

As Shakespeare said, there's 'something rotten'

Let us focus on the fundamental hopes and expectations of 1.4 billion people from the judges in the country's highest court of appeal. One may go incognito to the court campus to hear what the thousands of litigants, their friends and relatives have to say on various issues of democratic India's judiciary on a given day. How is the high priest in the highest court seen and assessed, irrespective of the verdicts that come out of the courtroom? It's important that a judge be ascetic-like, but not mendicant, and be a recluse of sorts, far from the madding crowd. Once a judge, he/she has to be detached, fair, objective and aloof from all allurements and glitz and glitches of society. Immersed in books, papers and thoughts, he/she must avoid partying, lecturing in public fora, issuing press statements or be photographed with high-profile public figures. That would cut deep into this oft-quoted adage: Justice must not only be done but also appear to have been done. Thus, image, credibility and probity must be an inalienable part of the judges in office, while deciding the fate of millions of people. They must be likened to the quote "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion." Not only performance, but also visibility, behaviour, utterances and body language, all combined, make a judge a judge.

Trust, faith and confidence of the people on the highest judiciary mustn't be allowed to be shaken or broken at any cost. And that can only be done by self-regulatory means and self-controlled mechanisms, adopted by the judges themselves.

That would bring us to the moot point of the appointment of judge(s). Article 124 (2) of the Constitution stipulates: "Every Judge of Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President." Plainly, the President of India still is central to the appointment of the Supreme Court judges, and the jurists of the apex court play a helping role vis-à-vis the appointment of their colleagues to the Bench, through "consultation". The makers of our Constitution rightly and wisely drafted the legal words. Hence, the best of legal brains, like Ashoke K Sen, could be the President of Supreme Court Bar Association as well as a brilliant Law Minister from 1957 to 1966 and 1984-1987.

Those days — from 1947 to the 1990s — the executive rightly and legally held the key to the appointment of judges. However, a few deplorable happenings between 1973 and the 1990s pertaining to judges irreversibly damaged the reputation, image and credibility of both the executive (the appointing arm) and the apex court (the appointed). It marked an embarrassing period of struggle for mastery between the judiciary and the executive on the issue of apex court appointments. The Indian system honestly adopted and deftly adapted itself by finding a via media between the US system of judicial supremacy and the British principle of parliamentary supremacy. At the same time, it also empowered the judiciary to declare a law unconstitutional if it was perceived as going beyond the competence of the legislature, according to the distribution of powers, as enshrined in the Constitution. Thus, in the landmark 13-judge Bench (April 24, 1973) verdict on Kesavananda Bharati vs Kerala, the doctrine of the "Basic Structure of the Constitution" formed the basis of power of the judiciary to review and override amendments to the Constitution enacted by Parliament. In this background, when the executive gravely erred in appointing junior judge Ray as the Chief Justice of India (two days after the Kesavananda Bharati April 24 case) on April 26, 1973, jumping over three of his seniors (Shelat, Hegde and Grover), a protracted tussle between the two arms of the state became inevitable. Things worsened with the repeat bypassing of seniormost Justice Khanna by his junior jurist MH Beg in January 1977.

Eradicating naxalism requires more than firepower

While the policy of the government to deal with naxalite activities is comprehensive, setting a timeline to eliminate violence in a low-intensity conflict is best avoided.

The Central government has reiterated in multiple forums since early 2024 that left-wing extremism (LWE) would be eradicated from the country by March 31, 2026. It has asserted that the entire ecosystem of naxalism would have to be destroyed with a ruthless approach. Interestingly, the Director General of Police, Odisha, emphasised this deadline on the Police Commemoration Day last year: "I am confident that Odisha police is capable of meeting this deadline." He added that the LWE activities were now limited to very few pockets of the state and they would be eliminated soon.

Such an assertion by the government can, at best, be taken as a political statement intended to influence a targeted audience in a specific context. However, it is disconcerting to note this deadline being repeated by security forces personnel at the apex level, responsible to direct the anti-naxal campaign in the affected areas.

Undoubtedly, the security forces combating LWE in the eastern parts of India need to be complimented for the recent notable successful operations against the naxals, especially in targeting their leadership. On March 20, in two separate encounters in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, security forces gunned down 30 Maoists, taking the total to 113 this year so far. As per a statement in Parliament by the MoS Home, LWE in the country has been contained in a significant manner in the last one decade in that the number of affected districts has come down to 38 from 126 in 2013 and violence-related incidents have reduced by 73 per cent since 2010. Irrespective of the recent successes notched up by the security forces, a realistic assessment of the conflict is imperative so as to avoid knee-jerk reactions by the security establishment. A number of LWE outfits have been operating in remote and poorly connected eastern areas of the country for decades. While LWE is a socio-economic problem, aimed to bring in a revolutionary democracy, it had assumed alarming proportions after 1999. The naxals had acquired significant capabilities to launch multiple coordinated attacks, executed with military precision by a large strength of cadres after detailed planning, reconnaissance and notable synergy. In April 2009, hundreds of cadres had even hijacked a train in Jharkhand. The attack on Nayagarh town in Odisha (February 15, 2008), when naxals overran three police stations and killed 13 policemen and two civilians and decamped with 1,100 weapons should not be forgotten.

They still have IED manufacturing units to maintain a continuous supply and wreak havoc on the civilians as well as security forces in the affected areas. An IED blast at Bijapur in Chhattisgarh on March 23 is a reflection of this capability. Destruction of infrastructure, levying of taxes and cess on narcotics plantation are being resorted



to with impunity. The naxals are also known to have domestic, regional and international linkages. The current volatile situation in Bangladesh and the increasing influence of Pakistan in its domestic and foreign policies can further complicate the situation. It is only a matter of time before the ISI steps in to exploit the situation to its advantage, with the aim of achieving its objective of destabilising India.

We need to remember that conflicts get transformed over a period of time with very significant evolutionary effects, which may lead to changes in the original goals of the movement, public attitude, external support, intensity levels and methods of operation of extremist cadres. An analysis of the current trends of naxalism is also indicative of the profound changes that have occurred in the very character of this conflict. It is imperative to identify and understand such a process so that the state response to the conflict can be suitably adapted.

It is apparent that the factors which gave rise to naxalism — the extent of poverty, uneven development, poor governance, neglect of land reforms, rising unemployment and tribals getting a raw deal — are, unfortunately, very much present today also. Land reforms, an important facet of countering left wing extremism, have not been taken up by the states. Unless these basic issues are sincerely addressed, a security-centric approach by itself would not be enough to deal with the problem. The employment of the security forces is but one element of the integrated government response

to deal with the problem of LWE. It entails the concurrent application of all elements of national power to address the root causes over a protracted period of time. Imaginative application of the security forces constitutes an indispensable component of the national strategy for creating secure conditions that are conducive for other elements of national power to function. Security and development are interlinked and inseparable. In the long term, a fine balance between the two has to be maintained as a way forward. While the policy and approach of the government to deal with naxalite activities are multi-pronged and comprehensive, setting a timeline to totally eliminate violence in a low intensity conflict is best avoided. Pressure on units at the functional level can lead to violation of human rights and collateral damage.

We need to expect and plan for a long struggle, despite the reduction in violence levels. It takes time to develop organisations and formulate and implement the policies necessary for the campaign, which now have matured after a long period of evolution. The process of identifying and rooting out the naxal infrastructure and locating and bringing them to battle is long and drawn out. The security forces have a critical role to see that the situation is not reversed and continue to relentlessly pursue further improvement in the security situation. The gains of the last few years need to be consolidated. Dramatic action to create a short-term effect or give the impression of decisive action usually proves counter-productive in such situations.

Focus on taxpayers

Govt outreach aimed at boosting compliance

A 'nudge' from the Union Government has prompted more than 30,000 taxpayers to revise their income tax (I-T) returns or file belated returns and declare additional foreign assets and income of about Rs 30,300 crore. A voluntary disclosure campaign under which SMS and e-mails were sent to select taxpayers has yielded good results. This is an important step towards boosting tax compliance through persuasion rather than intimidation. However, this successful outcome is tempered by the fact that around 48,000 direct tax defaulters with dues of Rs 5,91 lakh crore have been declared untraceable. In the case of indirect taxes, the number of such defaulters is in excess of 60,000, while the dues are to the tune of over Rs 43,500 crore. It seems that the measures taken to recover dues have left a lot to be desired. The bitter truth is that many chronic tax evaders have managed to outsmart the authorities. In recent months, the government has sharpened its focus on honest



taxpayers, giving them huge relief in the Union Budget. The Finance Bill, 2025, is another initiative aimed at

recognising the contribution of the middle class, which has traditionally been an important vote bank for the BJP. The underwhelming performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections appears to have spurred the ruling party to reach out to the tax-burdened public. This approach has already paid dividends in last month's Delhi Assembly elections.

A new challenge for the government is to firm up the recently introduced Income Tax Bill, which is being examined by a Select Committee of the Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to achieve tax clarity by rationalising several provisions; minimising the scope for litigation is a key objective. Simplicity and transparency should be at the core of this legislation so that more and more taxpayers come forward to do their bit in the best interests of Indian economy.

Govt's shadow looms over BJP polls

The party organisation has been playing second fiddle to the ruling establishment

The BJP is adept at coining punchy slogans and staging a spectacle. Any occasion, public or party-centric, is transformed into a mega event. The aim is to reassure voters that nearly 11 consecutive years in power have not dulled the party's ability to think big. The process of 'electing' the new party president as well as state, district and mandal chiefs has been termed a 'parv' (festival). The BJP, which claims to be the world's largest political party, wants to add exponentially to its count of 10 crore members. The exercise began in October 2024 — the year-end was fixed as the timeline to install the successor to the incumbent party president, JP Nadda, Health Minister in the Modi government. Nearly three months have passed since that deadline expired, but there is no sign of the new party head. Nevertheless, there is speculation over whether Nadda's successor would be a woman (a first, if it happens); a Dalit (the BJP's experiment with a Dalit chief, Bangaru Laxman, proved to be a disaster when he was caught on camera accepting cash from a 'defence dealer' in a sting operation); a leader from the southern or eastern regions; or a strong RSS hand (to work in concert with organisational networks on the ground).

Nadda became the party president in 2020 in place of Amit Shah, who was arguably the most successful chief the BJP has had after LK Advani. The three-year term prescribed in the party's constitution was extended in Nadda's case. Indeed, when he was designated as a working chief soon after Shah relinquished presidency, there were murmurs that the move was not in sync with the constitution. Critics were told that the BJP's constitution existed because of the party and not the other way around. In the 'New BJP', which has emerged as the country's pre-eminent political force with no real challenger in the foreseeable future, the party organisation is an underling and the ruling establishment, ensconced in the South and North Blocks, the supreme authority whose writ must not be questioned. Above all, the constitution, quoted as gospel



by party old-timers when it was expedient, is no longer sacrosanct. The extension granted to Nadda ended in June last year when the Lok Sabha elections got over. But a recent amendment in the constitution, for whatever it's worth, empowered the apex body, the parliamentary board, to take a call on the president's tenure in 'emergency' situations. The latest round of Assembly elections which culminated in the BJP's victory in Delhi after the triumphs in Haryana and Maharashtra was cited for first going slow on the party polls and then for celebrating Nadda's 'organisational success'.

Although the membership drive was launched to enhance the atmospherics before the organisational polls, which sometimes get tangled in infighting at the grassroots level, the scenario was not as perfect as expected of the Modi-Shah regime. In Goa, a BJP-ruled state, complaints poured in against 'elected' mandal

presidents who were proteges of ministers or MLAs. In Madhya Pradesh, consensus on the choice of district chiefs remained elusive because of disagreements among state leaders. Former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who ruled MP long and strong and is now a Union minister, was reluctant to let his grip loosen.

Uttar Pradesh, the topmost state on Modi-Shah's radar, called for deft handling because of CM Yogi Adityanath — who is still regarded as a power unto himself despite the BJP's reversals in the state in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls — and the tricky caste equations. Adityanath held on to his post despite the setback and felt emboldened to intervene in the organisation elections. He apparently named his choice for the state president, even as Delhi wanted a backward caste person or a Brahmin to try and balance the CM's pro-Rajput policies and appointments. Power flows from a centralised command in Delhi — this

is obvious from the fact that the BJP parliamentary party has not met even nine months after the Lok Sabha polls. Even under the PM's gaze, a few MPs had once summoned courage to ask disconcerting questions on agriculture and the economy. The NDA MPs met in June last year, a subtle gesture to please the BJP's valuable allies in the minority government.

The BJP parliamentary board, whose stamp on crucial decisions is a must, rarely meets. CMs are picked by the top leadership, and the decision is communicated to the legislators, as was evident after the elections in Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh and Delhi. Even the central election committee that selects candidates for the polls has not met often. In Delhi, the first list of 29 names was announced without a meeting of this committee; for the Jharkhand and Maharashtra polls, the body met just once, although there were multiple lists of candidates. How does the RSS — which continues to retain the title of an 'ideological parent' to the BJP — deal with the concentration of power in the Modi-Shah duopoly? To the RSS, like the BJP, Modi's charisma and oratory remain sure-fire guarantees in elections. Hence, it's unlikely that the Sangh will disturb the prevailing order unless there is an extreme provocation. And Modi, a die-hard pracharak who moderates his hardline stance only under duress, is unlikely to alienate the RSS. The PM is scheduled to visit the RSS headquarters in Nagpur on March 30. He is expected to meet Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat and thrash out the issues holding up the completion of the organisational poll process. In the past, the RSS 'loaned' quite a few pracharaks to the BJP; they served as the eyes and ears of the Sangh. It even tasked one of its senior officials to liaise with the BJP's organisational secretary, who has always been a former pracharak. The RSS has not replaced its former coordinator, Krishna Gopal; so, the post has effectively been disbanded. A sign of the times?

Sensex, Nifty fall in early trade over Trump tariff threats; Infosys down 2%

New Delhi. Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Friday, as investor sentiment largely remains cautious due to uncertainty over Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff threats. Auto and IT sector stocks dragged the market down in early trade.

The S&P BSE Sensex lost 282.59 points to 77,323.84, while the NSE Nifty50 was down 84.70 points to 23,507.25 as of 9:42 am. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "The market's resilience, despite Trump's reciprocal tariff threats, comes from the renewed buying by FIIs and the confidence this has given to the bulls. The bears are currently on the back foot and this market construct may continue unless Trump announces something very nasty." In today's morning trading session on Sensex, Nestle India emerged as the top gainer, surging an impressive 1.92%. Hindustan Unilever followed closely, rising 1.67%, while ITC gained 1.17%. Kotak Bank and Asian Paints completed the top gainers' list, climbing 0.78% and 0.67% respectively. Mahindra & Mahindra took the biggest hit, plummeting 3.41%, followed by Infosys dropping 1.78%. Powergrid and Sunpharma shares also dropped by 1.22% each.

HCLTech also witnessed selling pressure as it fell 1.10%. "Apart from the tariffs the market will be looking forward to the April 9th monetary policy and after that the Q4 results. The US PCE inflation data expected today may give an indication of the inflation trend in the US. But more important than that would be the inflationary expectations from Trump tariffs," said Vijayakumar. "In this time of heightened uncertainty investors should remain calm and wait for the dust to settle down. FII buying will keep fairly valued largecaps resilient," he added.

Stocks : Infosys, Tata Motors, BEL, Adani Power, HCLTech and more

New Delhi. The benchmark indices on Dalal Street are expected to continue their positive momentum on Friday, March 6, with benchmark indices likely to open on a strong note. Investors are keeping an eye on ongoing trade negotiations between Indian and US officials.

Sensex and Nifty closed in the green in the previous session, with gains across multiple sectors. Gift Nifty trends suggest that the positive momentum may continue today.

Here are some stocks likely to be in focus today:

BEL Bharat Electronics has bagged fresh orders worth Rs 1,385 crore since its last update on March 12, 2025. The orders include radar spares, voting machines, simulators, navigation systems, stabilisers for tanks, fire control systems for naval decoys, and communication gear. Adani Power The company has resumed power supply to Bangladesh after a nearly four-month halt due to unpaid dues. Bangladesh is making monthly payments of \$90-95 million, but outstanding amounts remain unpaid, sources said. Adani Energy Solutions The company announced the acquisition of Mahan Transmission (MTL) via a share purchase agreement with REC Power Development and Consultancy on March 26. This gives it complete ownership of the SPV.

BPCL Saudi Aramco is reportedly in talks to invest in two refineries in India, seeking a stable crude outlet. The discussions involve BPCL's planned Andhra Pradesh refinery and an ONGC refinery in Gujarat, as per Reuters sources.

Auto, Pharma Stocks Fall Up To 6% In 3 Sessions On US Tariff Fears; What Investors Should Know

New Delhi. There's noticeable anxiety among investors in the pharma and auto sectors ahead of the April 2 deadline, when US President Donald Trump's tariffs are set to take effect. This has been reflected in the performance of these stocks, which declined for the third consecutive session on Thursday.

In early trade on Friday, these stocks dropped by as much as 3%, with the Nifty Auto and Nifty Pharma indices trading lower by 0.9% and 0.7%, respectively. Despite the 6% drop in some stocks over the past three sessions, market experts believe the panic is overblown, as they remain optimistic about the long-term prospects for both sectors.

While the market had anticipated tariff hikes, Trump's recent 25% tariff announcement on Wednesday for automobiles exported to the US caused a shift in sentiment. A White House official later clarified that the tariff would apply to auto and auto parts companies, along with additional duties and fees, and a 25% tariff will be added to the existing 25% levy on light trucks. The revenue generated from the tariffs is planned to be used for tax cuts for American companies. This uncertainty has also affected the pharma sector.

Over the last three sessions, the Nifty Auto index has fallen by 2%, with Tata Motors seeing a steep 6% drop—the highest among its peers. Experts suggest that Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) may be particularly impacted by the tariff increase.

Samvardhana Motherson International, with operations across North and South America and Europe, dropped by 1.6%, while Sona BLW Precision Forgings plunged over 8% in the past four sessions.

Other auto companies such as Bharat Forge, Tube Investments of India, Bal Krishna Industries, Ashok Leyland, Bajaj Auto, Maruti Suzuki India, Exide Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Eicher Motors, and MRF saw declines ranging from 3.5% to 0.7%.

In terms of technicals, the Nifty Auto index has found support around the 100-week moving average (WMA) at 20,530, and it is attempting a pullback from oversold levels. Technical charts suggest that the index could rebound to 23,900 levels, offering an upside potential of nearly 11%. Interim resistance for the index is seen at 21,940, 22,080, 22,550, 22,650, and 23,070 levels.

Planning a bank transfer on March 31 Here's why it may not work

Complete financial transactions before March 29 to avoid issues

March 31 marks end of financial year, affecting key banking services

Complete financial transactions before March 29 to avoid last-minute issues

New Delhi. Imagine rushing to make a crucial bank transfer, only to realise that the system isn't processing transactions. That's exactly what could happen on March 31, as key banking services will be affected due to it being last day of the

fiscal year.

While banks will remain open, transactions like fund transfers, cash deposits, and withdrawals may not go through. March 31, 2025, is the last day of the financial year, but certain financial transactions will not be processed on this day. While banks will remain open, services such as fund transfers, cash deposits, withdrawals, and RTGS/NEFT transactions may not be available. It is important for customers and businesses to complete their financial transactions before March 29 to avoid any last-minute issues, since March 30 is a Sunday and March 29 is a Saturday.

WHAT TRANSACTIONS WILL BE AFFECTED?

Fund Transfers – RTGS and NEFT transactions may not be processed on March 31. **Cash Deposits and Withdrawals** – Banks may not process cash-related transactions on this day.

Salary and Vendor Payments – Businesses

should ensure payroll and vendor payments are completed in advance.

Tax Payments – Those making last-minute income tax or GST payments should complete them before March 29 to avoid

credit card dues, and utility bills ahead of time. Businesses should process all payments, including vendor settlements and tax payments, before March 29.

Investors should make any last-minute stock market or investment adjustments before the financial year closes.

While certain banking services will be affected, digital banking options such as UPI, IMPS, and mobile banking will remain operational. Customers can continue using these platforms for routine transactions. However, it is advisable to check with individual banks for specific details regarding services that may be impacted. As March 31 is a non-working day for certain financial transactions, individuals and businesses should complete all important banking tasks before March 29. This will ensure smooth processing and avoid any last-minute disruptions during the financial year-end.



penalties. Since March 31 marks the financial year-end, delays in processing transactions could impact compliance, tax filings, and business operations. To avoid any issues: Individuals should clear EMIs,

How this scheme can help you save Rs 20 lakh in 15 years for daughter

New Delhi. Every parent dreams of giving their child the best education possible. If you are planning for your daughter's higher education expenses, the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) can be a great savings option. But how much should you invest every month to build a corpus of Rs 20 lakh in the next 15 years? Let's find out.

WHAT IS SSY?

The Sukanya Samridhi Yojana is a savings scheme launched by the government in 2015, under the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" campaign, designed to encourage parents to save for their daughter's education and marriage expenses, thereby promoting financial security and empowerment for girls. According to CA (Dr.) Suresh Surana, "Under the SSY, an account may be opened by either a parent or a legal guardian in the name of a girl child, provided that the said child has not attained the age of 10 years as of the date of account opening. The interest rate on the deposits made is 8.2% for

the first quarter of 2025." **HOW MUCH TO INVEST MONTHLY TO GET RS 20 LAKH?** If a parent whose daughter is nine years old and wants to accumulate Rs 20 lakh in 15 years, how much should he invest



in SSY? Dr Suresh Surana explained, "In the aforementioned case, the parent intends to accumulate a corpus of Rs 20 lakh over a period of 15 years, requiring an estimated monthly investment of Rs. 6,100." "However, if he plans to make a withdrawal, he may only withdraw up to 50% of the accumulated amount," he noted. He also pointed out that the

calculation assumes a constant rate of interest, which is subject to revision by the government and may vary accordingly. Further, he added, "If the parent intends to withdraw Rs. 20 lakh in full for higher education, the required corpus should be Rs 40 lakh necessitating an estimated monthly investment of Rs. 12,100."

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Premature withdrawal from the account shall be permitted, provided that such withdrawal shall only be allowed upon the account holder attaining the age of 18 or successfully passing the 10th standard examination, whichever occurs earlier, subject to the submission of a duly completed application on Form-3, said Dr Surana.

He also noted that the maximum amount that may be withdrawn shall not exceed 50% of the balance available in the account at the end of the financial year immediately preceding the year in which the withdrawal application is submitted.

Health insurance rejected Here are 5 things you need to know

New Delhi. Most individuals purchase health insurance to cater for their future healthcare needs. Yet, during claim time, some face rejections due to simple errors. This makes one feel frustrated and suspicious about the intentions of the insurer. Understanding why claims are rejected is important as it will help you avoid unnecessary stress. The following are some common errors when filing health insurance claims and how to avoid them.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

One of the most common reasons for claims getting rejected is concealing pre-existing medical conditions. At the time of purchasing the policy, you must disclose health issues like diabetes, high blood pressure, or previous operations. If the insurance company



discovers subsequently that they were not disclosed, the claim can be rejected. To prevent this, one has to be honest about his/her medical history.

IGNORING POLICY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Numerous claims are rejected since policyholders are not aware of their policy details. For instance, claims for specific treatments such as hernia, cataracts, or knee replacement may be declined during the waiting period (which could be two-three years after

purchasing the policy). In addition, many policies have a room rent limit. If you claim a higher-category room in the hospital, your claim can be partially rejected. Thus, it is recommended to read your policy carefully before purchasing it and clear doubts with the insurance company, if any.

CLAIMING FOR EXCLUSIONS IN THE POLICY

Every health insurance policy includes and excludes specific treatments. At times, people attempt to claim for treatments which are not covered in the insurance policy. Therefore, you must check what your policy covers before undergoing treatment.

POLICY LAPSE OR INSUFFICIENT COVERAGE

Many a time a claim is rejected owing to the expiration of the policy and also when the total medical cost exceeds the sum insured.

Razorpay's Shashank Kumar, Harshil Mathur become India's youngest billionaires

Harshil Mathur and Shashank Kumar met at IIT Roorkee, where they shared an interest in technology and problem-solving. Their journey into fintech began in 2014 when they launched Razorpay to simplify digital payments in India.

New Delhi. It's no secret that India's startup ecosystem is one of the most exciting in the world as it has seen entrepreneurs rise faster than ever. And now, out of this thriving landscape, India has got its youngest billionaires, Razorpay co-founders Shashank Kumar and Harshil Mathur. At just 34, they have joined the elite club with a net worth of Rs 8,643 crore each, as per the Hurun Global Rich List 2025. Their rise to billionaire status also highlights the growth of the fintech sector and the increasing influence of homegrown startups in the global economy. Kumar and Mathur met at IIT Roorkee, where they shared an interest in technology and problem-solving. Their journey into fintech began

in 2014 when they launched Razorpay to simplify digital payments in India. Before turning entrepreneurs, both had corporate jobs. Kumar worked as a software development engineer at Microsoft, while Mathur was a wireline field engineer at Schlumberger. Their experience with the challenges of online payments in India led them to create Razorpay. Mathur once mentioned on his LinkedIn profile, "We started Razorpay after discovering the dismal state of online payments in India."

RAZORPAY'S GROWTH

Razorpay has grown into one of India's leading digital payment solutions providers. In December 2021, the company secured \$375 million in its Series F funding round, reaching a valuation of \$7.5 billion. The start-up has attracted investment from global firms, including Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC, Sequoia Capital, Ribbit Capital, Tiger Global Management, Matrix Partners India, and Y Combinator. The company's success reflects the growing investor confidence in India's fintech industry.

BILLIONAIRE COUNT CONTINUES TO RISE

The number of billionaires in India has seen



fluctuations over the years. In 2022, the count surged to 249 but dropped to 187 in 2023 due to market challenges. The trend reversed in 2024 with 271 billionaires, and in 2025, the number has increased further to 284. According to Hurun India's founder and chief researcher, Anas Rahman Junaid, "The collective wealth of Indian billionaires has surpassed the trillion-dollar milestone, signalling a new era of prosperity. Notably, 62% of these billionaires have experienced increased wealth, underscoring the positive economic trends sweeping the nation." While Kumar and Mathur have become India's youngest billionaires, China's Wang Zelong, aged 29, holds the same net worth of Rs 8,643 crore. The average age of billionaires in India is 68, slightly



easing with sizeable liquidity infusion), front-loading of the borrowing programme has been avoided. This will deny any undue pressure on market interest rates," said Ram Kamal Samanta, senior VP - investments, Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance. Of the total gross borrowing programme, govt is planning to mobilise 54% in the first half, as compared to 53% in FY25, 58% in FY24 and 59% in FY23. Additionally, govt has decided to borrow 34.5% of total first-half borrowing through super-long tenure securities as compared to 37% during the first half of FY25. The decision comes in the backdrop of widening of yield spreads of super long gilts over the benchmark 10-year gilts from 20 basis points (100bps = 1 percentage point) during Sept 2024 to as high as 47 basis points during late February 2025. This indicates lesser appetite from long term investors amid recent growth moderation, bond market players said.

Mukesh Ambani slips in Global Rankings

Mukesh Ambani, who has been among the world's richest individuals for years, has dropped out of the top 10. The Hurun Global Rich List 2025 attributes this decline to a Rs 1 lakh crore drop in his wealth, linked to rising debt levels. Meanwhile, Elon Musk remains the world's richest person with a net worth of \$420 billion, followed by Mark Zuckerberg and Jeff Bezos.

INDIA'S BILLIONAIRE CITIES

India's total billionaire wealth now stands at Rs 98 lakh crore, nearly one-third of the country's GDP—surpassing even Saudi Arabia's entire economy. Mumbai remains home to the highest number of billionaires in India, with 90, though it has lost its title as Asia's billionaire capital to Shanghai.

Supreme Court's big remark on freedom of speech: Satire enriches life

The Supreme Court's remarks came as it quashed an FIR filed against Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi over a poem uploaded by him on social media. It holds importance in the backdrop of the Kunal Kamra row.

New Delhi. The Supreme Court on Friday said freedom of expression was an "integral part" of a healthy civilised society as it cancelled an FIR filed in Gujarat against Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi over a poem uploaded by him on social media.

The top court, in strong remarks against the Gujarat Police, said the offence of promoting enmity cannot be judged by the standards of "insecure people" who see everything as a threat or criticism.

"Free expression of thoughts and views is an integral part of a healthy civilised society. Without it, it is impossible to lead a dignified life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. Literature, including poetry, drama, art, satire, enriches life," a bench of Justice AS Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan said.

The verdict holds importance against the backdrop of the row involving comedian

Kunal Kamra, who is facing a defamation case for calling Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde a "traitor" during a parody performance. Criticising the Gujarat High Court for refusing to quash the FIR, the bench reminded the courts and the police

written words, but... we are also under an obligation to uphold the Constitution and the respective ideals," the top court said. The Supreme Court directed the police to ensure that "reasonable restrictions" on free speech remain "reasonable and not fanciful and obstructive".

WHAT IS THE CASE?

A case was filed against Pratapgarhi in Gujarat after the Congress MP shared a poem on social media with the song 'Ae khoon ke pyase baat suno' playing in the background. It was perceived to be a dig at the BJP-ruled government.

On January 17, the Gujarat High Court declined to cancel the FIR. The Supreme Court had reserved its judgment after hearing the case in January.

During the hearing, the top court said the poem was not anti-religious or anti-national and the police must show sensitivity and understand the meaning of freedom of speech and expression.



of their duty to protect constitutional rights, saying free speech was the "most cherished right".

"The courts are duty-bound to uphold and enforce fundamental rights. Sometimes we, the judges, may not like the spoken or

Delhi HC issues notice to L-G V K Saxena on Medha Patkar's plea for new witness

The court noted that the case has been pending for 24 years. However, Patkar's counsel countered that there had been no delay from their end.



NEW DELHI. Social activist and Narmada Bachao Andolan leader Medha Patkar has moved the Delhi High Court against the dismissal of her plea seeking to introduce and examine an additional witness in her long-standing defamation case against Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena.

Justice Shalinder Kaur, after hearing the matter on Thursday, issued a notice to Saxena, seeking his response. The court also noted that the case has been pending for 24 years. However, Patkar's counsel countered that there had been no delay from their end. During the hearing, her counsel urged the court to stay the recording of Saxena's statement under Section 313 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), scheduled for the next day.

However, the court refrained from granting any such relief at this stage. Section 313 of CrPC provides an accused with an opportunity to explain any incriminating evidence presented against them during the trial. The case will now be heard in May. Patkar had approached the HC challenging a March 18 order of the trial court, which had dismissed her plea to introduce a fresh witness. The trial court observed that the request appeared to be a tactic to delay proceedings rather than a genuine necessity.

The origins of the legal battle date back to 2000, when Patkar sued Saxena, who was then heading an Ahmedabad-based NGO, the Council for Civil Liberties, over advertisements allegedly defaming her and the Narmada Bachao Andolan. Saxena, in turn, filed a counter-defamation case against Patkar, accusing her of maligning him in a press note dated November 25, 2000, titled "True Face of Patriot." Patkar had allegedly referred to Saxena as a coward rather than a patriot.

This counter-case resulted in Patkar being sentenced to five months of simple imprisonment last year, though her sentence was later suspended, and she was granted bail. In her plea, Patkar argued that she had the right to call upon any witness under Section 254(1) of CrPC to strengthen her case. She maintained that there was no legal bar preventing her from doing so. However, the trial court found no merit in her argument, ruling that she had already examined all the witnesses listed in her complaint.

Free NEET, CUET coaching to government school students, 1.63 lakh to get benefit in Delhi

NEW DELHI. In what could be a good news for the government school students who cannot afford expensive NEET and CUET coaching, the Delhi Education Department is preparing to offer free coaching to Class 12 students of city government schools.

The Directorate of Education on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bharat Innovation Global Pvt Ltd to provide free online coaching to Class 12 students of government schools, preparing for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Common University Entrance Test (CUET UG).

Bharat Innovation Global Private Limited (BIG) is a collaboration between the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) International, the Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and ed-tech company Physics Wallah Limited.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who attended the MoU signing at the Assembly, said the initiative would help over 1.63 lakh students of Delhi government schools to secure admission to medical colleges and Central universities. "With this support, more students will have the opportunity to pursue their dreams of becoming doctors and securing admissions in top universities," she added.

The Physics Wallah, based in Noida, has been roped in to provide classes for 30 days from April 2. Students will attend six hours of classes every day, which will run until May 5. The course will cover subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, General Aptitude, and English. PDF notes for revision, regular tests, and a doubt resolution portal will be made available. Also, a subject-wise study plan will guide students through the preparation process.

The previous AAP government had launched the Jai Bhim Mukhyamantri Pratibha Vikas Yojana to provide free coaching to SC/ST, OBC and EBC students for entrance and competitive exams but was discontinued in 2022 due to funding issues.

Verification drive soon for pension beneficiaries in Delhi

Officials from the Social Welfare Department stated that under the previous administration, no verification was done, resulting in thousands of eligible individuals being excluded from pension benefits.

NEW DELHI. After announcing an increase in pension amounts for senior citizens and specially-abled individuals in the 2025-26 budget, the Delhi government is set to launch a verification drive for all existing pension holders and eligible applicants. Officials from the Social Welfare Department said that no verification had been conducted under the previous administration, leading to thousands of eligible individuals being excluded from pension benefits despite meeting the criteria.



Since the AAP government assumed office in 2013, the pension system has remained largely unchanged, officials said. Pensions for the elderly, widows and disabled individuals have continued without updates, they added. "As per regulations, annual verification is required, but this process has not been undertaken for the past 12 years. As a result, many elderly beneficiaries have passed away, while others who are eligible are still waiting for their pensions," a senior official, requesting anonymity, said.

The department acknowledged the lack of accurate data on widow and disabled pensioners. To address this, officials outlined a plan to issue 50,000 new pensions while discontinuing those found to be ineligible. Additionally, the entire pension system will be digitized and pension cards will be introduced for all beneficiaries. These cards will contain vital details about the pensioner and their entitlements, ensuring greater transparency and accountability, officials said.

India ready to assist: PM Modi after massive earthquake jolts Myanmar, Thailand

Expressing concern over two back-to-back earthquakes of magnitudes 7.7 and 6.4 that struck Myanmar earlier today, PM Modi reached out to the Southeast Asian nation and Thailand, assuring assistance and offering prayers 'for the safety and well-being of everyone.'

New Delhi. Expressing concern over two back-to-back earthquakes of magnitudes 7.7 and 6.4 that struck Myanmar earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to the Southeast Asian nation and Thailand, assuring assistance and offering prayers "for the safety and well-being of everyone."

"Concerned by the situation in the wake of the Earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. Praying for the safety and wellbeing of everyone. India stands ready to offer all possible assistance. In this regard, asked our authorities to



be on standby. Also asked the MEA to remain in touch with the Governments of Myanmar and Thailand," PM Modi said in a post on X.

The earthquake, recorded at 12:50 pm local time, was felt far away, with several places in India, China, Thailand, and Bangladesh experiencing strong aftershocks. The epicentre was located 16 kilometres northwest of the Burmese city of Sagaing at a depth of 10 kilometres.

As the tremors were felt 900 kilometres away in Thailand's capital, Bangkok, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha declared a state of emergency following a meeting to assess the damage caused by the powerful quakes.

Shiv Nadar's Daughter Becomes First Indian In Top 10 Rich List For Women

Her rise in the rankings follows a 47 per cent stake transfer from her father, Shiv Nadar, the founder of HCL Technologies.

New Delhi. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, chairperson of HCL Technologies, has made history by becoming the first Indian to enter the top 10 in the Hurun Global Rich List 2025 for women. With an estimated net worth of Rs 3.5 lakh crore, she has secured the fifth position among the world's wealthiest women.

Her rise in the rankings follows a 47 per cent stake transfer from her father, Shiv Nadar, the founder of HCL Technologies. This transfer has placed her in control of Vama Sundari Investments (Vama Delhi) and HCL Corp, the promoter entities of HCL Technologies. As a result, Roshni Nadar Malhotra will now oversee all strategic decisions for the \$12 billion technology giant.

With this transfer, Roshni Nadar Malhotra now holds control over

voting rights for Vama Delhi's 44.17 per cent stake and HCL Corp's 0.17 per cent stake in HCL Technologies and



voting rights over Vama Delhi's 12.94 per cent stake and HCL Corp's 49.94 per cent stake in HCL Infosystems.

Before this transfer, Shiv Nadar held 51 per cent stake in both Vama Delhi and HCL Corp, while Roshni Nadar Malhotra owned 10.33 per cent in both

entities.

Roshni Nadar Malhotra took over as HCL Technologies' chairperson in July 2020. She is also a trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which has established top educational institutions in India.

The Hurun Global Rich List 2025 features several other Indian billionaires. Gautam Adani remains the second-richest person in India and ranks 18th globally. Dilip Shanghvi of Sun Pharmaceutical is at fourth position in India, followed by Azim Premji of Wipro in fifth.

The 2025 Hurun List includes 3,442 billionaires from 71 countries, marking a 5 per cent increase in the number of billionaires compared to last year. Their total wealth has grown by 13 per cent.

PWD Minister Parvesh Verma's 'bhai' remark sparks row in Delhi Assembly

Ruling party legislators argued the opposition was intentionally causing disruptions, especially since the question pertained to Chhath Puja.

NEW DELHI. The fourth day of the Delhi assembly's budget session was marked by a massive uproar after PWD Minister Parvesh Verma directed a comment at Leader of Opposition (LoP) Atishi during the Question Hour. Verma, who was responding to a question on the government's pilgrimage schemes and financial support for religious trips, was interrupted by Atishi.

In response, he presumably referred to her

with an otherwise unremarkable word "Bhai," triggering a 13-minute long disruption and heated exchanges between the ruling BJP and the AAP.

The comment quickly escalated tensions. AAP MLAs protested, demanding an explanation for the remark. Verma defended himself, questioning, "What did I say? How is it wrong to say 'bhai'?" He further clarified, "Atishi ji is my sister, not my brother," amid continued exchanges with AAP lawmakers. Despite Verma's clarification, opposition AAP members remained angry, with Atishi, a former chief minister, standing up to counter the remark.

As the minister tried to resume his speech, loud protests from Atishi and other AAP MLAs continued. After repeated failed attempts to resume his speech, a seemingly exasperated Verma said, "Kahan se laaye ho bhai?"

Atishi, asserting that the language used by Verma was "unparliamentary," once

again stood in protest. Other AAP MLAs joined in, accusing Verma of disrespect. The Speaker, Vijender Gupta, intervened, asking AAP members to



identify the offensive word, asserting that "bhai" was not objectionable. "I don't understand the issue," he said. As the uproar continued, Speaker Gupta marshalled two AAP MLAs, Vishesh Ravi and Kuldeep Kumar, from the House. Later, MLA Mukesh Ahlawat was also suspended. However, following

a request from the AAP delegation, the suspension of Ravi and Kumar was revoked.

one of the suspended MLAs, criticised the Speaker's actions, accusing him of bias in favour of the ruling party.

"This kind of bias encourages ruling party members to make objectionable comments," he said. "It is unacceptable that we are being punished instead of those who are using such words. We will continue to show solidarity for the LoP, who is not just a woman but a former CM of the national

capital." Ruling party legislators argued the opposition was intentionally causing disruptions, especially since the question pertained to Chhath Puja. BJP members also raised slogans of "Chhathi Maiyya Ki Jai" in response to the ongoing protests.

NEWS BOX

PM Mark Carney say
Canada's traditional ties
with US are over amid auto
tariff threats

OTTAWA. In a dramatic shift in Canada's foreign policy, Prime Minister Mark Carney declared on Thursday that the long-standing economic and security relationship between Canada and the United States has come to an end. This statement followed US President Donald Trump's announcement of new auto tariffs that could severely impact Canada's economy, Politico reported.

"The old relationship we had with the United States, based on deepening economic integration and tight security and military cooperation, is over," Carney said on Parliament Hill after breaking from his federal campaign trail to respond to Trump's latest threats. Trump announced on Wednesday that his administration would impose a 25% tariff on auto imports from Canada, the European Union, Japan, and South Korea. He also threatened to introduce additional tariffs targeting other major US trading partners. In response, Carney said he would speak with Trump in the coming days but emphasized that any discussions must respect Canada's sovereignty. "We must fundamentally reimagine our economy. We need to ensure that Canada can succeed in a drastically different world," he said.

Carney convened his Cabinet's committee on Canada-US relations upon returning to Ottawa. Canada has indicated it is prepared to retaliate, but the government has not revealed specific countermeasures. "We are facing a comprehensive and broad negotiation," Carney said, adding that he would not disclose Canada's response strategy prematurely. Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association of Canada, warned that if the tariffs go forward, both countries' auto industries could be paralyzed within a week. "One day, two days, three days where you hope the president shows you mercy. You're a publicly traded company whose share price is taking a beating, and you have a fiduciary obligation to shareholders," Volpe told Politico.

Noted economist honored by
Trump warns that 25%
tariffs risk 'irreparable
damage' to US automakers

WASHINGTON. Noted economist Arthur Laffer warns in a new analysis that President Donald Trump's 25% tariffs on auto imports could add \$4,711 to the cost of a vehicle, adding that the proposed taxes could weaken the ability of U.S. automakers to compete with their foreign counterparts. In the 21-page analysis obtained by The Associated Press, Laffer, whom Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2019 for his contributions to economics, says the auto industry would be in a better position if the president preserved the supply chain rules with Canada and Mexico from his own 2019 USMCA trade pact. The White House has temporarily exempted auto and parts imports under the USMCA from the tariffs starting on April 3 so that the Trump administration can put together a process for taxing non-U.S. content in vehicles and parts that fall under the agreement. "Without this exemption, the proposed tariff risks causing irreparable damage to the industry, contradicting the administration's goals of strengthening U.S. manufacturing and economic stability," Laffer writes in the analysis. "A 25% tariff would not only shrink, or possibly eliminate, profit margins for U.S. manufacturers but also weaken their ability to compete with international rivals." While Trump's tariff plans have frightened the stock market and U.S. consumers, Laffer's analysis shows the administration has yet to convince even his favored economists that his import taxes would deliver as promised. The paper reminds Trump that it's not too late to change course, specifically complimenting the USMCA negotiated in his first term as a "significant achievement." "The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) has served as a cornerstone of President Trump's first term and has quickly become a dominant feature of North American trade policy, fostering economic growth, stabilizing supply chains, and strengthening the U.S. auto industry," Laffer writes.

Suspected US strikes
pummel Houthi-controlled
areas of Yemen

DUBAI. Suspected U.S. airstrikes pummeled sites across Yemen controlled by the Houthi rebels early Friday, including neighborhoods in the capital, Sanaa. The extent of the damage and possible casualties wasn't immediately clear, though the number of strikes appeared particularly intense compared to other days in the campaign that began March 15. An Associated Press review has found the new American operation under President Donald Trump appears more extensive than those under former President Joe Biden, as the U.S. moves from solely targeting launch sites to firing at ranking personnel as well as dropping bombs in cities. Initial reports from the Houthis described at least seven people being hurt in the attacks Friday in Sanaa, Yemen's capital. Other strikes hit around the Red Sea port city of Hodeida, the rebel's stronghold of Saada and in Yemen's al-Jawf, Amran and Marib governorates. The Houthis did not immediately acknowledge what at those sites had been targeted, other than Sanaa International Airport, which is used for both civilian and military traffic. Neighborhoods in the capital also are home to military and intelligence service sites — as well as crowded with civilians.

Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad
Yunus meets Chinese President Xi Jinping

BEIJING. Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus here on Friday, official media reported. Yunus, on a four-day visit to China, took part in the country's Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan after his arrival there on Wednesday. He arrived in Beijing on Thursday and was received at the airport by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. Gearing up for his meeting with Xi, Yunus called on China on Thursday to reduce interest rates for Chinese loans and waive commitment fees on Chinese-funded projects. In his meeting with the Chinese Executive Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, Yunus sought Chinese support in an array of development projects, Bangladesh media reports said. He also called for a reduction of interest rates for Chinese loans from three per cent to 1-2 per cent to Bangladesh and sought a waiver of

commitment fees on the Chinese-funded projects in Bangladesh. China is Bangladesh's fourth-largest lender after Japan, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, with total loans disbursed since 1975 coming to USD 7.5 billion, according to a report in the Daily Star newspaper of Bangladesh.

In his meeting with Ding, Yunus sought Beijing's help in facilitating the relocation of the Chinese manufacturing industries, including ready-made garments, electric vehicles, light machinery, high-tech electronics, chip manufacturing and the solar panel industry. On the sidelines of the forum, Yunus also met Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk, who expressed Moscow's interest in exporting more wheat and fertiliser to Bangladesh. "Russia would like to export more wheat and fertiliser to Bangladesh," he said. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the



operationalisation of the Russia-funded Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. Yunus also met former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who is the Chairman of the Boao Forum, and sought support and advice for a smooth transition to democracy in Bangladesh. We want to start anew; we need your support and advice. We are having a great opportunity now," Yunus was quoted by the daily as saying. A day ahead of the

scheduled talks between Xi and Yunus, China signalled its desire to expand ties with Dhaka in a changed Bangladesh scenario, state-run BSS news agency reported. "President Xi Jinping attaches tremendous importance to your (Yunus) visit," BSS quoted Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang telling Yunus, hoping for the South Asian nation's prosperity under his interim administration.

Ding said Beijing would extend full support to the Bangladesh government in terms of investment, trade and cultural ties, and people to people exchanges as they mark 50 years since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties. According to BSS, Yunus told the Chinese vice-premier about Bangladesh's firm support and commitment to the One China policy, adding that Dhaka takes pride in being the first South Asian nation to join China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Old ties with US over, says Canada's
new PM amid Trump's tariff threats

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Thursday declared that the old economic and defence ties with the US were over after his US counterpart, Donald Trump, imposed a 25 percent tariff on automobile imports.

"The time will come for a broad renegotiation of our security and trade relationship." The 60-year-old, who replaced Justin Trudeau last month, said that he was "unclear" about what the Trump administration's next move would be. "What is clear is that we as Canadians have agency. We have power. We are masters in our own

he discussed Trump's new tariff policy. Ahead of the meeting in Ottawa, Carney said that Trump's tariff action will lead to potential economic distress among US consumers. "This is a very direct attack. We will defend our workers. We will defend our companies. We will defend our country," Carney stated earlier. Calling the tariffs "unjustified," Carney said that he would look into Trump's latest executive order before announcing any retaliatory tariffs.



home," he said. "We control our destiny. We can give ourselves much more than any foreign government, including the United States, can ever take away." Prime Minister Carney was speaking in Ottawa following a meeting with provincial leaders, where

The automobile sector employs nearly 125,000 Canadians and another half a million in related industries, making it Canada's second-largest export sector. Earlier, Trump had exempted auto imports from Mexico and Canada from tariffs. On April 2, the Trump administration also imposed a 25 percent tariff on Canadian steel and aluminum imports, dealing a huge blow to one of the US's top trading partners.

world. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Thursday declared that the old economic and defence ties with the US were over after his US counterpart, Donald Trump, imposed a 25 percent tariff on automobile imports. In response, Carney called it a "very direct attack" on the Canadian economy. "The old relationship we had with the United States, based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military cooperations, is over," Prime Minister Carney told reporters today.

Health and Human Services will lay off 10,000
workers, close agencies in a major restructuring

WASHINGTON. In a major overhaul, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will lay off 10,000 workers and shut down entire agencies, including ones that oversee billions of dollars in funds for addiction services and community health centers across the country. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. criticized the department he oversees as an inefficient "sprawling bureaucracy" in a video announcing the restructuring Thursday. He faulted the department's 82,000 workers for a decline in Americans' health. "I want to promise you now that we're going to do more with less," Kennedy said in the video, posted to social media. The restructuring plan caps weeks of tumult at the nation's top health department, which has been embroiled in rumors of mass firings, the revocation of \$11 billion in public health funding for cities and counties, a tepid response to a measles outbreak, and controversial remarks about vaccines from its new leader.

Still, Kennedy said a "painful period" lies ahead for HHS, which is responsible for monitoring infectious diseases, inspecting foods and hospitals, and overseeing health insurance programs for nearly half the country. Overall, the department will



downsize to 62,000 positions, losing nearly a quarter of its staff — 10,000 jobs through layoffs and another 10,000 workers who took early retirement and voluntary separation offers encouraged by President Donald Trump's administration.

The staffing cuts were first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Public health

experts, doctors, current and former HHS workers and congressional Democrats quickly panned Kennedy's plans, warning they could have untold consequences for millions of people.

"These staff cuts endanger public health and food safety," said Brian Ronholm, director of food policy at Consumer Reports, in a statement. "They raise serious concerns that the administration's pledge to make Americans healthy again could become nothing more than an empty promise." But Kennedy, in announcing the restructuring, blasted HHS for failing to improve Americans' lifespans and not doing enough to drive down chronic disease and cancer rates. "All of that money," Kennedy said of the department's \$1.7 trillion yearly budget, "has failed to improve the health of Americans." Cancer death rates have dropped 34% over the past two decades, translating to 4.5 million deaths avoided, according to the American Cancer Society.

Trump orders removal of 'anti-American
ideology' from premier US museum

Washington. President Donald Trump on Thursday ordered that "improper, divisive or anti-American ideology" be removed from the Smithsonian Institution, the vast museum and research complex that is a premier exhibition space for US history and culture.

The Republican president, in an executive order, directed that Vice President JD Vance undertake the action. The order also directs the Interior Department to restore federal parks, monuments and memorials that have been "removed or changed in the last years to perpetuate a false revision of history." The order, titled "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," is vague about what the president views as anti-American ideology. But it suggests Trump is seeking to purge elements of what conservatives view as a revisionist history of the United States that places systemic racism at the heart of its narrative.

The order singles out the National Museum of African American History and Culture as

problematic, claiming that it informs visitors that "hard work," "individualism" and "the nuclear family" are aspects of "White culture." The order also asserts the American Women's History Museum plans to celebrate male athletes participating in women's sports. The White House did not elaborate on the order, and neither the Smithsonian nor the African-American History museum responded to requests for comment. The Smithsonian spans 21 museums, most of them in the nation's capital lining the mall from the US Capitol to the Washington Monument, and including the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of American History and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The Smithsonian, whose website says it is the world's largest museum, education and research complex, also encompasses 14 education and research centers, and the National Zoo. The order is in line with the

Trump administration's efforts to do away with diversity and inclusion programs in government, universities and corporations. Vance is a member of the Smithsonian's Board of Regents. According to Trump's



order, the Democratic Biden administration "pushed a divisive ideology that reconstrued America's promotion of liberty as fundamentally flawed, inflecting revered institutions like the Smithsonian and national parks with false narratives."

Trump earlier this year made himself chairman of the Kennedy Center in Washington, indicating that he wants to leave his mark on US arts and culture as part of his presidency. Trump has been a

strident critic of renaming or removing Confederate statues and monuments. Earlier this year, he restored two US Army bases to their former names of Fort Benning and Fort Bragg despite a federal law that prohibits honoring generals who fought for the South during the Civil War. The administration says the names honor different individuals, all former soldiers.

In 2017, Trump defended white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, who protested the city's decision to remove a statue of the confederate commander Robert E Lee. At the time, he said there were "very fine people of both sides" of the fight, sparking widespread outrage.

NEWS BOX

Shardul Thakur set the tone, didn't let Abhishek, Head build pressure: Mitchell Marsh

New Delhi. Mitchell Marsh said that Shardul Thakur laid the platform for the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Thursday in the Indian Premier League (IPL) clash at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad. Shardul didn't let the opening duo of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head build pressure on the LSG bowlers. The speedster, who joined the Super Giants as a replacement for Mohsin Khan, got the early wickets of Abhishek and Ishan Kishan, after which he came back to get the wickets of Abhinav Manohar and Mohammed Shami. It was Shardul's spell of 4-0-34-4 that restricted SRH to 190 for nine, after which LSG romped home with 23 balls to spare.



"I thought Shardul bowled exceptionally well and set the tone for us early on. Against batsmen like Abhishek and Travis Head, you're under pressure right away, but Shardul used his experience to great effect. He bowled particularly well towards the end. Overall, it was a solid all-round performance, and it's great to start the tournament with a win," Shardul said in the post-match press conference.

'Prince was really impressive'

Marsh also had words of praise for Prince Yadav, who got the crucial wicket of Head to finish with figures of 4-0-29-1.

"Firstly, I'm really proud of Prince in his second IPL game. The way he bowled and executed his plans was impressive, and I'm sure it will give him a lot of confidence moving forward. As I mentioned the other day, we told him to rely on his depth in this long tournament. For someone like him to get an opportunity early on and step up for us tonight was really impressive," Shardul added. The Super Giants will next be up against Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings on Tuesday, April 1 at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow.

Ravi Shastri 'betting' ad may attract censure from MIB

CHENNAI. A Ravi Shastri advertisement where the cricketer-turned-pundit seemingly endorses a betting company could come under the scanner of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).

Over the last 11 months or so, Shastri has used X (formerly Twitter) to promote Stake, a betting company. He did the same on March 21, one day before the start of the Indian Premier League's 18th edition. "Witness the Ultimate Cricket Extravaganza," he posted to his 2m followers. "Early six? Early wicket? What's your stake? @Stake" There was also a video message to his followers.

He also added a disclaimer: "This content is not intended for the Indian region. Visitors must be 18+ of age to proceed." This daily has learned that the disclaimer may not be applicable for the purposes of legality as the commentator may still be liable.

"This specific advertiser appears to be a betting



platform," Manisha Kapoor, secretary-general of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), told this daily. "Betting is a violation of law, hence adding any disclaimer does not make it okay to advertise. ASCI is reporting such cases to the MIB." Under Indian law, games of chance—betting—are banned save a few exemptions as it's a state subject under the Public Gambling Act.

Shastri has periodically posted such ads on his handle, including during the Paris Olympics and the English Premier League (EPL). Any operator, sports lawyer Vidushpat Singhania told this masthead, "who claims an international license, cannot offer a betting product without a license from an authority in India. In addition they would also need GST registration in India. A celebrity before endorsing a brand is required to do a diligence check, otherwise a celebrity can be held liable under consumer protection laws." Indian cricket has been no stranger to betting advertisements in recent years. In 2022, to stop the encroachment of surrogate advertisements, in the form of L-shaped commercials during live cricket matches.

Chelsea rallies past Manchester City to reach Women's Champions League semifinals vs. Barcelona

Last week, City had ended Chelsea's unbeaten run with a 2-0 victory to become the first team to defeat Chelsea under coach Sonia Bompastor — in her team's 29th game of the season.

LONDON. Chelsea staged a big first-half comeback to march into the semifinals of the Women's Champions League with a 3-0 victory over Manchester City on Thursday. Sandy Baltimore scored early in the all-England quarterfinal at Stamford Bridge before Nathalie Björn and Mayra Ramirez netted in a five-minute span to overturn a 2-0 deficit from the first leg and set up a last-four matchup against defending champion Barcelona. "We were never in doubt," Chelsea captain Millie Bright told TNT Sports. "We had full confidence in ourselves. We could have had way more than three goals. Unbelievable mentality and desire to come back. A true Chelsea performance."



Baltimore gave Chelsea a 1-0 lead on a rebound with a left-footed, one-timed strike after a low shot from Lucy Bronze hit the post in the 14th. Björn headed in to double the advantage in the 38th before Lauren James set up Ramirez, whose shot beat goalkeeper Khara Keating and put Chelsea ahead 3-2 on aggregate. Last week, City had ended Chelsea's unbeaten run with a 2-0 victory to become the first team to defeat Chelsea under coach Sonia Bompastor — in

her team's 29th game of the season. Barcelona routs Wolfsburg Barcelona remained on course for a third straight Women's Champions League title after routing Wolfsburg 6-1 in the second leg of their quarterfinal encounter. Forward Salma Parulluelo and Clàudia Pina each scored twice as Barcelona reached the semifinal on a massive 10-2 aggregate score. The Catalan powerhouse has scored a total of 36 goals in eight games in the competition this

season. Barcelona won 4-1 in the first leg last week in the first meeting of the two teams since the Spanish side beat Wolfsburg 3-2 in the 2023 Champions League final. It was nowhere near that margin again at the Estadi Johan Cruyff. Parulluelo completed a fast move with a clinical left-footed low finish from the left corner of the area 10 minutes in. Only 10 minutes later, Esmee Brugts cut back for her from the left to add the second from inside the box before dancing with her smiling teammates in celebration. Brugts made it 3-0 with a powerful drive from some 20 meters (yards) to beat goalkeeper Anneke Borbe. Pina controlled the ball with her left foot before unleashing a right-footed strike from the edge of the area to add the fourth in the 62nd, less than four minutes after coming on as substitute. Only then did Wolfsburg respond, when substitute Lineth Beerensteyn scored with her first touch of the ball. But Pina curled in a free kick for her second and seventh of the campaign in the 77th and Maria León netted the sixth from a long-distance free kick in stoppage time. "Alexia (Putellas) and Maria León gave me some really good service and when my first touch is good, it helps with confidence," Pina said. "We're really happy with how we played and what we've done."

Riyan Parag-Guwahati pitch invader row: Aakash Chopra slams 'new low' in journalism

IPL 2025: Aakash Chopra slammed a popular media house for spreading incorrect information over a controversy where a fan breached security to touch Riyan Parag's feet in Guwahati.

New Delhi. Former Indian batter Aakash Chopra recently criticised a renowned media house for reaching a "new low" in clickbait journalism after an article surfaced on social media, claiming that Riyan Parag paid 10,000 INR to a fan for touching his feet during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 match between Rajasthan Royals (RR) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at the Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati. Chopra condemned the media outlet for circulating unverified rumours without any credible

evidence. He pointed out that the article failed to clarify how the media house



determined the payment, emphasising the lack of journalistic integrity. Chopra called for more responsible reporting in sports media. Stumbled upon this article. Headline is explosive, obviously. But there's nothing mentioned in the article about how they figured out that Riyan paid a fan to touch his feet. NOTHING at all. In the world of clickbait journalism, this is a new low. And this is mainstream media, btw," Chopra wrote on

X. Fans breaches security to meet Riyan Parag

During KKR's chase, a fan managed to slip past security and rush onto the field. As Parag was about to bowl his fourth over, the fan approached him, touched his feet, and gave him a hug. Riyan, caught off guard by the unexpected gesture, was met with cheers from the crowd, celebrating Assam's first IPL superstar. The brief interruption caused a delay in play, but security swiftly handled the situation and escorted the fan off the field. Parag and the Royals haven't had the best of times in the tournament thus far. In two matches, Parag has scored only 29 runs at an average of 14.50. The Royals began their campaign with a 44-run defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) after which KKR beat them by eight wickets. RR are placed at the bottom of the table with a net run rate of -1.882.

Barcelona beats Osasuna 3-0 to extend La Liga lead

BARCELONA. Ferran Torres and Dani Olmo scored early goals to lead Barcelona to a 3-0 win over Osasuna and extend its lead of the Spanish league on Thursday. Coach Hansi Flick rested Robert Lewandowski until the final stretch, when the Poland star came on and headed in a cross by fellow substitute Fermin López.

It was Lewandowski's league-leading 23rd goal of the season. The game had been originally scheduled for March 8 but was postponed after a first-team doctor of Barcelona died hours before kickoff.

The victory moved Barcelona three points ahead of Real Madrid and seven points ahead of Atletico Madrid with 10 rounds remaining. Torres culminated a team passing move in the 11th minute when he scored from a low cross by Alejandro Balde.

Freddie de Jong played Bald clear before the left back found Torres for the striker's 14th goal of the season across all competitions despite playing most games as a second-half substitute for Lewandowski. Torres also hit



the crossbar with a free kick late in the first half. "I try to make the most of my minutes," he said. "I don't consider myself a super sub. I am prepared to play whenever the coach needs me." Olmo doubled the lead in the 21st

The victory moved Barcelona three points ahead of Real Madrid and seven points ahead of Atletico Madrid with 10 rounds remaining.

after converting a penalty on a second try that he had earned when fouled by goalkeeper Sergio Herrera. Herrera saved his initial penalty but Olmo made good on a second attempt after Osasuna midfielder Jon Moncayola invaded the area early. Olmo left the game a few minutes later with an apparent leg injury. Osasuna's top scorer Ante Budimir, who came from playing with Croatia, went on for the final half hour but was unable to threaten in attack.

Novak Djokovic beats Sebastian Korda, advances to semifinals in push for 7th Miami Open title

Djokovic, who won all six of his titles at the tournament's previous venue at Key Biscayne, is going for his 100th professional title.

MIAMI GARDENS. Novak Djokovic is finding a higher gear in South Florida after a sluggish start to 2025. Djokovic, gunning for his seventh Miami Open title, dispatched American Sebastian Korda 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) Thursday in one hour, 24 minutes in a quarterfinal match that was postponed from Wednesday night because the women's quarterfinal between Jessica Pegula and Emma Raducanu ran past 11 p.m. and would have begun at about midnight — against new

ATP rules. Djokovic advanced to Friday's semifinals and will face Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov. Djokovic is 12-1 against the 33-year-old Dimitrov, who reached the tournament finals in 2024. Djokovic, who won all six of his titles at the tournament's previous venue at Key Biscayne, is going for his 100th professional title. "I'm getting great support," Djokovic said. "I feel I have a really good chance to go all the way here. ... I'm playing the best I have in some time."

With the Hard Rock Stadium fans cheering the 37-year-old and chanting his name, Djokovic rallied in the second set from 4-1 and 5-2 down to win in a tiebreaker. He served an ace on match point and finished with an 83 first-service percentage against the 24th-seeded Korda. The 37-year-old Serbian let out a yell after the victory and strummed his racket like a violin. "One word — serve," Djokovic said when asked the key to his second-set surge. "I was serving very well — best serving performance in a long time." The men's

leader in Grand Slam titles at 24 has been out of form this year, starting with an injury retirement at the Australian Open in January. Earlier this month, Djokovic lost his first



match at Indian Wells to Botić van de Zandschulp. Saturday's women's final is set with No. 3 Jessica Pegula facing top seed Aryna Sabalenka. It is also a rematch of the 2024 U.S. Open final, won by Sabalenka. In the women's semifinal staged late Thursday, Pegula had to be spectacularly resilient to stop the history-making run of the 19-year-

old lefty from the Philippines, Alexandra Eala. Pegula won in a rollercoaster 7-6 (7-3), 5-7, 6-3 victory in a contest that ended at 12:40 a.m. Friday. In the two-hour, 26-minute match, Eala showed she is a crafty lefty star in the making with drop shots, lefty volleys and a big forehand. The Hard Rock Stadium fans rooted on the player who had taken out major champions Jelena Ostapenko, Madison Keys and Iga Swiatek previously. Pegula fought off a set point in the first set. She was twice down a break in the first set forced a tiebreaker and dominated it. Eala had played forcefully through most of the first set, moving Pegula around and coming to the net at advantageous times to showcase her volley. But suddenly it turned. Eala served for the first set at 5-3, but at set point, she registered two straight double faults, then made an unforced error on her forehand. She lost eight straight points as Pegula seized control.



skipper Rajat Patidar when it comes to their batting and if Chennai have a stronghold over their opponents on Friday. Fleming said it is tough to say about it after just one game as both teams are different from last year. The CSK coach said that his side aren't dwelling on past results but admitted that Kohli is a big part of the plans at RCB. Fleming feels if CSK can keep Kohli and Patidar quiet, then they can win the game. It's really hard to comment after just one game. The RCB and CSK from last year is quite different. We don't look into past performances. Certainly, looking at their team, Kohli is a big part of it. But they have strength in their team, like most franchises have. The competition is pretty even this year. If we keep him and Patidar quiet, then it will help us to win," said Fleming.

Fleming provides Pathirana update

One of the big names who missed CSK's opening match win over Mumbai Indians was Matheesha Pathirana. Fleming said that the Sri Lankan pacer is suffering from an injury at the moment and he won't be playing against RCB. "Pathirana is recovering from injury. So don't expect him to play tomorrow," said Fleming. Fleming also hinted that there may not be any changes made to the lineup for the clash against RCB.



Sara Ali Khan

Admits She Felt Jealous Of Alia Bhatt, 'Dehumanised' Her: 'She Has A Kid Also, Her Life Is Set'



Sara Ali Khan has admitted to feeling jealous of Alia Bhatt after the Jigra actress' National Award win. Speaking at NDTV's event, Sara revealed that she was jealous of Alia because of her personal and professional milestones. Sara felt envious that Alia has a National Award and also a happy marriage with a child. Sara Ali Khan said, "When Alia got the National Award, I was like, 'God, she got it, she has a kid also, her life is set.' But I don't know what she went through to get that. I, as an actor, dehumanised her." "You don't know, she must have had challenges and disappointments too, to reach where she has. But I didn't realise what went into it. There are two sides to every coin," Sara added.

"Most often, when we are envious of other people, we feel so without all the information. We are envious because we just see that success and then we want that. We don't see what goes behind it; we never see it. Envy means blindness," she added. Alia Bhatt won the National Award for her role in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Gangubai Kathiawadi. She jointly won the Best Actress award with Kriti Sanon (for Mimi). Although Alia was on a roll with films like Gangubai Kathiawadi and Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani, she faced a setback with Jigra. Although her performance was appreciated in the film, Jigra failed at the box office.

Alia is now reuniting with Sanjay Leela Bhansali for Love and War. The film will also star Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal. She is also shooting for Alpha with Bobby Deol and Sharvari. Alpha is a standalone spy film by Yash Raj Films. There is also buzz that Alia will be seen in a Maddock horror comedy film in the coming years.

Fashion Ka Jalwa Is The Song Ananya Panday Listens To Before Her Ramp Walks

Ananya Panday, recognized for her on-screen performances, has also made a name for herself in the fashion industry. The actress has walked the runway for numerous renowned designers over the years and is often praised for her impeccable presence on the stage. Recently, she opened the 25th edition of Lakmé Fashion Week, in collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI). She was the showstopper for Anamika Khanna's Silver Collar collection. Recently, in an interview, Ananya revealed



her ritual before she heads out on the ramp. In a recent interview with Filmfare, Ananya Panday discussed her mandatory ritual before walking the ramp. She stated, "I always listen to Fashion Ka Jalwa before walking the ramp. Today I was watching the match, so I almost didn't listen to it. But then I listened to the song because I feel if I

don't listen to it, something bad may happen." Ananya made a strong statement as she walked the runway in a daring and unconventional outfit. She wore a silver bralette with an elaborate chain design, giving the appearance of vintage armour with a modern touch. Ananya added a splash of colour to her ensemble by pairing the bralette with high-waisted, flared slacks in a brilliant shade of blue. The pants had magnificent silver embroidery, elaborate zari work, and glittering embellishments, which added to the outfit's grandeur. Ananya Panday's acting career will soar with her role in Kesari Chapter 2, scheduled for a global release on April 18. The film features R. Madhavan and Akshay Kumar in pivotal roles. The upcoming film is a spiritual sequel to Kesari, with Akshay Kumar as the protagonist and marks Karan Singh Tyagi's directorial debut. The plot is inspired by the brave lawyer C. Sankaran Nair, who pushed the British Raj to uncover the awful truth about the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The film also includes some personal touches from the creators, as well as scenes from India's struggle for freedom. Besides Kesari 2, Ananya also has Call Me Bae 2 and Chand Mera Dil alongside Kill fame Lakshya.



Nayanthara's Adorable Pictures With Twins Ulagam And Uyir Are Too Cute To Miss



Actress Nayanthara is a doting mother to twin boys, Ulagam and Uyir, whom she welcomed via surrogacy in October 2022 with her husband, Vignesh Shivan. The actress often treats her fans with adorable glimpses of her happy family moments. Recently, the Jawan actress delighted her Instafam with a string of cute pictures featuring both her baby boys. Sharing the pictures, she wrote in the caption, "I would choose you both in EVERY LIFETIME." The first snapshot is a selfie wherein the actress is seen on her bed along with one of her kids and giving him a peck. The child, on the other hand, kissed her mother's cheek. In the next pic, the mother-son duo is looking straight into the camera.

Another picture featured Nayanthara and her son posing for a cute selfie. The last picture of the carousel post depicted the actress and her kids' legs as they sat inside a car.

In no time, the comment section was flooded with reactions from fans and admirers. An Instagram user commented, "OMG all three are the prettiest." Another one wrote, "Cute click." One of them shared, "Aww, I am loving this mother Nayanthara more and more."

On the work front, Nayanthara is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming sports thriller film titled Test, co-starring Siddharth, R Madhavan and Meera Jasmine. Helmed by the debutant director S. Sashikanth and produced by YNOT Studios, the film will be streaming on the OTT giant Netflix from April 4 in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam languages. Recently, the makers unveiled the film's official trailer, which received huge responses from the audiences. In the film, R Madhavan plays Saravanan, a bright but struggling scientist, while Nayanthara portrays his wife Kumudha. Siddharth plays cricketer Arjun, who struggles with the narrow line between professional and personal choices, while Meera Jasmine portrays his wife Padma, who passionately protects their private space.

Rohanpreet Singh BACKS Wife Neha Kakkar After Melbourne Concert Controversy, Urges Fans Not To Judge Anyone



Singer Rohanpreet Singh finally broke his silence on wife Neha Kakkar's Melbourne concert controversy. Taking to Instagram, he wrote a note in Punjabi, urging fans not to judge anyone and to be aware of the 'reality' of the situation. Earlier today, Neha finally shared her first post after the controversy, asking her fans to "wait for the truth". On Thursday, March 27, Rohanpreet Singh shared an official statement in Punjabi. It can be loosely translated in English as, "I want to be humble while sharing something. Till the time we do not know the reality or aren't aware of both the sides, we should not judge anyone. We should implement this in all our lives."

He further added in English, "Huge respect to my wife and band, who went on stage even after so much of difficulties and chaos." The singer dropped a folded hands emoji as the photo caption. Neha, on Thursday, March 27, dropped a short but crisp note for trolls on her Instagram story. She wrote, "Wait for the truth, you'll regret judging me so quickly".

The words were accompanied with an emoji indicating sadness. However, she didn't explain why she was late to her own concert.

Earlier this week, Neha arrived three hours late to her show in Melbourne. The singer faced an angry crowd, who urged she go back. The Dilbar singer was seen breaking down in front of the audience while apologising for coming late. "Guys, you are really sweet! You have been patient. Itni der se aap log wait kar rahe ho."

I hate it, maine life mein kabhi kisi ko wait nahi karwaya hai. Aap itni der se wait kar rahe ho, I'm so sorry! It means a lot to me. I will remember this evening forever. Aaj aap log mere liye itna kimti time nikaal kar aaye ho. I will make sure that I will make you all dance," she said, while fighting her tears.

However, the crowd was in no mood to hear her apologies. While a section of the audience sided her, others said, "Go back! Rest in your hotel", "This is not India, you're in Australia", "We have been waiting for three hours." Another voice mocked her by saying, "Very good acting! This is not Indian Idol. You're not performing with kids."