

## US pressing rivals to end war by June Says Zelensky

AFP, Kyiv  
The United States wants Ukraine and Russia to end their nearly four-year war by June, and has offered to host talks between the two sides in Florida next week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

US-led efforts to end Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II have stepped up a gear in recent weeks, but Moscow and Kyiv remain at odds over the key issue of territory.

Russia, which occupies around 20 percent of its neighbour, is pushing for full control of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region as part of any deal and has threatened to take it by force if talks fail.

But Ukraine says ceding ground will embolden Moscow, and so it will not sign an agreement that fails to deter Russia from invading again.

"The United States has proposed for the first time that the two negotiating teams - Ukraine and Russia - meet in the United States, probably in Miami, in a week's time," Zelensky told reporters in comments made public early yesterday.

"They say that they want to do everything by June," he added.

The US has mediated two rounds of negotiations between the two sides in Abu Dhabi since January, brokering a major prisoner exchange but failing to reach a breakthrough on territory.

Both Moscow and Kyiv said talks have been difficult.

Zelensky has repeatedly expressed frustration that his country is being asked to make disproportionate compromises compared to Russia.

Ukraine has proposed freezing the conflict along the current front lines.

Russia has rejected this and Washington has instead pushed for Kyiv to convert the land it currently controls in the Donetsk region into a "free economic zone" where neither side has military control.



Members of the Canadian diaspora gather in front of the Canadian consulate after its official opening, in Nuuk, Greenland, yesterday. Canada and France, which both oppose US President Donald Trump's claim to Greenland, open consulates in the Danish autonomous territory's capital on Friday, in a strong show of support for the local government. PHOTO: AFP

## Iran nods to more nuclear talks, sets redlines

FM says missile programme 'non-negotiable', warns attacks on US bases if hit

AFP, Paris  
Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday said he hoped talks with the United States would resume soon, while reiterating Tehran's red lines and warning against any American attack.

According to excerpts published on his official Telegram channel during an interview with the Al Jazeera network, Araghchi said that Iran's missile programme was "never negotiable" in Friday's talks in Oman.

He warned that Tehran would target US bases in the region if the US attacked Iranian territory. However, Araghchi also said that despite the talks in Muscat being indirect, "an opportunity arose to shake hands with the American delegation".

He called the talks "a good start", but added that building trust would take time. He said the talks would resume "soon".

US President Donald Trump on Friday called the talks "very good" and pledged another round of negotiations next week.

Despite this, he signed an executive order effective from Saturday that called for the "imposition of tariffs" on countries still doing



business with Iran.

The United States also announced new sanctions against numerous shipping entities and vessels, aimed at curbing Iran's oil exports.

More than a quarter of Iran's trade is with China, with \$18 billion in imports and \$14.5 billion in exports in 2024, according to World Trade Organization data.

Araghchi told Al Jazeera that nuclear enrichment was Iran's "inalienable right and must continue".

"We are ready to reach a reassuring

agreement on enrichment," he said. "The Iranian nuclear case will only be resolved through negotiations."

He also said Iran's missile programme was "never negotiable" because it relates to a "defence issue".

Washington has sought to address Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support for militant groups in the region - issues which Israel has pushed to include in the talks, according to media reports.

Tehran has repeatedly rejected expanding the scope of the negotiations beyond the nuclear issue.

Friday's unprecedented talks between the two arch enemies came amid a major US military buildup in the region in the wake of Iran's crackdown on protests that began in late December, driven by economic grievances.

The negotiations were the first since nuclear talks between Iran and the US collapsed last year following Israel's unprecedented bombing campaign against Iran, which triggered a 12-day war.

During the war US warplanes bombed Iranian nuclear sites.

## RUSSIA OIL DEAL US lifts 25% tariff on Indian goods

AFP, Washington  
US President Donald Trump moved Friday to lift an additional 25 percent tariff he imposed on goods from India over its purchases of Russian oil - a step to implement a trade deal announced this week.

"India has committed to stop directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil," according to an executive order Trump signed.

New Delhi has also said that it will purchase US energy products, "and has recently committed to a framework with the United States to expand defense cooperation over the next 10 years," the order said.

The additional 25 percent US duty will be removed at 12:01 am Eastern Time on Saturday.

The executive order comes days after Trump announced a trade deal to reduce tariffs on India, saying that Indian PM had promised to stop buying Russian oil over the war in Ukraine.

The pact would also see Washington cutting so-called "reciprocal" levies on Indian products to 18 percent, down from a 25-percent level.

The rollout of this reduction is still to come.

Other terms of the agreement include the removal of tariffs on certain aircraft and parts, according to a separate joint statement released Friday by the White House.

The statement added that India intends to purchase \$500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and parts, precious metals, tech products and coking coal over the next five years.

## Make our Epstein testimony public Demand Clintons

AFP, Washington  
Former US president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton are calling for their congressional testimony on ties to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein to be held publicly to prevent Republicans from politicising the issue.



The couple had been ordered to give closed-door depositions before the House Oversight Committee, which is probing the deceased financier's connections to powerful figures and how information about his crimes was handled.

Hillary Clinton will appear for her deposition on February 26, while Bill Clinton will appear on February 27.

House Republicans had previously threatened a contempt vote if the Democratic power couple did not show up to testify.

But holding the deposition behind closed doors, Bill Clinton said Friday, would be akin to being tried at a "kangaroo court."

"Let's stop the games & do this the right way: in a public hearing," the former Democratic president said on X.



Palestinians struggle to receive food at a community kitchen in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. A US-backed plan to end the war in Gaza entered its second phase last month despite unresolved disputes between Israel and Hamas over alleged ceasefire violations and issues unaddressed in the first stage. Gaza, whose borders and access points remain under Israeli control, continues to face severe shortages of food, clean water, medicine and fuel. PHOTO: AFP

## Trump refuses to apologise for racist clip of Obamas as monkeys

AFP, Washington  
President Donald Trump refused to apologise Friday for a video posted on his social media account depicting Barack and Michelle Obama as monkeys, though he said he condemned the post as the White House shifted the blame to staff.

The video shared on Trump's Truth Social account late Thursday night sparked intense US political spectrum, with the White House initially rejecting "fake outrage" only to then blame the post on an error by a staff member.

"I didn't make a mistake," Trump said on Air Force One late Friday

when asked if he would apologise for the post.

Asked if he condemns the racist imagery in the video, Trump replied: "Of course I do."

Democrats slammed Trump as "vile" over the clip of the Obamas - the first Black president and first lady in US history - while a senior Republican senator said the video was blatantly racist.

Near the end of the one-minute-long video promoting conspiracies about Republican Trump's 2020 election loss to Joe Biden, the Obamas were shown with their faces on the bodies of monkeys for about one second.

The video, uploaded late Thursday amid a flurry of other posts, repeated false allegations that ballot-counting company Dominion Voting Systems helped steal the election from Trump.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt initially played down the row, saying the images were "from an internet meme video depicting President Trump as the King of the Jungle and Democrats as characters from The Lion King."

"Please stop the fake outrage and report on something today that actually matters to the American public," Leavitt said in a statement to AFP.



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### Invitation for e-Tender

Memo No. 44.01.0000.057.11.045.25/1360/Betar Date: 05-02-2026

For the financial year 2025-2026 e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following items.

Sl	Description	e-Tender ID	Procurement method	Online tender publication date & time	Online tender closing date & time
1.	Designing, Supplying and Installing of 150-feet 3-Leg Self-Supported Tower.	1223557	OSTETM (One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method)	08 Feb 2026 16:30	02 Mar 2026 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd>).

**The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders.  
If the fund is insufficient/unavailable in that case the tender will be cancelled.**

  
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