

BBC NEWS

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BBC News of Fiona MacDonald.

A key aide to Vladimir Putin has described talks that the Russian president has held with Donald Trump's main envoys about ending the war in Ukraine as meaningful and extremely frank.

Yuri Ushakov was speaking to reporters. "The conversation lasted more than three hours. It was substantive, constructive, extremely frank and confidential. The Russian side provided a clear and comprehensive assessment of the situation. In particular, note was made of the Russian army's advances in the combat zone. Confidence was expressed that the established objectives would be achieved and naturally the necessity of addressing the root causes of the conflict was underscored."

The U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Mr. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner have reportedly now left Moscow. They're heading for Kyiv for talks on Sunday with President Zelenskyy.

The head of the Kharkiv region in northeastern Ukraine has said three people, including a child, have been killed in a Russian drone attack on a home in the city of Chuhuiv. A number of people have been injured in separate attacks in Zaporizhia.

In Russia, the authorities in the Belgorod region say one person has been killed and one injured in a Ukrainian drone strike.

Iran's military has threatened to carry out more severe retaliatory attacks if Washington continues to strike Iranian ships. The warning came hours after the United States hit three Iranian oil tankers. Peter Hyatt reports.

The Pentagon says its forces permanently disabled one tanker of Kharg Island, Iran's main oil exporting terminal, and another near the port of Jask. It says it destroyed the third vessel in the Gulf of Oman.

It posted video and social media of blasts of the stones of the first two ships and multiple explosions on the vessel it says it destroyed. The Pentagon said Iran had earlier launched a failed ballistic missile attack on a U.S. aircraft carrier and destroyer and it quoted Admiral Bradley Cooper as warning that if the Iranians shoot at two American ships, the U.S. will take out three of theirs.

In Germany, tens of thousands of people have been taking part in demonstrations across Saxony-Anhalt, a day before elections that could for the first time see the far-right AfD win power in one of the country's 16 states.

The biggest rally was held in the state capital Magdeburg where thousands expressed their support for democracy, diversity and solidarity.

This man was among those taking part. "We simply wanted to show that the people of Saxony-Anhalt aren't quite so hopeless after all, but there are still cool people here who tap to the streets, who speak out in support of diversity and respect and who won't just accept whatever might happen here tomorrow."

The AfD or Alternative for Germany has been holding its final campaign rally in the city. Opinion polls suggest the party could win more than 40 percent of the vote.

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Peru has declared a state of emergency in five high-security prisons due to concerns about criminal gangs. The measure allows the military and police to take control of the facilities for 60 days.

The decree was issued by the office of the new right-wing President Keiko Fujimori who promised to tackle crime inside and outside prisons.

A court in Egypt has sentenced 12 people to death including a famous television presenter after they were convicted of manufacturing and dealing synthetic drugs and processing unlicensed firearms. Youssef Taha reports.

The glamorous television presenter Sarah Khalifa is well known all over the Arab world for her program "Mission Impossible" which covers security and crime. She's also a successful film and music producer.

She told the judges at Cairo's Criminal Court that she did not smoke, let alone dealing drugs. The court heard that police see three-quarters of a ton of ingredients used to make drugs worth 40 million dollars from a property used by the group. Nine fellow defendants have been sentenced to life imprisonment while seven were acquitted.

The death sentences can be appealed to a higher court. Khalifa's lawyer has said that she will be doing that.

Reports from the Democratic Republic of Congo say at least 22 people have died in a fire at a wedding hall in Kinshasa. Officials say the fire started at the front of the hall and spread quickly. Several guests were crushed as people tried to escape through the only exit.

Tens of thousands of people have taken part in a protest in Croatia's capital Zagreb against the illegal dumping of waste. The demonstration was one of the country's biggest for years.

The organizers demanded better environmental protections. They want the authorities to clear up a site near the town of Gospić where up to 45,000 tons of waste has reportedly been buried. Campaigners say drinking water is being contaminated.

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