

Lebanon front

A parallel ceasefire in Lebanon is also under strain.

Lebanese state media reported three strikes south of Beirut on Saturday despite a three-week-old ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

An AFP correspondent saw two stricken cars and emergency workers in attendance along a highway that links Beirut with the country's south, 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the capital. The strikes come as Lebanon and Israel, officially at war since 1948, are to hold direct negotiations in Washington next week, which Hezbollah vehemently opposes.

Ukraine, Russia confirm US-brokered three-day truce, prisoner swap

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Russia and Ukraine confirmed on Friday a US-brokered truce and a large prisoner swap over May 9-11, when Moscow celebrates its World War II victory, after trading drone strikes and declaring unilateral ceasefires in the run-up.

US President Donald Trump first announced a three-day truce between the warring sides, saying he hoped it could lead to a long-term deal to end the war.

Russia had previously announced a two-day unilateral ceasefire to mark its WWII victory holiday on May 9. Ukraine earlier stated that it too had offered a truce, but it had been ignored by Moscow.

The truce would also include a mutual swap of 1,000 prisoners each, said Trump, who has struggled to end the four-year conflict he once pledged to solve within a day of taking office last year.

Everyone on hantavirus-hit ship 'high-risk contact', must be monitored

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The World Health Organization said Saturday it considered everyone on board a cruise ship hit with a deadly hantavirus outbreak as "high-risk" contacts who should be actively monitored for 42 days.

There are nearly 150 people on board the MV Hondius at the centre of the outbreak that has killed three people, which is heading towards the waters off Tenerife. "We classify everybody on board as what we call a high-risk contact," WHO's epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention director Maria Van Kerkhove told.

Plane hits and kills pedestrian during takeoff at Denver airport

AFP | Washington, United States

A person who jumped a perimeter fence and was hit by an airplane taking off from Denver International Airport died in the incident, the airport said Saturday.

Frontier Airlines Flight 4345 aborted takeoff after hitting the person at about 11:19 pm Friday night (0519 GMT Saturday), the airport said.

"DEN can confirm that the pedestrian jumped the perimeter fence and was hit just two minutes later while crossing the runway," the statement said.

"The pedestrian is deceased, and is not believed to be an employee of the airport nor have they been identified," it said.

The person hit "was at least partially consumed by one of the engines," ABC News reported citing an unidentified official.

The plane was quickly evacuated and 12 passengers on the flight reported minor injuries;



Frontier Airlines planes are parked at gates in Denver International Airport (DEN) in Denver, Colorado

five were transported to local hospitals, the airport said.

The Airbus A321, bound for Los Angeles, was carrying 224 passengers and seven crew members, according to Frontier.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said that local law enforcement was investigating.

"Late last night, a trespasser breached airport security at Denver Int'l Airport, deliberately scaled a perimeter fence, and ran out onto a runway" and

was struck by the plane "during takeoff at a high speed," Duffy said in a post on X.

"No one should EVER trespass on an airport," Duffy wrote.

The airport has examined the fence line and found it to be intact, it said.

"We're stopping on the runway, we just hit somebody, we have an engine fire... There was an individual walking across the runway," a pilot told air traffic controllers, according to audio from ATC.com.

UK's Starmer vows to 'listen to voters' after election drubbing

AFP | London, United Kingdom

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised yesterday he would "listen to voters" after his Labour party received a historic drubbing in local and regional elections.

Disillusioned voters backed hard-right and nationalist parties in Thursday's ballots -- Starmer's biggest electoral test since Labour ousted the Conservatives in 2024.

"The right lesson is to listen to voters," but it "doesn't mean tacking right or left", Starmer, who has faced calls to resign, wrote in the Guardian newspaper.

The anti-immigrant Reform UK party made gains across England, Scotland and Wales -- though Scottish and Welsh parties took the biggest share of seats in those elections.

With almost all votes tallied, the results are

grim for Labour, particularly in Wales where they lost control of the devolved government for the first time since the parliament in Cardiff was established 27 years ago.

Nationalists Plaid Cymru, which wants Welsh independence in the long-term, is now the biggest party with Reform second and Labour third.

In Scotland, the Scottish National Party remains the biggest party but failed to get a majority -- winning six fewer seats than in 2021.

In England, Reform picked up nearly 1,500 of the 5,000 council seats available and the Greens also fared well, gaining more than 500.

Labour lost almost 1,400 council seats and ceded control of several local authorities -- though results in London were not as bad as predicted.



Naval buildup in Strait

UK sending warship to Middle East ahead of Hormuz mission

AFP | Tehran, Iran

The UK will send a destroyer to the Middle East ahead of any international mission to help protect shipping in the key Strait of Hormuz, its defence ministry said yesterday.

"The pre-positioning of HMS Dragon is part of prudent planning that will ensure that the UK is ready, as part of a multinational coalition jointly led by the UK

40 countries are understood to have agreed to participate in plans for the mission to free up navigation in Hormuz.

and France, to secure the strait, when conditions allow," a ministry spokesperson told AFP.

Britain and France said last month that military plans to secure the Strait of Hormuz were coming together and would succeed in restoring trade flows through the vital passage.

The MoD said deploying HMS Dragon would strengthen the confidence of commercial shipping and support mine clearance

efforts once hostilities end.

At a two-day meeting in London in April involving more than 44 countries, military planners discussed the practicalities of a multinational mission led by the UK and France to protect navigation in the key waterway.

Some 40 countries are understood to have agreed to participate in plans for the mission to free up navigation in Hormuz.

In an incident on Friday, a US fighter jet fired on and disabled two Iranian-flagged tankers that Washington accused of challenging its naval blockade of Iran's ports. The US action prompted Iranian retaliatory attacks.

It came after a flare-up overnight Thursday to Friday in the strait, where Iran is seeking to extract tolls from foreign vessels and wield economic leverage over the US and its allies.



Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115) implementing a maritime blockade against the Iran-flagged crude oil tanker vessel Herby while the latter was attempting to sail toward an Iranian port

Seafarers' anguish: "Are we just bait?" Gulf crews ask

Many of the thousands of seafarers stuck on board ships bottled up in the Gulf for more than two months are trau-

matized by drones and missiles and face grave mental suffering, maritime charities warn.

"They see drones flying, they

see missiles flying, and then we see instances where the ships get hit," said Gavin Lim,

head of the Crisis Response

Network for the Sailors' Society, a UK-based seafarers' charity.

"You can imagine that anxiety

and fear building up. 'Are we just bait? Are we going to be a victim so that someone can make a point?'"