

Key agreements at G8 summit

AFP, Tokyo

The Group of Eight industrialised powers wrapped up three days of summit talks here yesterday.

Here are the key points of the agreements of the G8, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States:

Climate Change: G8 leaders agreed on the need for the world to cut carbon emissions blamed for global warming by at least 50 percent by 2050 and for each nation to set its own target for a nearer term.

The statement is a step forward from last year's call to "consider seriously" such long-term cuts. But environmentalists and developing countries denounced the deal as toothless.

African Development: G8 leaders set a five-year deadline to commit 60 billion dollars in funding to help the continent fight disease, including pledging 100 million mosquito nets by 2010 which officials hoped would prevent thousands of deaths from malaria.

The nations renewed a commitment made three years ago to double aid for Africa to 25 billion dollars by 2010 and to look to further assistance after 2010.

Food Price Crisis: G8 leaders expressed "serious concern" about rising food prices. They called on nations with sufficient food stocks to release some of them to help others cope with soaring prices and said it was "imperative" to remove export restrictions.

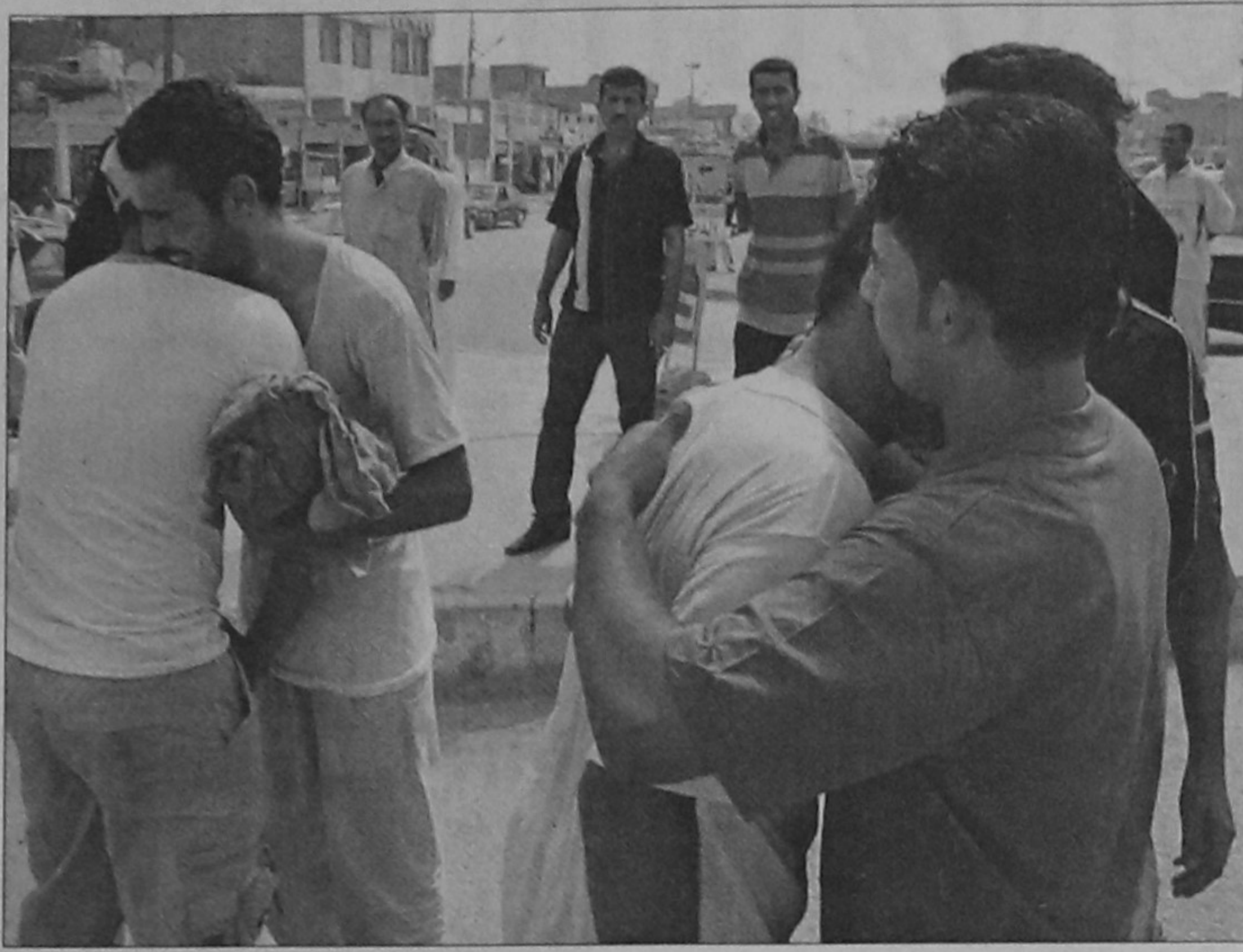
Oil: G8 leaders called for an increase in oil production and refining capacities to help rein in soaring crude prices.

WTO Trade Talks: The G8 vowed to resist protectionist pressures and expressed "strong will" to work toward a breakthrough in free trade talks.

Zimbabwe: G8 leaders voiced "grave concern" about the violence-marred re-election last month of President Robert Mugabe. They warned of further action including financial measures against individuals behind the violence and recommended a UN special envoy.

Iran: G8 leaders urged Iran to end its uranium enrichment activities in line with UN Security Council resolutions and called on Tehran to respond positively to international mediation.

North Korea: G8 leaders urged North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and cooperate in the verification of its dossier of nuclear programmes. In a key concern for Japan, the G8 leaders also urged progress in a row over North Korea's abductions of Japanese civilians in the 1970s and 1980s.



Newly-freed detainees are welcomed by their relatives in Baquba, 45-km from Baghdad. Iraqi police from restive Diyala province released 24 detainees from a prison in Baquba yesterday.

India seeks release of workers arrested over UAE riot

AFP, Dubai

United Arab Emirates police arrested more than 3,000 mostly Indian workers after a dining room riot at a construction site in which a manager, security guards and the workers were beaten up, India's ambassador said yesterday.

The ambassador, Talmiz Ahmad, said that the Indian embassy in Abu Dhabi was now seeking the release of those not involved in the riot and had made an official approach to the government.

"A total of 3,147 mostly Indian workers were arrested after a small group had a violent altercation in the dining room with the mess manager" at a construction site in the northern emirate of Ras al-Khaimah on Friday evening, the diplomat told AFP by telephone from the capital Abu Dhabi.

"They beat up the manager and security guards, and they were also beaten up. The police were called," he said.

"We have informed the UAE government officially through a note and unofficially that while we totally condemn violence, we believe that people not involved in

the violence should be released immediately," the envoy said.

Ahmad said the workers were being held in prisons in several of the seven emirates making up the UAE.

Indian diplomats have not had access to the detainees, but sent a fact-finding team to the site of the riot and had spoken to managers of the company that employs the workers and police, he said.

"We have offered to help identify those involved in the violence," he said, adding that the embassy was seeking to meet the interior minister and undersecretary over the issue.

He said there were several versions of what sparked the violence.

"We heard that the workers were complaining about the quality of the food. We also heard that they were complaining that managers have a different mess. (Another theory is that) the workers were intoxicated," Ahmad said.

The violence is the latest to hit construction and other working sites in the UAE, an oil-rich Gulf country in the midst of an economic boom where hundreds of thousands of mostly Asian low-paid labourers are employed.

The protests, which have multiplied since last year despite a ban on public protests, have been mainly over low or withheld pay and poor living conditions.

Indians have been involved in several of the protests. In February, the local press reported that a court in the emirate of Dubai sentenced 45 Indian construction workers to six months in jail followed by deportation over a violent protest to demand wage increases.

But Ahmad said he did "not see any broad pattern in these grievances... I believe that in such episodes, only small numbers are involved."

Bomb attacks kill 14 in Iraq

AFP, Mosul

At least 14 people were killed in bomb attacks yesterday, including a suicide bombing against an Iraqi general who escaped unharmed, the officer and security officials said.

A suicide bomber rammed his explosives-filled car against the convoy of General Riyadh Jalal Taoufik, the head of the security operations in Iraq's main northern city of Mosul and its surrounding province of Nineveh.

"The bomber drove his car into my convoy in the Al-Faisalya neighbourhood of east Mosul," general Taoufik told AFP.

"When my guards tried to arrest him, he detonated his car. Seven people were killed, including five civilians," he said, adding that 19 people were wounded. The US military said "eight Iraqi civilians killed, 33 civilians were wounded and 4 Iraqi soldiers were wounded" in what it said was a dual car bomb attack against the general.

US forces claim that Mosul, the third largest city of Iraq, is the last urban bastion of al-Qaeda.

The US and Iraqi forces are currently engaged in a military crackdown in Mosul that began on May 14.

US MARINES COMMANDER SAYS

400 Afghan insurgents killed since late April

AP, Kabul

A US Marines commander said yesterday his troops have killed 400 insurgents in southern Afghanistan since late April.

Col Peter Petronzio, the commander of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, said the figure came from the governor of the southern Helmand province, where his troops have been deployed since late April.

Some 2,200 US Marines moved into the town of Garmser in Helmand province to clean the area of insurgents.

Helmand province is the world's

largest opium poppy growing region, the main ingredient in heroin. It is also the area with the highest level of insurgent activity in the country.

After months of fighting around Garmser, Petronzio said the area is not yet secure but is more stable.

"The Taliban proved they wanted to fight for Garmser and we took the fight to them," he told a news conference in Kabul.

Petronzio said Nato and Afghan forces are committed to completing their mission in an area that is an important gateway for insurgent fighters smuggling weapons from Pakistan. The Marines will be

replaced by British troops this fall. "If the Taliban are waiting for us to leave, they will have a very long wait," he said.

Meanwhile, the top Nato commander here told The Associated Press in an interview this week that rockets and mortars fired from militants in Pakistan at US and Afghan border outposts in Afghanistan have spiked in the last month.

"We have seen an increase in the eastern part of Afghanistan of cross-border indirect fires coming into some of our, not only our but Afghan" outposts, said McKiernan, who took command of the 40-

nation International Security Assistance Force mission last month.

But McKiernan said that US and Nato forces have been returning fire.

"Of course our presumption is that the threat feels safer firing (from) across the border. I'm not sure that's the case, that they're any safer, because we do return those fires, coordinated with the Pak military," McKiernan said.

US troops have fired artillery and used airstrikes to hit militants inside Pakistan. The militants use that country's lawless border areas as a base for staging their attacks against Afghan and foreign troops here.

Russian President warns US on missile shield

AFP, Tokyo

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev warned yesterday that he would consider countermeasures if the United States goes ahead with a plan to build a missile defence shield in eastern Europe.

Medvedev said a deal on the missile plan signed this week between the United States and the Czech Republic "offends us greatly."

"Russia isn't going to get hysterical but will be studying countermeasures," Medvedev told reporters after a summit of Group of Eight leaders including US President George W. Bush in the northern Japanese town of Toyako.

Washington says it needs to base interceptor missiles in former Soviet bloc states to form a shield to stop possible attacks by states like Iran or North Korea. But Russia has seen the move as an affront.

"We have stressed numerous times that issues of European security should be settled in a different way," Medvedev said.

Moscow had offered joint Russian-NATO sites to track any missile threats.

"Unfortunately there was no reaction to that. Our negotiations were rather weak and led to nothing," he said.

Report from Sofia says: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed disappointment here yesterday at Russia's reaction to Washington's plans to install part of a missile defence shield in eastern Europe.

"I'm sorry to say it was predictable, if disappointing," given all the effort both she and US Defense Secretary Robert Gates had made to ease Russian concerns about the project, Rice said at a news conference.

Earlier, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had warned that

he was considering countermeasures if the United States goes ahead with plans for a missile defence shield in Poland and the Czech Republic.

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Rice was in Sofia to receive a medal for her role in obtaining the release a year ago of Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor jailed in Libya.

During her brief stop, she met with Foreign Minister Ivaylo Kalfin, Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev and President Georgy Parvanov.

Militants surround Pak police station

AFP, Peshawar

Around 200 pro-Taliban militants surrounded a police station in restive northwest Pakistan yesterday to demand the release of suspected extremists, police said.

The tense standoff was triggered after police and paramilitary forces patrolling in Hangu district of the Northwest Frontier Province arrested seven suspected militants, local police station chief Jehangir Khan told AFP.

"There are about 35 police personnel in Doaba police station and the armed Taliban have surrounded the building from all directions," Khan said, adding that the seven arrested had been shifted to another station.

The official said police reinforcements have been called in while a jirga, or committee of local elders, was making efforts to resolve the matter amicably.

Hangu district, which has a history of violence between minority Shiite and majority Sunni sects, is close to tribal areas bordering Afghanistan where pro-Taliban militants are active.

Israel to build new homes in east Jerusalem

AFP, Jerusalem

An Israeli commission has approved the building of 920 new homes in occupied east Jerusalem, the municipality said yesterday, in a new blow to shaky peace talks with the Palestinians.

"The district commission has approved for construction 920 housing units in Har Homa," a statement said, referring to a neighbourhood in east Jerusalem, known in Arabic as Jabel Abu Ghneim, that has more than 10,000 residents.

The Har Homa project is part of a plan to build some 40,000 new homes over the next decade in neighbourhoods in both east and west Jerusalem, that the housing minister approved in June, a ministry official told AFP.



Sunni Muslim gunmen walk together after clashes in the Bab al-Tabbaneh district in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli yesterday. Two people were killed and 41 wounded in overnight clashes between rival sectarian camps in the port city, a security official said.

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Sealed Bids are invited for "ICT Equipment" from authorized/ certified vendors with the detailed specification and price. The detailed bid documents are available on the website: http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php Hardcopy of specifications are also available at UNDP-CHTDF Office, Rangamati.

Submission of Bid: The envelope should state "Quotation for CHTDF ICT Equipment" and addressed to the Operations Manager, UNDP-CHTDF, Rajbari Road, Rangamati. The selection of Bids will be done based on the UNDP procurement rules and regulations and only the successful bidder(s) will be contacted. However, UNDP reserves the right to accept or reject any bid(s) without assigning any reasons whatsoever. Bids must be submitted before **16:30 hrs on 27 July 2008.**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh, seeks proposals from interested and well qualified organizations to Design and implement a comprehensive, practical, evidence-based training, to a large pool of local leaders or responsible individuals that will ensure the effective design and implementation of sustainable and effective systems for successful management of rodent pests at local level of CHT.

The solicitation documents have been uploaded on the UNDP website <http://www.undp.org.bd/proc.php>.

The deadline for submission of RFPs will be 5 p.m., 24 July 2008