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Then back to being PM'* → G2



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The Guardian

Starmer pledges to make Britain 'battle-ready' with drones and AI

Dan Sabbagh
Kiran Stacey
Peter Walker

Britain will spend an extra £2bn on drones and seek to introduce weapons and tactics developed during the war in Ukraine under a strategic defence review revealed by the government yesterday.

The plan will prioritise cheap

one-way attack craft and more expensive reusable systems, as well as the creation of a drone centre to share knowledge and better coordinate across the armed forces.

John Healey, the defence secretary, told MPs the army would become "ten times more lethal" by combining technologies such as drones and artificial intelligence "with the heavy metal of tanks and artillery".

It was part of a wider commitment

to make the UK "battle-ready" in the words of the prime minister. Keir Starmer argued on a visit to BAE Systems shipyard at Govan in Glasgow that defence had to come above other public services.

Drones have transformed the battlefield in Ukraine, with Moscow and Kyiv's forces now making heavy use of attack and surveillance drones miles beyond the frontline, causing an estimated 70% of casualties.

On Sunday, Ukraine launched coordinated attacks from remotely piloted drones hidden inside trucks aimed at airfields deep inside Russia. Kyiv claimed it had destroyed or damaged 41 Russian aircraft in the innovative long-range attack.

The review said drones were "an essential component of land warfare" now and the army needed to invest in a mix of attack drones, surveillance craft and counter-drone technology.

But critics said remotely piloted drones risked increasing the chance of conflict. Chris Cole, of the research group Drone Wars UK, said that drones "lower the threshold for the use of armed force" and so could "encourage war as the first rather than the last option".

Starmer said the 140-page review was "a blueprint to make Britain safer and stronger, a battle-ready, armour-clad nation" 6 →

Etna erupts Tourists flee huge plumes of grey ash

→ Page 4



▲ Scores of tourists rush to safety in Sicily as ash, gas and rocks spew from Italy's Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe PHOTOGRAPH: @AURELIENPOUZIN/X

Alarm over rise in fake remedies for cancer

Andrew Gregory
Chicago

Cancer patients are snubbing proven treatments in favour of quackery such as coffee enemas and raw juice diets amid an "alarming" increase in misinformation on the web, doctors have said.

Some patients were dying needlessly or seeing tumours spread as a result, oncologists said. They raised their concerns at the world's largest cancer conference in Chicago, the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

Dr Fumiko Chino, a cancer researcher and assistant professor at MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas, co-authored a paper presented in Chicago that said cancer misinformation had "acutely worsened in the past decade".

With more people being diagnosed amid a growing and ageing global population, misleading or false information about cancer had become a significant public health concern, the study said.

While most people trusted doctors, the paper found, more than half of those surveyed 2 →

IDF strikes on schools in Gaza 'deliberate'

Exclusive
Harry Davies
Investigations correspondent

A series of recent deadly airstrikes on school buildings that were sheltering displaced people in the Gaza Strip were part of a deliberate Israeli military bombing strategy, with further schools identified as targets, the Guardian has learned.

At least six school buildings have been struck, reportedly killing more than 120 people, in recent months as part of a targeting effort by the Israeli military.

This has followed a loosening of controls on actions to target Hamas operatives at sites with large numbers of civilians present, according to sources familiar with the strategy.

Yesterday, four people were reportedly killed in the latest Israeli

airstrike on a school turned shelter, in Deir al-Balah in the centre of Gaza. Videos posted on social media appeared to show the aftermath at what was said to be the location of al-Aishiya school.

Announcing the strike, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said, without providing evidence or naming the school, it had bombed a site "used by terrorists" in the area, claiming it had taken steps 4 →

'We deserve better'
Designer of iPhone on
his next AI innovation
 Page 11

'Insectageddon'
Ecologists' horror as
rainforests fall silent
 Page 18



National

Hospital trust faces corporate manslaughter investigation

Josh Halliday

An NHS trust is being investigated on suspicion of corporate manslaughter after the deaths and severe harm of potentially more than 2,000 babies and women in Nottinghamshire.

Police are reviewing more than 200 alleged failures of maternity care at Nottingham university hospitals (NUH) NHS trust but this figure could rise to about 2,500.

NUH is at the centre of the largest maternity inquiry in the history of the NHS, led by the leading midwife Donna Ockenden, who is examining deaths and harm spanning more than a decade at the Queen's medical centre and Nottingham City hospital.

Yesterday, police announced they were investigating possible corporate manslaughter at the trust.

Det Supt Matthew Croome of Nottinghamshire police said the alleged offences related to "circumstances where an organisation has been grossly negligent in the management of its activities, which has then led to a person's death".

He added: "In such an investigation, we are looking to see if the overall responsibility lies with the

organisation rather than specific individuals, and my investigation will look to ascertain if there is evidence that the Nottingham university hospitals NHS trust has committed this offence."

About 2,500 cases of potentially poor care at NUH are being examined by Ockenden and a national team of leading doctors and midwives, whose review is due to conclude in summer 2026.

Jack and Sarah Hawkins, who blew the whistle on the maternity scandal after the stillbirth of their daughter Harriet in 2016 due to multiple failures, called for medics and managers to be individually prosecuted to show that they are not "above the law".

Jack Hawkins, who worked at NUH as a consultant doctor before their daughter's death, called for the trust's maternity services to be closed and alleged the poor care was "ongoing - there's still people coming to harm".

He told the Guardian: "We think the urgent message needs to be sent that you are individually accountable. While we're very grateful that there's a corporate manslaughter [investigation], failures are not caused by the sinks, the doorframes and the building - they're caused by

'Families have raised repeated concerns on maternity safety, only to be ignored'

Nottingham Affected Families Group

the people who turn up to work there and they are above the law."

Hospital bosses initially found "no obvious fault" with Harriet's care at Nottingham City hospital and the couple were told their child had died of an infection. But an external review of the case later found 13 failings and concluded the death was "almost certainly preventable".

Sarah Hawkins, who worked at NUH as a physiotherapist, said they had faced "barrier after barrier, cover-up after cover-up" while demanding answer's over Harriet's death. "I can't describe how traumatic that is," she said. "You can't grieve until you know the truth."

A group representing alleged victims, Nottingham Affected Families Group, said the corporate manslaughter announcement brought "mixed

emotions". They added: "Over many years, families have repeatedly raised concerns over maternity safety, only to be ignored and turned away. Had our concerns been listened to and acted upon, lives could have been saved. No investigation will ever reverse the harm and suffering that thousands of families have endured, but right now, families are feeling an immense sense of vindication."

In a statement, NUH said it was right that the trust took "organisational accountability where we have failed women, families and babies". Nick Carver, the chair, and Anthony May, the chief executive, said: "We are deeply sorry for the pain and suffering caused. We know that for many families this harm and suffering will be lifelong."

They said they were fully committed to the investigations and that since joining the NUH board they had "emphasised the importance of openness, transparency and accountability" but that "there is more to do".

They added: "We know how important the police investigation and independent review are for the families, the trust and our local communities. We hope affected families receive the answers they deserve."

To date, NUH has been fined more than £2.5m after admitting failures of care in the cases of four babies who died shortly after being born. NUH is the first trust to be prosecuted more than once for maternity failings.

It was revealed last year that NUH had paid compensation to more than 134 families, costing the NHS £102m, between 2006 and 2023.

UK's hottest, sunniest spring prompts calls for action on climate crisis

Damien Gayle

Environment correspondent

The UK has recorded its hottest and sunniest spring, prompting warnings yesterday that action was needed to tackle the climate crisis.

Eight of the 10 warmest UK springs have occurred since 2000, and the three hottest have come since 2017. But this spring was particularly warm, with the mean temperature of 9.5C (49.1F) surpassing the long-term climatological average by 1.4C. All four UK nations recorded their highest mean temperature for the season, according to the Met Office.

Alec Hutchings, the environmental charity WWF's chief climate adviser, said: "This new Met Office data is a stark warning that climate change is no longer a distant threat. It's here now and it needs immediate action."

Since the end of February high-pressure systems, often from the Azores or mainland Europe, have lingered over Britain, blocking the normal flow of Atlantic weather fronts that bring damp conditions.

The result was the sunniest spring on record and the fourth sunniest season overall since records began.

The Met Office said there were 653.3 hours of sunshine - 43% above average - beating the record set in 2020 by more than 27 hours.

Sunshine did not just bring heat on land: there was an unusual heatwave in the sea, with UK waters reaching record temperatures for April and May. Some areas were up to 4C warmer than normal.

The lack of rain has left farmers and gardeners struggling. By mid-May, the UK was experiencing its driest spring for a century. Recent rainfall has eased conditions slightly but this spring still ranks as the sixth driest since 1836. The 128.2mm (5in) of rainfall was about 40% below the long-term average.

Dr Emily Carlisle, a Met Office climate scientist, said: "This spring shows some of the changes we're seeing in our weather patterns, with more extreme conditions - including prolonged dry, sunny weather - becoming more frequent."

She added: "The data clearly shows that recent decades have been warmer, sunnier and often drier than the 20th-century average."

653.3

Hours of sunshine this spring: 43% above the average and more than 27 hours longer than 2020's record



Fluttering by
 Ramblers walk among 75 marble butterflies in Penistone Hill country park created by the Pakistani-born artist Meherunnisa Asad as part of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture.



PHOTOGRAPH: DANNY LAWSON/PA