

8 killed in Ukrainian drone attack in Russia

MOSCOW, July 18 (AP)

EIGHT people were killed and more than 60 others were wounded in Russia by overnight Ukrainian drone attacks, Russian officials said Saturday.

Kyiv's forces are continuing their relentless aerial campaign against energy infrastructure and military targets inside Russia, aiming to undermine Moscow's war effort and make Russians feel the consequences of the Kremlin's all-out invasion of Ukraine that is well into its fifth year. Two sprawling warehouses of Russia's major online retailer, Wildberries, were hit by Ukrainian drones overnight, according to Russian officials: one in the town of Kotovsk in the Tambov region, some 360 km from the border with Ukraine, and another one in the city of Elektrostal, about 50 km east of Moscow.

Both caught fire, but Wildberries founder Tatyana Kim said later on Saturday morning that the fire in Kotovsk has been



Warehouse that was attacked by Kyiv forces in Kotovsk in Tambov region, in Russia on Saturday.

put out. Images and footage released by Russian online outlets showed a fire raging at the Elektrostal facility, with massive plumes of smoke towering over it.

A Ukrainian drone also hit an oil depot in the city of Noginsk, just north of Elektrostal, sparking a fire and prompting evacuations of a nearby maternity hospital and a residential building, according to the governor of the Moscow region, Andrei Vorobyov.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post on Saturday that Ukrainian long-range strikes hit two "significant logistical facilities in the Moscow and Tambov regions."

"These facilities were used by the aggressor to supply sanctioned components for the production of drones and navigation equipment," he wrote. An oil facility was also hit, he said.

All-party meeting ahead of Parlt monsoon session today

NEW DELHI, July 18 (PTI)

THE forcible removal of activist Sonam Wangchuk from Jantar Mantar, citing health concerns, is set to resonate during the all-party meeting convened by the Government on Sunday.

This meeting, which will involve the floor leaders of all major parties, will discuss several pressing issues, including the alleged embezzlement of donations for the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Wangchuk's removal from the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protest site at Jantar Mantar in central Delhi by the city police will dominate the customary meet.

The alleged mishandling of donations at the Ram temple will

also play a significant role in the proceedings. The Samajwadi Party has announced that it will obstruct House proceedings regarding this matter.

Additionally, the Government has announced five new bills that will be introduced in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha during the upcoming monsoon session. These include:

Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026: This bill amends the 1971 law to impose penalties for intentional disruptions during the singing of "Vande Mataram." Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026: This introduces stricter regulations for delayed registrations.

Another MH-60R Seahawk helicopter delivered to Indian Navy: US Embassy

NEW DELHI, July 18 (PTI)

THE US Embassy on Friday said that another MH-60R Seahawk helicopter has been delivered to the Indian Navy and two more are arriving soon, underlining that the bilateral defence partnership between the countries is “growing stronger”.

Sharing the update on X, the embassy said, “Another MH-60R Seahawk naval helicopter touched down on Indian shores! Developed by Lockheed Martin, this highly equipped helicopter was delivered to the Indian Navy at Kochi last week, with two more arriving this week. Thrilled to see the US-India defence partnership growing stronger.”

India had signed an agreement with the US in February 2020 to procure 24 MH-60Rs. The MH-60R Seahawk is a maritime variant of the Blackhawk helicopter.

Manufactured by the Lockheed Martin Corporation, MH-60R is an all-weather helicopter designed to support multiple missions with state-of-the-art avionics and sensors.

The first three MH-60R helicopters were delivered to India in 2021.



HISTORIC LIFT OFF !

Vikram-1, India's 1st private rocket, successfully places tech payloads into low Earth orbit

■ By Jemima Raman
SRIHARIKOTA, July 18 (PTI)

IN ITS maiden voyage, India's first homegrown private orbital rocket, Vikram-1 Test Flight-1 on Saturday successfully placed multiple technology demonstration payloads and postcards, including from Prime Minister Narendra Modi into a low Earth orbit, with the PM calling the mission as a "defining moment" in the country's space journey.

Dubbed 'Mission Aagaman' (arrival), it marks the entry of India's private space sector into the orbital launch market, spearheaded by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace.

The mission was a "grand success," the company said.

The four-stage, seven-storey-tall Vikram-1 rocket lifted off majestically at 12.05 pm amid cloudyskies from the first launch pad of ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre, leaving behind plumes of orange smoke and marking a new era from this spaceport.

A "planned hold" due to apparent navigation issues forced a revised launch time of 12.05 pm,



Vikram-1 Test Flight-1 (Mission Aagaman), India's first private orbital rocket launch, lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota on Saturday. (PTI)

PM speaks to Skyroot Aerospace team, congratulates them on their success

NEW DELHI, July 18 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the team of Skyroot Aerospace, which spearheaded India's first privately developed orbital rocket Vikram-1, and termed it a defining moment in India's space journey.

Modi also said the growing participation of India's private sector is opening new frontiers

and accelerating innovation.

"Spoke to the team of Skyroot Aerospace and congratulated them on the successful launch of Vikram-1. This is a defining moment in India's space journey," Modi wrote on X.

"This achievement will encourage countless youngsters to dream bigger and innovate fearlessly," he said.

Earlier, the PM termed the

initiative as "a historic new frontier" for India's space journey. He said this four-stage rocket is designed to provide rapid and on-demand launch services.

The Prime Minister said that this mission highlights the talent, determination and entrepreneurial spirit of India's youth and it shows how Indian space sector reforms are unlocking new opportunities for innovation and enterprise.

Modi also urged all Indians, especially "my young friends, to follow this historic mission and join in wishing Team Skyroot success using #IndiaWithVikram1".

from PM Modi bearing the message "Vande Mataram", along with postcards from engineers, scientists, and Indian astronauts.

The miniature micro-art payload, carrying micro-sculptures of the doyen of India's space programme Vikram Sarabhai, scientist Sir CV Raman and former President APJ Abdul Kalam has been created "as a tribute to three visionaries who shaped India's scientific and space journey," the company said.

"Skyroot proudly named its (Contd on page 3)



From left, ISRO Chairman Dr V Narayanan, Skyroot Aerospace Co-founder and CEO Pawan Kumar Chandana, Skyroot Aerospace COO and Co-founder Naga Bharath Daka, and others during the press conference following the successful launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. (PTI)

as against the originally planned 11.30 am.

After its ascent, the primary payloads -- technology demon-

◀ An engineer prepares a satellite payload ahead of Vikram-1 launch at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. (PTI)

strators from Grahaa Space, CosmoServe, DCubed, and Skyroot's SCOPE -- were sequentially deployed into a 450 km Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

The launch vehicle also successfully deployed a micro-art payload, an 18-karat gold rocket and a handwritten postcard



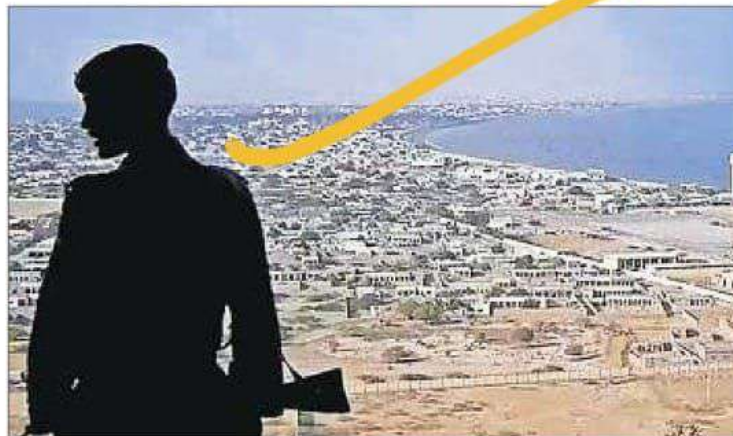
BLA-TTP alliance declares all-out war on Pak, CPEC

NEW DELHI, July 18 (IANS)

A SHARP escalation in violence is expected over the next few days in both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), as multiple militant outfits recalibrate their strategies in response to the evolving security situation.

According to security sources, the Pakistan Army has brought together Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) under a coordinated arrangement to counter the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in Balochistan and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Officials said the BLA, the TTP and several other militant outfits are also moving towards a coordinated front to counter the alliance put together by the Pakistan Army. While such a consolidation could pose a significant challenge for the military, officials said it is part of a broad-



er strategy unfolding in the region.

The TTP, its faction Hafiz Gul Bahadur, Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and the BLA have decided to fight together not only against Pakistan's alliance, but even Chinese interests in the region.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that the idea of this new alliance is to take control over the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor Project (CPEC).

The Baloch people have for years protested this project, stating that it will not benefit the people of the region. They have accused the Pakistani establishment of looting the resources in Balochistan. The money that is raised through these resources is only reaching the big cities in Pakistan, the people have said.

The BLA in particular has fought against the establishment

for long, and over a period of time, it has become Pakistan's biggest nightmare. Officials say that the new alliance being formed aims at taking control of the resources in Balochistan as well as KP.

Another official said there are reports that the groups in Balochistan have begun demanding a share of project profits from Chinese investors in return for guaranteeing their safety. "The groups have also warned that Chinese firms should scale back their involvement in the region unless assurances are given that a portion of the profits will be used for the welfare and development of the Baloch people, the officials said.

The idea is to drive fear into the minds of the Chinese investors. China has repeatedly warned Pakistan to take control of the project and ensure the safety of its investments and nationals. Beijing had even

(Contd on page 3)