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Ukraine Orders More Evacuations as Russia Steps Up Pressure

By AFP

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Main Directorate of the National Police in Donetsk Region

Ukraine on Thursday ordered more evacuations in the east, from a town close to where Russia's army recently made a swift breakthrough, as Moscow steps up pressure ahead of the U.S.-Russia summit.

"We began the mandatory evacuation of families with children from the town of Druzhkivka," said Donetsk regional military administration head Vadym Filashkin, adding that four more villages near the town were also ordered to evacuate.

He added that 1,879 children were remaining in the settlements.

Earlier on Thursday, Russian forces claimed to have captured the village of Iskra and the small town of Shcherbynivka in Ukraine's Donetsk region, which the Kremlin claimed to have annexed in September 2022.

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Russian forces had on Tuesday swiftly advanced by up to 10 kilometers (six miles) in a narrow section of the front line near the towns of Dobropillia and Druzhkivka.

This was their biggest gain for a 24-hour period in over a year, according to an AFP analysis of data from the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW).

On Wednesday, Ukraine ordered evacuations from Bilozerske, another town not far from where the Russians were advancing.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump are to meet on Friday in Alaska for a summit which the Kremlin said would focus on "the resolution of the Ukraine crisis."

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