

US wants to hold talks with Russia, Ukraine

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that the United States wants to broker a new round of talks with Ukraine and Russia on ending the four-and-a-half-year war and hold it by the end of October.

The US-led peace efforts have been largely stalled with Washington's attention shifted to its war with Iran and as Ukraine says Russia has ramped up its aerial attacks across the war-torn country.

"The American side is currently in contact with Ukraine

and Russia and is proposing to somehow hold a meeting at the technical level in a trilateral format by the end of October," Zelensky told reporters on Sunday.

He said he had spoken with the American negotiators on Saturday.

"I confirmed to them that our side is ready to support this timeline," he added.

Zelensky did not say where the talks would take place but said Ukraine was "open to the Emirates or another country proposed by the American side".

Trump confirms national intelligence chief as new AI czar

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump yesterday confirmed national intelligence chief Jay Clayton as head of a new White House task force on artificial intelligence, amid increasingly vocal warnings from researchers about the technology's potential dangers.

Under Clayton, the new Super Intelligence Force -- Trump's preferred term for artificial intelligence -- will ensure that the United States "continue to lead the world" in AI development, the president posted on his Truth Social platform.

Trump said the force had also been tasked to "protect the interests, and improve the lives of all Americans."

Clayton will become the



Jay Clayton

second person to hold the informal title after venture capitalist David Sacks, who held the role at the start of Trump's second term before stepping down.

Sacks continues to advise the president on AI, as does Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang.

Russian strikes hit Kyiv while Germany's Merz visits

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukraine and Germany have signed a \$1.5-billion weapons deal to help fight the surge in Russian drone attacks, while fresh strikes and air raid sirens greeted Chancellor Friedrich Merz on a solidarity visit yesterday.

The agreement includes combat drone weapons and support for Ukraine's battered energy sector, which Russia is targeting to cut off heating and power during the freezing winter months, Ukrainian

President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on X.

Merz, on a surprise visit to show European support as attacks increase, discovered the new reality of daily life in the Ukrainian capital.

Air raid sirens wailed repeatedly, including as Zelensky showed him the damage to the National Academy of Sciences, which was hit by a Russian attack drone on Monday, killing two.

"We can see the entire pointlessness of this war at this place," noted Merz.

UK Green party adopts 'Zionism is racism' policy

London, United Kingdom

The UK's left-wing Green party on Sunday voted to define Zionism as racism at the party's annual get-together, drawing sharp backlash from British Jewish groups and the Israeli government.

Members of the Green party, which has five MPs in Britain's 650-seat parliament and which enjoyed a boost in recent local and special elections, backed the motion at the party's conference, with 1,022

votes in favour and 813 against. Zionism would be "treated as any other form of racism" and the party supports the establishment of a "single democratic Palestinian State in all of historic Palestine". "This has been a serious and deeply felt debate within our membership," a Green spokesperson said. The Greens have enjoyed a surge in popularity under Zack Polanski, attracting voters dissatisfied with the centre-left Labour government's stance on Israel-Hamas war.

Pro-Imran Khan march starts in Pakistan's northwest

● Authorities have been preparing for weeks for the possible arrival of demonstrators in Islamabad

● PTI has also called for the release of Khan's three sisters, whose arrests last month further heightened tensions.

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

A march protesting against the imprisonment of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan kicked off in northwest Pakistan yesterday after talks to avoid the demonstration stalled.

Authorities have been preparing for weeks for the possible arrival of demonstrators in Islamabad, with the march planned by supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party originally slated for September 27 and then postponed until Sunday.

Videos posted on PTI's official social media showed supporters coalescing in different areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province,



Security personnel gather outside the Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad on August 20, 2026 after Pakistan's Supreme Court ordered to transfer jailed former prime minister Imran Khan to hospital for medical treatment.

which is ruled by the party, and setting off in convoys as part of the "long march".

Sohail Afridi, the chief minister for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said earlier on X that the demonstration in support of Khan would go ahead.

Discontent over Khan's incarceration has mounted in recent months, particularly over the 73-year-old's medical treatment and access to him by doctors and family.

PTI has also called for the release of Khan's three sisters,

whose arrests last month further heightened tensions.

Opposition politician Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said last-minute talks between the government and representatives from PTI were in "deadlock".

Abbas told Geo TV, a popular private news channel, that negotiators had hit an impasse over demands that included access to Khan by his doctor.



Yemen announces military drive to retake all Houthi territory

Yemen's government has struggled to roll back the surge



An armoured vehicle belonging to the Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces is stationed under a tree near to the Jabal Han front west of the city of Taiz

● The statement came just hours after the Houthis cut a vital supply route

AFP | Taiz, Yemen

Yemen's leader announced yesterday the start of a new military operation to retake all territory held by the Houthis, even as the group made fresh gains on the ground, effectively encircling a government-held city.

The announcement sets an ambitious goal for the embattled government, which recently lost large swathes of the country's Red Sea coastline and areas around the Bab al-Mandab Strait -- a chokepoint for international shipping -- after a lightning offensive by the Iran-backed

Houthis.

Yemen's government has struggled to roll back the surge, even with the military support of Saudi Arabia, where the Houthis said they had attacked oil infrastructure in the capital yet again on Sunday.

"I announce today the start of military operations to retake the remaining territories of the republic and extend the authority of the state and its institutions across the entire national territory," Rashad al-Alimi, the head of Yemen's presidential council, said in a statement.

Alimi called on all the armed forces "to begin carrying out their assigned missions, in accordance with the approved plans, until the country is liber-

ated from the grip of the Houthi terrorist militia".

The statement came just hours after the Houthis cut a vital supply route linking the besieged city of Taiz with the government's interim capital Aden, according to four security sources.

The Houthi advance followed days of heavy fighting in and around the city.

"We were informed that the Houthis had taken control of the al-Safiya area, where they cut the main road and took control of the police station," a police source in the area told AFP.

Three sources with the Yemeni military also confirmed Houthi control over the area and the supply route, with traffic along the road halted and the group

now surrounding Taiz city.

The military sources added that fighting in the area was ongoing.

Taiz itself remains under the control of government forces but has long been besieged from the north, east and west by Houthi fighters and remains one of the main fronts in Yemen's long-running civil war.

"They've achieved the military objective of isolating Taiz from Aden, even if they haven't fully taken control of it," Farea Al-Muslimi, research fellow at the Chatham House think-tank, told AFP.

Muslimi also downplayed expectations over what the coming government offensive might accomplish.



The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah, began as a Zaydi Shia revivalist movement in northern Yemen in the 1980s. Their first major armed conflict with the Yemeni government began in 2004. They later captured Yemen's capital, Sana'a, in 2014, and have since controlled large parts of northern and western Yemen.