

Public outrage over Ram temple donation theft has shaken UP, entire nation: Mayawati

LUCKNOW, JULY 19: A day ahead of the Monsoon session of Parliament, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said public outrage over the theft, misappropriation and embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya has deeply shaken both Uttar Pradesh and the nation.

In an X post in Hindi on Sunday, she said that both the ruling and opposition parties should set aside political animosity and discuss key issues in Parliament with utmost seriousness. South Asians & Diaspora

"The widespread public outrage over the theft, tampering, and embezzlement of offerings at the Ayodhya Ram temple has shaken Uttar Pradesh and the entire country to its core.

"People are holding those who politicised religion for electoral gains responsible for hurting their sentiments, which is echoing from streets to the courts, and are keeping a close watch on the issue, which is bound to heat



up in Parliament as well," Mayawati said in the X post.

The Monsoon session of Parliament will begin on Monday.

"The nation and the general public are once again concerned about whether the session will fall victim to uproar and adjournments, or seriousness will be shown in calming the charged and agitated atmosphere fuelled by burning issues such as soaring inflation, poverty, unemployment, women's insecur-

ity, and paper leaks in major examinations, and in finding satisfactory solutions to them," Mayawati said.

Referring to the West Asia conflict, she said that issues of significant national and public interest, such as the ongoing US-Israel conflict against Iran and the devaluation of the rupee demand that both the ruling and opposition parties set aside political animosity, self-interest and narrow-mindedness.

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conflict, she said that issues of significant national and public interest, such as the ongoing US-Israel conflict against Iran and the devaluation of the rupee demand that both the ruling and opposition parties set aside political animosity, self-interest and narrow-mindedness. News magazine subscription

"They must unite to devise effective solutions and take commendable action. Otherwise, the lives of the 'bahujan' population in our country of nearly 140 crore people could face even harder times, leaving their future in limbo, which is being apprehended," she said.

In this context, it is essential for Parliament to be fully serious and sensitive regarding these burning national issues, the BSP chief said.

"It would certainly be best if this process begins with the current Monsoon session itself. An effective Parliament is crucial for ensuring people-friendly good governance," Mayawati added.

Opposition Parties Stage Walkout From All-Party Meeting Over Govt Invite To NCPI, Say Democratic Norms Violated

NEW DELHI, JUL 19: Opposition parties on Sunday staged a "walkout" from the all-party meeting convened by the government ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament over Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju extending an invitation to the National Citizens Party of India to take part in the meeting.

They said the move was against the norms and the TMC rebel MPs' merger into "so-called NCPI" has not been approved by the Lok Sabha Speaker.

Talking to reporters, TMC leader Mahua Moitra said that opposition parties registered their strong protest over the government decision.

The opposition members staged a walkout soon after the all-party meeting began.

"Today, the entire opposition including Congress, the Samajwadi Party, DMK, JMM, Aam Aadmi Party, National Conference, Left parties, Shiv Sena UBT have all walked out of the all party meeting in protest because the so-called NCPI, which is an unrecognized party, the strength of the All India Trinamool Congress in the list



provided by the table office is shown to be 28 members. These so-called rebel 20 MPs, their merger has not been approved by the Speaker," Moitra said.

"The 20 disqualification petitions are still pending. After the 91st amendment, there is no room for a separate bloc. So on what grounds did the Parliamentary Affairs Minister extend an invitation to these 20 rebel MPs and how are they attending this meeting? We have registered our strong protest and walked out as a symbol of our protest. And we thank all our opposition

parties," she added.

Congress MP Pramod Tiwari said the party staged a walkout to uphold the Constitution. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant also backed the protest, questioning the recognition accorded to the rebel MPs.

"The affiliation granted to them (rebel MPs), where is that term in the books of law? We too have protested against it and walked out of the House," Sawant said.

Six Shiv Sena (UBT) "merged" with the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP ND Gupta alleged that a similar situation had arisen in his party's case and accused the government of undermining democratic norms.

"In our case, of 10 MPs of the Rajya Sabha, seven have been hijacked and our petition to decide whether this is valid or not is pending. In spite of this fact, they have allotted independent separate seats in the Rajya Sabha. This is hijack and murder of the democracy," Gupta said.

The monsoon session of Parliament will be held from July 20 to August 13. (Agencies)

CBI searches 15 locations in cases against Reliance ADA group firms

NEW DELHI, JUL 19: The CBI today conducted searches at 15 premises in Delhi and Mumbai in connection with cases registered against Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd. (RCFL) and Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL), officials said.

The searches covered 23 interlinked entities associated with the Reliance ADA Group, led by Anil Ambani, the agency spokesperson said in a statement. These premises are located in two cities - Mumbai and Delhi.

"The interlinked entities associated

with the... group were allegedly used as conduit for the diversion of bank funds borrowed by RCFL and RHFL to other Reliance ADA Group companies, thereby causing wrongful loss to the lending banks," the spokesperson said.

The searches were conducted after securing warrants from a special court in Mumbai. The searches also covered the "premises of three individuals, namely the former CFO of RHFL, the former Secretarial Head of the Reliance ADA Group, and the former Chief Treasury Consultant of RHFL," it said.

The CBI has registered seven FIRs against Reliance Communications Limited (RCom), RHFL, RCFL and Reliance Telecom Limited (RTL) on the basis of complaints received from various public sector banks and LIC. Business & Corporate Law

"The total alleged loss to PSBs/LIC in these seven cases is approx. Rs. 27,337 crore. The CBI has earlier conducted searches at 38 locations, filed four chargesheets and arrested seven accused persons in the Reliance ADA Group cases," the statement said. (PTI)

US launches fresh attack on Iran after 2 American soldiers are killed in strikes

DUBAI, JULY 19: Minutes before the U.S. announced the troop deaths earlier Saturday (July 18, 2026), Iran's supreme leader warned of "unforgettable lessons" if the U.S. keeps attacking the Islamic Republic.

The remarks read out on state TV and attributed to Mojtaba Khamenei, still unseen since the war began, also called President Donald Trump's signature "worthless and invalid." An Iranian negotiator said Tehran was suspending its commitments to the interim deal signed about a month ago and aimed at permanently ending the fighting.

Tehran's declarations snapped another fragile thread as the war shows no end in sight. Now Mr. Khamenei warns of "lessons" not only from Iran but also from its armed proxies in the region, calling them the "Axis of Resistance." The U.S. issued a global travel alert over the rising tensions.

The battle has focused on control of the Strait of Hormuz. The widening strikes now threaten civilians and infrastructure, including desalination plants for drinking water, while the global economy again is on alert.

The U.S. has violated its commitments under the deal and now Iran is "no longer implementing them," Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, told state TV.

The previously recorded death of a U.S. service member was that of a helicopter pilot who was killed when the helicopter crashed in the Arabian Sea earlier this month. Early in the war, an Iranian drone strike on a command centre in Kuwait killed six soldiers. One soldier died after an attack on a base in Saudi Arabia. Six were killed when a refueling aircraft crashed in Iraq.



On Saturday (July 18, 2026), the most significant damage from Iranian strikes occurred in Kuwait, where a water desalination plant and an oil facility were hit, according to the Kuwait authorities and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Both declined to provide locations.

It was the second attack against a desalination plant in two days in the tiny desert nation that depends on desalination for 90% of its drinking water. The strikes injured several people at the oil facility and caused a fire at the desalination plant, forcing several power generation units offline.

Several firefighters and a worker were injured while battling two other blazes sparked by Iranian strikes, according to the Kuwait Fire Force. Kuwait briefly closed its airspace due to missile threats, and Kuwait Airways said it was rescheduling most flights to and from the capital. Meanwhile, Iraq said it shot down attack drones over the city of Irbil. Jordan's state-run Petra news agency said the kingdom's air defence systems had downed Iranian missiles, while air sirens

sounded multiple times in Bahrain throughout the day and in Saudi Arabia in the morning, according to their governments.

The secretary general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassem Mohamed al-Budaiwi, accused Iran of war crimes for strikes on infrastructure and civilian facilities. (AP)US forces have launched fresh strikes to 'swiftly punish' Iran following US President Donald Trump's directions. The attack came after two US military men were killed in Jordan the day before, due to Iranian missile strikes.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said the strikes started at 6 pm Eastern Time in the US (3.30 am on Sunday Indian Standard Time).

"US forces began launching new airstrikes against Iran at the Commander-in-Chief's direction. The strikes are designed to further degrade Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and swiftly punish Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces who launched attacks against American service members

in Jordan last night," the CENTOM said on Sunday.

Sixteen US service members have been killed and around 430 wounded since the war with Iran began.

Hours prior to this statement, the CENTCOM said, "Two US service members in Jordan were killed in action and one service member is missing." Politics(Right)

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Saturday called the fallen service members "heroes". "Their sacrifice only stiffens our resolve," he wrote.

Meanwhile, following the US strikes reports emerged of Iranian city of Sirik being hit. Located strategically overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, Sirik has faced sustained attacks since the US campaign targeting Iran's southern coast began.

Over the past two or three nights, the scope of the US attacks has widened across southern Iran, including Bandar Abbas, Qeshm Island and areas near the Strait of Hormuz, as well as Ahvaz and Bushehr.

Iranian reports say the

NEW DELHI, JUL 19: Activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife has said she has moved the Delhi High Court seeking permission to shift him from Safdarjung Hospital to a private facility, and will seek an urgent hearing on her plea on Sunday.

Asserting that she has "lost faith" in Safdarjung hospital, Gitanjali J Angmo said she wants to move the activist out of Safdarjung Hospital to a private facility of her choice before his health further deteriorates.

In a post on her X handle, Angmo said no family should have to fight the system to choose where their loved one receive medical care and that the public health bulletin released by Safdarjung has "conveniently omitted" the actual number with respect to his potassium level. Geographic Reference

"Despite repeated requests, the hospital has refused to discharge him or allow us to shift him to a



private hospital of our choice. With around 30 police personnel stationed on our floor and well over 100 across the hospital, our movement is severely restricted. It is not medical care. It is illegal detention," she stated.

"I have therefore moved the High Court and sought

an urgent hearing today, praying for permission to shift Sonam before his health deteriorates further. No family should have to fight the system simply to choose where their loved one receive medical care," it further informed.

Wangchuk was on Saturday taken forcibly to Safdar-

jung Hospital by the Delhi Police on the 21st day of his hunger strike. He has been on an indefinite hunger strike since June 28 in support of the CJP-led protest over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination and the reported deaths of students linked to the controversy. (Agencies)

'Over 4,000 killed in human-animal conflict'

UP CM calls for raising awareness to minimise deaths

LUCKNOW, JULY 19: Asserting that Uttar Pradesh is the first state to declare human-animal conflict a disaster, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday called for raising public awareness and also pressed the need for leveraging technology to minimise the loss of lives.

The chief minister also said that over 4,000 people have lost their lives in human-animal conflict, while more than 5,000 others died in natural disasters.

Yogi Adityanath was speaking at the inauguration of the new headquarters building of the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority in Lucknow.

Referring to the recent death of a 12-year-old boy in a crocodile attack in Bahraich district, Adityanath said, "Barely two days ago, near Bahraich, a crocodile completely swallowed a 12-year-old boy. If we had exercised a little caution... After all, people already know which areas are prone to crocodile activity. It's not as if crocodiles travel vast distances. They generally stay within a range of just 3 to 5 kilometres throughout their lives."

On Thursday evening, Sunil (12), a resident of Tikuri village in Bahraich,

went to the banks of the Ghaghara river to relieve himself after helping his uncle, Vijay Raj Singh, with paddy sowing in the fields. Later, a crocodile emerged from the river and attacked him.

Speaking about leopards rescued in Bijnor, Adityanath said, "A day before yesterday, I was in Bijnor. We have rescued 80 leopards in Bijnor in the past two years. I asked how so many leopards ended up here on a large scale. They (officials) explained that their numbers have increased and, secondly, they are commonly found in the sugarcane belt. People have even started calling them 'sugar leopards'. Now, if a person isn't aware of this, he could easily fall prey to one."

chief minister also emphasised the use of technology to prevent loss of life from lightning strikes.

Citing the incident in which over 111 people lost their lives in a single day due to storms and lightning, Adityanath said he had expressed his displeasure at the situation and insisted on the use of technology, after which officials devised a plan within three days.

"The result was that while

thousands of people were participating in a 'bhandara' (community feast) at the Shakumbhari Devi temple in Saharanpur, an alert was received, and the administration safely evacuated everyone. Moments later, a five-foot-high surge of water came rushing down from the Shivalik Hills. Had there been no alerts at that time, hundreds of lives could have been lost, he said.

"We often act and express our sympathies only after a disaster has struck and caused extensive loss of life and property. However, I believe that prior alertness, preparedness, and awareness regarding disasters can minimise such losses. This should be an integral part of our daily lives. These matters need to be conveyed through school curricula as well as through conversations within families," Adityanath added.

Adityanath said that awareness programmes should be conducted so that even an ordinary citizen is empowered to provide relief during a disaster.

"Disasters do not strike all the time. However, during periods of calm, we must focus on our own training. Furthermore, if we could visit

schools and colleges to educate students and teachers, perhaps by holding a conference for principals at the district level on a Sunday to inform them about the necessary precautions for various disasters, I believe it would constitute a significant service to the nation," Adityanath said.

The chief minister inaugurated the new headquarters building of the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), built at a cost of more than Rs 200 crore.

He also launched the authority's website and inspected the exhibition set up on the premises.

"Our resolve is to make Uttar Pradesh a state that is fully prepared to deal with every disaster, where every citizen can live with the confidence that both the government and the citizens are ready to face any crisis. This should become a part of every citizen's and the nation's duty," he said.

Stressing the importance of training, he said, "The recruitment process for 45,000 Home Guards is being completed. Those Aapda Mitras who have received training will be given priority in this recruitment.