

Draft emission cut targets issued for iron, steel sector

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, July 4

THE CENTRE has once again issued a draft notification to set greenhouse gas emission intensity (GEI) targets for the intensive iron and steel sector and to align them under India's carbon credit trading system (CCTS).

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued the draft on June 26 and made it public on July 2. It has set emission reduction targets for 255 industrial units, including the sector's giants such as JSW Steel, Tata, SAIL (Steel Authority of India), and ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel, among others.

Draft targets for the iron and steel sector were already issued on June 23, 2025, along with aluminium (second aluminium), petroleum refinery, petrochemical and textile sectors. While final targets for other sectors were notified in January 2026, the Environment Ministry has issued a revised draft for iron and steel sector with marginal changes to targets, but without any explanation for the draft.

The draft notification lists 2023-24 as the year for baseline product output and baseline emission intensity, and 2026-27 as the compliance-year target for individual steel plants, sponge iron units and ferro-alloy manufacturers. A 60-day window has

E. EXPLAINED

Global commitment on climate action

INDIA'S GLOBAL commitments on climate action include reducing emissions intensity of its GDP — emissions behind economic output — making heavy industry manufacturing cleaner and more efficient. The government has incentivised emissions reduction through a carbon credit scheme. As part of this initiative, it has set sectoral targets for more polluting industries. If industries achieve those targets, they can earn credits, or buy them from others.

been given to submit objections and suggestions on the draft.

The draft defined targets in terms of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), which is used to measure the impact of all greenhouse gases and not just CO₂, based on their warming potential. The draft has set GEI targets only for 2026-27, while 2025-26 column has been left blank.

GEI is the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) emitted per unit of product output, such as the quantum of gases released while producing cement. The

CCTS was launched in 2023 to create a framework that incentivises emission reduction through a market-based mechanism and to help achieve India's climate action goals.

The Centre has already finalised emission reduction targets for eight sectors — aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali, pulp and paper, secondary aluminium, petroleum refinery, petrochemical and textile.

In March, India revised its nationally determined contributions commitments on climate action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. This included a revision of target to reduce emissions intensity of Gross Domestic Product, which was set at 47% by 2035, compared to 2005 levels.

India has committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product — the amount of energy used per unit of GDP — to 47% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels as part of its domestic commitments under the agreement. The targets set in previous rounds covered 490 high-emission industrial units.

The CCTS, notified in 2023, created an overarching framework for the Indian carbon market. The objective was to slash or avoid GHG emissions from sectors whose processes emit more pollutants and whose operations are hard to decarbonise.

Integrated Parachute tests for Gaganyaan a success: ISRO

Express News Service
Bengaluru, July 4

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Friday successfully conducted Integrated Parachute tests required to validate deceleration systems, which will be used in the Gaganyaan's Crew Module splash-down at sea. Crew Module is a special, pressurised space vehicle which houses the astronauts during take-off, space flights and splashdowns.

ISRO Saturday said it was developing a solid motor based Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments (SOLVE).

This is a special test rocket that can perform numerous ex-



The test involved deployment of 10 parachutes to facilitate the deceleration of the Crew Module before splashdown. ISRO

periments under various test conditions. During such tests, the Crew Module is separated from the vehicle at an altitude of 10 to 17 km.

ISRO added that the tests performed on July 3 at its Sri-

harikota centre saw the deployment of about 10 parachutes, which are primarily responsible for reducing the velocity of the Crew Module as it descends and splashes down into the sea.

Only talks can bring peace, says Manipur CM at funeral for MLA who died in Feb.

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

Late Manipur Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Vungzagin Valte, a victim of a mob attack in May 2023, was laid to rest near his residence in Churachandpur district on Saturday, more than four months after he died in a Gurugram hospital.

Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh attended the funeral service, marking the first visit by a Chief Minister to the district since the ethnic conflict broke out on May 3, 2023, even as certain Kuki groups called



Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh pays tribute to the late BJP MLA, Vungzagin Valte, in Churachandpur on Saturday. PTI

for a boycott of the event demanding a permanent solution to the crisis.

Speaking at the funeral service, Mr. Singh noted his association with Valte

since 2017, when he became the Speaker of the 60-member State Assembly.

Recalling the tense situation in May 2023 and the

assault on Valte, Mr. Singh said that he regretted not having been beside his "friend" when the incident happened.

Later, he told journalists that dialogue was the only way forward to restore peace, which was essential for development in Manipur. "Your smile is the way for peace," he said, responding to the manner in which a reporter sought the road map to peace in the State.

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SECURITY REVIEW

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India's essential medicine list lags behind global benchmark; unrevised in 4 years

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

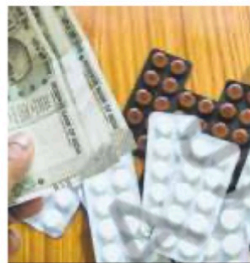
NEW DELHI

India's roster of essential medicines has not been updated in nearly four years even as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has revised its own list twice in the same period, says a civil society network of activists and organisations working for affordable healthcare.

The collective – Working Group on Access to Medicines and Treatments – has written to the government demanding an urgent revision of the National List of Essential Med-

Outdated prescription

The National List of Essential Medicines prioritises drugs that satisfy the critical healthcare needs of India's population



POINTS RAISED BY THE COLLECTIVE

- The NLEM, last notified in 2022, contains 384 medicines while the WHO list runs to 523 drugs
- At least 17 active cancer-treating agents, 4 supportive cancer-care medicines, and 9 monoclonal antibodies feature on the WHO list but not on the NLEM

icines (NLEM), so that such drugs are available at affordable prices.

The NLEM is a curated list of medications compiled by the Ministry of

Health and Family Welfare. It prioritises drugs that satisfy the critical healthcare needs of India's population. Medicines on this list – 384 at present – are gen-

erally dispensed free of cost by government hospitals. The government uses the NLEM to instruct the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to enforce a strict price ceiling on them. The list was last overhauled in 2022.

The WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, meanwhile, was revised in 2023 and again in 2025, and contains 523 medicines – leaving India's list trailing well behind the global benchmark, said the group in its letter on Friday.

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Govt. asks Telegram to take proactive anti-piracy action

Move signals fresh escalation in issues between Centre and Telegram; platform has been accused of 'delayed action against piracy reports'; it was asked to remove over 3,100 URLs in March 2026

Aroon Deep

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting “has demanded that Telegram take proactive action in detecting and taking down pirated content on its platform,” a senior official said on Saturday. Telegram has been asked to reply to the Union Ministry’s notice within 15 days.

The move is a fresh escalation of issues between the government and the Dubai-headquartered messaging app, following a week-long ban ahead of the rescheduled National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

Telegram has been accused in multiple court cases of delayed or little action in response to reports of piracy.

The app has emerged as a haven for pirates since it places few limits on file sizes that users can upload on channels for free, enraging entertainment industry executives who have seen it turn into a convenient hub



Telegram was also served a notice on its username feature by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. REUTERS

for pirated books, newspapers, TV series, and films.

The firm spends tens of millions of dollars on its operations in India without earning back, Telegram founder Pavel Durov has said. A Telegram spokesperson did not have an immediate comment on the notice, in response to *The Hindu*.

Even as Telegram in recent years moved to comply with both court orders and private infringement complaints faster, the I&B Ministry has sent the firm its own orders, including

on the removal of more than 3,100 URLs in March this year. Telegram complied with that order.

This may not be enough, and the Ministry is now demanding that the firm do more to automatically detect piracy. A note shared by a senior official describing the notice said that it was aimed at creating a “clear shift from piecemeal takedown to platform accountability”, and that the firm “is required to observe due diligence under the IT Act and IT Rules”.

Under Section 3(1)(b) of

the IT Rules, 2021, intermediaries, including Telegram, are required to “make reasonable efforts by [themselves], and to cause the users of [their] computer resource to not [share] any information that... infringes any patent, trademark, copyright or other proprietary rights”.

Telegram fought its week-long ban, which has been justified by the National Testing Agency (NTA) in the Delhi High Court as a way to prevent misinformation on leaks made possible by an app feature on backdating the timestamp on messages sent on the platform. Justice Tejas Karia ruled that the ban was proportionate and legal.

Shortly after this order, Telegram was also served a notice on its username feature by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, which had asked WhatsApp to pause the rollout of a similar feature. It is unclear if the IT Ministry has specifically directed Telegram to disable the feature.

India's semiconductor push will create countless jobs: PM

Modi inaugurates semiconductor facility in Gujarat's Sanand; he says such clusters will bring in economic transformation; he urges youth to tap new opportunities in era of Artificial Intelligence

Abhinay Deshpande

AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is giving birth to semiconductor clusters across the country, and described the current phase as the beginning of large-scale employment and economic transformation.

He said the country is building the entire electronics value chain, from products and components to semiconductors, which will serve as the road map for Viksit Bharat.

He said semiconductor clusters were emerging not only in Sanand (Gujarat) but at multiple locations across India.

Mr. Modi, who inaugurated the CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Sanand, also said India's youth would power the artificial intelligence, robotics and next-generation technology revolution with made-in-India chips.

He said the plant reflected the government's vision of 'Design in India' and 'Make in India' and noted that he had laid the foundation stone for the project in 2024, chip testing began



Future ready: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the semiconductor facility in Sanand, Gujarat, on Saturday. VIJAY SONEJI

in August 2025, and commercial production had now commenced.

Appeal to youth

Mr. Modi said the coming era of artificial intelligence would open up new avenues for skills and expertise. "The youth of India should not lose this opportunity. I want to tell the youngsters of the country: 'Your ideas, my support,'" Mr. Modi said.

"It (semiconductor industry) is the next step in the electronics revolution that has taken place in India over the past decade," he added as he was handed the first semiconductor chips made at the company, to be exported to Ja-

pan. First, it was the IT revolution that created opportunities for lakhs of Indians to showcase their talent, he said. Then the smartphone and electronics manufacturing boom opened new avenues for employment and innovation. "Now, the world is entering the era of semiconductors and artificial intelligence revolution that will create opportunities for countless people."

Government's goal

The CG facility is part of the India Semiconductor Mission and will undertake the assembly, packaging and testing of semiconductor chips. Mr. Modi said the project was built in part-

nership with companies from Thailand and Japan, and described it as a model of technology, trust and collaboration that would strengthen India's semiconductor sector.

He also said that the government's goal is to build a complete semiconductor ecosystem in India, from chip design to fabrication and packaging. "I'm informed that this unit has the capacity to manufacture 20 crore chips annually and that the company aims to scale up production to more than 500 crore chips a year, which means 1.5 crore chips per day," he said.

He called the project a "success story" and a "revolution".

He said many women employees from the hinterlands of the country who completed their ITI training were now working at the plant. He said many of them had never visited Delhi or Mumbai and had never held a passport before travelling to Malaysia for training.

"They learnt advanced semiconductor manufacturing techniques there and are now part of India's chip manufacturing sector."

Delhi conclave raises federalism concerns over 'One Nation, One Election' proposal

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A group of eminent citizens, comprising retired bureaucrats, judges, lawyers, professors, writers, civil society groups and leaders of various movements from all over the country, on Saturday rejected the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' initiative, saying it would fracture the federal compact of the country.

At a conclave on 'One Nation-One Election, Federalism and Citizenship' at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi, participants said the proposal would also curtail the ability of State Assemblies to run their own affairs in the manner in which the Constitution has empowered them.

The speakers expressed concern over what they described as the degradation of the status of the Indian



Key issues: At the conclave on Saturday, the speakers also discussed the SIR, electoral processes, and caste census. ANI

Passport to "a mere travel document", saying it had triggered anxieties over the nature of citizenship. The burden of proving citizenship has been shifted onto citizens, they alleged.

Outcome of SIR

Speaking on the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, former Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa questioned the outcome of the exercise,

claiming that nearly 16 crore people have so far been disenfranchised.

"There is no data available in the public domain to show how many people were deleted (from electoral rolls) because they were ineligible. There is data to show that names were deleted because people migrated, but not because they were ineligible. Will this data be made public?"

The Supreme Court gave

four weeks to the EC to submit the names to the Foreigners Tribunals. How many people have been referred? How did the EC assess the health of electoral rolls in comparison to previous years? Let us understand the lessons learnt or improvements that the EC proposes. An Army colonel called to say his wife's name is missing from the draft list. There are so many people anxious about whether they will continue to vote," Mr. Lavasa said.

It was not just the constitutional right to voting, but the fundamental right was being compromised, according to former Supreme Court judges who addressed the meeting.

The participants also expressed concern over what they called the curtailment of citizens' rights and the lack of transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Demands to make public Form 17C,

CCTV camera footage, presiding officer diaries, and other electoral records have been resisted by the Election Commission (EC), they claimed.

Caste census

Former Union Home Secretary G.K. Pillai demanded wider public consultation on the caste census.

He said the 2027 Population Census would be one of India's most consequential demographic exercises. Beyond counting the population, it would shape delimitation, women's reservation, welfare allocation, and caste politics, he said.

While digitisation may improve efficiency and speed, the success of both the Census and the caste census would depend on transparency, public consultation, clear classification criteria, and careful implementation, Mr. Pillai said.

Centre lists six Indians, 17 Pakistan nationals as terrorists under UAPA

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has added Abdul Rauf, whom the government describes as a key Lashkar-e-Taiba operative working under its chief Hafiz Saeed and involved in planning, coordinating and financing terrorist activities, into the list of designated terrorists. The latest addition of 23 names into the designated list of terrorists under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was notified by the Ministry on Saturday.

“Of the 23 terrorists announced today, 17 are Pakistani nationals, and 6 are Indian nationals. However, all of them at present operate from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir,” Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

Five of the six Indians designated as terrorists are from Jammu and Kashmir. They have been identified as Firdous Ahmad Bhat (33) from Kulgam, Haroon Rashid Ganai alias ‘Shunoo’ (36) from Anantnag, Bilal Ahmad Mir alias ‘Ahmad Bhai’ (27) from So-

All of them are currently operating from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, says Shah

pore, Abid Quyoom Lone (27) from Baramulla and Nazir Ahmed Gujjar alias ‘Munazil’ from Doda.

The Bengaluru engineer, who has been identified as Mohammed Shaheed Faisal (40), is currently residing in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and associated with Pakistan-based terrorist outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, an MHA notification said.

Wanted by the NIA since 2012, Faisal carries a reward of ₹10 lakh and is alleged to have handled three terror modules in Karnataka in the past 14 years.

“Faisal recruits youth via social media, arranges weapons training in Pakistan, raises funds for terrorist activities and imparts training in the use of data encryption and fake identities to evade law enforcement agencies. With the intent of carrying out

terrorist activities in the country, he has been involved in the delivery of weapons and ammunition and in conspiracies related to several terrorist incidents,” the notification said.

The MHA also designated senior JeM functionary Masood Ilyas Kashmiri, alleging that he recruited youth into the outfit, facilitated infiltration into India and was involved in the April 2022 attack on Sunjwan military station in Jammu.

Also listed are Hafiz Khalid Waleed, alleged to be a close associate of Hafiz Saeed and mastermind of several terror attacks; Maulana Saifullah Khalid, described as active in various Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) factions; Mohammad Yaqoob, accused of providing logistics and financial support to terrorists; Qari Yaqub Sheikh, alleged to have participated in anti-India activities while remaining associated with various LeT factions; and Rana Iftikhar, who allegedly coordinated among jihadist organisations and motivated youth to participate in terrorism.

Involvement in Iran mediation will not benefit India: envoy

Ananth Krishnan

BEIJING

Rejecting comparisons between India's role on the world stage and Pakistan's recent mediation efforts in the Iran crisis, Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami said on Saturday that New Delhi's involvement in an already crowded field would not have particularly benefited India.

"The question about mediation that you're talking about, this is for individual countries to decide whether that adds value to their larger national position. We have done our bit of that in the past. I don't see how, at this point of time in what is already a crowded field, that would benefit us in any particular way," he said at the World Peace Forum in Beijing, an annual foreign policy event hosted by Tsinghua University. He was speaking in response to a question from Chinese media, on Pakistan's mediation in the Iran crisis and India's broader global leadership aspirations.

Mr. Doraiswami pointed

out that India and China, as two major powers, had both not offered their services to mediate whether in Ukraine or Iran, and added it was unfair to compare India with Pakistan considering, for instance, their different economic sizes or India's broader integration with the world.

"As far as I see it, our position in recent crises, both in West Asia and even in Eastern Europe, has been quite similar to that of China. I don't see China or India actually stepping forward to offer mediatory services in either of these two matters. Quite frankly, I think the comparison with Pakistan, if I might be a little direct, is a little unfair to us. I think the economies of the two countries will tell you a lot. It is up to that country to decide what it chooses to do in the region. I don't see why we should follow a leaf from their book," he said.

"About what more could India do in terms of global leadership, we should look at countries according to what they are actually doing in the larger global system," he added.

Chinese investment influx good for wider ties, says India's envoy

Ananth Krishnan

BEIJING

Greater investment from China into India will be good both for the economics of the relationship and for broader bilateral ties, Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami said on Saturday. The Indian envoy also made a pitch for greater Indian exports to China, especially in areas such as pharmaceuticals, where India is globally competitive.

“Obviously, we would like to be able to export more to China. There is nothing unreasonable about suggesting that,” he said, speaking at the World Peace Forum, an annual foreign policy forum in Beijing.

India's trade with China has expanded despite the political freeze on relations since 2020. Both sides have begun the process of normalising relations fol-



Vikram Doraiswami

lowing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October 2024, in the wake of disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

However, trade remains lopsided, with a ballooning deficit. According to Commerce Ministry data, China was India's largest trading partner in 2025-26, with bilateral trade growing to \$151.1 billion, while the deficit stands at \$112.16 billion.

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‘Chinese investment influx good for ties’

“Particularly in areas where we believe we have a competitive advantage, like pharmaceuticals. For instance, we’re one of the world’s big exporters of pharmaceuticals to advanced markets. We hope Chinese partners will work with us to ensure that Indian production firms, producing high quality generic medicines, being the same products that have been exported to the U.S. and elsewhere, can be exported to the Chinese market. We think there is a balance of advantage for both countries, including value for China and of course, value for the relationship,” the Indian envoy said at a panel on global economic governance during the forum.

India’s exports to China had also increased recently. “That means that the market opportunity is there. We need to find ways of making it easier,” he said.

India continues to import large amounts of electrical machinery and finished goods from China, as well as a range of intermediate goods. “How do we find ways in which India and China can be connected, with a widening basket of goods that both sides can provide each other, but also a sense that reasonable mechanisms to protect consumers can be applied in a way that enables India also to export more...?” he said.

“It would be easier to consider that the trade wouldn’t be exactly 50-50 balanced, but one side would have more exports, provided that exports consist of goods that we can also add value. If it is pure consumption goods, that becomes a little harder to sell as a reasonable mechanism for the deficit,” he added.

India navigated West Asia crisis efficiently, says Modi

Fuel rationing, LPG disruptions, and price surges avoided with refineries upping production and public OMCs bearing the losses, says PM; politically motivated rumour-mongering failed, he adds

Saptaparno Ghosh

NEW DELHI

India successfully weathered the challenges triggered by the West Asia conflict through effective assessment and strategic, timely decision-making while efficiently using its domestic resources and strong diplomatic ties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

The country avoided fuel rationing, ensured cooking gas supplies, and shielded consumers and farmers from global price spikes, with state-run oil marketing firms (OMCs) bearing the losses, he said, adding that certain politically motivated entities which had engaged in rumour-mongering during the crisis had failed and



Crucial sector: PM Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the HRRL petrochemical complex in Balotra, Rajasthan, on Saturday. PTI

“may be dwelling in an abyss of disappointment”.

‘Effective strategies’

“India took potent decisions, made correct evaluations, charted effective strategies, used its domestic resources effectively, and constructively leveraged its diplomatic power

to successfully weather the challenges,” Mr. Modi said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd. (HRRL) in Balotra, India’s first greenfield integrated refinery-petrochemical complex, Mr. Modi credited domestic refineries for helping the country wade

Modi inaugurates semiconductor facility in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test facility at Sanand in Gujarat on Saturday. Semiconductor clusters are coming up across India and these will create large-scale employment, he said. » **PAGE 10**

through the crisis by increasing their production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). India is currently the world’s fourth-largest refiner and would continue expanding its refining capacity, Mr. Modi said.

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'India navigated West Asia crisis efficiently'

“India has consistently increased its refining capacity and has emerged as the world’s fourth-largest refiner... However, we will not stop here, and will continue to increase capacity in the coming years,” he added.

The Prime Minister insisted that there had not been any major supply disruptions during the crisis, even in remote areas, barring certain minor hurdles. He pointed out that India had not adopted any rationing measures for petrol and diesel, unlike certain other countries.

With regard to cooking gas, Mr. Modi told the gathering that prices of domestic LPG - which could have gone up to ₹2,000 per cylinder - were shielded and restricted to less than ₹950 per cylinder and ₹650 per cylinder for Ujjwala beneficiaries.

India also continued to provide urea for ₹300 per bag, though the fertilizer could have been priced at ₹3,000 per bag if it had followed the global price surge after the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

While customers were thus protected, state-owned oil marketing companies absorbed losses of about ₹75,000 crore in the June-end quarter, the Prime Minister said. “This is equivalent to the cost of building one refinery,” he noted.

Mr. Modi accused the previous Congress government of Rajasthan of delaying the completion of the Balotra refinery, claiming that the party had not extended the necessary cooperation.

BEIJING

China launches coast guard patrol east of Taiwan despite pushback



AFP

China said on Saturday it had launched a new coast guard patrol east of Taiwan, drawing a sharp response from Taipei after a task force last month off the island's coast caused alarm in some Western capitals. The fleet will conduct "law enforcement patrols" in the area, China's Coast Guard said in a statement. REUTERS

MOUNT RUSHMORE

American identity under 'renewed attack', says Trump as U.S. turns 250



AP

U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out on Friday at what he called a fresh threat against the country's identity, taking aim at domestic "radicals and extremists" on the eve of America's 250th birthday. "As we approach this magnificent anniversary, we see our American identity under a renewed attack," he said. AFP

Iranians flock to week-long funeral ceremonies for slain leader Khamenei

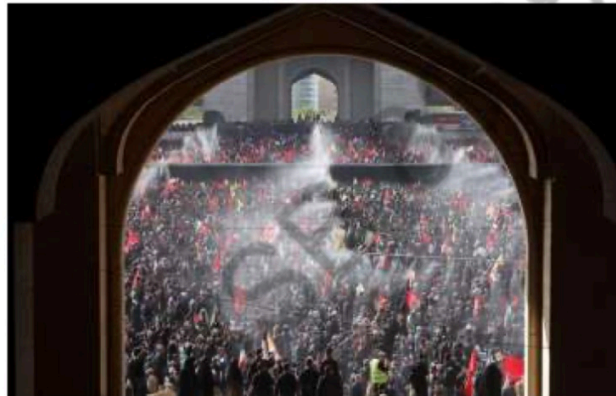
Reuters

DUBAI

Mourners thronged a vast prayer complex in Tehran on Saturday as the week-long funeral ceremonies of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei began with the national anthem, religious eulogies and readings from the Koran.

Iran is staging mass funeral processions for Khamenei in a show of public devotion to the Islamic Republic's theocratic state and revolutionary zeal.

Television footage showed his coffin draped with the Iranian flag and topped with his black turban. It was placed, along with four other coffins of his slain family members,



Mourners gather at the Grand Mosalla as they pay their final respects to Ali Khamenei, in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

on a large black platform that resembled the Kaaba.

The vast courtyard of the complex, the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla, was filled with mourners, many waving Iranian flags and carrying photographs

of the slain leader.

“Death to America” chants echoed through Tehran’s Mosalla on the day of the farewell to ‘Mr. Martyr,’ a broadcaster said. In other video posts, mourners were also heard

chanting: “Our slogan is one word: Revenge, revenge,” and “We will kill, we will kill he who killed our Imam.”

Representatives of Tehran-backed militant groups attended the funeral ceremonies, with envoys from Hezbollah and Hamas meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, state media reported.

Khamenei’s coffin will remain in the Mosalla until Sunday evening. His body was expected to be taken to Qom, Najaf and Kerbala, the great Shia centres of Iran and Iraq, before being laid to rest on Thursday in Mashhad, home to the country’s holiest pilgrim shrine.

MOSCOW CLAIMS ITS FORCES HAVE CAPTURED TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRIAL HUB KOSTYANTYNIVKA

Ukrainian drones hit St Petersburg oil terminal in latest strike on Russia

Associated Press

July 4

A UKRAINIAN drone attack struck an oil terminal in St. Petersburg on Saturday, Russian officials said, as Kyiv presses on with bombardment of Russia's oil infrastructure.

Almost daily long-range attacks on Russian oil facilities have created a fuel crisis and heaped political pressure on the Kremlin as its all-out invasion of Ukraine stretches into its fifth year.

Gov. Alexander Beglov said the city's Kirovsky district on the Baltic Sea was hit. He also said that air defenses shot down 72 Ukrainian drones across Russia's second-largest city and the surrounding region.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the attack as part of Ukraine's "long-range sanctions" against Russia. He said that Ukrainian forces also hit a military target on the island of Kronstadt, just off the coast of St. Petersburg.

"The Ukrainian defence forces hit the port oil infrastructure, which earns money for the Russian war, and there were



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting as he visits a command post of Russia's joint force grouping at an unidentified location on Friday. REUTERS

also hits on Kronstadt — an important military target," he said in a post on Telegram.

St. Petersburg's Kirovsky district was previously hit in June, ahead of Russia's flagship St Petersburg International Economic Forum.

The Crimean peninsula,

which Russia annexed in 2014, has suffered particularly from heavy strikes, causing local authorities to suspend gasoline sales to civilians. A Ukrainian attack on Saturday killed one person and injured two more, including a 10-year-old child, the Moscow-installed Gov. Ser-

gei Aksyonov said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has shrugged off Ukraine's strikes on Russia's energy facilities as "not critical," and insisted the war will continue until his goals are met. He has described the attacks on Russian energy as an

effort by Ukraine to distract attention from its losses on the battlefield, although analysts say the advance of Russian forces has been stymied in recent months.

On Friday, Putin visited the Russian military headquarters directing the war in Ukraine and received a report on the capture of the city of Kostyantynivka, after weeks of intense street battles. He hailed it as a key step toward capturing the nearby cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, the key remaining strongholds in the so-called "forest belt" of heavily fortified cities in the Donetsk region that remain in Ukraine's hands.

The capture of Kostyantynivka, a big transport and industrial hub, is of "major strategic importance," Putin, clad in military fatigues, said in televised comments.

In a briefing Saturday, Col. Gen. Sergei Rudskoy, the first deputy chief of the General Staff of the Russian armed forces, said that Ukrainian troops had been pushed back several kilometers (miles) and that fighting was taking place on the outskirts of the nearby town of Oleksiiievo-Druzhkivka.