

NATO allies puzzled by Trump's U-turn on sending 5,000 US troops to Poland

HELSINGBORG, May 22 (AP)

NATO allies and defence officials expressed bewilderment on Friday at US President Donald Trump's announcement that he would send 5,000 US troops to Poland just weeks after he ordered the same number of forces pulled out of Europe.

The apparent change of mind came after weeks of statements from Trump and his administration about reducing - not increasing - the American military footprint in Europe.

Trump's initial order set off a flurry of action among military commanders and left allies already doubtful about America's commitment to Europe's security to ponder what forces they might have to backfill on NATO's eastern flank with Russia and

Ukraine.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration said it was reducing levels in Europe by about 5,000 troops, and US officials confirmed about 4,000 service members were no longer deploying to Poland. The dispatch to Germany of US personnel trained to fire long-range missiles was also halted.



But in a post on Truth Social on Thursday, Trump said he would send "an additional 5,000 Troops to Poland," citing his strong ties with Polish President Karol Nawrocki, whom Trump endorsed in elections last year.

"It is confusing indeed, and not always easy to navigate," Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard told reporters at a meeting Friday that she was hosting of her NATO counterparts, including US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

India delivers 20 tonnes of critical vaccine supplies to Afghanistan



Consignments of critical dry materials for BCG, and Tetanus & Diphtheria (Td) vaccines being delivered by India to support Afghanistan's child immunisation programme. (PTI)

KABUL/NEW DELHI, May 22 (IANS)

CONTINUING with its humanitarian support for Afghanistan, India on Friday delivered 20 tonnes of Bacillus Calmette–Guerin (BCG) and Tetanus & Diphtheria (Td) vac-

cines to Kabul to boost immunisation efforts among Afghan children.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal said, "India delivers 20 tonnes of critical dry materials for BCG and Tetanus &

Diphtheria (Td) vaccines to Kabul, to augment Afghanistan's Child Immunisation Programme. More consignments are underway. India is committed to support the friendly people of Afghanistan in the health sector.

India to launch 'smart border' project: Shah

NEW DELHI, May 22 (PTI)

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Government will launch a "smart border" project in the next year to make the 6,000 km fronts with Pakistan and Bangladesh impenetrable and ensure that the "conspiracy" to change the demography of the areas is defeated.

Delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial lecture hosted by the Border Security Force (BSF) here, the Minister also reiterated that the Government will find each and every infiltrator from the country and send them outside India.

K F Rustamji was the first Director General of the BSF after it was raised in 1965.

"I want to assure BSF troops that we will launch this smart border project in the 60th year of its



Union Home Minister Amit Shah felicitates BSF officer Alok Negi during the Rustamji Memorial lecture at Vigyan Bhawan, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI)

raising and we will make the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders impenetrable," Shah said.

The Modi Government, Shah added, has decided to create a "strong security grid" along the Pakistan and Bangladesh fronts

in the next one year. The "smart border" will be aided by technology, drones, radars and smart cameras which will help create an impenetrable border, he told the gathering.

The Minister also urged BSF

troops to ensure that the conspiracy to artificially change the demography of India is defeated. He said current State Governments in Tripura, West Bengal and Assam -- all led by the BJP -- believe in the policy that there should be no infiltration from across Indian borders. His Ministry, Shah added, will soon hold a meeting with the Chief Ministers of these States on the subject of border security.

The Minister added that a high-powered demography mission declared earlier will be announced soon by the Union Government.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday extended his heartfelt congratulations to the all-women mountaineering team of the BSF for scripting history by successfully summiting Mount Everest.

India to host QUAD meet

■ Foreign Ministers to discuss West Asia fallout, Indo-Pacific

NEW DELHI, May 22 (PTI)

THE Foreign Ministers of the QUAD nations will deliberate on the fallout of the West Asia crisis and the prevailing situation in the Indo-Pacific at an India-hosted meeting on May 26.

The New Delhi meeting will be attended by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will preside over the meeting. Rubio, Wong and Motegi are also expected to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, besides holding separate bilateral meetings with Jaishankar.

“In keeping with the QUAD vision for a Free and Open Indo-



Pacific, the Ministers will build on discussions held in Washington DC on July 1, 2025,” the MEA said.

“They will exchange views on advancing QUAD cooperation across priority areas, review progress on ongoing Quad initiatives, and reflect on recent developments in the Indo-Pacific region and other international issues of mutual concern,” it said.

The QUAD, comprising India, the US, Australia and Japan, has emerged as a key grouping largely focusing on peace, security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

India is hosting the meeting in its capacity as the current chair of the coalition. There is no official word yet on the planned meeting.

India's Agni-1 ballistic missile test successful

NEW DELHI, May 22 (PTI)

INDIA on Friday successfully test-fired short-range ballistic missile 'Agni-1' from the integrated test range at Odisha's Chandipur, the Defence Ministry said.

The launch validated all operational and technical parameters, it said.

"The test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces



Command," the Ministry said.

The Agni 1 to 4 missiles have ranges from 700 km to 3,500 km and they have already been deployed.

EC announces RS elections for 26 seats on June 18



NEW DELHI, May 22 (FTI)

THE Election Commission on Friday announced elections for 26 Rajya Sabha seats on June 18 following the retirement of incumbents, including former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Digvijaya Singh, besides two Union Ministers Ravneet Singh and George Kurian.

NDA likely to lose one RS seat, while Cong-led Oppn is set to gain three

In a statement, the EC said the elections for the Rajya Sabha seats will be held in 10 States where 24 incumbents are retiring on different dates beginning June 21 to July 19. Of the total 26 seats where elections are being held, the NDA currently has 18 and the Congress four while one seat is with the JMM and three are with the YSRCP.

The NDA is likely to lose one Rajya Sabha seat in the biennial elections for 26 seats in 12 States across the country, while the Congress-led Opposition is set to gain three. The NDA is likely to get 17 seats in these elections, while the Congress will get five, the JMM two and the TVK one. The NDA currently has 149 MPs in the upper house while the Opposition has 78 and non-aligned regional parties have 17 MPs in the 244-member house.

The Rajya Sabha elections will be held in four seats each in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, three seats each in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, two seats in Jharkhand and one seat each in Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Besides, one seat each in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu will also go to the polls on June 18. The last date for filing of nominations is June 8, according to the EC. In a separate notification, the EC also announced by-elections to fill the vacancies created by the NCP's Sunetra Pawar in Maharashtra and the AIADMK's C Ve Shanmugam in Tamil Nadu following their resignations after they were elected to the State assemblies.

While the NDA is set to bag Pawar's seat, going by its strength in the State Assembly, the TVK is likely to get the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Tamil Nadu going for a by-poll. The tenure of Pawar's seat will be till July 4, 2028 while that for the Tamil Nadu seat will be till June 29, 2028. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP will win all the four states for the Council of States and the BJP will bag all four seats in Gujarat. In Jharkhand, the JMM-Congress alliance is likely to win both the seats, but the BJP which has 21 seats of its own may try to bag one seat with the help of cross-voting by four opposition members.

In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Congress will get one seat each while the BJP will win two seats in each of the states, going by their current numbers.

'Severe heatwave conditions likely to prevail over parts of India'



People cool off at Hawa Mahal in Jaipur. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, May 22 (PTI)

HEATWAVE to severe heatwave conditions are likely to persist over the plains of north-west India, Central and East India, and parts of Peninsular India during the next six to seven days, IMD said on Friday. IMD stated that heatwave conditions are likely in isolated areas of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh from May 22 to May 28.

"Severe heatwave conditions over East Uttar Pradesh and East Madhya

Pradesh are expected during the same period," the IMD said. It added that heatwave conditions are very likely in isolated/some pockets over Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi from May 22 to May 28.

Severe heatwave conditions are predicted in some areas of these regions between May 24 and May 27.

"Heatwave conditions are very likely in isolated/some pockets over Rajasthan during May 22-28, with severe heatwave conditions likely in isolated/some pockets over West

Rajasthan during May 24-28," the IMD said. Parts of Vidharbha, Coastal Andhra, Yanam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Telangana, Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand are likely to witness heat wave or severe heat wave conditions on different dates between May 22 and May 28. Warm night conditions are expected in isolated pockets of Uttar Pradesh and Vidarbha from May 22 to May 24, in Odisha from May 22 to May 26, and in Telangana on May 22 and May 23.