

G7 hammers China over Russia ties, 'harmful' trade

AFP, Bari

G7 leaders meeting in Italy yesterday hardened their tone against China, warning Beijing to stop sending weapons components to Russia and play by the rules on trade, according to a draft summit statement.

China has been a key focus of the Group of Seven talks in Puglia, amid souring trade relations between Beijing and the West and concerns that its supplies of equipment to Moscow are fuelling Russia's war in Ukraine.

"We call on China to cease the transfer of dual-use materials, including weapons components and equipment, that are inputs for Russia's defence sector," according to a draft statement seen by AFP.

The Group of Seven also took aim at what it called "dangerous" incursions by China in the contested



South China Sea, where worries of a military escalation between Beijing and its neighbours are rising.

"We oppose China's militarisation, and coercive and intimidation activities in the South China Sea," the statement read.

After a first day dominated by Ukraine, US President Joe Biden and the leaders of Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Britain and host country Italy turned their focus to the world's second-largest economy, a superpower whose oversized influence on geopolitics and global trade cannot be underestimated.

"G7 countries are on the same page vis-a-vis China," a Japanese government source told AFP.

Thursday's talks, attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, were marked by a strong show of G7 support for Kyiv, with an agreement to use profits from frozen Russian assets to provide a new \$50-billion loan to Ukraine.



A Palestinian man carries an injured child following an Israeli strike in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli forces targeted a house in Deir el-Balah and killed at least two Palestinians. Four others, including children, were critically injured in the strike. PHOTO: REUTERS

Putin demands more Ukraine land to end war

Kyiv, Nato swiftly reject Russian peace proposals

AGENCIES

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday Russia would end the war in Ukraine only if Kyiv agreed to drop its Nato ambitions and hand over the entirety of four provinces claimed by Moscow, demands Kyiv swiftly rejected as tantamount to surrender.

On the eve of a conference in Switzerland to which Russia has not been invited, Putin set out maximalist conditions wholly at odds with the terms demanded by Ukraine, apparently reflecting Moscow's growing confidence that its forces have the upper hand in the war.

He restated his demand for Ukraine's demilitarisation, unchanged from the day he sent in his troops on February 24, 2022, and said an end to Western sanctions must also be part of a peace deal. He also repeated his call for

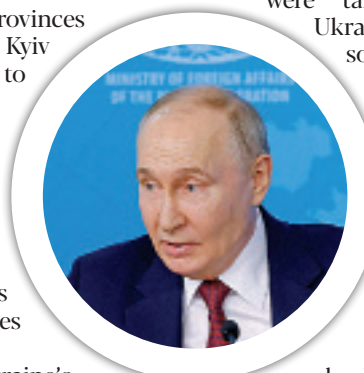
Ukraine's "denazification", based on what Kyiv calls an unfounded slur against its leadership.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak told Reuters that Putin's conditions were tantamount to proposing that Ukraine admit defeat and sign away its sovereignty.

There was "no possibility to find compromise" on the basis of what Putin had proposed, he said.

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg slammed conditions set out by Putin for initiating Ukraine peace talks, calling them a proposal for "more aggression, more occupation," reports AFP.

The timing of Putin's speech was clearly intended to pre-empt the Swiss summit, billed as a "peace conference" despite Russia's exclusion, where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky seeks a show of international support for Kyiv's terms to end the war.



Heavy rain, floods kill 6 in Sikkim

2,000 tourists stranded

REUTERS, Guwahati

At least six people have been killed this week and 2,000 tourists stranded in India's Himalayan state of Sikkim in landslides and floods after heavy rainfall, officials said yesterday.

Another four people have been killed in Nepal's Taplejung district, which borders Sikkim, after a landslide following rains swept away the house in which they were sleeping, officials there said.

Heavy rains triggered landslides at several locations in Mangal district in Sikkim.

S Africa's ANC brings opposition into government

REUTERS, Cape Town

The African National Congress and its largest rival, the white-led, pro-business Democratic Alliance, agreed yesterday to work together in South Africa's new government of national unity, a step change after 30 years of ANC rule.

Once unthinkable, the deal between two sharply antagonistic parties is the most momentous political shift in South Africa since Nelson Mandela led the ANC to victory in the 1994 election that marked the end of apartheid.

"Today, South Africa is a better country than it was yesterday. For the first time since 1994, we've embarked on a peaceful and democratic transfer of power to a new government that will be different from the previous one," DA leader John Steenhuisen said in a televised address.

"From today, the DA will co-govern the Republic of South Africa in a spirit of unity and collaboration," he said, adding that multi-party government was the "new normal".

"We will be supporting President Cyril Ramaphosa in his election for the president of the republic of South Africa," Steenhuisen said, during a pause in the opening session of South Africa's seventh parliament since the advent of post-apartheid democracy.

Earlier, Chief Justice Raymond Zondo had opened the first sitting, swearing in MPs in batches ahead of planned votes on the election of a Speaker, Deputy Speaker and the President.

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Junta orders evacuations around Sittwe

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta has ordered thousands of people living outside a state capital threatened by ethnic rebels to leave their homes and head into the city, residents said yesterday.

Sittwe city is one of the few holdouts for junta troops in western Rakhine state, where the military has lost swathes of territory to the Arakan Army (AA) in recent weeks.

The AA, which says it is fighting for autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine population, has vowed to capture Sittwe, home to an India-backed deep sea port and around 200,000 people.

Residents of 15 villages around Sittwe were given five days to leave their homes and move to the state capital, a resident of one of the villages told AFP.

"The army threatened to shoot and kill if they found someone after the deadline" which expires today, she said, requesting anonymity due to fear of arrest.

'Ananda' makes them smile

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games, art projects, and interactive sessions, offering them a rare opportunity for social interaction and physical activities.

Ananda is an initiative of "Compassionate Korail," a community palliative care centre run by the Palliative Care Society of Bangladesh (PCSB) since 2019.

This centre, also known as "Momotamoy Korail," offers home-based palliative care, essential medicines, assistive devices, and monthly food supplies to 304 patients, including 27 children, with conditions like cerebral palsy, congenital heart defects, cancer, and Down syndrome.

Dr Noorjahan Begum, senior specialist at Evercare Hospital and team leader at Momotamoy Korail, highlighted the struggle of children with cerebral palsy and other genetic disorders.

"Without proper medical support, they often remain bedridden and suffer continuous bouts of epilepsy. Meanwhile, limited access to medication exacerbates their conditions, resulting in severe physical disabilities such as rigid limbs due to lack of therapy."

Her study on caregivers for children with cerebral palsy in Korail found that over 97 percent of the caregivers are women, with 88.6 percent being mothers and 8.6 percent grandmothers. Around 80 percent reported that other family members rarely assist in caregiving.

Prolonged caregiving to children with mobility impairments significantly reduce the quality of

life for primary caregivers, leading to higher levels of stress and conflict, which in turn impacts the quality of care and family relationships.

Realising their need for assistance, Momotamoy Korail proposed bringing the children to the centre for a few hours every week to provide relief to their caregivers and also give the children a change in environment.

After multiple meetings with guardians and community volunteers, the Ananda programme started in February 2023.

Every Saturday since then, all the 27 children, four at a time, are brought to the centre.

Every child receives personalised care from PCAs and volunteers, supported by a dedicated caretaker who ensures their hygiene and provides meals, including nutritious hotchpotch and fruit snacks.

"We maintain a registry book for parents to sign when dropping off and picking up their children. Feedback has been positive so far, and participation is entirely voluntary," said Dr Noorjahan.

AH Sabbir, a physiotherapist at the centre, noted positive outcomes, stating, "Many babies who previously didn't receive physiotherapy are now actively participating as the toys, games, nursery rhymes make it more engaging for them."

"We've seen improvements in their motor development; children with weak neck control can now hold their heads up, those who were unable to sit properly can now do so, and some are even learning to walk. Additionally,

their cognitive development is progressing. Initially, they would sit quietly in fear, but now they have overcome that and interact with each other with ease."

Samia's mother, Fatema Begum, was reluctant at first to send her daughter to the centre due to concerns of unfamiliarity and the constant need for assistance.

"But after I saw familiar PCAs taking care of them and dedicated individuals for cleaning, I agreed. In the beginning, I would go and check on her often out of worry. But now, I have complete trust. This allows me to get with household chores and errands."

"It's great to see my daughter enjoying herself with others and making progress with her therapies. Parents like us, who struggle to provide even the basics, could never afford such facilities for our children."

Dr Noorjahan highlighted the primary challenge - shortages in human resource, as it requires a constant supply of dedicated volunteers.

Dr Nezamuddin Ahmed, former chairperson of the palliative medicine department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and an advisor at PCSB, said, "Ananda might seem like a drop in the ocean, but it showcases how community initiatives can make a big difference for children with cerebral palsy, or other incurable chronic health issues, especially when government resources are limited."

"We should customise services to fit local needs rather than adopting models from wealthier nations, considering our lower per capita health expenditure."

Border killings continue despite BSF promise

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and stronger stance against it."

ASK data show 31 people were killed in BSF shootings last year, up from 23 in 2022. In 2021, 18 were killed in BSF firings.

The latest border killing was reported on June 9 when a Bangladeshi was shot dead by BSF along Jamtala border in Cumilla's Burichang upazila. Bangladesh shares a 4,096km long border with India, the fifth-longest land border in the world. A large part of the border remains unfenced, while some border points are known for illegal entry and smuggling of various items, including drugs and cattle.

BSF often claims that its members

open fire in self-defence, although this has been rejected by rights bodies and victims' families who say that is not always the case.

Kirity Roy, secretary of Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), a rights organisation based in West Bengal, told The Daily Star that they found evidence that in several cases the BSF's self-defence claim was fictitious.

According to the MASUM's April report, a Bangladeshi youth was killed in BSF firing near Lalmonirhat border on March 25, while he was smuggling cattle into Bangladesh. BSF personnel first shot him with a shotgun and then with a rifle.

At that time, 19-year-old Liton Miya

was 75m inside Indian territory. He was hit by pellets and bullets on his chest and abdomen. But in the BSF complaint, they claimed that they did not fire to kill Liton.

In its March report, the rights body mentioned another Bangladeshi Rabiul Islam alias Tuklu, 34, was killed by BSF personnel along Dahagram border of Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila on January 28.

It was reported that on his head, Rabiul was trying to smuggle a bag containing 50kg of sugar into Bangladesh. He was alone as stated by villagers. It is evident that he was not in the position to attack BSF members, MASUM said in the report.

Prices go up ahead of Eid

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Tk 3,300-4,200 per kg, up from Tk 3,200-4,000.

Rahim Sheikh, a trader at Duaripara Bazar in the capital's Mirpur, said prices of essential commodities increased in the wholesale market, and this had an impact on the retail market.

"Consumers will see retail prices fall if wholesale prices fall first. But for that to happen, the government needs effective monitoring of the supply chain," he said.

Riaz Uddin, who was shopping at Kawran Bazar, said the high prices of essentials had forced him to cut down on monthly shopping.

week, when I go to the market, I see that the price has increased. This is intolerable," she said.

"Due to increases in prices, I am buying less than necessary," she added.

"Every year, the prices of some products automatically increase before Eid. The government should investigate this matter seriously. Common people are not doing well at all," she lamented.

Sales ahead of Eid ul-Azha this year are far lower than last year, Monwar Hossain, a retail trader of Yasin General Store at Kawran Bazar, one of the largest kitchen markets in the capital.

PRODUCTS NAME	YESTERDAY'S PRICE (PER LITRE/KG)	PRICE A WEEK AGO (PER LITRE/KG)
Fine rice	Tk 68-78	Tk 60-78
Coarse rice	Tk 57-58	Tk 54-55
Loose soybean oil	Tk 155-160	Tk 150-152
Bottled soybean oil	Tk 170	Tk 165
Local garlic	Tk 200-220	Tk 190-220
Ginger	Tk 250-300	Tk 240-280
local onions	Tk 85-90	Tk 80-85
Brown egg (four piece)	Tk 52-55	Tk 50
Bay leaves	Tk 200-300	Tk 150-200
Cardamom (Small)	Tk 3,300-4,200	Tk 3,150 - 4,000

SOURCE: TCB AND THREE KITCHEN MARKETS IN DHAKA

He said he spent Tk 10,000 on essentials such as fish, meat, and vegetables before Eid ul-Azha last year, but this year, he could only afford to spend Tk 8,000.

"I was forced to cut costs. Otherwise, if I had spent Tk 10,000 like last year on fish, meat, and vegetables, I would not be able to afford the rest of the essentials that I need."

Eyamin Sultana, who works at a private company in the capital and lives in Mirpur, echoed those sentiments.

"There is no product in the market that has not gone up in price. Every

"Sales are down about 15 to 20 percent," the trader claimed.

"The demand for some products increases a lot ahead of Eid ul-Azha. As a result, a supply demand gap is created. This is why the prices of these products are increasing now," he said.

"We have not increased the prices of any commodity, including soybean oil," said Taslim Shahriar, deputy general manager at Meghna Group of Industries, one of the biggest commodity importers and processors in the country.

He blamed retailers for the increase in prices.

Pakistan out

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World Cup largely thanks to their shock win over 2009 champions Pakistan.

The two teams will receive a point each meaning the USA will progress to the Super Eights along with Group A winners India who are due to play Canada on Saturday in what is now a dead rubber.

Only the top two teams from the four groups advance to the Super Eight. The USA beat Canada in the tournament opener before stunning Pakistan in a match that went to a Super Over.

The Super Eights qualification also ensures direct qualification into the next T20 World Cup for USA. The next edition will also have 20 teams like this one, with 12 automatic qualifiers: the two co-hosts - India and Sri Lanka - as well as the other teams in the Super Eight in 2024, and the three highest-ranked teams outside of these on the ICC's T20I rankings as of June 30, 2024. The remaining eight spots will be decided through the ICC's regional qualifiers pathway.

The early exit, meanwhile, is a bitter disappointment though for Pakistan, who were beaten finalists in the tournament two years ago.

St Martin's

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to Cox's Bazar to see a doctor 10 days ago and got stranded.

"We stayed at a hotel and had to spend a lot of money," she added.

Luna Akhter, a student of Cox's Bazar Government College, said the government should provide sea trucks for St Martin's residents as the usual route through the Naf has been abandoned.

Meanwhile, the sound of shelling in Myanmar's Rakhine state rocked Teknaf on Thursday, and the sight of a warship in the Naf caused panic in some neighbourhoods.

Teknaf Upazila Nirbahi Officer Adnan Chowdhury said the ship was in Naikhongdia, Myanmar.

Residents of St Martin's said there were three Myanmar warships close to the island.

Mohammad Hashem, a resident of Dailpara on the island, said, "I have never seen Myanmar warships so close. Troops are firing weapons from the ships and we are hearing explosions. We are very scared."