



(Left, clockwise) US President Joe Biden, Australia's PM Anthony Albanese, Japan's PM Fumio Kishida and India's PM Narendra Modi hold a Quad meeting on the sidelines of the G7 summit yesterday; World leaders from G7 and invited countries pose for a family photo during the Leaders' Summit; Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and French President Emmanuel Macron speak in Hiroshima during the summit yesterday.



PHOTO: REUTERS

PAKISTAN POLITICAL CRISIS HRW calls on govt to 'respect rights'

DAWN ONLINE

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) yesterday called on the Pakistani government to uphold human rights while prosecuting the "more than 4,000 people" arrested in the wake of violent protests that followed former premier Imran Khan's arrest on May 9.

In a statement, HRW Associate Asia Director Patricia Gossman said, "The Pakistani authorities should end their arbitrary arrests of political opposition activists and peaceful protesters."

"Anyone committing violence should be appropriately charged," she said in the statement, adding that the due process and rights must be respected, she said in the statement.

"The authorities should display restraint and respect for human rights and the rule of law," Gossman said. "Fundamental guarantees of peaceful protest and due process should not become casualties of Pakistan's political conflict."

Highlighting concerns about further violence between the police and PTI supporters, the HRW said, "In dispersing violent assemblies, firearms may only be used when using less harmful means are not practicable, and only to the minimum extent necessary."

It also mentioned the United Nation's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to call on the government to display restraint.



IMPACT OF GENRATIVE AI G7 calls for 'responsible' use To launch discussions, working group

AFP, Hiroshima

The world must urgently assess the impact of generative artificial intelligence, G7 leaders yesterday, announcing they will launch discussions this year on "responsible" use of the technology.

A working group will be set up to tackle issues from copyright to disinformation, the seven leading economies said in a final communique released during a summit in Hiroshima, Japan.

Text generation tools such as ChatGPT, image creators and music composed using AI have sparked delight, alarm and legal battles as creators accuse them of scraping material without permission.

Governments worldwide are under pressure to move quickly to mitigate the risks, with the chief executive of ChatGPT's OpenAI telling US lawmakers this week that regulating AI was essential.

"We recognise the need to immediately take stock of the opportunities and challenges of generative AI, which is increasingly prominent across countries and sectors," the G7 statement said.

"We task relevant ministers to establish the Hiroshima AI process, through a G7 working group, in an inclusive manner... for discussions on generative AI by the end of this year," it said.

"These discussions could include topics such as governance, safeguard of intellectual property rights including copyrights, promotion of transparency, response to foreign information manipulation, including disinformation, and responsible utilisation of these technologies."

The new working group will be organised in cooperation with the OECD group of developed countries and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), the statement added.

On Tuesday, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman testified before a US Senate panel and urged Congress to impose new rules on big tech.

He insisted that in time, generative AI developed by his company would one day "address some of humanity's biggest challenges."

G7 Bloc wants 'constructive, stable' relations with China Warns on 'militarisation'; Beijing lodges 'stern' complaint over statement

AGENCIES

G7 leaders yesterday warned China over its "militarisation activities" in the Asia-Pacific region but said the bloc also wanted "constructive and stable relations" with Beijing.

In a final communique issued at a summit in Hiroshima, the nations laid out a raft of concerns about China's economic and military activities, reports AFP.

But they also sought to keep the door open to cooperation and avoid further inflaming tensions between the world's second largest economy and the grouping of major Western powers plus Japan.

Meanwhile, China firmly opposes the G7 joint statement out of Hiroshima and has complained to summit organiser Japan, the Chinese foreign ministry said.

The ministry said that the G7, disregarding China's concerns, had attacked it and interfered in its internal affairs, including Taiwan, the ministry said in a statement.

China has expressed its strong dissatisfaction and has lodged stern representations with summit host Japan, the statement added, according to AFP.

The Group of Seven in their statement said, "We stand prepared to build constructive and stable relations with China, recognising the importance of engaging



candidly with and expressing our concerns directly to China."

"Our policy approaches are not designed to harm China nor do we seek to thwart China's economic progress and development," the statement continued, adding that the G7 countries are not "decoupling or turning inwards".

Still, the language made clear the bloc's wide-ranging concerns about Beijing's willingness to deploy trade measures in diplomatic disputes and G7 determination to untangle sensitive supply chains from Chinese influence.

"Economic resilience requires de-risking and diversifying," the communique said, pledging to "reduce excessive dependencies in our critical supply chains".

The bloc warned against China's "militarisation" in the South China

Sea and repeated that "peace and stability" in the Taiwan Strait is "indispensable" to global security.

The countries urged China to use its influence with Russia "to stop its military aggression, and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Ukraine".

They warned that countries attempting to use trade as a weapon would face "consequences", sending a strong signal to Beijing over practices Washington says amount to economic bullying, reports Reuters.

"We are not decoupling or turning inwards. At the same time, we recognise that economic resilience requires de-risking and diversifying," they said. "A growing China that plays by international rules would be of global interest."

Everest is 'dry, more rocky' Says Britain's record holding climber

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Mount Everest is losing snow and turning "dry and rocky", British climber Kenton Cool, who made his 17th ascent of the world's highest peak this week, the most by a foreigner, said yesterday.

The 49-year-old Cool, who climbed the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak for the first time in 2004, said the giant mountain appears to be drying now.

"If you go back to early mid-2000s there used to be a lot of snow," he told Reuters in an interview in Kathmandu after returning from his record-setting expedition which was confirmed by Nepali and hiking officials this week.

"A general trend of the mountain is to be more rocky and less snow... But it changes year on year."

Cool said he had never seen the types of rock falls he saw on the Lhotse Face, along the route to the Everest summit, before.

"That shows how dry the mountain is now... I think that is because of the lack of precipitation, a lack of snowfall. It could be global warming or any environmental change of some sort," he said.

Climate scientists say the earth's temperature has increased by an average of 0.74 degrees Celsius over the past 100 years, but warming across the Himalayas has been greater than the global averages.

Officials have said the average temperature in Nepal was rising by 0.06 degrees Celsius annually, due in part to its location between China and India, two of the world's heaviest polluters.

Also, this week, a 53-year-old Nepali guide, Kami Rita Sherpa, improved his own record of most summits after scaling Everest for the 27th time.

Cool said his 17th ascent might not be the last and he would return to the mountain next year.



Russia's Wagner claims Bakhmut

'Situation critical,' Ukraine says, denies city has fallen

REUTERS

Russia's Wagner private army claimed yesterday to have finally captured the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut after the longest and bloodiest battle of the war, while Kyiv denied the city had fallen though it called the situation there critical.

If confirmed, the announcement by Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin that his troops had finally pushed the Ukrainians out of the last built-up area inside the city would amount to claiming Moscow's first big prize for more than 10 months.

Prigozhin, who has repeatedly denounced Russia's regular military for abandoning ground captured earlier by his men, said his own forces would now pull out of Bakhmut in five days to rest, handing the ruins of the city over to the regular military.

"Today, at 12 noon, Bakhmut was completely taken," Prigozhin said in a video in which he appeared in combat fatigues in front of a line of fighters holding Russian flags and Wagner banners. "We completely took the whole city, from house to house."

Ukrainian military spokesperson Serhiy Cherevatyi told Reuters: "This is not true. Our units are fighting in Bakhmut."

Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar reported "heavy fighting in Bakhmut. The situation is critical," she said on the Telegram messaging service.

"As of now, our defenders control some industrial and infrastructure facilities in the area and the private sector."

Whether the Ukrainian forces have left Bakhmut or not, they have been slowly pulling back inside it, to clusters of buildings on the city's western edge.

But meanwhile, to the north and south, they have made their most rapid gains for six months in the surrounding area, seizing swathes of territory from Russian troops.

Russia has acknowledged losing some ground around Bakhmut in the past week, while denying assertions by Prigozhin that the flanks around the city guarded by regular troops have collapsed.

Kyiv says its aim in Bakhmut has been to draw Russian forces from elsewhere on the front into the city, to inflict high casualties there and weaken Moscow's defensive line elsewhere ahead of a planned major counteroffensive.

"Wagner troops climbed into Bakhmut like rats into a mousetrap," said Oleksander Syrskyi, commander of Ukraine's ground forces.



Founder of Wagner private mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin makes a statement as he stand next to Wagner fighters in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Bakhmut, Ukraine, in this still image taken from video released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS