WITH TRUMP CALL FOR A DEAL, G7 TURNS THE HEAT ON RUSSIA

Ukraine back in focus as war with Russia stretches beyond World War I

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and US President Donald Trump talking on the sidelines of the G7 summit, in Evian, eastern France | AFP

EVIAN-LES-BAINS

G7 leaders agreed on Tuesday to intensify pressure on Russia to end more than four years of war against Ukraine, with US President Donald Trump saying Moscow should "make a deal". Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joined the summit at the French resort of Evian-les-Bains, with Ukraine seen as holding up well on the battlefield but its cities still the target of deadly Russian attacks in a conflict that has now lasted longer than World War I.

The summit of the G7 group of world powers notably brought Zelensky face-to-face with Trump, who has sought to reach out to Russian President Vladimir Putin but also showed signs of losing patience with Moscow. "Leaders decided today to increase the pressure on Russia through sanctions on gas and oil," a French diplomatic source said after the talks.

The leaders also agreed there "is a dynamic on the ground that benefits Ukraine", added the source. Host President Emmanuel Macron has invited Zelenskyy to stay until the end of the three-day summit on Wednesday so that he can meet Trump and the other G7 leaders. European leaders will be keen to remind Trump of the importance of pushing Russia to accept peace on Ukraine's terms.

"Russia should make a deal" to end the war against Ukraine, Trump said after meeting Zelenskyy. He pointed to the high casualties on both sides in the conflict, the deadliest on European soil since World War II.

"The whole thing is ridiculous. So, yeah, I'm going to do whatever I can," Trump added. Zelenskyy said in a post on X after meeting G7 leaders that Ukraine's priorities were "clear", including increasing the number of air defence missiles, a winter support package and strengthening pressure on Russia. *AFP*

Trump signals to reimpose sanctions on Russian oil

EVIAN-LES-BAINS

The United States could soon reimpose sanctions on Russian oil shipments after Donald Trump and fellow leaders at the Group of Seven summit of major industrialised democracies moved on Tuesday to put the war in Ukraine back on top of their agenda.

The Iran conflict has in recent weeks overshadowed Ukraine, but following his announcement of an agreement to end the 3 1/2-month-old conflict in the Gulf, Trump said he now wants to focus on Ukraine. Trump said Iran will soon be "back in the rearview mirror."

Asked if he would reinstitute sanctions on Russia that were eased to help lower oil prices, Trump said the restrictions can go back in place as more oil moves through the Strait of Hormuz. "Soon we'll be able to do that because the oil is now flowing," Trump told reporters. "We're in a position to do that soon."

The US in March temporarily eased some sanctions on some Russian oil shipments as crude prices sharply increased. The waiver has been extended as the war in the Gulf stretched on. Zelenskyy said Ukraine is serious about peace while Russia toys with world leaders.

"The entire 'Seven' supports Ukraine unanimously today," Zelenskyy said. The Russian side, meanwhile, is failing to show any serious activity toward peace, Zelenskyy said, calling Russia's actions "a game." Zelenskyy said G7 leaders backed Ukraine's call for more Patriot missiles and discussed boosting production to counter Russian attacks on its cities and power grid. *AP*

Iran crisis reveals Southeast Asia's energy vulnerability, says IEA report

BANGKOK

WAR WATCH

The Iran war has exposed major risks for Southeast Asia that could cost the region billions of dollars, if it doesn't diversify sources of energy more quickly, according to an International Energy Agency report released Tuesday.

An overreliance on oil and gas transported through the Strait of Hormuz left the region particularly vulnerable to shocks from the Iran war, a "stark wake-up call" for its energy security, the report says.

It notes that rising sales of electric vehicles, a renewed interest in nuclear power and a boom in rooftop solar and other renewable energy installations show that the war is spurring change.

But more sweeping reforms are needed. Otherwise, Southeast Asia's energy import bill could rise to \$245 billion by 2035, tripling from \$80 billion in 2024, the report warns. "Diversification of energy sources and supply routes is now a central priority," said Fatih Birol, the IEA executive director.

The energy shock sent Southeast Asia into a state of energy triage, leading to higher energy bills and rising inflation. In a likely setback for efforts to phase out dependence on fossil fuels, the conflict has reinforced the need to rely on coal during times of energy crisis, the IEA said.

The war is also furthering plans for nuclear power in Southeast Asia, but yearslong construction and regulatory processes remain.

Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines may be the furthest along with nuclear power plans, but their timelines are uncertain. *AP*

Lebanon welcomes US-Iran accord

BEIRUT

LEBANESE President Joseph Aoun on Monday welcomed the announced US-Iran deal to end the West Asia war during a call from Tehran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi, the Lebanese presidency said. Aoun said he hoped the agreement would be a "positive step towards reducing tensions and opening the door to diplomatic solutions", while Araghchi emphasised "the importance of respecting Lebanon's sovereignty", a statement said.

Iran's news agency IRNA reported that Araghchi spoke with Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Hezbollah. Araghchi briefed them on the details of the agreement with the US "particularly the provisions relating to Lebanon," IRNA reported. *AFP*