

Macron: No doubt Russia will target Paris Olympics

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that he had no doubt Russia would malevolently target the Paris Olympics this summer, in comments that underline the fraught geopolitical backdrop to the games. "I have no doubt whatsoever, including in terms of information," he said in response to a reporter's question about whether he thought that Russia would try to target the Olympics.

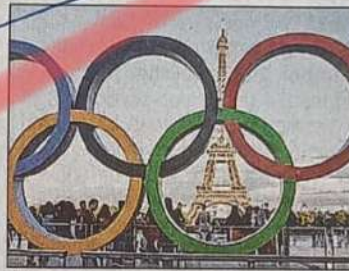
Moscow is yet to comment.

Macron's remarks represent his most explicit acknow-

ledgment to date of foreign threats to the security or smooth running of the games.

The globally anticipated event takes place amid a complex global context, with Russia's war in Ukraine and Israel's conflict with Hamas in Gaza complicating efforts to safeguard the Olympics.

A Macron aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, declined to say whether the president was referring to specific intelligence signalling a future Russian interference attempt. Instead, she said: "The-



Macron's remarks represent his most explicit acknowledgment to date of foreign threats to security

re is a hardening from Russia, which we have been seeing for several months." Macron has recently adopted a tougher

stance against Russia, vowing that Moscow must be defeated, and has not ruled out that European troops may one day go to Ukraine, although he has made clear that France has no intention of instigating hostilities against Russia.

Relations between Russia and the International Olympic Committee, too, have worsened in the run-up to the Paris Olympics, where Russian athletes will compete as neutrals, without their flags and anthems, and be excluded from opening parade. REUTERS

Pilots of other Tata airlines echo Vistara crew concerns

Write To Chairman About Poor Roster, Work Conditions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Concerns expressed by Vistara pilots regarding poor rostering and overall working conditions have been echoed by their colleagues in other Tata Group airlines, including flagship Air India, AI Express and AIX Connect (earlier AirAsia India).

Pilot unions of erstwhile Indian Airlines and Air India have written to Tata Group chairman N Chandrasekaran about the "justification of Vistara pilots' demands and prevalence of issues across Tata group airlines."

Tatas are consolidating their low cost carriers (LCCs) by merging AIX Connect into AI Express and full service Vistara into AI. The NCLT will take up AI-Vistara merger issue on Friday. This is the final nod required to go



FRESH TURBULENCE

ahead with the full-service carriers' merger.

Back-to-back flying, being almost always on standby to be called anytime to operate flights, discontent over pay and less than desired rest period leading to fatigue and serious health issues have been the constant complaint of pilots of fund-rich airlines in India that have the ability to fly more. As of now, this list includes Tata group carriers, IndiGo and Akasa.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had tried to go in for more humane flying duty norms for pilots but the implementation has been deferred. Airlines were not keen to implement the changes proposed by DGCA as it would have increased pilot requirement, leading to

spike in their wage bills.

"The pilots of Vistara have been steadfast in their advocacy for fixed 70 hours compensation, improved working conditions, and stable roster... their demands are reasonable and reflective of broader challenges prevalent within Tata Group airlines," the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA of erstwhile Indian Airlines) and Indian Pilots Guild (IPG of erstwhile AI) have written to the Tata Group chairman.

"Concerns expressed by Vistara pilots are not isolated but indicative of systemic issues across Tata Group aviation entities. The issues of 70 hours fixed remuneration, approval of leaves, adequate rest periods, unstable roster, stretching pilots to max flight duty, botched roster practices and an unsupportive work environment are consistently echoed by pilots across different Tata Group airlines," the joint representation said. "Pilots are being subjected to conditions and treatment reminiscent of bonded labour," it said.

India successfully carries out night launch of nuclear capable

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (PTI)

INDIA has successfully carried out a night launch of new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' from the Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, boosting the country's strategic deterrence capability.

The Defence Ministry said, the test-flight was carried out on Wednesday evening and it met all the trial objectives, validating the reliable performance, as confirmed from the data captured by a number of range sensors deployed at different locations.

The Strategic Forces Command (SFC), along with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), carried out the flight test of the missile that has a strike range of 1,000 to 2,000 km.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, SFC and the Armed Forces for the successful test flight and stated that the successful development and induction of the missile will be an excellent force multiplier for the military.

"Strategic Forces Command (SFC), along with the DRDO, conducted the successful flight-test of new generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha at around 1900 hours on April 3," the Ministry said.

"The test met all the trial objectives validating its reliable performance, as confirmed from the data captured by a num-



New generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime being successfully flight-tested from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha on Thursday. (PTI)

Apache makes hard landing during Ladakh sortie

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In the first major accident of Apache attack helicopters since they were inducted from US four years ago, one of the heavy-duty choppers made a hard landing during an operational sortie for ongoing Gagan Shakti exercise in Ladakh Wednesday.

The two pilots escaped with minor injuries and were evacuated to the nearest air

base. IAF said the helicopter "sustained damage due to the undulating terrain and high altitude" during the "precautionary landing". A court of

TWO PILOTS SAFE

inquiry has been ordered to pinpoint the cause of the accident that occurred near Khardung La in Ladakh.

The accident comes soon after the US Army has wit-

nessed our Apache helicopter crashes in two-three months had led to the temporary grounding of the fleet and delayed investigations.

IA refused to specify how badly the helicopter was damaged in the accident and whether it could be salvaged.

Dubbed as "tanks in the air", Apaches are armed with air-to-air missiles, Hellfire Longbow air-to-ground missiles, and rockets. TNN

IMD predicts heatwave conditions in States across South India as summer intensifies

NEW DELHI, Apr 4 (ANI)

AS THE country battles scorching heat and the arrival of summer, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted a possible heatwave in States across South India.

The weather agency predicted heatwave conditions over peninsular India from April 3 to April 6.

Hot and humid weather is very likely to prevail over Coastal Karnataka, Kerala & Mahe, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry & Karaikal, from April 2 to April 6, over Telangana, South Interior Karnataka from April 2 to April 4 and over Coastal Andhra

Pradesh & Yanam and Rayalaseema on April 2 and April 3.

The IMD said heatwave conditions are very likely in isolated pockets in north interior Karnataka this week, from April 3 to April 5. Further, parts of Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh are also expected to experience heatwave conditions.

It also predicted above normal heatwaves in most parts of the northern plains of the country from April to June.

The most prone areas to increased heatwaves are Gujarat, Maharashtra, North Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, North Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

The Director General of Meteorology at IMD, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, said at a press briefing that normal rainfall is also expected during the month of April across the country. He was addressing a briefing on the seasonal outlook for the hot weather season of April to June.

"Above normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, especially with high probability over central India and western peninsular India," Mohapatra said. Mohapatra informed that normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely to occur in some parts of the western Himalayan region.

Not asking India to cut Russia oil imports, says US

New Delhi: Two senior treasury department officials, who are in India to discuss what is Phase 2 of the Russian oil price cap, said Thursday US and others imposing the cap, are seeking to minimise Kremlin's profits and stifle its Ukraine aggression, but without destabilising the global energy market or forcing India to slash its imports from Russia. The officials, however, said allowing unrestricted Russian oil trade will remain unacceptable.

Eric Van Nostrand, assistant secretary for economic policy, and Anna Morris, assistant secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes, said US isn't asking India to cut down its oil imports from Russia, adding the price cap isn't meant to block the flow of Russian oil. Nostrand said it's important to keep the oil supply going in the market and that what the US is seeking to do is to limit Putin's profit. Russia has the option of selling under the price cap or to sell at discounts if it doesn't follow the Western regulations. The two officials were speaking at an event organised by the Ananta Centre. The US and an international coalition opposed to Russia's war on Ukraine had implemented a price cap, \$60 per barrel, on Russian oil, allowing them to support trade in Russian oil only if it was sold at or below the price cap.

With India exporting oil products, believed to be refined from Russian crude to the US and Europe, the official said that "once Russian oil is refined, from technical perspective it is no longer Russian oil". TNN