

Adopt multi-pronged strategy to counter cross-border terrorism

PAKISTAN has been pursuing its policy of bleeding India with a thousand cuts with unabated persistence for the past four decades. Somehow, India has neither been able to tackle this problem nor find a viable counter. Of late, terrorist activity has shifted from the Kashmir valley to south of the Pir Panjal range to areas of Poonch and Rajouri as well as Kathua in the Jammu region. During this year itself, there have been at least six major attacks, including the killing of nine pilgrims in Reasi last month. This shift is not due to any enhanced anti-terror measures taken in the Valley, but perhaps due to an unprecedented flow of tourists, which leads to financial gains for almost all sections of society, from porters to shikara owners and hoteliers. Any terror attack in the Valley would impact the inflow of tourists, which in turn will result in financial losses to the local people and their consequent slant towards terrorists. In addition to cross-border terror attacks, Pakistan has been pumping drugs into India, more recently using drones and other means. To counter this, India needs to deploy anti-drone systems, besides working out a more effective system to check the smuggling of drugs both by sea and land routes.

The Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border are fenced, yet terrorists continue to sneak into Indian territory and inflict casualties on Indian troops, police and other personnel. To infiltrate into Indian territory, terrorists normally use nullahs and streams, which are not fenced, and sometimes make tunnels under the fence to send terrorists. Terror attacks on military establishments close to the border resulted in the setting up of extensive fencing and the raising of boundary walls around unit lines, thereby inducing in some manner a siege mindset among the troops. Terrorists who sneak into Indian territory are generally dealt with effectively, though often only after they succeed in inflicting casualties on military personnel and causing other damage. Even the existing distressful state of political and economic conditions in Pakistan has not resulted in any pullback of this policy of 'a thousand cuts'. Pakistan's policy of promoting terrorism has eventually led to terror attacks on it from across its western border.

A well-evaluated policy is required to dissuade Pakistan from indulging in this game of pushing terrorists into India. This can be achieved by attempting some of the following measures.

One, deploy adequate forces and ensure effective surveillance to neutralise terrorists just as they attempt to cross into Indian territory. This may involve shifting a certain number of troops from depth areas and redeploying them along the border. There is also a need to enhance intelligence inputs. All areas up to 200-300 metres with undergrowth on the home side of the fence should be regularly checked for any tunnel opening. Second, take punitive action against Pakistan for every terror attack. Such a policy was adopted when we carried out the surgical strikes in 2016 and the Balakot airstrikes in 2019. Earlier, the military mobilisation consequent to the 2001 attack on Parliament ended in a fiasco. These actions did not produce the desired results. Further, there is the possibility that these actions could lead to escalation, such as border skirmishes and even a major conflict. In this regard, China factor will have to be borne in mind. Third, build friendly relations with Pakistan so that it gives up its policy on cross-border terror attacks. Good neighbourly relations can result in open trade and cooperation in a range of areas. India could even, when required, extend financial help. It is the continued adverse relations with India that lend justification to the Pakistan army to exist in its present state. Otherwise, there is no rationale for Pakistan having a military of the size it has and the consequent unaffordable burden it imposes on the country's economy. India wants a friendly, cooperative and prosperous Pakistan. Friendly relations with India would work to a great extent in Pakistan's favour. However, the China factor has come into play; it will work to Pakistan's disadvantage and eventually drive it into a debt trap. If none of the above options work, India must portray Pakistan as a terrorist state at world forums. Terror activities and treaties cannot coexist.

R&D needs firm commitment from govt

India must invest in developing critical technologies for nuclear and other energy sources

IN her 2024-25 Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a bunch of announcements relating to the future course of India's energy mix in the light of the need to move towards the target of achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2070. While continuing the thrust on renewable sources of energy, the government wants to give a push to nuclear power as well. "Nuclear energy is expected to form a very significant part of the energy mix for Viksit Bharat," Sitharaman said. She did not elaborate on any time frame to make nuclear power a significant player in the energy mix but talked of some ideas to promote nuclear power: the setting up of small reactors — Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs); research and development to develop the Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR); and a role for the private sector in this regard. At present, nuclear power constitutes a minuscule part of India's energy mix. Per the data shared in the Economic Survey a day before the Budget, the total installed capacity of power in India stands at 494,000 MW (megawatt). Of this, nuclear power contributes a mere 6,800 MW, while renewable sources of energy account for 125,000 MW (which is almost a quarter of the total installed capacity). The rest comes from hydro and thermal power. The production of nuclear power has remained stagnant since 2016. Not a single megawatt of nuclear power has been added to the grid for nearly a decade. The promise of massive additions to the installed capacity has eluded the Department of Atomic Energy since the 1980s when it first set the target of 20,000 MW by 2000.

The reasons for the return of nuclear energy on the table are many. The most obvious is the need for energy transition necessitated due to climate change. Nuclear power is considered a clean, carbon-free source of energy. A study on India's energy options towards 'net zero' done by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-Ahmedabad) came up with some projections. While coal would continue as the backbone of the Indian energy system for the next two decades, renewable sources and nuclear power would be the predominant sources then on, according to the study. Countries are also realising that the energy transition requires certain critical technologies (battery storage, carbon

capture, etc.) which are not readily available. China has become the main source of several critical materials and rare earths needed for batteries, electric vehicles, etc.

If Sitharaman wants nuclear energy to reach a 'very significant' level in the energy mix from the minuscule role it plays currently, a new policy direction and investment are necessary. The Budget does not provide any of this. Pinning all hopes on the private sector to achieve this is misplaced. The doors for non-government players in the nuclear sector have been open since the much-touted Indo-



US nuclear deal. The deal promised a piece of the nuclear supplies pie for Indian companies. But not a rupee has been invested by any Indian or foreign investor nor have Indian companies got supply contracts from elsewhere, as hoped by then UPA government. The Atomic Energy Act, 1962, was amended to let the Nuclear Power Corporation form joint venture companies with other public sector entities like the National Thermal Power Corporation. Till recently, the Modi government has maintained that it does not propose to allow the private sector to enter the nuclear power domain. It is not clear if Sitharaman's statement about the collaboration with the private sector reverses this position. Coming to technology, the Finance Minister has spoken about BSRs and BSMRs. The International Atomic Energy Agency defines reactors under 300 MW capacity as 'small' and those up to 700 MW as 'medium'. Most of the two dozen nuclear reactors in India are below 300 MW and so are small, the only exception being the two

Kudankulam reactors which are 1,000 MW each and Kakrapar which has 700-MW reactors. The pressurised heavy water reactors operational in Tarapur (Maharashtra), Narora (UP), Rawatbhata (Rajasthan) and Kaiga (Karnataka) range between 160 MW and 220 MW. We don't know if the government wants BSRs to be even smaller than the internationally accepted definition of 'small' or if it is going to rechristen existing reactors as BSRs because they are already small.

The idea of modular nuclear reactors, too, has been around for some years now. A modular reactor refers to using modules fabricated in factories and already available parts to assemble a small nuclear plant (below 300 MW) to speed up construction. The idea is that many such reactors can be planned at one site, and manufacturers can achieve 'economies of scale'. However, nuclear suppliers have seen low demand for modular reactors because the regulatory requirements for design certification, construction and operation licences are similar to those for large reactors. The core issues of fuel availability, safety and nuclear waste disposal remain major challenges for nuclear power generation — be it through small, modular or large reactors. The elephant in the room is

R&D, be it any source of energy — nuclear, hydrogen, wind or solar. Unless we invest in developing critical technologies for each of these energy sources, the road to 'net zero' is going to be painful. Many technologies and critical materials needed for the energy transition are not available commercially or have to be sourced from monopoly suppliers. The Modi government has been stingy when it comes to spending on R&D. Sitharaman announced a new funding mechanism for R&D — the National Research Fund (NRF) — in 2019. On Tuesday, she said: "We will operationalise" the NRF, but still did not commit when. Her Budget speeches in the past have talked about funding to the tune of Rs 50,000 crore over five years for NRF. No such funding has materialised. Now, she is talking of "a financing pool of Rs 1 lakh crore" for R&D. What India needs is a firm commitment from the government to R&D in general and critical areas like energy in particular.

No NEET re-test

Focus on sustainability, income for farmers

MANY weeks of student trauma later, the Supreme Court verdict on Tuesday finally shut the door on the NEET controversy with a firm rejection of the demand for a re-exam. While the SC decision to avoid a re-test, considering the disruption it would cause to 24 lakh aspirants, is pragmatic, it also highlights deeper issues within our educational and testing systems. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud's observation that the leaks did not constitute a 'systemic breach' provides temporary relief but does little to address the underlying vulnerabilities. The leaks in Hazaribagh and Patna, as per the evidence presented by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and IIT-Delhi question the integrity of an exam critical for aspiring medical professionals. The court's reliance on the NTA to address the affected students' cases reflects a stopgap approach rather than a long-term solution.



The UGC-NET's cancellation in June further amplifies concerns. The Ministry of Education's suo motu action based on undisclosed inputs from the Union Home

Ministry, while protecting students' interests, exposes the fragility of our examination infrastructure. The lack of transparency regarding the exact nature of the compromise fuels distrust and anxiety among the student community. These incidents demand a comprehensive overhaul of the examination and testing framework. The establishment of a high-level committee to review the NTA's structure, as suggested by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, is a step in the right direction. However, this must be coupled with robust measures to enhance security, transparency and accountability. The recurrent examination scandals not only undermine the credibility of educational institutions but also affect the future of young candidates. In a country striving to harness its demographic dividend, ensuring the sanctity of examinations is non-negotiable. The government must prioritise reforms to restore faith in the system and fulfil the aspirations of the youth.

The poor get short shrift in short-sighted Budget

The poorest, who don't have to pay income tax, will nevertheless have to pay for virtually all that they must consume as goods, which fall under the GST ambit.

EVERY year, the government presents the Economic Survey and the Budget one after the other. Through the survey, it seeks to describe how the economy is faring. And through the Budget, it tries to spell out what action plan it has in mind. These are viewed against two considerations: given the current situation, what should be done? And are things likely to go in the right direction?

The government seems rather pleased by what it has been able to achieve so far in its 10 years in power. In the 2023-24 financial year, the economy grew by 8.2 per cent, making India the fastest mover among all large economies. In 2023, the global economy grew by 3.2 per cent. The country is also confident about being able to contain the headline inflation of 4.5 per cent in 2024-25. But this story is not entirely rosy. Retail inflation was higher at 5.4 per cent during 2023-24. And more disturbingly, food inflation was as high as 7.5 per cent. Overall, having done rather well in this regard, the survey has spelt out the following growth strategy so that the goal of Viksit Bharat can be attained by 2047: the private sector will have to find its own capital to keep growing steadily. Public-private partnerships will have to be encouraged to create a green transition in the country. The government will have to plug the gaps for MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) to keep growing. A policy will be needed to fill the skills gap so as to enable the country to continue growing. To shape the policy, the capability of the state machinery and the system will need to keep pace.

If it is a long-term goal for a quarter century, where do we begin from now? First, there is good news for taxpayers. The standard deduction is being raised from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000. The slabs are being tweaked so that employees can save up to Rs 17,000. Professionals are going to get incentives to

join the workforce. Over two million youngsters will benefit from it. Not just the salary income, but the exemption for capital gains is also being raised for those who make gains on investment.

Thus, the Budget will help the middle class, which will have to pay lower taxes. The irony is that the poorest, who don't have to pay income tax, will nevertheless have to pay for virtually all that they must consume as goods, which fall under the ambit of the GST. More GST-linked reforms can be undertaken by the Centre and the states, though consensus is always hard to achieve. Besides, it is unfair that the Centre makes a killing from cess, which it does not have to share with the states; the latter need all the revenue they can procure for projects to meet development targets, such as ensuring that poor children get educated.

The Budget has also approved several big-ticket projects designed to please the BJP's allies — the Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United) and Chandrababu Naidu-helmed Telugu Desam Party. The move by the BJP, which does not have an absolute majority on its own, is aimed at remaining in power at the Centre.

Major projects include the Patna-Purnea and Buxar-Bhagalpur expressways. Besides, a two-lane bridge will be built over the Ganga in Bihar's Buxar district. Additionally, a 2,400-MW power plant will come up in Bhagalpur's Pirpainti. Railway and roadway projects have been announced for Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, a sum of Rs 15,000 crore has been announced for the development of its new capital, Amaravati. The Budget, which is a political act, has a



clear goal: to ensure that the BJP's coalition partners — without whose support the saffron party will not be able to stay in power — and the middle class are content. The objective to please the latter is driven by the gut feeling of the traders who dominate the leading party. In terms of sheer numbers, the small middle class cannot determine electoral outcomes. The motive of the ruling dispensation is to make the masses happy. In the short run, things are going well for the government. Even the global commentariat has lauded the high growth rate. But for the growth to be sustained, workers must develop better skills and maintain good health. The Budget has introduced only token programmes to address these key issues.

Thus, the overall feeling is that while the ruling party understands political compulsions well, it is not being far-sighted. The expectations from the Budget have also highlighted three issues that need addressing, irrespective of what is happening on the ground right now. Despite buoyant growth, the consumption demand is soft, and employment is a serious laggard. Are large numbers of people not getting the fruits of high economic growth? And — this is a bit more technical — is the low level of inflation as robust as it is cracked up to be?

Many have argued that the growth rate is not as high as it is made out to be, as the economy has suffered from the setbacks of demonetisation and the Covid-19 pandemic. So, in a way, the economy is merely trying to catch up. Consumption is subdued not because people are saving more but because they are trying to repay the deep debt that they got into when they lost their source of income as a result of the two setbacks. Retail inflation is restrained not because of abundant supplies but because people are unable to consume what they would like to. There is also a powerful contradiction. If the economy and businesses are to continue doing well, the RBI must keep the interest rates low. But then, how can banks pay a higher rate of interest in order to garner more deposits? Hence, the banks are seeing a mismatch between loans and savings. Overall, the Budget is realistic in a short-sighted way. It is an exercise by the middle class and for the middle class. But that leaves the issues for ensuring long-term growth unaddressed.

Sensex surges 1,100 points: What's driving the rally on Dalal Street

NEW DELHI. Benchmark stock market indices jumped sharply on Friday and are set to end the week on a positive note.

The S&P BSE Sensex was up 1,100.91 points at 81,140.70 at 1:18 pm, while the NSE Nifty50 rose 358.90 points to trade at 24,765. A major push came from smallcap and midcap stocks that recovered sharply to rise up to 2%. The overall recovery in the stock market has been linked to investors buying the dip to capitalise on lower prices after Budget 2024 dampened the mood on Dalal Street.

IT, metal and pharma stocks drive gains

Information technology stocks, backed by better-than-expected Q1 results, led the rally as the Nifty IT was up over 2%. The positive Q2 US GDP numbers also played a significant role in boosting domestic IT stocks.

Nifty Metal was up nearly 3% and Nifty Pharma also contributed to the gains on the benchmark indices.

Gains in individual shares such as Divi's Laboratories, Apollo Hospitals, SBI Life, Adani Enterprises, Infosys, HCLTech, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Adani Ports also boosted the benchmark indices.

Strategy ahead

Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, exuded confidence in the domestic stock markets and said, "The unique feature of the ongoing bull market in India is its ability to climb all walls of worry. The market dismissed all concerns relating to elections, the Budget and the correction in the mother market US." The buy on dips strategy which has played out well in this rally continues to hold good. However, the valuation discrepancy - largecaps fairly valued and mid and small caps highly valued - continues. Long-term investors should exploit this discrepancy by buying quality largecaps on declines," he added. According to experts, markets have moved on from the budget announcements and the remaining Q1 results will be the biggest factor determining the sentiments on Dalal Street next week.

Google maps adds six new features in India to improve commuter experience

CHENNAI. Google has unveiled six new features for Google Maps in India, focusing on AI enhancements and local partnerships to improve user experience and support sustainable travel. These updates will roll out this week, targeting common commuter challenges.

AI-Driven Narrow Road Avoidance

To prevent routing through roads unsuitable for four-wheelers, Google Maps now uses AI to identify and avoid narrow roads. This feature utilizes satellite imagery and Street View data to estimate road widths and refine routing algorithms. It will initially be available in eight cities, including Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai, with plans for further expansion. Google Maps will now highlight flyovers on recommended routes in 40 Indian cities, helping drivers better prepare for elevated roadways.

Metro Ticket Booking

In Kochi and Chennai, users can now book metro tickets directly through Google Maps, integration with ONDC and Namma Yatri.

EV Charging Station Integration

Google has partnered with EV charging providers to integrate details of over 8,000 charging stations into Maps and Search. This includes real-time availability and filtering by charger type, making India the first country to feature two-wheeler EV charging stations on Google Maps.

Curated Local Recommendations

Local experts are collaborating with Google to curate lists of recommended places in major cities and tourist spots, enhancing the exploration experience.

Improved Road Incident Reporting

Enhancements to user-generated content allow easier reporting of road incidents, available on Android, iOS, Android Auto, and Apple CarPlay. These features are tailored to address local transportation challenges and will be gradually available on Android and iOS devices.

Nestle misses Street estimates, reports 7% jump in net income

NEW DELHI. Leading FMCG maker Nestle India on Thursday reported that its net profit during the June quarter grew by 7% year-on-year to Rs 746.6 crore compared to Rs 698.3 crore in the same quarter last fiscal. The revenue surged 3.3% YoY to Rs 4,814 crore. Both the topline and bottomline figures were below Street estimates as most analysts were expecting the Maggi maker to report PAT at about Rs 800 crore and revenue at about Rs 5,000 crore. Nestle said commodity



prices are seeing unprecedented headwinds in coffee and cocoa with all-time high prices and an ongoing price rally. "Cereals and grains are going through a structural cost rise backed by MSP. There is relative stability in milk prices, packaging and edible oils," the company said. Meanwhile, Nestle India and Dr Reddy's Laboratories announced the formation of a joint venture, which will be called Dr. Reddy's and Nestlé Health Science Ltd.

No Angel tax for investors. How it will benefit startups

The angel tax, introduced through Section 56(2)(viib) of the Income Tax Act in 2012, required private companies to pay tax on the excess amount received for issuing shares beyond their fair market value.

NEW DELHI. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the government will abolish the 'angel tax' in her Budget 2024 presentation, providing a boost to both angel investors and startups. The angel tax, introduced through Section 56(2)(viib) of the Income Tax Act in 2012, required private companies to pay tax on the excess amount received for issuing shares beyond their fair market value. This tax applied to investments from both resident and non-resident investors. The valuation of shares, which involved subjective methods like discounted cash flow and asset valuation, often led to disputes and litigation. This was particularly challenging for new-age businesses whose valuations did not



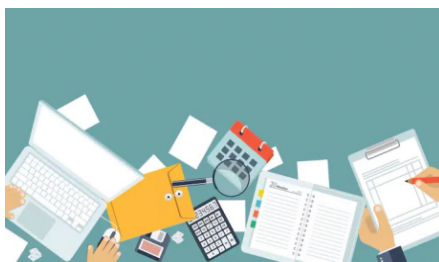
always fit conventional norms, leading to what is commonly referred to as angel tax. "The proposal in the Finance (No. 2) Bill 2024 to abolish angel tax is a welcome measure as it would remove the genuine concerns of investors (both residents and non-residents). The potential tax and litigation exposure on investment in an Indian company's shares will be put to rest," said CA Dr Suresh Surana. The removal of the angel tax is seen as a major win for the Indian startup

ecosystem. By eliminating this tax, startups will face less financial scrutiny and administrative burden. This change is expected to allow startups to focus more on innovation and growth, potentially strengthening India's position as a global hub for startups. Ashish Bhatia, Founder & CEO of India Accelerator, said, "By eliminating this tax, startups will experience a reduction in financial scrutiny and administrative burdens, enabling them to focus more on innovation and growth. This strategic

move will solidify India's position as a global startup hub. Simplifying the taxation framework for startups and investors is anticipated to unlock more domestic capital, which is crucial for the growth of early-stage companies, especially in the current funding climate." "This will lead to ease in raising funding for early-stage founders and will encourage more early-stage investors and angels to view startup investing as a fruitful asset class. In our view, this single announcement is a small step towards making angel investment accessible to people with an investment corpus that currently goes to markets and mutual funds," said Manoj Agarwal, Co-founder & Managing Partner at Seafunder, on removal of angel tax. "Abolishing the angel tax in the Budget 2024 is excellent news for startups, aiding in capital formation in the country as it will attract more startup investments by reducing tax burdens on capital received from investors. Simplifying FDI rules and promoting Rupee-based overseas investments will attract global investors and strengthen India's international market position," said Vinnaayak Mehta, Founder, The Infinity Group.

Income tax: Old or new regime Check which one will help you save more tax

Despite stable margins and satisfactory top-line performance, the disappointing results have prompted analysts to revise their earnings estimates for the bank downward by 5-6%.



lakh: 10%, Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh: 15%, Rs 12 lakh to Rs 15 lakh: 20%, Above Rs 15 lakh: 30%

Old income tax regime (Unchanged)

On the other hand, there were no changes introduced to the old income tax regime. Up to Rs 2.5 lakh: Nil, Rs 2,50,001 to Rs 5 lakh: 5%, Rs 5,00,001 to Rs 10 lakh: 20%, Above Rs 10 lakh: 30%. Standard deduction: Enhanced from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 in the new tax regime. Rebate under Section 87A: Salaried individual taxpayers earning up to Rs 7.75 lakh can utilise the standard deduction of Rs 75,000 and claim a rebate of up to Rs 25,000, effectively reducing their tax liability to zero.

Concessional Surcharge Rate: For individuals earning over Rs 5 crore, the surcharge rate is reduced to 25% under the new regime from 37% under

the old regime, lowering the effective tax rate from 42.744% to 39%. Old or new regime: Which one should you choose?

While the old income tax regime continues to offer benefits of deductions, the illustrations above show that salaried individuals earning up to Rs 7,00,000 per annum, up to Rs 10 lakh per annum and up to Rs 12 lakh per annum get the benefit of lower tax slabs after the changes. Moreover, salaried individuals earning Rs 7.75 lakh are exempt from paying tax under the new income tax regime, given the increased standard deduction of Rs 75,000 and the rebate under section 87A of up to Rs. 25,000. This effectively makes their tax liability zero. Simply put, the new tax regime has been made more attractive for taxpayers earning up to Rs 12 lakh per annum, but at the same time, it depends on the taxpayer's investments. In case of more investments, deductions under the old income tax regime can still make it more attractive. Therefore, it is ideal for taxpayers to consult tax professionals to get clarity on which tax regime will help them save more tax.

New Delhi. The first full budget of the Modi 3.0 government, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, introduced some key amendments to the new income tax regime. The changes to the new tax regime were aimed at benefiting middle-class taxpayers. The changes included incremental revisions to some tax slabs under the new regime, in addition to a hiked standard deduction limit of Rs 75,000, up Rs 25,000 from the previous Rs 50,000. Standard Deduction: Increased to Rs 75,000 from Rs 50,000. Revised Tax Slabs: Up to Rs 3 lakh: Nil, Rs 3 lakh to Rs 7 lakh: 5%, Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10

Why you should complete ITR filing by July 31 deadline

The deadline for filing income tax return (ITR) is July 31 for financial year 2023-24 (Ay25).



New Delhi These technical issues have led to frustrations among users trying to access important documents like Form 26AS, Annual Information Statement (AIS), and Taxpayer Information Summary (TIS). The glitches have been ongoing for nearly a month, causing delays in the filing process. In some instances, joint income is being reported on the statements of both account holders, leading to scrutiny notices even when taxpayers have submitted their returns

on time. Additionally, the limited response options on the AIS/TIS portal often do not address specific issues, and updates to the TIS responses are not always prompt, further compounding the problems. These technical challenges are obstructing taxpayers' ability to complete their form submissions efficiently. Various

chartered accountant associations have voiced concerns to the tax department, highlighting the significant difficulties faced by both taxpayers and professionals with the e-filing portal.

Despite the ongoing issues and calls for an extension from various quarters, experts believe that the chances of an extension are slim.

They point to last year's decision not to extend the deadline and the potential complications of creating a backlog as reasons why the government is likely to stick to the original deadline. As the July 31 deadline approaches, taxpayers are urged to complete their filings as soon as possible to avoid any last-minute problems.

IT companies' hiring to see positive traction in second half

Experts said the IT hiring will have a major focus on attracting skilled talent and offering flexible work arrangements.



BENGALURU. In the first quarter of this financial year, IT services companies showed signs of recovery in hiring compared to the previous few quarters. HR experts say hiring in the second half of the calendar year will see positive traction. After three quarters, Tata Consultancy Services added 5,452 employees and onboarded 11,000 trainees in the first quarter. It expects to hire about 40,000 trainees this fiscal. HCLTech added 1,078 freshers in Q1FY25, and likely to hire 10,000 freshers in FY25. "We will continue to recalibrate our hiring

for the year based on the demand outlook. We are focused on re-skilling and organically developing the required competencies among our talent base," Milind Lakkad, chief HR officer at TCS, said at the company's Q1 earnings conference. Infosys' headcount was down

by 1,908 in the June quarter. Jayesh Sanghrajka, CFO, recently said at the media briefing that they have moved to the agile hiring base and as they start seeing growth, they will look at hiring. "We are looking at hiring 15,000 to 20,000 freshers this year, depending on

how we see the growth," he said. Experts said the IT hiring will have a major focus on attracting skilled talent and offering flexible work arrangements.

Owing to rising IT spending, an uptick in investments, growth in Global Captive Centers, and other positive factors, the talent market in the IT industry is anticipated to get back on track and provide a variety of opportunities to IT candidates, said Sachin Alug, CEO, NLB Services. "The upward trend in IT hiring has already been noticed during the first half of 2024. We expect the momentum to gain strength by the second half of the year with an increase of about 10-12% in hiring within the sector," he added. TCS, HCLTech recruit more employees HR experts say hiring in the second half of the calendar year will see positive traction. After 3 quarters, TCS added 5,452 employees and onboarded 11,000 trainees in Q1. It expects to hire 40,000 trainees this fiscal. HCLTech added 1,078 freshers in Q1 and likely to hire 10,000 freshers in FY25.



The stock has gained 35% in a year. The market cap of Tata Steel rose to Rs 2.03 lakh crore amid a rally in the broader market today.

On the other hand, JSW Steel stock has a one-year beta of 1.2. This signals the stock had high volatility during the period. The metal sector stock is trading neither in the oversold nor overbought territory as the relative strength index (RSI) of JSW Steel stands at 34.8. The large-cap stock stands lower than the 10-day, 20-day, 30-day, and 50-day, but higher than the 5-day, 100-day, 150-day and 200-day moving averages. The market cap of JSW Steel stood at Rs 2.20 lakh crore on BSE. The stock has gained over 12% in a year. Centrum Broking has a price target of Rs 168 on Tata Steel. Prabhudas Lilladher has a price target of Rs 186 on the stock with an accumulate call. The Tata Group firm is yet to announce its Q1 results. Prabhudas Lilladher has a price target of Rs 1022 with an accumulate call, valuing at 7x EV of Mar'26 EBITDA. Centrum Broking has a reduce rating on JSW Steel with a target price of Rs 895 (Earlier: Rs909), valuing at 7x FY26 EV/EBITDA. The company has announced its Q1 earnings. First quarter net profit (attributable to owners) fell 64 percent to Rs 867 crore. The profit missed consensus estimates of Rs 1,254 crore. Revenue from operations came at Rs 42,943 crore, up from Rs 42,213 crore in the year-ago quarter.

US woman accuses Rajasthan lawyer of rape on pretext of marriage

In her complaint to the police, the woman said that she was invited to India by the accused, who then raped her several times in hotel rooms in Jaipur and Ajmer based on a false promise to marry her.



New Delhi. The woman approached the Bundi's Superintendent of Police (SP) with the help of an NGO, following which a zero FIR was filed against the accused, a resident of Ajmer. Speaking to the media about the case, Bundi's Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amar Singh said that the woman visited India twice between April and July. The woman alleged that during this period, the accused falsely promised to marry her and established physical relations with her several times in hotel rooms in Ajmer and Jaipur, the DSP said. The dispute arose between the two after the woman discovered the man was already married and had a family in Ajmer. She then lodged a case against the accused, the officer said. "They allegedly even had a wedding function with the woman in a temple in Ajmer, but avoided taking her to his home despite her insistence," Singh said, as per news agency. A case has been registered in connection with the matter and further investigation was underway, Singh said.

Supreme Court's Rap For "Sorry State" Of Foreigners Detention Centre In Assam

New Delhi. The Supreme Court on Friday flagged the "sorry state" of a detention centre in Assam that house individuals whose citizenship is unclear and foreigners waiting to be deported. The court said it was troubled by the lack of water and sanitation facilities, and non-functioning toilets.

A bench of Justice Abhay Oka and Justice AG Masih referred to a report by the Secretary of the Assam Legal Services Authority, about a detention centre in Matia in Goalpara district.

"There are no proper toilets... no medical facilities. What are you managing?" the court asked. "We find the facilities are very poor... there is no adequate water supply, there is no sanitation system (or) proper toilets. The report does not speak about and medical health."

The court directed the Law Authority to ensure a follow-up visit to establish not only under-par facilities as mentioned in the report but also quantity and quality of food and kitchen hygiene. A report is to be submitted within three weeks. According to the petitioner, the Matia detention

centre holds 3,000 people. The centre, meanwhile, is to respond on the issue of deportation within the same time. The court had earlier told the centre to deport 17 declared foreigners presently held in detention camps across the northeastern state. Four of the



foreigners have been held for two years. It was in this context the court had directed the Assam Legal Services Authority to visit the detention camp.

Heavy rain in Delhi leads to waterlogging and traffic jams

New Delhi. Several roads in Delhi were water-logged and commuters faced traffic snarls with vehicles breaking down after a spell of heavy rain lashed the national capital on Friday morning. Data shows 39 mm of rainfall was recorded from 5.30 am to 8.30 am at Delhi's main weather station in Safdarjung. While 89 mm of rainfall was recorded at the Delhi University weather station it was, at the weather station in Pitampura it was 10 mm. Multiple videos of commuters in Delhi facing issues due to the waterlogging surfaced online — a BMW car stuck in a waterlogged area, motorists struggling to drive on the road in front of Saket Metro station, and people using wooden planks as boats to float on top of the water. Amongst the areas where waterlogging was reported were the roads in front of the Australian and the British embassies in Lutyens Delhi, Dhaura Kuan, Saket Metro Station, the area around the New Delhi Railway Station, Shantipath, Motibagh, Naoraji Nagar, Bhikaji Cama Place, Minto Bridge, Sadar Bazar market, Ring Road, Mukarba Chowk, Gulabi Bagh underpass, GTK Depot, Zakhira Underpass, Anuvrat Marg near Qutub minar, Nigam Bodh Ghat, and opposite the Satya



Niketan Bus Stand. "Water logging took place due to railway construction that led to a pipe leak around the Leela Palace hotel that led to water accumulation around the British High Commission... The issue has been resolved," an official of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert (be aware) in the Capital till Sunday, and forecast moderate rain and a generally cloudy sky on Friday as per its seven-day forecast.

NCW complaint: Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra provided FIR copy after approaching Delhi HC, Court to hear maintainability of quashing next

New Delhi. The Delhi Police on Friday provided Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra with a copy of the FIR lodged against her on July 7 after the Delhi High Court on Friday took up for hearing Moitra's petition seeking quashing of the FIR.

Moitra was booked after she allegedly posted a video on social media, wherein NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma was seen arriving at the site of a stampede in Hathras. The post was later deleted.

Following the NCW complaint, Moitra was booked under Section 79 (intending to insult the modesty of any woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the IFSO unit of the Delhi Police. Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for Moitra before the court of Justice Neena Bansal, submitted that while the



FIR was lodged on July 7, and Moitra through her legal representatives sought a copy of the FIR by way of a communication dated July 9, the same was not provided till date.

Jaising went on to further submit before the Court that Moitra, through the

petition, was seeking that the FIR copy be produced and the same be quashed. She also requested that Moitra be permitted to amend her petition once provided with the FIR.

During the hearing, the counsel for the Delhi Police agreed to provide a copy of the FIR but objected to the plea for amending the petition as well as quashing, adding that the same would require a fresh petition.

The counsel argued, "Their grievance stands satisfied if I give a copy (of the FIR), then their petition becomes infructuous and they'll have to file a fresh petition (for quashing). This is an abuse of the process of law."

The Court has listed the matter next for November 6.

Gangster, Out Of Jail, Holds "Comeback" Rally, Sent Back To Prison



New Delhi. A gangster in Maharashtra was recently released from jail but was sent back to prison after his celebration rally video went viral on social media.

Nasik's gangster Harshad Patankar was jailed under the Maharashtra Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Slumlords, Bootleggers, Drug Offenders and Dangerous Persons Act (MPDA).

He got out of jail on July 23, following which his supporters took out a car rally to celebrate his release. About 15 two-wheelers also took part in the rally, which was allegedly held from the Bethel Nagar to Ambedkar Chowk. In the viral videos, Patankar can be seen waving at his supporters while coming out of the car's sunroof.

His supporters also shared the reels of the rally on social media, with the caption "comeback".

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The reels, however, prompted police action and Patankar was arrested again, along with his six aides, for carrying out the unauthorised rally and creating chaos. According to reports, several police cases have been registered against him, including attempted murder, theft and violence.

In Fresh States vs Governors Row Over Bills, Supreme Court's Notice To Centre

New Delhi. The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to the centre and secretaries to the governors of Bengal and Kerala, on the basis of pleas - long-standing and frequent - by the states, claiming delays in granting assent to pending bills and referring those to President Droupadi Murmu.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud issued notices to the Home Ministry and senior aides of Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and his Bengal counterpart, CV Ananda Bose.

"...bills are pending for eight months. I am challenging the reference (of the bills) to the President. There is confusion among governors... they keep bills pending. This is against the Constitution..." senior advocate KK Venugopal, appearing for the Kerala government, said.

"We are issuing notice to Additional Chief Secretary to Governor and Union," the court said.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi then spoke up, "I represent Bengal... we will frame common issues", to which the Chief Justice said, "Issue notice in the Bengal case as well (with) liberty to implead union government. We will issue notice to Governor and Union Home Ministry."

"Every time the court hears this... some bills are cleared." Mr Singhvi remarked, "Same happened during Tamil Nadu case as well."

The Supreme Court has given the centre and governors three weeks to respond. The court also directed petitioning states to submit a joint notice.

Kerala Government Vs Governor

In March, Kerala's ruling CPIM moved the Supreme Court against the Governor's decision to reserve seven bills for review by the President. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's government called Mr Khan's move "manifestly arbitrary" and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

"Equally... advice by Union of India to the President to withhold assent for four bills, which are wholly within domain of the State, while disclosing no reason whatsoever, is also manifestly arbitrary and violates Article 14 of the Constitution," the state government had said. These seven bills have been pending with the Governor for two years, the state added.

Addressing a press conference, Atishi said, "In 2023-24, Delhiites paid Rs 2.07 lakh crore as income tax to the central government. In return, the central government allocated only Rs 1,168 crore to Delhi which is not even 0.4% of the tax paid by the people of Delhi."

New Delhi. Continuing with her attack on the Centre over budget allocation for Delhi, AAP senior leader and Finance Minister Atishi Thursday accused the BJP-led Central government of doing "injustice" to the residents of the city, stating that it was "oppressing the people of Delhi like the British".

Addressing a press conference, Atishi said, "In 2023-24, Delhiites paid Rs 2.07 lakh crore as income tax to the central government. In return, the central government allocated only Rs 1,168 crore to Delhi which is not even 0.4% of the tax paid by the people of Delhi."

The minister said that in the last decade, ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has come to power at the Centre, Delhiites have paid Rs 15,59,933 crore as income tax but in return, they got only Rs 7,534 crore.



"That is, Delhiites received only 0.48% of the income tax that they paid to the last 10 years," she added.

Atishi accused the BJP-ruled Centre of oppressing the people of Delhi like the British. "I want to ask the BJP-ruled central government on behalf of Delhiites, why is this injustice

happening to the people of Delhi? If the central government can give money to the rest of the states of the country, then the people of Delhi should also get the money they are entitled to. This is the demand of the people of Delhi," she said.

Delhi BJP has termed the allegations false and a lie. State unit president Virendra Sachdeva said that the central government has done several works in Delhi and spent Rs 5.5 lakh crore for the development of the Capital.

Bansuri Swaraj, MP from New Delhi Parliamentary constituency, said, "I challenge Minister Atishi to have an open debate with a BJP representative on the development works, services, and grants provided by the Central government to Delhi in the last 10 years."

Over 1,600 people in trouble for creating nuisance, making reels in Delhi Metro

New Delhi. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) booked more than 1,600 people for creating nuisance, including making reels, on the metro premises during April to June, a rise of three per cent from the corresponding year-ago period, officials said on Thursday. A senior DMRC official said the separate calculation for passengers penalised only for making reels, however, was not available.

Creating nuisance may also include offences such as sitting on the floor of the train and eating inside the train, among others. According to the data, 1,647 penalties were issued for creating nuisance under Section 59 of the Metro Railways (Operations and Maintenance) Act.

The corresponding number for the same period last year was 1,600. The DMRC issued 610, 518 and 519 penalties in April, May and June, respectively. The corresponding numbers for the previous year were 528, 485 and 587, the data showed.

DMRC Managing Director Vikas Kumar told news agency PTI that they penalised people for creating nuisance in the metro area. "We use our machinery so that such kinds of incidents should not happen on the metro premises. We have a provision of penalising if someone creates a nuisance on the metro premises, and we do penalise them. It is an ongoing process and the more you keep doing it, the more people will get discouraged", he said.

"But the issue is that we do not have enough manpower to check every corner. If we have 67 lakh passengers a day, then monitoring such a huge number of people is not easy. We have CCTV surveillance through which we get to know if anything happened on the premises", he added.

The DMRC has also put up posters at several metro stations, dissuading passengers from making reels and causing discomfort. In April, the DMRC asked the Delhi Police to conduct a thorough investigation after a video emerged online of two women applying colours on each other inside a train.

The video, which surfaced ahead of Holi, drew criticism from a large section of commuters.

The DMRC had said at the time that it was running various campaigns, both online and offline, to discourage passengers from indulging in any activity that might cause inconvenience to fellow commuters. Mobile checking squads are also deployed at times to check activities considered inappropriate.

NEWS BOX

North Korean hackers steal military secrets for weapons programme: US, allies

London. North Korean hackers have conducted a global cyber espionage campaign to try to steal classified military secrets to support Pyongyang's banned nuclear weapons programme, the United States, Britain and South Korea said in a joint advisory on Thursday. The hackers, dubbed Anadriel or APT45 by cybersecurity researchers, have targeted or breached computer systems at a broad variety of defence or engineering firms, including manufacturers of tanks, submarines, naval vessels, fighter aircraft, and missile and radar systems, the advisory said. "The authoring agencies believe the group and the cyber techniques remain an ongoing threat to various industry sectors worldwide, including but not limited to entities in their respective countries, as well as in Japan and India", the advisory said. It was co-authored by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US National Security Agency (NSA) and cyber agencies, Britain's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), and South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS).

"The global cyber espionage operation that we have exposed today shows the lengths that DPRK state-sponsored actors are willing to go to pursue their military and nuclear programmes," said Paul Chichester at the NCSC, a part of Britain's GCHQ spy agency.

Internationally isolated North Korea, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has a long history of using covert hacking teams to steal sensitive military information. In August last year, Reuters exclusively reported that one elite group of North Korean hackers had successfully breached systems at NPO Mashinostroyeniya, a rocket design bureau based in Reutov, a small town on the outskirts of Moscow. As was the case with that hack, APT45 - a part of North Korea's Reconnaissance General Bureau intelligence agency - used common phishing techniques and computer exploits to trick officials at the firms they were targeting into giving away access to their internal computer systems, Thursday's advisory said.

Mexican drug lord 'El Mayo', leader of Sinaloa cartel, arrested in US

UPDATED. Mexican drug lord Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada and the son of his former partner, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, were arrested in El Paso, Texas, on Thursday, the US Justice Department said. "The Justice Department has taken into custody two additional alleged leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel, one of the most violent and powerful drug trafficking organizations in the world," the department said in a statement. Zambada and Joaquin Guzman Lopez, the son of El Chapo, face multiple charges in the US "for heading the Cartel's criminal operations, including its deadly fentanyl manufacturing and trafficking networks," the statement said. The arrest of Guzman Lopez was first reported by Reuters, ahead of the Justice Department statement. Two U.S. officials told Reuters that Zambada and Guzman Lopez were detained after landing in a private plane. Zambada is one of the most consequential traffickers in Mexico's history and co-founded the Sinaloa Cartel with El Chapo, who was extradited to the United States in 2017 and is serving a life sentence in a maximum security prison.

After El Chapo's extradition, his criminal empire was inherited by four of his sons -- known as Los Chapitos, or Little Chapos -- who took over his faction of the cartel and became some of the biggest exporters of fentanyl to the United States. El Mayo and Los Chapitos have had a fractious relationship since El Chapo's extradition, and the arrests of the two traffickers may trigger instability or even violence in Mexico. US federal prosecutors in February charged Zambada with conspiracy to manufacture and distribute fentanyl, which the Drug Enforcement Administration says is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

Nearly 300,000 displaced in eastern China as Typhoon Gaemi hits

world. Authorities evacuated nearly 300,000 people and suspended public transport across eastern China on Friday due to Typhoon Gaemi, which brought torrential rains that have already caused five deaths in Taiwan. Gaemi, the strongest typhoon to hit Taiwan in eight years, made landfall on Thursday, flooding parts of the island's second largest city. Typhoon also intensified seasonal rains in the Philippines on its way to Taiwan, triggering floods and landslides that resulted in 20 deaths. A tanker carrying 1.4 million liters of oil sank off Manila due to the severe weather conditions, prompting authorities to act swiftly to contain a potential fuel spill. By the time Typhoon Gaemi reached China's eastern Fujian province shortly before 8:00pm local time (1200 GMT) on Thursday, it had already weakened, according to state media. China has been experiencing a summer of extreme weather. Heavy rains have lashed the eastern and southern parts of the country, while the northern regions have faced successive heatwaves. These conditions are believed to be exacerbated by climate change, with China being the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Chinese authorities warned that Typhoon Gaemi would bring torrential rains capable of causing significant flooding. More than 290,000 people were relocated in Fujian province, and public transport, offices, schools, and markets were shut down in various cities to prepare for the storm. In neighboring Zhejiang province, state broadcaster CCTV showed footage on Friday of streets turned into rivers and roads blocked by fallen trees. Bicycles were seen struggling through knee-high waters. Wenzhou city, which has a population of nine million, issued its highest warning for rainstorms and evacuated nearly 7,000 people as a precaution. State media reported that Typhoon Gaemi would bring heavy rainfall to central Jiangxi and Henan provinces. In Guangdong province, the most populous in China, some passenger train services were suspended on Friday in anticipation of the typhoon's arrival.

CCTV cited the official China Weather Network, saying, that the typhoon was moving northwestward at about 20 kilometers per hour and was expected to "gradually weaken" as it traveled toward Jiangxi by late Friday afternoon. As of now, no deaths or injuries have been reported in China due to the typhoon. However, the northwestern province of Gansu experienced heavy rains this week, resulting in one death and three missing persons.

Bill introduced in US Congress to strengthen partnership ties with India

Washington. US Senator Marco Rubio on Thursday introduced a bill in the Congress which proposes to treat India on par with its allies like as Japan, Israel, Korea and NATO allies regarding technology transfers, support India in its response to growing threats to its territorial integrity and bar Pakistan from receiving security assistance if it is found to have sponsored terrorism against India. "Communist China continues to aggressively expand its domain in the Indo-Pacific region, all while it seeks to impede the sovereignty and autonomy of our regional partners. It's crucial for the U.S. to continue its support in countering these malicious tactics. India, along with other nations in the region, is not alone," Rubio said after he introduced the U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Act in the Senate. Given the short timeline of a bitterly divided Congress in an election year, the bill is unlikely to make much headway, but might be reintroduced in the next Congress given that there is a bipartisan level of support on India-US

relationship. The bill notes that the US-India partnership is vital to countering influences from Communist China. In order to strengthen this partnership, it is essential to enhance our strategic diplomatic, economic, and military relationship with New Delhi, it asserts.

Among other things, the bill would set a Statement of Policy that the US will support India in its response to growing threats to its territorial integrity, provide necessary security assistance to India to deter adversaries, and cooperate with India with respect to defense, civil space, technology, medicine and economic investments. When passed into law, it would provide a limited exemption for India from CAATSA sanctions for purchases of Russian equipment that are currently used by the Indian military and set a sense of Congress that expeditious consideration of certifications of letters of offer to sell



defense articles, defense services, design and construction services, and major defense equipment to India is consistent with US interests and it is in the interest of peace and stability India to have the capabilities needed to deter threats. It proposes to treat India as if it were of the same status as the US allies such as Japan, Israel, Korea, and NATO allies regarding

technology transfers; authorize the Secretary of State to enter into a memorandum of understanding with India to increase military cooperation; expedite excess defense articles to India for two years and grant India the same status as other allies; and expand International Military Education and Training Cooperation with New Delhi.

It requires a report to Congress on Pakistan's use of offensive force, including through terrorism and proxy groups, against India; and bar Pakistan from receiving security assistance if it is found to have sponsored terrorism against India. This is for the first time such an India-centric bill has been introduced in the US Congress that proposes to put India at the same level of that of its treaty ally, exempt it from CAATSA sanctions, and imposes sanctions on Pakistan for promoting terrorism in India.

Typhoon Gaemi slams China after Taiwan, thousands evacuated, floods feared

Beijing. Typhoon Gaemi roared into southeastern China on Thursday after churning across the Taiwan Strait, prompting warnings of swelling rivers, flash floods and waterlogging in cities and provinces that were hit by extreme rains just several weeks ago. Gaemi, the third and most powerful typhoon to hit China's eastern seaboard this year, made landfall in Fujian province at 7:50 p.m. (1150 GMT) after whipping Taiwan with gusts of up to 227 kph (141 mph), some of the strongest winds recorded in the Western Pacific Ocean. Despite slightly weakening since its landfall in Fujian's Putian, a city of over 3 million, Gaemi and its giant cloud-bands are forecast to unleash intense rainfall in at least 10 Chinese provinces in the coming days.



The arrival of Gaemi has drawn comparisons with Typhoon Doksuri last year, which triggered historic flooding as far north as Beijing and caused nationwide losses of nearly \$30 billion. Authorities said water levels in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River as well as the vast freshwater lakes of Poyang and Dongting in central China could rise, returning to dangerous

levels seen in early July after intense summer rains. Due to its high vapour content, Beijing cautioned that Gaemi could spawn strong rainfall in the Chinese capital, about 2,000 km (1,242 miles) north of Putian, even as the storm weakens into a tropical depression. Gaemi's rains could cause flash floods and waterlogging, particularly in parts of northern China where the soil remains saturated after being lashed by a passing system of storms earlier this week, authorities warned. In Taiwan, Gaemi killed three people, triggered flooding and sank a freighter after the strongest typhoon to hit the island in eight years made landfall on Wednesday night. Some parts of southern Taiwan are expected

to have recorded rainfall of 2,200 mm (87 inches) since Tuesday. The storm cut power to around half a million households, though most are now back online, utility Taipower said.

Apart from the three fatalities, 380 were injured by the typhoon in Taiwan, the government said. Taiwan's fire department said a Tanzania-flagged freighter with nine Myanmar nationals on board had sunk off the coast of the southern port city of Kaohsiung. Three of them have since been found alive on the shoreline, Taiwan's coast guard said. Taiwanese television stations showed pictures of flooded streets in cities and counties across the island. Li Li-chuan, 55, saw the roof of her restaurant blow off in the northeastern Taiwanese city of Suao. "I was frightened," she told Reuters. "It was the strongest in years. I was worried that the roof would hit other people." Offices and schools as well as the financial markets closed for a second day on Thursday, while trains were stopped until 3 p.m. (0700 GMT) and all domestic flights and 195 international flights were cancelled.

UN rights chief urges probe of Bangladesh protest crackdown

GENEVA. The UN rights chief called Thursday on Bangladesh to urgently disclose the details of last week's crackdown on protests amid accounts of "horrific violence", calling for "an impartial, independent and transparent investigation". "We understand that many people were subjected to violent attacks by groups reportedly affiliated with the Government, and no effort was made to protect them," Volker Turk said in a statement.

protest leaders announced a temporary halt to new demonstrations. Turk's statement lamented reports that

killed, injured, or detained for the benefit of their families". The UN high commissioner for human rights also called on the government to restore full internet access to allow people, including journalists, to communicate freely. "Blunt measures such as a blanket deliberate internet shutdown for a prolonged period contravene international law, affecting States' obligations to respect freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly," he said.



Last week's violence killed at least 193 people including several police officers, according to an AFP count of victims reported by police and hospitals, in one of the biggest upheavals of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year tenure. The unrest was sparked by protests against a public jobs quota scheme that critics say gives preference to allies of Hasina's ruling party. Thousands of troops are still patrolling cities and a nationwide internet shutdown remains largely in effect, but clashes have subsided since

some of the more than 1,000 injured in last week's crackdown were denied medical care, while many people remained missing. "At least two journalists were reportedly killed and scores of others injured. Hundreds of people were also reportedly arrested, including opposition figures," the statement said. The government, it said, "must provide the details of those

This also breached "a wide range of other rights, including freedom of association and of movement, the rights to health and education, and a number of economic rights," Turk said.

"Internet shutdowns can also reduce public scrutiny and knowledge of conduct of law enforcement agencies, and so risk heightening impunity for their actions," he warned.

Kamala Harris has joined leaders from both Democratic and Republican parties in condemning protesters who burned American flags and sprayed pro-Hamas graffiti outside Washington's Union Station on Wednesday. The protests took place as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed Congress.

Harris, who is the presumed presidential candidate of the Democrats, described the protests as "unpatriotic and abhorrent." On Wednesday, demonstrators marched near the US Capitol building, protesting US military aid to Israel during its conflict with Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Following Netanyahu's speech, some protesters gathered at Union Station, where they burned American flags and spray-painted messages such as "Hamas is coming" and "Free Gaza" on a prominent monument. Harris issued a statement on Thursday, strongly condemning any individuals associating with Hamas.

"I condemn any individuals associating with the brutal terrorist organisation Hamas, which has vowed to annihilate the State of Israel and kill Jews. Pro-Hamas graffiti and rhetoric is abhorrent



and we will not tolerate it in our nation," Harris said.

She further slammed the burning of the US flag. "I condemn the burning of the American flag. That flag is a symbol of our highest ideals as a nation and represents the promise of America. It should never be desecrated in that way," she stated.

During Wednesday's protests, prior to the events at Union Station, police used pepper spray on some of the thousands of demonstrators and made several arrests. In her statement, Harris reiterated her support for the right to peaceful protest but added that "Antisemitism, hate, and violence of any kind have no place in our nation." The protests against Netanyahu, however, continued for the second day. After the Capitol, the Gaza war protesters gathered outside the White House and raised slogans against Netanyahu.

As per a report by the news agency Associated Press, the protesters chanted, "Arrest Netanyahu," and brought in an effigy of Netanyahu with blood on its hands and wearing an orange jumpsuit.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met President Joe Biden at the White House on Thursday. Netanyahu is also scheduled to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris later.

Benjamin Netanyahu meets Joe Biden to narrow 'gaps' on Gaza ceasefire deal

Joe Biden reiterated in their Oval Office meeting his calls for Israel and Hamas to quickly agree to a cease-fire deal that would bring home the remaining hostages.

Washington. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the White House Thursday to discuss the war in Gaza -- and the possibility of securing a cease-fire deal -- with President Joe Biden and likely Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris. Netanyahu's first White House visit since 2020 comes at a time of growing pressure in Israel and the U.S. to

find an endgame to the nine-month war that's left more than 39,000 dead in Gaza and some 1,200 dead in Israel. Dozens of Israeli hostages are still languishing in Hamas captivity. Biden reiterated in their Oval Office meeting his calls for Israel and Hamas to quickly agree to a cease-fire deal that would bring home the remaining hostages, according to White House national security spokesman John Kirby. White House officials say the negotiations are in the closing stages, but there are issues that need to be resolved. "The gaps are closable," Kirby said. He added, "But it's going to require, as it always does, some leadership, some compromise." Harris is scheduled to meet separately on Thursday with Netanyahu. She is also expected to press him on securing a deal to release the hostages kidnapped during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel that launched the war.



Netanyahu, last at the White House when former President Donald Trump was in

office, is headed to Florida on Friday to meet with the Republican presidential nominee. The conservative Likud Party leader Netanyahu and centrist Democrat Biden have had ups-and-downs over the years. Netanyahu, in what will likely be his last White House meeting with Biden, reflected on the roughly 40 years they've known each other and thanked the president for his service. "From a proud Jewish Zionist to a proud Irish American Zionist, I want to thank you for 50 years of public service and 50 years of support for the state of Israel," Netanyahu told Biden

at the start of their meeting. A U.S.-backed proposal to release remaining hostages in Gaza over three phases is something that would be a legacy-affirming achievement for Biden, who abandoned his reelection bid and endorsed Harris. It could also be a boon for Harris in her bid to succeed him.

Following their talks, Biden and Netanyahu met with the families of American hostages. For Harris, the meeting with Netanyahu is an opportunity to demonstrate that she has the mettle to serve as commander in chief. She's being scrutinized by those on the political left who say Biden hasn't done enough to force Netanyahu to end the war and by Republicans looking to brand her as insufficient in her support for Israel. A senior administration official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House, said there is "no daylight between the president and vice president."



Pranitha Subhash

Announces Second Pregnancy, Shares Photos Flaunting Baby Bump, Fans React

Pranitha Subhash, a popular actress, has announced her second pregnancy. The actress also shared photos flaunting her baby bump. The news has gone viral and fans are sending congratulatory messages to her. The actress got married in 2021 and welcomed her first baby in 2022. Then, Pranitha took a break to enjoy her time with the newly born kid. Taking to her Instagram handle, Pranitha shared photos in which she is wearing a denim and black tee. "Round 2... The pants don't fit anymore!" read the caption. One of the fans wrote, "Congratulations maam." Another wrote, "Hey congratulations." Pranitha Subhash is popular among the masses for her impeccable performances in the Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi films. Her fans keep pouring in love for the diverse roles played by her. She has a large fanbase across different regions. She leaves no opportunity to create major mother-daughter goals by posting adorable snaps with her cute daughter. The recently concluded Ugadi festival was no exception. The actress and her daughter were all decked up in South Indian attire.

In a bunch of pictures from Ugadi, Pranitha Subhash and her daughter Arna were looking adorable in traditional South Indian clothes. With a green saree consisting of pink borders, the actress opted for heavy accessories to complement her outfit. On the other hand, Pranitha's daughter wore a beautiful saffron traditional Kurta. The mother-daughter duo looked cute as they posed for the photo while sitting on the floor. Other photos captured the cute bond between the mother and daughter. "Bringing smiles on all our faces," wrote Pranitha Subhash while hinting at her cute daughter. Pranitha Subhash was seen in the Kannada movie Ramana Avatara. It is written and directed by Vikas Pampapathi and stars Rishi and Pranitha Subhash in the lead roles. The 31-year-old, who started her career with a Kannada film Porki alongside actor Darshan, became a renowned name in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam movies. She shared silver screens with superstars like Mohan Babu, Upenendra, Suriya, Mahesh Babu and many others. The actress recently made a comeback in the entertainment industry with the movie Thankamani after a long hiatus of three years. It is a Malayalam movie written and directed by Ratheesh Reghunanadan and starred Dileep in the titular role. It was released on March 7, 2024.



Are Gigi Hadid And Bradley Cooper Making Marriage Plans? What We Know



Rumoured couple Bradley Cooper and Gigi Hadid's chemistry has become the talk of the town. Despite their nearly 20-year age gap, their bond seems to be going strong, and fans are eager to see them settle down together. Although there's no official announcement about a proposal, recent reports suggest their romance is getting serious, with marriage potentially on the horizon. According to the Daily Mail, Cooper is seriously considering taking their relationship to the next level and is "ready to propose to Hadid." The couple, who each have a daughter from previous relationships, have also "discussed the possibility of expanding their family together." As per an insider, "Bradley has already determined that he is going to ask Gigi to marry him. This is not even a question. They discussed family and marriage early on in their relationship. They have been committed to each other and to their plans for some time and now it is just a matter of when. Bradley only has a couple of projects currently in production but has nothing lined up after that. He wants to take some time away to focus on this and give Gigi the attention and love she deserves." The Oscar winner already has "the blessing of her family, friends and even her daughter."

While Gigi Hadid shares daughter Khai with her former partner Zayn Malik, Bradley Cooper, on the other hand, also has a daughter named Lea De Seine with his ex, Irina Shayk. According to reports, Bradley and Zayn share a good relationship, as they both focus on co-parenting their children. The two families interact smoothly, as Gigi and Zayn's daughter get along well with Bradley and Irina's child. The source mentioned that they are all committed to creating a supportive blended family for their kids. Another source revealed that Cooper's feelings for Hadid blossomed after she supported the actor during his challenging awards season. Despite receiving several nominations, Bradley did not win any major awards for Maestro, which left him disheartened. During the low phase, the supermodel was there to provide comfort and encouragement.

Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu, Starring Nani And Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Set For Special Re-Release



After almost twelve years, the timeless love story Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu is making a triumphant comeback to the big screen. Directed by the renowned Gautham Menon and featuring Nani and Samantha in the lead roles, the acclaimed film is scheduled for re-release on August 2. The announcement by producers Supriya and Srinivas under the Lakshmi Narasimha Movies banner promises to revive the enchantment of a film that charmed audiences back in 2012. A particular distributor has bought the rights to re-release the film in theatres next week and it will run in selective private theatres in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu garnered acclaim upon its release, earning five esteemed Nandi Awards. The film's honours include Best Hero for Nani, Best Heroine for Samantha, Best Music Director for Ilayaraja, and Best Lyricist for Ananth Sriram. Additionally, Gautham Menon received the Special Jury Award for his exceptional contribution to the film.

The film was highly praised for its engaging storyline, stellar performances, and beautiful music. Nani and Samantha received particular commendation for their roles, while Gautham Menon's script and direction were notably impressive. Ilayaraja's enchanting soundtrack significantly enhanced the cinematic experience, winning the hearts of music lovers. Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu was simultaneously produced in both Telugu and Tamil, with Jeeva taking the lead in the Tamil version. Samantha starred in both versions, highlighting her versatility as an actress. Initially, Gautham Menon planned a Hindi adaptation featuring Aditya Roy Kapur and Samantha, but the project faced production issues and was ultimately shelved.

Meanwhile, Gautham Vasudev Menon is eagerly anticipating the release of his long-delayed film Dhruva Natchathiram, starring Vikram and Ritu Varma in the lead roles.

Hina Khan

Is 'Very Strong' Amid Cancer Diagnosis, Shivangi Joshi Says 'We Are Praying For Her'

Shivangi Joshi has reacted to Hina Khan's cancer diagnosis. The two used to work together in the popular show, Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai. In the Rajan Shahi show, while Shivangi used to play the role of Nayra, Hina used to essay the role of her mother, Akshara. In a recent interview, Shivangi Joshi called Hina Khan a 'fighter' and revealed that they are still in touch with each other. The former Balika Vadhu actress shared that she is planning to meet Hina soon and hoped for her recovery. "I'm still in touch with her. We spoke yesterday. She is okay. She is very strong. She is a fighter and she will be fine soon. We are all praying for her. I will meet her soon. She will get well super soon," Shivangi told Pinkvilla.

On June 28, Hina Khan confirmed that she had been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. She took to her Instagram handle to share the heartbreaking news with her fans. Hina penned down a long note and shared that her treatment has already begun and assured all that she is "doing well".

"Hello Everyone, To address the recent rumour, I want to share some important news with all the Hinaholics and everyone who loves and cares for me. I have been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. Despite this challenging diagnosis, I wish to reassure everyone that I am doing well. I am strong, determined and fully committed to overcoming this disease. My treatment has already begun and I am ready to do everything necessary to emerge from this even stronger," Hina wrote.

I kindly ask for your respect and previously during this time. I deeply appreciate your love, strength and blessings. Your personal experiences, anecdotes and

supportive suggestions would mean the world to me as I navigate this journey. I, along with my family and loved ones, remain focused, determined and positive. With the grace of the almighty, we believe I will overcome this challenge and will be completely healthy. Please send your prayers blessings and love," she added. Since then, the 36-year-old actress has been sharing several motivating posts online, hoping for her speedy recovery. She even chopped her hair in one of the videos. In another, she was seen getting emotional with her mother. In one of her recent posts, Hina expressed that her boyfriend, Rocky has been her greatest "strength" during these tough times.

