

Parlt clears Taxation Bill

■ UPI transactions to remain free, says Nirmala Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, Aug 10 (PTI)

PARLIAMENT on Monday passed the Taxation and other Laws (Amendment) Bill, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman making clear that the legislation does not impose any tax on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the digital payment system will remain free.

The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last week, was returned by the Rajya Sabha with a voice vote after a brief discussion and reply by the Finance Minister.

The Bill does not propose any tax or transaction charge on UPI, she asserted.

“Will consumer pay any UPI charge - No. UPI has remained free for consumers since its launch and every Indian will continue to make this instant digital without paying any transaction charge,” Sitharaman said.

The Bill also proposed to remove the linkage between the Payment and Settlement Systems Act and the Income Tax Act, and provide legal backing to the Government to modify the zero-MDR framework of UPI and RuPay card transactions.

At present, banks and payment system providers cannot directly or indirectly charge users for payments made through UPI and RuPay debit cards.

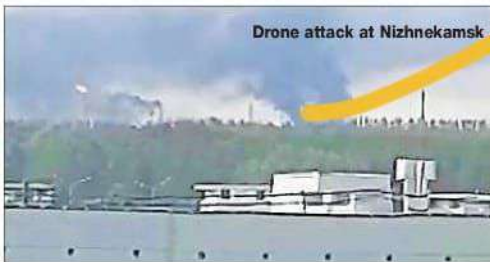
The Bill proposes allowing the Central Government to decide, through notification, which electronic payment modes or transactions must remain free.

13 killed in Ukrainian drone attack on Russian city

KYIV, Aug 10 (AP)

A UKRAINIAN drone attack Monday on the Russian city of Nizhnekamsk killed 13 people, including a child, and wounded 48 others, authorities in the Tatarstan region said.

Officials didn't say what the drones targeted, but the city is an important oil refining hub, home to two refineries and a petrochemical plant. Ukraine has targeted Russian oil facilities with long-range drones almost daily in recent months. The barrage has caused fuel shortages in Russia, eaten into Russian refining capacity, and



unsettled the Russian public. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says it is a campaign to force Russian President Vladimir Putin to the

negotiating table and stop his more than 4-year-old invasion. Nizhnekamsk came under a "massive" drone attack targeting industrial and civilian

Russia 'no' to 'freeze' conflict with Ukraine

MOSCOW, Aug 10 (ANI)

REITERATING core demands, Moscow has firmly rejected any proposal to "freeze" the Ukraine conflict, insisting that lasting peace requires addressing the crisis's root causes, including Kyiv's permanent neutrality and territorial cessions.

According to 'Russia Today', Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin emphasised that Russia will not settle for "freezing" the fight-

ing without resolving its underlying drivers.

Reiterating Moscow's stance, Galuzin stated, "As Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said, there can be no 'freeze' of the conflict without addressing the root causes of the crisis." The diplomat further asserted that Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy had "completely lost touch with reality" and was actively trying to "escalate the conflict," 'Russia Today' reported.

facilities on Monday morning, according to the press service of Tatarstan's head, Rustam Minnikhanov. No further details were immediately available.

Ukrainian officials made no immediate comment.

Nizhnekamsk is roughly 1,200 kilometres (750 miles) east of the Ukrainian border and has a population of about 240,000.

Ukraine's domestically developed long-range drones have flown increasing distances deep inside Russia, with some now reaching Siberia, around 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) from the border.

Israel rejects Trump's Gaza plan

DUBAI, Aug 10 (AP)

ISRAEL on Sunday rejected a deal announced by US President Donald Trump for Gaza. Details emerged on the potential deal between Iran and Oman on managing the Strait of Hormuz as Tehran suggested that vessels

withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed."

Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting that "Israel rejects the 15-point document" but is still discussing plans for Gaza with Washington, after making similar comments last week. Trump had said Israeli forces would

withdraw as the Hamas militant group's disarmament is completed. Israeli forces control over half the Palestinian enclave of about 2 million people that's been largely destroyed.

There was no immediate White House comment on Netanyahu's statement.



(File photo)

linked to "hostile countries" would be barred. Iran also shuffled its top security post.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed the deal on Gaza announced by Trump last month, saying Israel's military "will not carry out any

New Hormuz security mechanisms developed with Oman: Iran

TEHRAN, Aug 10 (ANI)

IRAN'S Foreign Ministry on Monday said the Islamic Republic and Oman are developing new mechanisms to monitor the safe passage of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, while maintaining that continued US violations of an earlier Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) prevent the strategic waterway from being declared safe.

Addressing a press briefing, Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said that the discussions between Tehran and Muscat were progressing "in a very smooth and constructive manner", with the two sides having reached an understanding on a traffic map through the Strait. He said the proposed mechanisms would go beyond monitoring shipping and would also cover environmental issues, maritime services and combating crime.

India's Russian crude imports hit record for second straight month

NEW DELHI, Aug 10 (PTI)

INDIA'S imports of Russian crude oil rose to a record for the second consecutive month in July, underscoring the Country's continued reliance on discounted Russian supplies even as Western sanctions have tightened restrictions on Moscow's energy exports.

Indian buyers imported Russian crude worth 5.5 billion euros in July, up 2.1 per cent from June, according to data compiled by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

Crude accounted for 87 per cent of India's total Russian fossil fuel purchases during the month. In June, India bought Russian crude worth 4.5 billion euro, accounting for 83 per cent of its total Russian fossil fuel imports of 5.5 billion euro.

The 2.1 per cent rise is in volume terms and not value.

India's dependence on Russian crude has surged since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February

2022, when Western sanctions and an exodus of European buyers left Moscow offering deep discounts to Asian refiners.

Russia supplied less than 1,00,000 barrels per day to India in 2021, or about 2.5 per cent of its crude imports, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The volume rose to about 7,40,000 bpd in 2022 and nearly 1.8 million bpd in 2023, making Russia India's largest crude supplier with about 39 per cent of imports that year.

The dependence has since grown further. Indian refiners imported a record 2.8 million bpd of Russian crude in July 2026, accounting for about 55.5 per cent of total crude imports of just over 5 million bpd. That compares to roughly 1.8 million bpd on average in 2024.

India was the second-largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in July 2026, importing a total of 6.4 billion euros worth of Russian hydrocarbons.

Set up 2 spl courts to deal with Manipur violence cases: SC

NEW DELHI, Aug 10 (PTI)

THE Supreme Court on Monday asked the Manipur and Assam Governments and others to consider setting up two special trial courts to exclusively hear CBI and NIA cases arising from the 2023 ethnic violence in Manipur.

Taking stock of the status of investigations into cases arising from the ethnic violence in Manipur, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana also directed the authorities to compile details of cases in which chargesheets have been filed so that victims, their families and legal counsel can access the relevant records.

The bench also directed the Registrar General of the High Court concerned to submit a status report on the issue before the next date of hearing.

"The authorities shall consider setting up two separate exclusive courts, one for dealing with

the CBI cases and another for dealing with the NIA cases arising out of the Manipur violence. The Registrar General of the High Court shall submit a status report in this regard before the next date of hearing," the bench ordered.

The CJI said the bench had devised a mechanism for monitoring the investigation and also issued directions regarding reports concerning such probes.

The bench said there were cases where chargesheets have been filed. "The request is that particulars of those cases, including the relevant case numbers and status of the proceedings, be made available so that the legal counsel as well as the families concerned have access to the reports and proceedings. We accept the request and direct that the relevant particulars and reports be compiled and placed before the court," the bench said.

"We have also considered the status reports regarding the cases investigated by the CBI and



Army and Assam Rifles have been deployed to contain the large-scale rioting that broke out across Manipur between Kukis and Meiteis, displacing over 9,000 people. (File photo)

the NIA and the courts before which the chargesheets have been filed. It has been pointed out that there are Special Judges dealing with CBI and NIA cases," it said. The bench said its concern was whether these courts are dealing exclusively with the CBI and NIA cases arising out of the Manipur violence or whether

they are also dealing with other cases. It then asked the authorities to consider setting up two separate exclusive courts, one for dealing with the CBI cases and another for dealing with the NIA cases arising out of the Manipur violence.

The bench also noted the facts about attacks on Assam Rifles

and protests seeking NRC (National Register of Citizens) before the census.

"As regards the safety and security situation in Manipur, joint action by the Manipur Police and security forces has strengthened the process of recovery of arms and ammunition, as well as arrests. With respect to the law-and-order situation, the CBI and NIA shall be facilitated so that they are able to carry out their investigation uninterrupted," it said. The State of Manipur, as well as the Central agencies and security agencies, shall extend necessary support and coordination to ensure the proper functioning of the system and maintenance of security, including the safety of students, it said.

During the hearing, the bench was informed by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati that the CBI has investigated 31 cases, with final reports filed in 27, including 22 chargesheets and five closure reports.

Manipur CM reviews security situation

IMPEAL, Aug 10 (PTI)

MANIPUR Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Monday reviewed the law and order situation along the state's national highways, days after announcing plans to reopen the routes for all communities.

Singh chaired a meeting which reviewed the prevailing law and order situation along the highways and discussed measures to prevent any attempts to disrupt peace and normal movement.

The meeting came after Singh announced that the NHs would be reopened for all communities.