day highlighted both the importance of independent journalism and the growing threats faced by reporters.

"Today we celebrate World Press Freedom Day ... unfortunately, this right is often violated, sometimes in blatant ways, sometimes in more hidden forms," he said.

The pope urged the faithful to remember journalists and reporters who have lost their lives pursuing the truth, particularly in areas afflicted by conflicts.

"We remember the many journalists and reporters who have been victims of war and violence," the pope said.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit Rome and the Vatican this week, an Italian government source said yesterday, weeks after President Donald Trump's stinging criticism of Pope Leo.

Italian media reported that Rubio would meet the US pontiff himself on Thursday, but there was no immediate confirmation of this.



Seoul holds power nap contest

REUTERS, Seoul

Under hazy spring sunshine, hundreds of young Seoulites on Saturday turned up at a park by the Han River at the invitation of the city government to try to do something many overworked South Koreans never get enough of -- sleep.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government staged its third annual spring event, dubbed a power nap contest, from 3:00pm, under a refreshed set of admission requirements for would-be participants: wear outfits befitting either a sleeping beauty or prince, come tired, with a full belly.

For a metropolis that famously runs on 24-hour shopping malls, competitive hustle and iced Americanos, the underlying exhaustion on the lawn was palpable.



palpable.

"Between exam prep and part-time jobs, I survive on three or four hours of sleep a night, patching it up with desk naps during the day," said Park Jun-seok, who showed up draped in the silken, crimson robes of a Joseon Dynasty monarch.

Now in its third consecutive year, the sleep competition underscores a chronic issue for South Koreans. Data show South Korea is one of the most

overworked and sleep-deprived nations among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development members, and, as a consequence, people have some of the fewest sleep hours.

As the clock struck three and eye masks descended across the park, officials went around to measure participants' heart rate to make sure they had a stable reading -- an indicator of deep, peaceful sleep.

The winner of the contest was a man in his 80s.

Hwang Du-seong, a 37-year-old office worker, was a runner-up.

"I was completely drained, having done night shifts often on top of going to work every day, plus I also drive a lot for work. So when I saw the contest, I was determined to sleep to fully recharge amid river breeze, and I'm very happy to be placed in second place, luckily."

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Israel okays deal to buy fighter jets from US

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday approved a multi-billion-dollar deal to acquire two combat squadrons of fighter jets from the United States, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying it would "reinforce" its air superiority.

The purchase includes a squadron of F-35 multi-role stealth fighters from Lockheed Martin and another of F-15A warplanes from Boeing, Israel's defence ministry said.

The plan aims to "ensure Israel's air superiority for decades to come," Defence Minister Israel Katz said in a statement.

"The F-35 and F-15A acquisitions are central to the 'Shield of Israel' plan, which is designed to give the IDF (Israeli military) a lasting qualitative edge," he said.

The F-35, a joint project between the United States and a number of allies, is one of the world's most advanced military aircraft. Israel already operates several dozen of the jets.

Netanyahu said it would bolster Israel's "overwhelming air superiority" but pledged to start building its own weapons and fighter planes.

"Our pilots can reach anywhere in the skies of Iran and are ready to do so, if needed," he said.

"Over the next decade we will add \$118 billion to the defence budget in order to manufacture such weaponry in Israel and not be dependent on foreign suppliers," he said.

"At the same time, we will develop 'blue and white' groundbreaking aircraft. This will change the entire picture," he said, using a term for products developed in Israel.

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