



Judges As Gods:
New Deities?

Textbook Changes:
No Lessons Learned



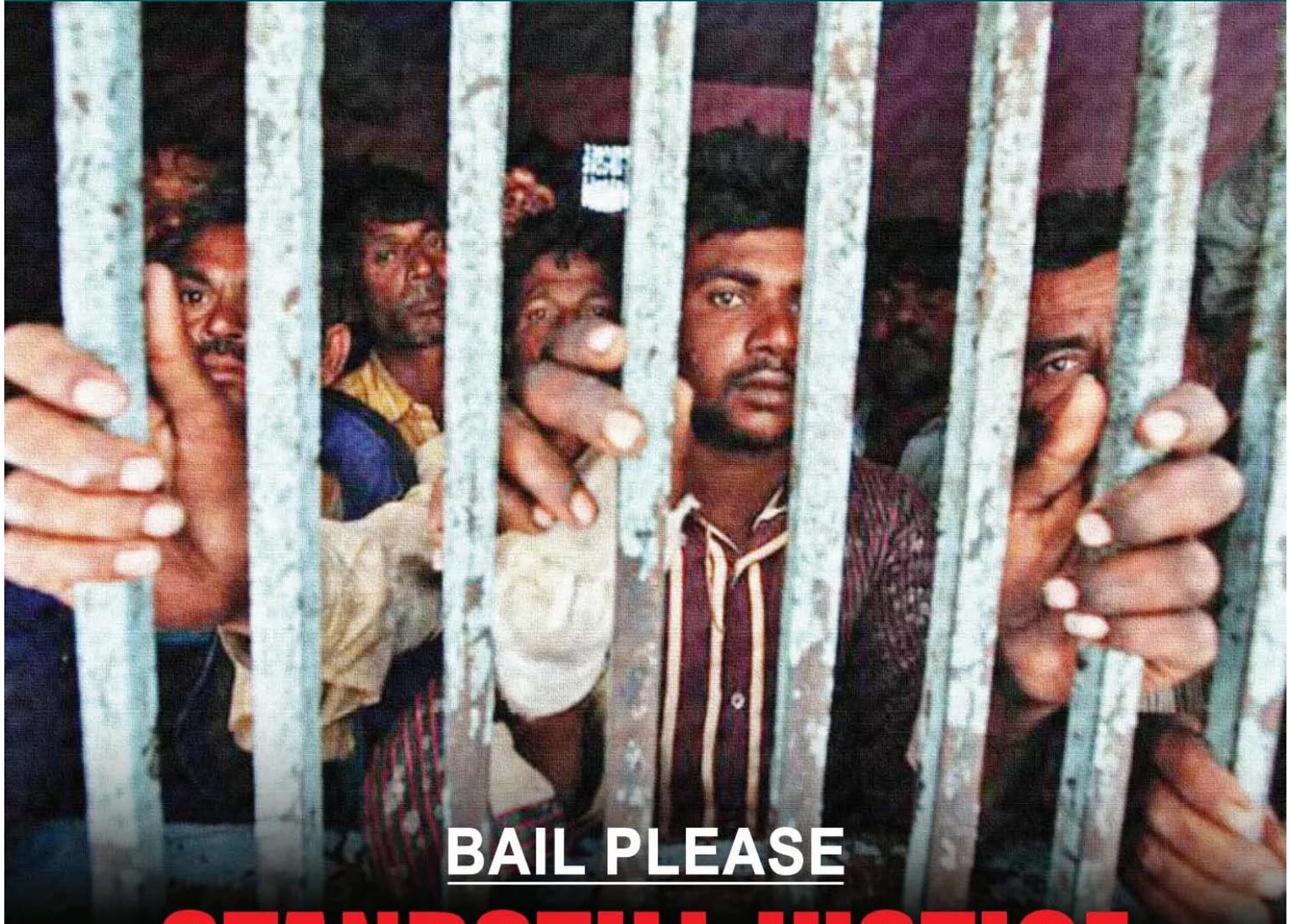
www.indialegalive.com

July 15, 2024

₹ 100

INDIA LEGAL

STORIES THAT COUNT



BAIL PLEASE

STANDSTILL JUSTICE

Despite the repeated goading from several Chief Justices of India, bail as a fundamental right to liberty in the absence of a trial, leave alone a conviction, continues to elude the citizen



RADO HYPERCHROME CERAMIC TOUCH DUAL TIMER
HIGH-TECH CERAMIC. SECOND TIME ZONE. TOUCH TECHNOLOGY.

RADO
S W I T Z E R L A N D

TIME IS THE ESSENCE WE ARE MADE OF

RADO STORES: AHMEDABAD: Ph: 26442802. AMRITSAR: Ph: 6600555. BANGALORE: Ph: 30160121, 40982107. COCHIN: Ph: 4060336, 9142491424. COIMBATORE: Ph: 4203500. CHENNAI: Ph: 42613000, 28464224, 30083480. GURGAON: Ph: 4665607. HYDERABAD: Ph: 9247656706, 65795916, 23420070, 30534003. KOLKATA: Ph: 22814466, 40002954. MUMBAI: Ph: 28337244, 67439854, 26489174/75, 64521117. MANGALORE: Ph: 2498165. NEW DELHI: Ph: 46562788, 43575253. NOIDA: Ph: 4210121. TRIVANDRUM: Ph: 2728999.



Dutigan

Since 1985

AUDITORIUM CHAIRS

HIGH PERFORMANCE SEATING

Get the best seat, every time.



Chief Patron Justice MN Venkatachaliah
Managing Director Rajshri Rai
Editor-in-Chief Inderjit Badhwar
Senior Managing Editor Dilip Bobb
Deputy Managing Editor Shobha John
Executive Editor Sujit Bhar
Deputy Editor Prabir Biswas
Senior Writer Sanjay Raman Sinha
Senior Artist Vinay Kamboj
Editor (Digital) Vikram Kilpady
Coordinator Kumkum Sharma

Group Brand Adviser
SK Menon

Marketing & Branding

James Richard (New York), Tim Vaughan (London),
Madhvi Pandey (Delhi-NCR), KL Satish Rao (Hyderabad),
Nimish Bhattacharya (Mumbai), Misa Adagini (Northeast)

Circulation

Kamesh Tyagi; Contact No: 9013029409
email: indialegal.enc@gmail.com
website: indialegallive.com

Published by EN Communications Pvt. Ltd. and printed at Vijaylakshmi Printing Works Pvt. Ltd. B.117, Sector-V, Noida GSTIN/UIN: 09AABC7028F1ZA, State: Uttar Pradesh, Code: 09

E-mail: vpwpl.1972@gmail.com. All rights reserved. Reproduction or translation in any language in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Requests for permission should be directed to EN Communications Pvt. Ltd. Opinions of writers in the magazine are not necessarily endorsed by EN Communications Pvt. Ltd. The publisher assumes no responsibility for the return of unsolicited material or for material lost or damaged in transit. All correspondence should be addressed to EN Communications Pvt. Ltd.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only.

OWNED BY EN COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.

A -9, Sector-68, Gautam Buddha Nagar, NOIDA (U.P.) - 201309, Phone: +91-0120-2471400- 6127900
Fax: + 91- 0120-2471411
e-mail: editor@indialegallive.com
website: www.indialegallive.com

MUMBAI: Arshie Complex, B-3 & B4, Yari Road, Versova, Andheri, Mumbai-400058

RANCHI: House No. 130/C, Vidyalaya Marg, Ashoknagar, Ranchi-834002.

LUCKNOW: First floor, 21/32, A, West View, Tilak Marg, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001.

PATNA: Sukh Vihar Apartment, West Boring Canal Road, New Punaichak, Opposite Lalita Hotel, Patna-800023.

ALLAHABAD: Leader Press, 9-A, Edmonston Road, Civil Lines, Allahabad-211001.

JULY 15, 2024

Contents

VOLUME XVII

ISSUE 36



LEAD

Justice At A Snail's Pace

8

Despite the chief justice urging bail, the wheels of justice grind slowly. Many high-profile cases see several adjournments, prolonging detention and triggering a debate about the fairness of bail proceedings

LEGAL EYE

Deities Of New Temples

14

As pointed out by CJI Chandrachud, there have been references, calling courts as temples and of judges being deified. This is a dangerous trend, the CJI said, but India already has had a long history of deifying people, and such unnatural societal acceptance becomes a big hindrance towards developing a modern approach to life



COURTS

Wheels Of Misfortune 18



The Bombay High Court has issued a notice on a PIL filed highlighting the causes and reasons for the alarming number of deaths on the Mumbai suburban railway system. The reasons are all too familiar

SPOTLIGHT

Winds Of Change 22



The Madhya Pradesh cabinet has decided that ministers would pay their own income tax on salaries

and allowances. This move overturns a 1972 rule that exempted ministers from paying their own taxes on salaries and allowances. The chief minister has introduced a series of other reforms that are quite radical

FOCUS

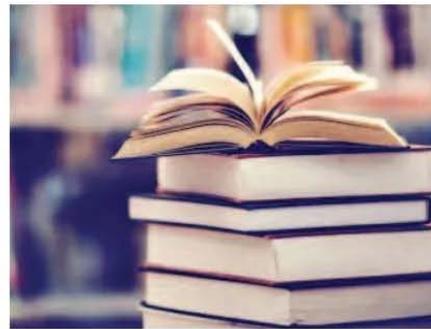
Taxing Times 26



The management of various popular destinations has imposed a tax on tourists in a bid to decrease their influx. But this is having a deleterious effect on the tourism industry which employs many people

No Lessons Learnt 30

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is facing constant opposition over the change in content in its textbooks. The objectionable aspects are the mention of the Babri Masjid as "a three-domed structure", the role of *kar sevaks*, communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Masjid, apart from other omissions



GLOBAL AFFAIRS

A Balanced Approach 36



PM Modi's visit to Russia signifies India's intent to maintain strong ties with it despite western sanctions over the Ukraine war. Yet, there is unease over Moscow's growing closeness to China

The Big Biden Question 42

A televised debate on June 27 between US President Joe Biden and challenger Donald Trump shredded any semblance of normality as the Democratic candidate, Biden, 81, appeared frail and unsteady. His democratic party was in a huddle, deciding whether he needed to step down and make way for a younger candidate. America is caught between a rock and a hard place



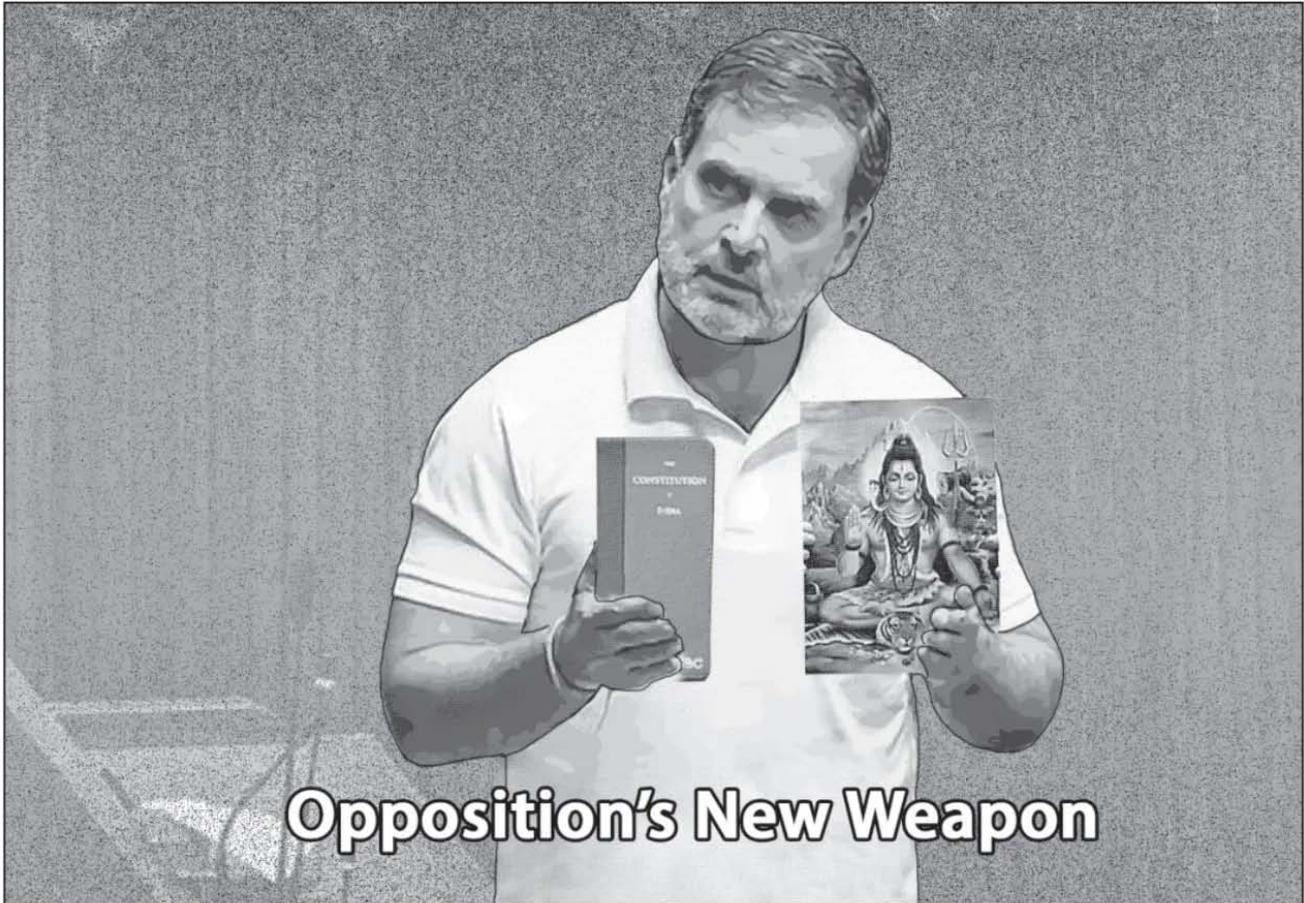
REGULARS

Ringside	6
International Briefs.....	48

Cover Design: Vinay Kamboj



Follow us on
Facebook.com/indialegalmedia
Twitter: @indialegalmedia
Website: www.indialegallive.com
Contact: editor@indialegallive.com



Opposition's New Weapon

WORTH REMEMBERING



"Law is born from despair of human nature."
—Jose Ortega Gasset, a Spanish philosopher and essayist

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest."
—Elie Wiesel, a Romanian-born American writer, professor, political activist, Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor

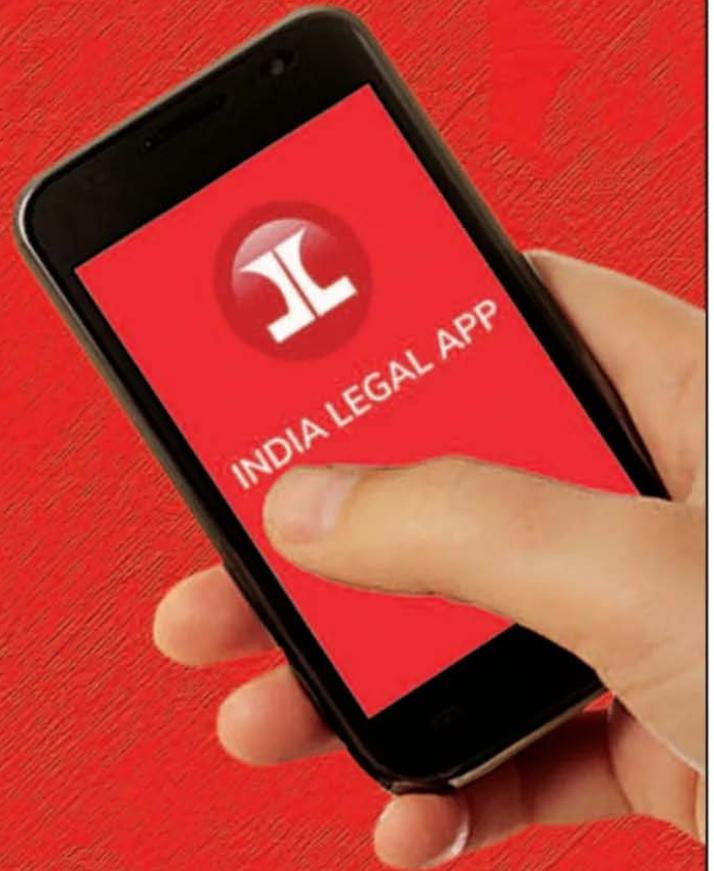
"Justice and judgment lie often a world apart."
—Emmeline Pankhurst, a British political activist who organised the UK suffragette movement and helped women win the right to vote

IT'S FINALLY HERE ...

The much-awaited India Legal App.

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE
NOW AT YOUR
FINGERTIPS. JUST A
CLICK AWAY FROM
HELP.**

*Download this
free legal aid from
your commercial
playstore*



DISCLAIMER

The application is not intended as any kind of a final legal authority for decisions or any other advice of a professional nature. The content of the suite should not be used as a substitute for further professional advice. You should also consult your own attorney, accountant or other applicable professional before making important personal or professional decisions. The data and advice available through this app is from lawyers using their best capabilities and interpretation of the law which may differ. Your reliance on the information provided by the application suite is solely at your own risk. The India Legal App shall not be held responsible for any delay or failure in achieving a specified goal to the extent that such delay or failure is caused by circumstances beyond control and without the fault or negligence of the application or its affiliates.

Timely disposal of bail pleas is important to ensure that the accused doesn't face legal limbo and suffer undue incarceration. Bail is a mechanism which guarantees that the accused is not deprived of liberty while awaiting trial.



JUSTICE AT A SNAIL'S PACE

Despite the chief justice urging bail, the wheels of justice grind slowly. Many high-profile cases see several adjournments, prolonging detention and triggering a debate about the fairness of bail proceedings

By Sanjay Raman Sinha



“Timely justice is the antithesis of judicial abuse.”

—Former Chief Justice of India JS Verma

THE much used cliché—justice delayed is justice denied—is still relevant for those for whom the mills of justice grind exceedingly slow. And this includes many politicians who are in jail. The case of former Delhi minister Satyendar Kumar Jain gains prominence in this regard. Jain was arrested in May 2022 on money laundering charges. Later on due to health issues, he was released on medical bail. However when his



The plea for regular bail by former Delhi minister Satyender Kumar Jain, arrested on money laundering charges is facing repeated adjournments. Now, the apex court has instructed the Delhi High Court to expedite his bail application.

medical report declared him fit and fine, he was again taken into judicial custody. Jain then put up a regular bail application for his release, which faced indefinite adjournments at the Delhi High Court. He then moved the Supreme Court for relief from indefinite adjournment. The apex court instructed the Delhi High Court to expedite the bail application, stating that such applications are not to be adjourned indefinitely.

Jain’s counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi had contended that as the question of law involved in this matter is already pending in another matter before the Supreme Court, it should tag the instant plea with it, but the Court did not oblige, saying that the High Court can decide the bail application on its merit.

The principle of timely justice is inbuilt in democratic setups and laws affirm its operation. Timely disposal of bail pleas is important to ensure that the accused doesn’t face legal limbo and suffer undue incarceration. Bail is a mechanism which guarantees that the accused is not deprived of liberty while awaiting trial.

In 1977, in *Rajasthan vs Balchand* case, Justice V Krishna Iyer held: “Bail is a rule, ►

Last year, the Madhya Pradesh High Court took a stand on delays in bail plea and said that “the right to speedy justice is a Fundamental Right”; all this while rejecting a plea against the executive order of the chief justice asking district courts to dispose of 25 of their oldest cases every quarter.



jail is an exception.” Jurisprudence demands that every person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. This principle is recognised under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. Undertrial incarceration violates this cardinal principle. Oftentimes, they undergo incarceration longer than what

their crime demands.

Article 21 of the Constitution says that “no person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except in accordance with procedure established by law”. Remedial measures for wrongful incarceration have been established by many verdicts.

Last year, the Madhya Pradesh High Court took a stand on delays in bail plea and said that “the right to speedy justice is a Fundamental Right”; all this while rejecting a plea against the executive order of the chief justice asking district courts to dispose of 25 of their oldest cases every quarter.

In December 2022, Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud said the rule “bail but not jail” is one of the most fundamental rules of the criminal justice system. He said: “Liberty is one of the most essential requirements of the modern man. It is said to be the delicate fruit of a mature civilisation. It is the very quintessence of civilised existence and essential requirement of a modern man.”

Indefinite adjournments of bail pleas go against the grain of human rights and individual freedom. Such delays are equivalent to pre-trial punishment, more so for those who may be finally be acquitted. No wonder



One reason for bail petitions being indefinitely delayed is the reluctance of trial court judges to grant bail in sensitive cases. CJI DY Chandrachud had pinpointed the shortcoming. He also highlighted the “adjournment culture” in courts.



Today, the battle for bail often reaches the Supreme Court. Faced with rejection at the trial court level, the accused often knocks the door of the highest court of the land. *Arnab Manoranjan Goswami vs The State of Maharashtra (2020)* is a case in point wherein the Supreme Court gave a message to all High Courts to protect the rights of citizens. The Court stated bluntly: personal liberty is increasingly becoming a casualty in the country.

the call for bail law reform has been high on the agenda of human rights activists.

The process of getting bail is still more difficult and complicated in cases under the UAPA, PMLA and NDPS. In all the three laws, the accused is considered guilty *prima facie* until his innocence is proven. This is contrary to the basic concept of law in which the accused is considered innocent until proven guilty.

Today, the battle for bail often reaches the Supreme Court. Faced with rejection at the trial court level, the accused often knocks the door of the highest court of the land. *Arnab Manoranjan Goswami vs The State of Maharashtra (2020)* is a case in point wherein the Supreme Court gave a message to all High Courts to protect the rights of citizens. The Court stated bluntly: personal liberty is increasingly becoming a casualty in the country. CJI Chandrachud opined: “Courts must be alive to the situation that prolonged incarceration on the basis of a trial which is yet to commence is a violation of the right to personal liberty.”

The new criminal laws which came into force from July 1 have addressed delayed justice. They introduce timelines for various procedures. Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha

Sanhita requires sessions courts to frame charges within 60 days from the first hearing and deliver judgments within 30 days (extendable to 60 days) after completing arguments. Plea bargaining applications must be filed within 30 days of framing charges.

One reason for bail petitions being indefinitely delayed is the reluctance of trial court judges to grant bail in sensitive cases. CJI Chandrachud had pinpointed the short- ▶



The reluctance of trial court judges to grant bail in sensitive matters was again brought to the fore when the bail granted to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi liquor policy case was annulled by the Delhi High Court. The Court observed: “This court is of the view that the trial court has not applied its mind and has not considered the material properly.”

Indefinite adjournments

● **Arun Gawli case:** The infamous underworld figure-turned-politician faced numerous criminal charges, including murder and extortion. His bail pleas saw repeated adjournments over extended periods.



● **Karti Chidambaram case:** The son of former Finance Minister P Chidambaram was arrested in connection with the INX Media corruption case. His bail application witnessed several adjournments, raising concerns over judicial delays.



● **Rhea Chakraborty case:** The girlfriend of late actor Sushant Rajput was embroiled in a media trial following his suspicious death. She faced multiple charges, including abetment to suicide and drug-related offenses. Her bail pleas saw several adjournments, prolonging her detention and triggering a public debate on the fairness of bail proceedings in high-profile cases.



● **Arnab Goswami case:** The journalist was arrested on charges of abetment of suicide. His bail plea was also postponed several times. The Supreme Court said in the case: "Along with media freedom, individual freedom is also important. Indefinite postponement of bail petitions is unacceptable."



● **Asaram Babu case:** The self-styled religious leader was arrested on charges of sexual harassment. His bail plea was also postponed several times.



● **DK Shivakumar case:** Karnataka Congress MLA DK Shivakumar was arrested in a money laundering case. His bail plea was also postponed several times. Commenting on the case, the Supreme Court said: "Keeping the accused in custody indefinitely is against the principles of justice."



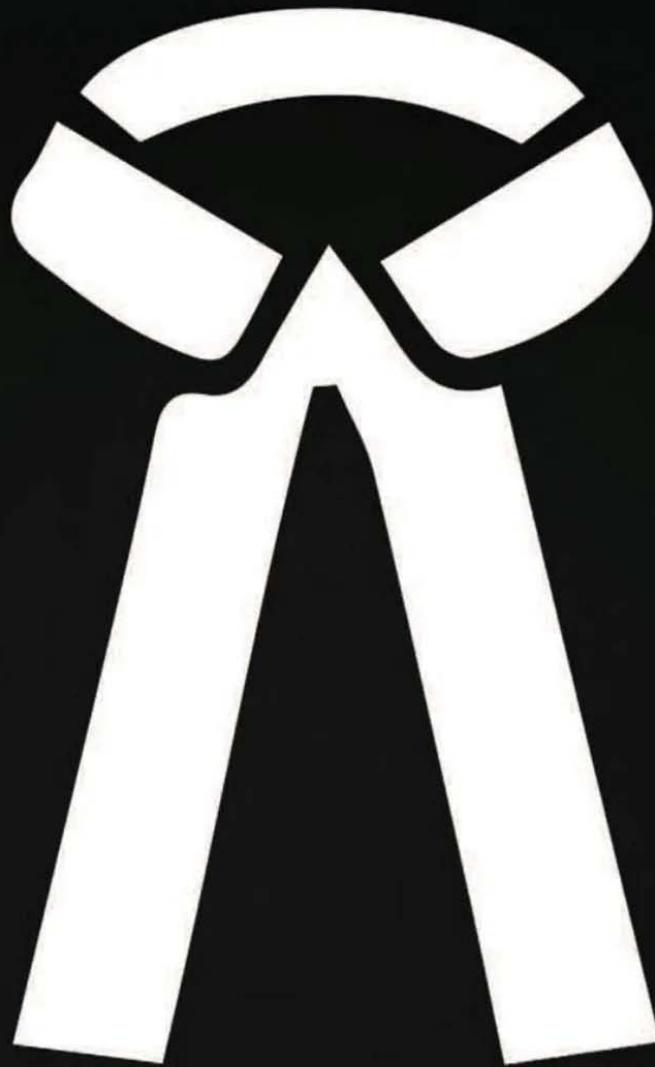
coming. He also highlighted the "adjournment culture" in courts. Adjournments, which were never intended to be commonplace, have become normalised within the judicial process. The CJI noted: "This culture of adjournments can effectively suspend time within a case, prolonging the agony of litigants and perpetuating the cycle of backlog." He added that there was a "sense of fear among district judges that nobody talks about. Trial court judges are apprehensive that they may be targeted for granting bail in heinous cases".

The reluctance of trial court judges to grant bail in sensitive matters was again brought to the fore when the bail granted to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the

Delhi liquor policy case was annulled by the Delhi High Court. The Court observed: "This court is of the view that the trial court has not applied its mind and has not considered the material properly."

High pendency in lower courts and the pressure of high-profile cases makes the job of a judge all the more difficult. As the prosecution mounts pressure and a media trial begins, judges are often browbeaten into making a hasty decision or play safe.

Despite the CJI's encouragement, matters continue to move at a snail's pace at the lower echelons of the judiciary. One can only hope that the timeline formulated by the new criminal laws will expedite bail matters and bring relief to the accused. ■



**ILRF: A FOUNDATION
WITH A LEGAL
DIFFERENCE**

If you are in need of legal support and advice, and your pocket doesn't allow it, India Legal Research Foundation (ILRF) is there to help you. This Non-Profit Organization, equipped with senior lawyers, is devoted to bring justice to those who deserve it, but cannot afford it.



OFFICE: A-9, Sector-68, Noida(UP)
Phone: +91-0120-2471400/6127900
Email: Contact@ilrf.in

“There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice. There is a grave danger that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples. I would rather recast the role of the judge as a server of the people. When you regard yourselves as people who are there to serve others, then you bring in the notion of compassion, of empathy, of judging but not being judgmental about others.”

—Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud at a lecture at the Regional Conference of National Judicial Academy in Kolkata



DEITIES OF NEW TEMPLES

As pointed out by CJI Chandrachud, there have been references, calling courts as temples and of judges being deified. This is a dangerous trend, the CJI said, but India already has had a long history of deifying people, and such unnatural societal acceptance becomes a big hindrance towards developing a modern approach to life

By Sujit Bhar

RECENTLY, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, during a lecture at the Regional Conference of National Judicial Academy in Kolkata, made a very remarkable comment. He said: “There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice. There is a grave danger

that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples.”

The remark was in response to a comment made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who was also present at the event. The chief minister had equated courts with places of worship.

As Justice Chandrachud elaborated on his comment, he observed that this attempt



In India, politicians are deified with people garlanding them as if they are gods or, at least, messengers on their behalf. Temples have also been constructed of film stars in India like Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth and many more.

at adding religious context to courts and of, also contextually, deifying judges was dangerous since the basic task of judges is to serve public interest.

The CJI added: “...very often, we are addressed as Honour or as Lordship or as Ladyship. There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice. There is a grave danger that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples.

“I would rather recast the role of the judge as a server of the people. When you regard yourselves as people who are there to serve others, then you bring in the notion of compassion, of empathy, of judging but not being judgmental about others.”

This was a comment of modern times, an era that India seems to have regressed from in recent times. The CJI also said that even while sentencing anyone in a criminal case, the judges do that with a sense of compassion, since at the end, a human being is being sentenced. “So these concepts of constitutional morality which, I think are the key, not just for the judges of the Supreme Court or the High Court but also for the district judiciary itself, because the engagement of the common citizens begins first and fore-

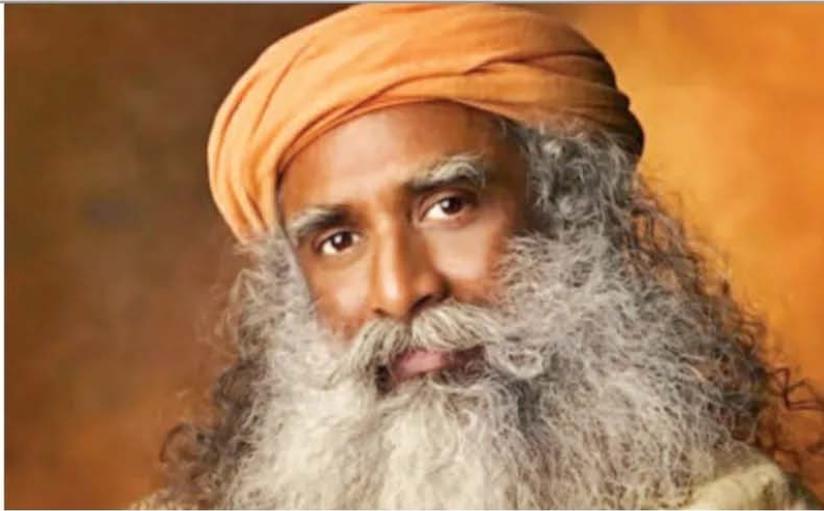
most with the district judiciary.”

THE “ETERNAL CIVILISATION”

It was a matter of logical ideation by the chief justice of India, but India, being the “eternal civilisation”, as is said, clings to thoughts of times before science and logic took shape. Deification is real in India, as it was in ancient Greece and possibly with the Sumerians and the Egyptians. In India, even today, politicians are deified with people garlanding them as if they are gods or, at least, messengers on their behalf. Temples have been constructed of politicians.

Why just politicians? Temples have been constructed of film stars in India. There is an Amitabh Bachchan temple in Kolkata, a Rajinikanth temple in Bengaluru, and more. In fact, one of the earliest such temples was of actor Khushboo Sundar in Tamil Nadu. Then there is a Sachin Tendulkar temple in Pune. The list goes on.

It is almost natural for Indians to put somebody on a pedestal and start worshipping him or her. There is barely any underlying faith or logic that accompanies such deification and, so why should the courts and its incumbent judges be left out of the ►



“In the East, a whole science and technology of god-making evolved in such a way that we set up god-making factories! This is the only culture that understood that God is our making. Everywhere else, people still think God made them. This serious mistake has caused too much pain to humanity.”

—Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev in an article published some time back

ambit of such “worshippers”?

Before delving further into the judicial issue, one needs to see how society’s leaders, the thinkers, motivators and spiritual guides address this.

KINKS IN INDIA’S SPIRITUAL OEUVRE

The apparently tough epidermis of Indian spirituality develops logical cracks sometimes. Words of actual wisdom seep in from those, and one published article by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is quite surprising in this context.

In the article, published some time back, he writes: “In the East, a whole science and technology of god-making evolved in such a way that we set up god-making factories! This is the only culture that understood that God is our making. Everywhere else, people still think God made them. This serious mistake has caused too much pain to humanity.”

Coming from a popular and extremely rich spiritual figure, these words are interesting indeed.

He continues: “God is your making. Suppose all the (sic) human beings fell asleep for the next 25 years, do you think the birds and bugs will pray? There would be no god-talk on the planet and everything would still be fine. Well, you might say everything is fine because god is working. That is an

unbeatable argument because it is not even an argument. It is just what the religious kind of people insist on.

“This land and culture of Bharat understood that god is our making. They made every kind of god for every kind of need. There are over 330 million gods and goddesses in India. These 330 million were created when India’s population was 330 million. We are now 1,300 million people (sic). We should have had that many gods but in the last few centuries, not enough gods have been created because of invasions and the poverty that this culture was pushed into.”

These words make sense and confirm the Indian (Hindu) propensity to “create” gods.

THE JUDICIAL ASPECT

The judiciary is a relatively new concept in Indian culture and, then, it had been properly introduced into the Indian ethos by the Mughals first and more institutionally by the British. Hence the deification process took time, but it probably had to happen. This is where the CJI sees the danger in.

However, the danger could be a tad deeper.

The Supreme Court of India has been earning accolades for a raft of verdicts in the recent past. It showed muscle to overturn the result of a mayoral election in Chandigarh for open rigging by a polling officer, caught on camera, and then the court went ahead and rebuked the official, loyal to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for having rigged the poll. This came on the heels of another verdict in which the top court had ordered the central government to reverse a dilution in the rules protecting forestland. Then, like a cherry on top, it had struck down the electoral bonds scheme as being unconstitutional, striking hard at the ruling dispensation’s acts, just before the elections.

What the public saw in such pronouncements was a power that could challenge even the powerful government. Every worshipped hero in India, except probably Mahatma Gandhi, has been associated with power. Whether the message ultimately is of peace, it must emanate from the womb of brute power. With these acts, the Supreme Court, quite suddenly, ascended this pedestal

and the temple and deity analogies came into being.

The judiciary itself has to bear much of the blame. In a system where judges can be seen openly leaning towards one political, religious and even some patently unscientific opinion, then the system has the responsibility of addressing its own lacunae, its own identity.

That will evidently bring us to the issue of accountability. When a judge of a High Court stuns his audience by stating that peahens reproduce by drinking the tears of the peacock, then there was definitely something wrong in the system which chose such a person to sit on the bench. More importantly, there was definitely something wrong with the section of the multitude that eagerly accepted and absorbed this piece of “information” as true, just because a judge has said it.

When the knowledge and intelligence of the audience seems suspect—even if he/she be the highest ranking political official of a state, sometimes even of the country—a deity can surely be born out of thin air. With all other possible arenas having already been populated by gods of many hues, the courts and the judges remained as fertile grounds for new ambitions, new hope.

Probably an element of accountability would have left the Indian judiciary more on the ground, more attuned to reality, yet independent enough to adjudicate without fear.

THE SYSTEMIC DIFFERENCES

If we compare our system with the US system, we get some startling differences.

In the United States, the balance between judicial independence and judicial accountability remains a big issue. One has to say that despite the Bush administration’s effort towards it, no solution has been reached. But there was an effort, nevertheless.

An analysis titled “Holding Federal Judges Accountable” clearly talks about the shortcomings of judicial impeachment and alternatives to such proceedings. This analysis was in the backdrop of the proposed Judicial Tenure Act, penned to hold federal judges accountable.

This Judicial Tenure Act, often called the Nunn Bill, was “designed to set up a mecha-



nism for investigating, disciplining, and removing judges who are accused of misconduct or who become disabled; it was a supplement to impeachment, the primary remedy available for assuring federal judicial accountability.”

The argument was about “...whether impeachment is necessary and constitutional as a way of holding judges accountable is controversial.

What happened then was that five major criticisms of impeachment were offered:

1. Grounds for impeachment are too narrow.
2. The impeachment process does not provide adequate sanctions.
3. The process is cumbersome.
4. The process is subject to political manipulation.
5. Impeachment is rarely used.

Therefore, especially due to the shortcomings of the impeachment mechanism in the US, other procedures were forwarded. The senior judiciary remains unmoved, though.

In the backdrop of recent strange actions by many judges in lower courts and even in High Courts, the Law Commission might want to think on these lines. And this is where the CJI’s comments do come in handy.

There is need for change, within the judiciary, as well as among the public which has started viewing the judiciary in some strange light. ■

The judiciary is a relatively new concept in Indian culture and, then, it had been properly introduced into the Indian ethos by the Mughals first and more institutionally by the British. Hence the deification process took time, but it probably had to happen. This is where the CJI sees the danger in.

Between 2002 and 2012 on an average about 2,000 people were killed, more than 36,152 people died and 36,688 people were injured on the Mumbai suburban railway network (right). In 2008, a record 17 people died every weekday on the network. In mid-2011, a viral video depicted a youth performing stunts while dangling from the compartment of a Harbour Line train. Later, a boy was killed while following the actions performed in the video.



WHEELS OF MISFORTUNE

The Bombay High Court has issued a notice on a PIL filed highlighting the causes and reasons for the alarming number of deaths on the Mumbai suburban railway system. The reasons are all too familiar

THE petitioner in the Mumbai suburban railway case quoted a study that said every year the number of deaths were more than 2,000. Details of such deaths, according to the advocate representing the petitioner, is based on newspaper reports and other

sources, including the Railways. In response, the Division Bench of the Bombay High Court, comprising Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar observed: “The Mumbai Suburban Railway System is said to be the second busiest such system globally after Tokyo. However, the fatalities occurring amongst the commuters



using this railway system raises a concern on account of its high rate.”

The petition drew the attention of the Court to the fact that while there has been a phenomenal growth in the number of passengers/commuters using the suburban railway system in Mumbai in the past few years, the infrastructure has not kept pace. The petition also highlighted the fact that deaths in many such situations were being disowned by the Railway administration, terming them to be deaths caused on account of “untoward incidents”.

The PIL underscored the need of not only adopting innovative technological tools to check such high rate of human deaths, but also emphasized on the need for upgrading the infrastructure available on railway stations on the entire Mumbai suburban railway system, which are very old, with some having crossed their intended period of service.

The Court noted that “it is almost a daily affair that newspaper reports carry reports of

deaths of human beings falling from running trains or being hit by a moving train while crossing the railway track on the railway station itself and getting killed. There are various other causes which have been mentioned in the PIL petition.”

While observing that the issue raised in the petition needs urgent attention by all concerned, especially, the authorities at the higher level of the Railway administration, including the member concerned in the Railway Board and the Principal Chief Safety Commissioner, the High Court called upon the general managers of the Western Railways and the Central Railways to look into the entire issue as raised in the petition and file affidavits-in-reply which shall be sworn in by some higher level officer to be nominated by the general managers.

The Court also directed that the affidavits-in-reply shall be personally vetted by ▶

Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya (inset, right) and Justice Amit Borkar of the Bombay High Court said: "The Mumbai Suburban Railway System is said to be the second busiest such system globally after Tokyo. However, the fatalities occurring amongst the commuters using this railway system raises a concern on account of its high rate."



the general managers themselves and while filing the affidavits-in-reply, they shall also indicate the measures which are available and in force to check such mishaps.

"Once the affidavits-in-reply by the respondents are filed in the Court, the Court may consider setting up of a committee or a commission/body of experts to conduct a high-level study to suggest measures to be enforced and implemented for meeting the challenges caused by daily occurrence of such deaths of commuters/passengers in the entire Mumbai Suburban Railway System," the order read.

The court also said that it expects that the PIL shall not be viewed as an adversarial litigation and that the railway administration and all concerned shall cooperate with the proceedings in the matter.

Between 2002 and 2012, on an average, about 2,000 people were killed, more than 36,152 people died and 36,688 people were injured on the Mumbai suburban railway network. In 2008, a record 17 people died every weekday on the suburban railway network. In mid-2011, a viral video depicted a youth performing stunts while dangling from the compartment of a Harbour Line train. Later, a boy was killed while following the actions performed in the video.

According to government statistics, a total of 2,590 people died on the Mumbai's suburban railway tracks in 2023, with an

average of seven deaths per day. In 2022, it was slightly higher. Out of the total deaths, 1,277 people were killed while crossing railway tracks while 590 died by falling off running trains. One hundred and twenty one people died by suicide along railway tracks and 529 deaths were reported as deaths by natural causes. Moreover, 10 people died after falling between the edge of the platforms and the trains, four after hitting poles, and 14 were electrocuted while travelling on the roofs of trains. The death of 13 people has not been determined, as their post-mortem reports were pending. On January 22, 2024, three employees of Western Railway were mowed down by a train as they were attending to a point failure on the railway track between Vasai and Nalasopara.

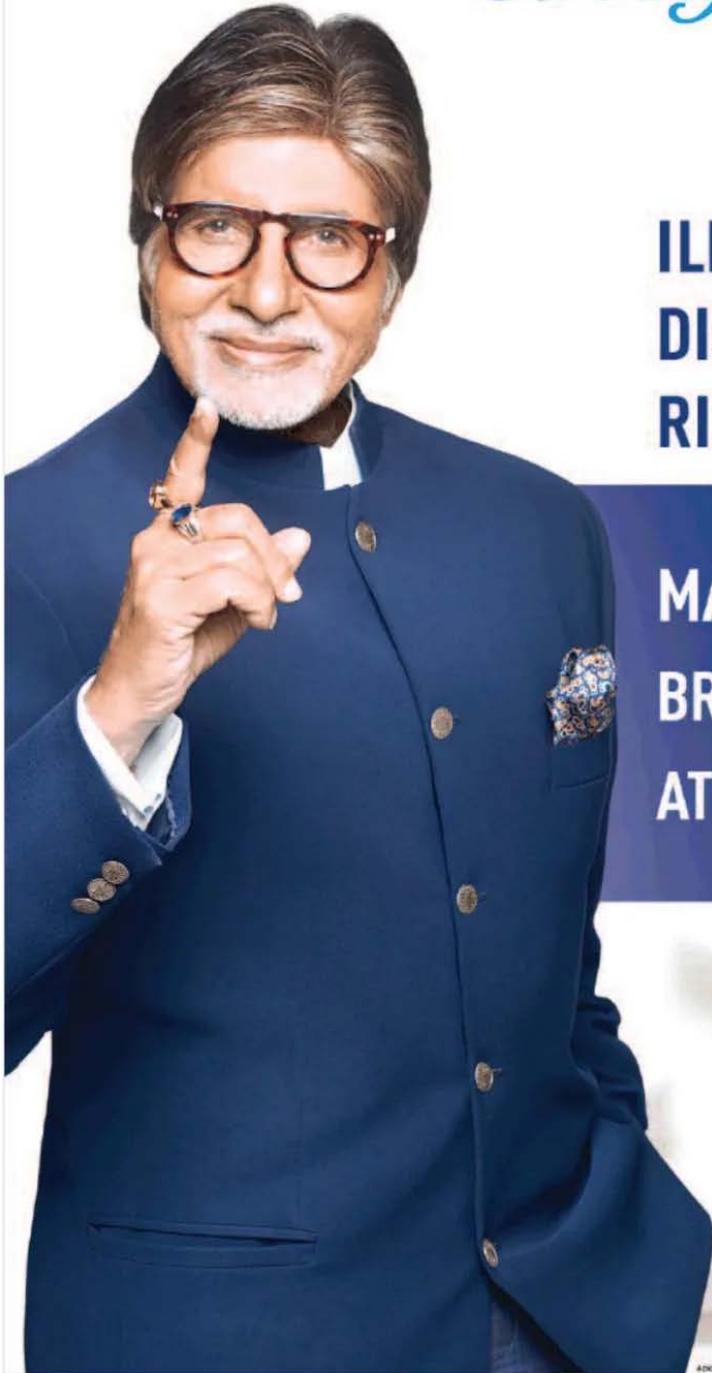
Unauthorised crossing of the tracks and passengers falling off running trains are the major cause of deaths. Overcrowding is generally blamed for the incidents. Passengers crossing the tracks on foot in order to avoid climbing footbridges is another major cause of deaths. Some passengers died while sitting on train roofs to avoid the crowds and were electrocuted by electric cables or fell while hanging from doors and window bars. To reduce the risk of such deaths, longer platforms and more frequent trains are being implemented.

Again, a case of too little too late. ■

—By Shivam Sharma and
India Legal Bureau



Mankind 
Serving Life



**ILLNESS DOES NOT
DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN
RICH AND POOR.**

**MANKIND PHARMA
BRINGS QUALITY MEDICINES
AT AFFORDABLE PRICES.**



Scan the QR Code to
watch our latest TVC



Visit us at: www.mankindpharma.com

Follow us on:



42K/Poster/110817



WINDS OF CHANGE

The state cabinet has decided that ministers would pay their own income tax on salaries and allowances. This move overturns a 1972 rule that exempted ministers from paying their own taxes on salaries and allowances. The chief minister has introduced a series of other reforms that are quite radical



Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav has ended the tradition of not depositing income tax of the Chief Minister and ministers from the state government treasury, but that decision does not include the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition due to a separate law enacted for them.

Secretary for all allowances payable to them, for the facility of a furnished residence provided without payment of rent, and for other perquisites permissible to them under this Act.”

It is noteworthy that Yadav has ended the tradition of not depositing income tax of the Chief minister and ministers from the government treasury, but that decision does not include the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition in the state because a separate law has been made for them by the Madhya Pradesh assembly. This exemption was also given to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition through an ordinance in 1997 and later by bringing a bill in the state assembly. Section 8(a) of the Madhya Pradesh Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Salary and Allowances) Act, 1972, was amended and implemented from January 1, 1994. When this bill was brought in the state assembly, the BJP was in the opposition, but no member of the party opposed it.

Since 2003, all these benefits have been received by the state ministers, Chief Minister, Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Leader of the Opposition. By amending Section 8(a) of the Madhya Pradesh Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Salaries and Allowances) Act, ▶

MADHYA Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav is a man in a hurry and also on a mission. His most dramatic reform is the one on tax to be paid by ministers. The move marks a significant change in policy, aimed at giving more financial responsibility to state officials. “We have decided that our ministers will pay their own income tax and will not take any financial assistance from the government. So, the 1972 rule is being amended,” said Yadav after a cabinet meeting.

The 1972 Act ruled that: “No income tax shall be levied on any Minister, Minister of State, Deputy Minister, or Parliamentary



A provision for employment in soil testing was also approved by the state government. This will benefit the young people in the state who have a background in agriculture. These soil testing laboratories will be started in all 313 blocks of Madhya Pradesh.

1972, a provision was made that income tax will not be levied on the emoluments, including allowances received by the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition of the Madhya Pradesh legislative assembly.

There is a provision of Rs one crore in the state budget for depositing the income tax of Chief Minister, Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, ministers, Deputy Speaker and ministers of state. This amount was returned by the department after assessing the taxable amount and deducting tax from the respective salaries.



The Madhya Pradesh Correctional Services and Prison Bill, 2024, was also approved by the state cabinet. Measures for the reform and rehabilitation of prisoners were proposed in the Bill.

In Madhya Pradesh, the salary and allowances of the Chief Minister is around Rs two lakh. Cabinet ministers get salaries and allowances of Rs 1.70 lakh. State ministers get Rs 1.45 lakh per month and MLAs get Rs 1.10 lakh per month. This includes basic salary, hospitality allowance, constituency allowance and daily allowance.

Other decisions taken by the state cabinet include:

- Fifty percent of the assistance amount (Rs one crore) given on martyrdom of a jawan of the Army, central police and security forces as well as police in the state will be given to the wife or the spouse. Till now, 100 percent was given to the spouse while many parents used to suffer.
 - A provision for employment in soil testing was approved. This will benefit the young people in the state who have a background in agriculture. These soil testing laboratories will be started in all 313 blocks of the state.
 - Till now, trees were planted on 10 acres of land under the CSR guidelines. Now, the limit of 10 acres has been abolished and it has been reduced to a minimum of one acre which will benefit the state and small land owners.
 - Students studying in Sainik schools will get the benefit of scholarships.
 - The transport department used to look after the monitoring of railway projects, but now the entire work will be done by the public works department.
 - The Madhya Pradesh Correctional Services and Prison Bill, 2024, was also approved at the cabinet meeting. New jails will now be built in Sagar, Bhind, Damoh, Chhatarpur, Ratlam, Mandsaur and Betul. The Bill also includes measures for the reform and rehabilitation of prisoners.
- Before Madhya Pradesh, in 2019, the Uttar Pradesh cabinet had made the decision to change the law that exempted the Chief Minister and other ministers from paying their income tax. In 2022, the Himachal Pradesh cabinet also expressed that all ministers and MLAs shall pay their own income tax. ■

—By Adarsh Kumar and
India Legal Bureau

**Made in India.
Made by a billion Indians.**



**Now, moving the world.
Namaste London.**

#ProudlyIndian 

Now operating in United Kingdom,
Australia and New Zealand.





The Calangute panchayat in North Goa has enacted a resolution to impose a “tax” on tourists visiting the popular destination. According to the panchayat, the resolution was held to discuss issues related to “public nuisance, garbage throwing, parking, cooking and eating in the open area on the road side by tourists visiting the Calangute beach (above) and other areas in their vehicles”.

TAXING TIMES

The management of various popular destinations has imposed a tax on tourists in a bid to decrease their influx. But this is having a deleterious effect on the tourism industry which employs many people

FOLLOWING the recent proposal by Calangute panchayat in North Goa requiring tourists to secure hotel reservations prior to entering the village, it has enacted a resolution to levy a “tax” on them. In a resolution passed during a meeting on June 7, the panchayat of Calangute, a popular tourist destination, noted the implementation of similar taxes in Maharashtra’s Mahabaleshwar and resolved to formally communicate with the district collector, police chief and government. The purpose of this communication is to request the establishment of checkpoints, supported by police personnel and panchayat staff, at five entry points to the village. These checkpoints will serve to verify the vehicles of all

tourists, with the aim of “preventing and eliminating public disturbances”.

According to the panchayat, the decision was taken after several complaints about tourists creating ruckus and indulging in illegal activities which bring disrepute to the village.

“Tourists come in groups in jeeps and buses, stroll around the beach area and drink alcohol and cook in their vehicles. They do not make any hotel reservations. We have proposed to set up checkpoints for verification and to charge a passenger tax or an entry fee to deter such behaviour,” Joseph Sequeira, sarpanch of Calangute, who proposed the resolution, reportedly, said. The modalities of the tax will be discussed later if it is approved, he said, adding, “if it can be

done in Mahabaleshwar, it can also be done here”.

According to the panchayat, the resolution was held to discuss issues related to “public nuisance, garbage throwing, parking, cooking and eating in the open area on the road side by tourists visiting the Calangute beach and other areas in their vehicles”. It said that checkpoints in Mahabaleshwar impose taxes such as a road passenger tax, a pollution tax, sanitary cess and an entry fee. “It is resolved to impose such taxes in the village panchayat Calangute. The panchayat is taking all the required steps to keep the area clean,” the resolution said.

Sequeira emphasised that the primary objective is not to generate revenue, but to ensure the cleanliness and maintenance of the village. “We will implement the decision only if the state authorities approve it,” he stated.

The beach village of Calangute had initiated a controversial proposal to monitor and impose taxes on tourist vehicles entering the area. This decision had sparked a debate among legal experts in the state. Former Advocate General Carlos Ferreira had dismissed the proposal as “unconstitutional”, “illegal” and “untenable”, while senior advocate and intellectual Radharao Gracias supported the panchayat’s stance, citing similar practices in other parts of the country.

Concerns have been raised about the logistical challenges of implementing the tax, given the high volume of tourist vehicles during peak season. Ensuring each vehicle is stopped and examined would be a daunting task for the authorities.

“No tax can be levied by the government, whether central or state, unless authorised by law, which means legislation, not an executive order. The same rule applies to local bodies like panchayats,” said Ferreira.

Similarly in 2023, the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh was dealt a blow. The Himachal government’s decision to impose tax on all commercial vehicles registered outside the state not only caused a dip in tourist inflow, but left tour and travel operators an agitated lot.

The state government had issued a notifi-



“Tourists come in groups in jeeps and buses, stroll around the beach area and drink alcohol and cook in their vehicles. They do not make any hotel reservations. We have proposed to set up checkpoints for verification and to charge a passenger tax or an entry fee to deter such behaviour. If it can be done in Mahabaleshwar, it can also be done here”.

—Joseph Sequeira, sarpanch of Calangute, who proposed the resolution

cation in July that year imposing a tax ranging from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000 per day per vehicle entering Himachal. The tax depends on the seating capacity of the vehicle and it came into effect from September 1.

According to Mohinder Seth, president of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Stakeholders Association, the state government must roll back this tax. “Travel agents in places like Maharashtra and Ahmedabad are ditching Himachal for Uttarakhand and Kashmir. Why would they come to Himachal when they are being asked to pay through the nose? The state government must under- ▶



The beach village of Calangute had initiated a controversial proposal to monitor and impose taxes on tourist vehicles entering the area. This decision had sparked a debate among legal experts in the state. Former Advocate General Carlos Ferreira had dismissed the proposal as “unconstitutional”, “illegal” and “untenable”.

In 2023, the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh was dealt a blow. The Himachal government's decision to impose tax on all commercial vehicles registered outside the state not only caused a dip in tourist inflow, but left tour and travel operators an agitated lot.



stand that instead of earning additional money through new tax, it's losing more," Seth reportedly said, adding that tourists from Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal visited Himachal, mostly in groups and in buses and Tempo Travellers, from September till February.

"But presently, hotel occupancy throughout the state is at its lowest. This just means that travel agents don't want to suffer losses by sending tourist buses and Tempo Travellers to Himachal anymore," said Seth. He has also written to the state government asking it to withdraw its decision as no such tax was imposed anywhere else, including Uttarakhand and Kashmir. "The tourism industry of Himachal will never recover like this. First, it was Covid-19, then monsoon devastation caused huge losses. Now we have this," added Sethi.

Vinesh Shah, Surat-based president of the Travel Agent Association of Pan India (TAAPA), reportedly, said: "Around 5 lakh Gujarati tourists, who were scheduled to visit Himachal at this time of the year are now going to Uttarakhand or Kashmir. The reason is simple. Why would we suffer losses by sending our vehicles to Himachal? The government is charging Rs 3,000 per day per Tempo Traveller from us. We have ended up paying more and earning less."

According to Shah, TAAPA would request the Gujarat tourism ministry to mediate in the matter. "We are requesting the Gujarat

tourism ministry to speak to the Himachal government to resolve the issue. Of the total tourists that visit Himachal annually, 25% to 30% are from Gujarat. Just imagine the setback the tourism industry of Himachal will face if these charges continue. Himachal is trying to increase its tourist footfall, but this surely is not the way to do it," added Shah.

Last year, the Darjeeling civic body too decided to reintroduce tourist tax of Rs 20 per tourist coming there. This was after a gap of more than a decade. "The collection of tourist tax would start soon. A private firm has already been issued the order to collect the tax," said Dipendra Thakuri, chairman of Darjeeling Municipality.

Darjeeling is a highly sought-after hill destination in India, renowned for its breathtaking views of Mt. Khangchendzonga, the third highest mountain globally. Annually, over a million tourists visit Darjeeling, contributing to its robust tourism industry. The hill station boasts approximately 400 hotels, catering to the diverse needs of its visitors.

"Hotels would collect tourist tax of Rs 20 per tourist irrespective of the duration of stay. The private company, which would be collecting the tax from hotels, would pay Rs 28.25 lakh per year to the municipality. This amount is far less than the total amount of the tax that would otherwise be col-



lected from the tourists arriving in Darjeeling,” said Ritesh Portel, former chairman of the Municipality and the leader of opposition Hamro Party.

The decision, however, met with criticism from opposition parties, which have appealed to the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGP)-led municipality to re-consider the decision. The decision to collect Rs 20 per tourist above five years of age from the hotels they would be staying in would have a dampening effect on the tourism industry and the civic body would also lose revenue, opposition parties said.

“Tourists arriving in Darjeeling are already over-burdened as they have to pay tax while entering multiple tourist locations like the Tiger Hill, which is famous for viewing the sunrise,” said Bharat Tiruwa, general secretary of the Gorkha Ekta Chalak Sangathan.

This is, however, not the first time Darjeeling Municipality has decided to levy tourist tax. It started in 2008. The levy per tourist was Rs 3 in 2011 and it was raised to Rs 10 per tourist in 2012. Thereafter, it was stopped as the process was cumbersome and most hotels did not cooperate.

These types of measures are not only being implemented in India, but also in various foreign countries, where tourism taxes are levied by the concerned authorities. Scotland recently introduced

tourist taxes; it now gives its local authorities the power to introduce a visitor levy in their areas. Scotland has joined the league of countries like Bhutan, Japan, France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Slovenia, Austria and many more in this regard.

Though the forms of these taxes and the methods of collection might be different, the end objective is the same—combat overtourism and get visitors to pay for the upkeep and maintenance of the public spaces they visit.

In Tanzania, the government charges 18% VAT on tourist services like ground transportation, water safaris and camping fees. In some countries like Japan, the tourist has to pay the tax when he leaves the country. The taxes can be adjusted easily for different types of travellers. They are seen as a quick fix to the ill-effects of tourism, which is seen as unsustainable, harmful to the environment and inconvenient for local residents.

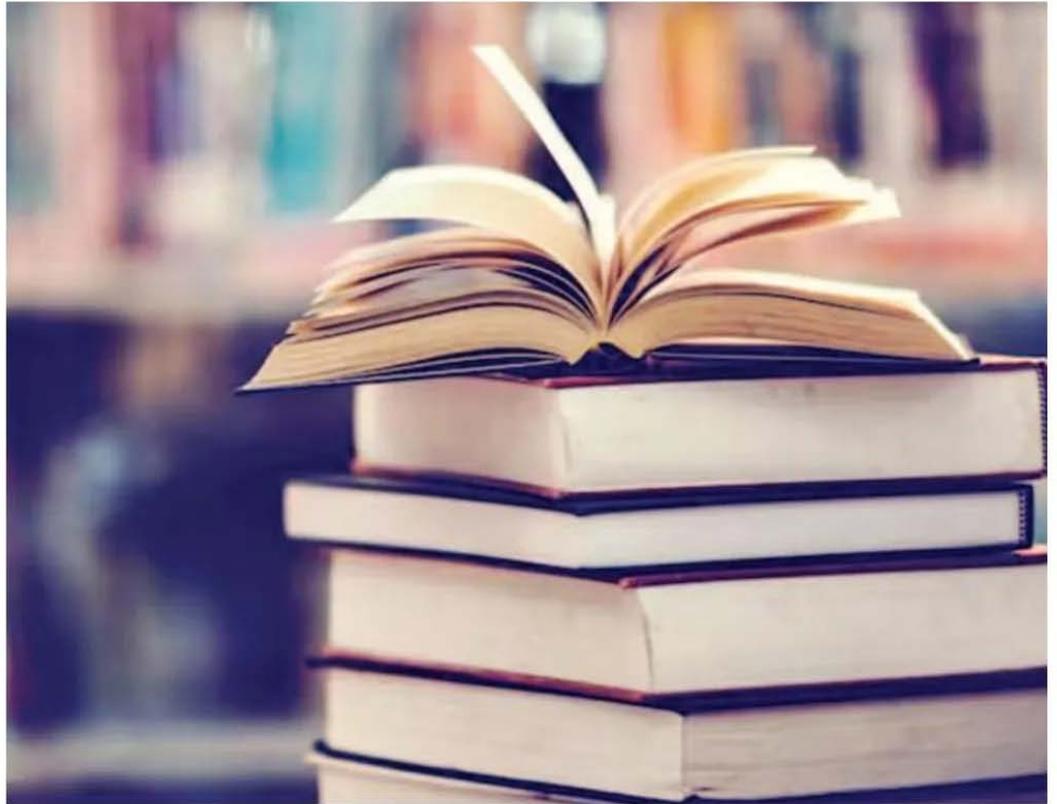
There is a popular perception now that the tourism industry generates its profits from places, people and the environment, but gives very little back. But many industry insiders argue that tourism tax is not a long-term answer and authorities should focus on responsible tourism planning and management. ■

—By *Abhilash Kumar Singh and India Legal Bureau*

Last year, the Darjeeling (left) civic body too decided to reintroduce tourist tax of Rs 20 per tourist coming there. The decision, however, met with criticism from opposition parties, which have appealed to the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha-led municipality to re-consider the decision. Annually, over a million tourists visit Darjeeling, contributing to its robust tourism industry.

School textbooks revised by NCERT (facing page) have been under constant scrutiny over the last few years, especially when it comes to rewriting historical events.

The latest one relates to the political science textbook for Class XII. If the NCERT now finds these textbooks inappropriate, it is well within its rights to withdraw these and publish new textbooks. But the NCERT has no moral or legal right to distort these textbooks without consulting any of the authors and yet publish these under their names despite their explicit refusal.



NO LESSONS LEARNT

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is facing constant opposition over the change in content in its textbooks. The objectionable aspects are the mention of the Babri Masjid as “a three-domed structure”, the role of kar sevaks, communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Masjid, apart from other omissions

SCHOOL textbooks revised by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have been under constant scrutiny over the last few years, especially when it comes to rewriting historical events. The latest one relates to

the political science textbook for Class XII.

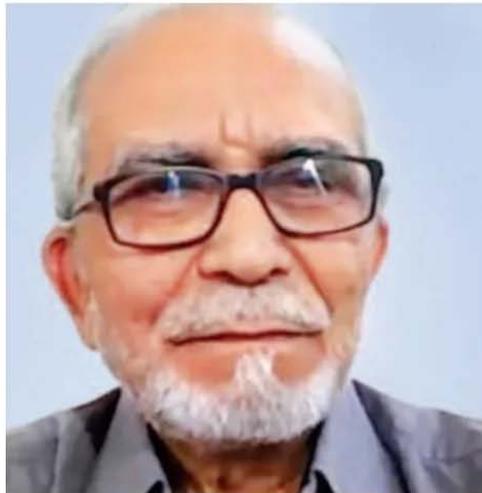
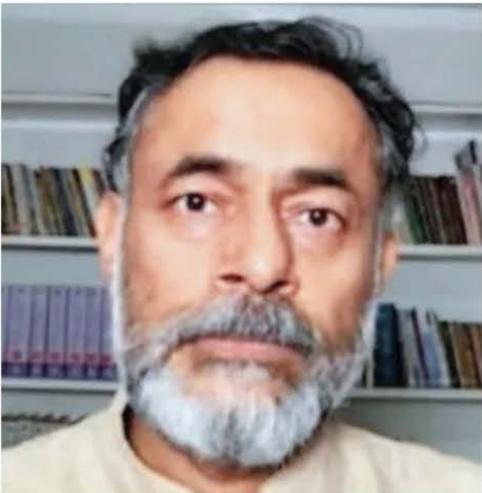
Social educationists Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar have written a letter to NCERT and objected to their names being included in the new books. They said that they no longer have any connection with the review of curriculum books and they do not want NCERT to use their names to teach



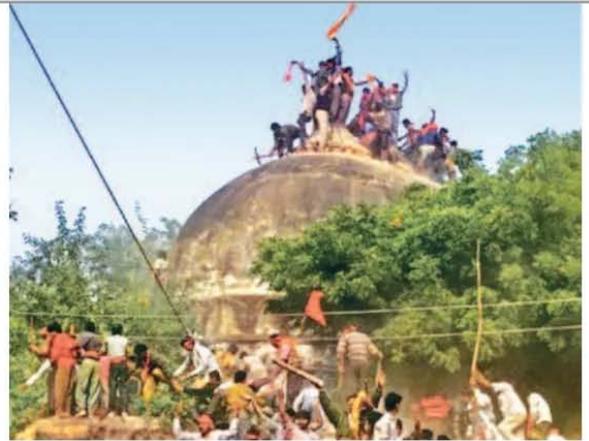
students books that are politically biased.

The academicians said that last year both of them had requested the NCERT to “drop our names as ‘chief advisors’ from all political science textbooks of classes IX, X, XI and XII as mentioned in the Letter to the Students and also in the list of Textbook Development Team at the beginning of each textbook”. “We had categorically asked you to

give effect to this request immediately and ensure that our names are not used in the soft copies of the textbooks available at NCERT website as also in the subsequent print editions.” This mail was followed by a collective letter by a majority of scholars associated with the Textbook Development Team in political science making the same request. “The NCERT did not act upon our ▶



Social educationists Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar (left) have written a letter to NCERT and objected to their names being included in the new books. They said that they no longer have any connection with the review of curriculum books and they do not want NCERT to use their names to teach students books that are politically biased.



The recently removed material from NCERT textbooks includes—Bharatiya Janata Party’s *rath yatra* from Somnath (above left) in Gujarat to Ayodhya, the role of *kar sevaks*, communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid (above right), president’s rule in BJP-ruled states and BJP’s regret over what happened in Ayodhya.

request, nor did it have the courtesy to write back to us,” says the letter addressed to NCERT’s Director DP Saklani. The letter adds that they were shocked to discover that “more than a year after our original request, the NCERT has gone ahead to publish and distribute the new edition of these six textbooks without removing our names from the publications that we do not wish to be associated with.”

It further notes: “We are also distressed to learn that the NCERT has taken a step further in its drive towards indiscriminate distortion of these textbooks. Besides the earlier practice of selective deletions, the NCERT has resorted to significant additions

and rewriting that are out of sync with the spirit of the original textbooks. Both of us, as Chief Advisors of the original textbooks, have already registered our strong disapproval of this unethical, unacademic and illegal practice of mutilation of textbooks that violate both the authors’ rights to intellectual property and the students’ right to quality education.”

It is alleged that if the NCERT now finds these textbooks inappropriate, it is well within its rights to withdraw these and publish new textbooks. But the NCERT has no moral or legal right to distort these textbooks without consulting any of the authors ▶

NCERT’s Director DP Saklani Saklani, while rejecting allegations of changes in school curriculum, said that references to the Gujarat riots and the Babri Masjid demolition have been revised in school textbooks because teaching about the riots could create violent and depressed citizens. Speaking to PTI, he said changes in textbooks are part of annual revisions and there should be no hue and cry over it.



ONLY THE STORIES THAT COUNT

IN DEPTH NEWS AND VIEWS BURNING POLITICO-LEGAL ISSUES



INDIA LEGAL



TERM-1 YEAR | NO. OF ISSUES-52

PLAN	COVER PRICE	OFFER PRICE	SAVINGS	SELECT
PRINT ONLY	₹5200	₹2600	50%	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRINT + DIGITAL	₹10400	₹5200	50%	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name: Age: Sex:

Address:

City: State: Pin:

Phone Res. Office: e-mail:

Enclosed DD/Cheque No.: Dated: Drawn: for ₹ :

Card No.: Signature:

For outstation cheque please add 50/-

*DD/Cheque to be drawn in favour of EN Communications Pvt. Ltd.

To be sent to: EN Communications Pvt. Ltd.

A-9, Sector-68, Gautam Buddha Nagar, NOIDA (U.P.) 201309

Terms & conditions apply. Please provide us 4 weeks to start your subscription

Email : contact@indialegalive.com

Scan For Payment





AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi wrote in X: “The NCERT has decided to replace Babri Masjid with the words “three domed structure”. It has also decided to call the Ayodhya judgment an example of “consensus”. India’s children should know that a functioning masjid was desecrated in 1949 and then demolished by a mob in 1992. They should not grow up glorifying criminal acts.”

and yet publish these under their names despite their explicit refusal. There can be arguments and debates about someone’s claims to authorship of any given work. But it is bizarre that authors and editors are forced to associate their names with a work they no longer identify as their own.

“Both of us do not want the NCERT to hide behind our names to pass on to students such textbooks of political science that we find politically biased, academically indefensible and pedagogically dysfunctional. We reiterate our demand that the NCERT must delete our names as ‘chief advisors’ from all political science textbooks of classes IX, X, XI and XII as mentioned in the ‘Letter to the Students’ and also in the list of Textbook Development Team at the beginning of each textbook. The new editions of these books that have been published with our names should be withdrawn from the market forthwith. If the NCERT fails to take immediate corrective action, we may be forced to take legal recourse,” the letter reads.

The recently removed material from the textbooks includes—Bharatiya Janata Party’s *rath yatra* from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya, the role of *kar sevaks*, communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid, president’s rule in BJP-ruled states and BJP’s regret over what happened in Ayodhya.

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi wrote in X: “The NCERT has decided to replace Babri Masjid with the words “three domed structure”. It has also decided to call the Ayodhya judgment an example of “consensus”. India’s children should know that the Supreme Court called the demolition of Babri Masjid an “egregious criminal act”. India’s children should know that a functioning masjid was desecrated in 1949 and then demolished by a mob in 1992. They should not grow up glorifying criminal acts.”

Saklani, while rejecting allegations of changes in school curriculum, said that references to the Gujarat riots and the Babri Masjid demolition have been revised in school textbooks because teaching about the riots could create violent and depressed citizens. Speaking to *PTI* editors at the agency’s headquarters on June 15, he said changes in textbooks are part of annual revisions and there should be no hue and cry over it.

When Yadav and Palshikar had first disassociated themselves from the textbook, the NCERT had asserted its right to make changes on the basis of copyright ownership and said there is no question of any single member disassociating themselves as textbooks are the result of a collective effort. Reacting to this statement of the NCERT director, Owaisi wrote on X: “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

This is not the first time that Owaisi is raising questions on the changes made in NCERT books. Citing the changes made in the NCERT syllabus, he has accused the Modi government of erasing the history of the Mughals from the books. In 2022, while claiming it is necessary to reduce syllabus to reduce examination pressure on students by removing repeated concepts and lessons learnt in middle school and high school classes, both CBSE and NCERT removed topics regarding Mughal empires in the class XII history textbooks and chapters like “Challenges to Democracy” in the class X political science textbooks and many others which started a new controversy. The latest one suggests lessons haven’t been learnt. ■

—By Shivam Sharma and
India Legal Bureau

Pro Planet



BRING THE DEAD END BACK TO LIFE.

WHY STOP?



SHOP ONLINE 

www.woodlandworldwide.com



Customer Care No. 1800-103-3445

Woodland is a Pro-Planet company which cares for the environment and uses eco-friendly manufacturing processes.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Moscow next week to meet President Vladimir Putin, marking his first visit to Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The agenda includes discussions on military logistics, joint fighter aircraft development and nuclear power collaboration, though no major agreements are expected. The trip will also highlight India's balanced foreign policy, especially amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.



A BALANCED APPROACH

PM Modi's visit to Russia signifies India's intent to maintain strong ties with it despite western sanctions over the Ukraine war. Yet, there is unease over Moscow's growing closeness to China

By Annunthra Rangan

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Moscow next week to meet President Vladimir Putin, marking his first visit to Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. This visit accentuates India's strategic concerns over the growing China-Russia alliance and emphasises the importance New Delhi places on its relationship with Moscow.

The agenda includes discussions on military logistics, joint fighter aircraft development and nuclear power collaboration, though no major agreements are expected. The trip will also highlight India's balanced foreign policy, especially amid the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Discussions will likely cover Russia's war in Ukraine, defence supply issues and increased investments in

the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor. This visit also signals India's intent to maintain strong ties with Russia despite western sanctions.

Despite sanctions on Russia, India has considerably increased its import of discounted Russian oil, saving billions. While India has maintained a balanced stance on the Ukraine conflict, it remains cautious about deepening economic ties due to sanctions' risks. Modi's upcoming visit to Moscow, his first since 2015, marks a return to the annual India-Russia summit format, aimed at revitalising the strategic partnership amid perceptions of drifting ties.

India and Russia have a long-standing partnership, rooted in Cold War alliances and the 1971 Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, which saw Russia support India during the Indo-Pak war. The relationship was elevated to a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" in 2010. Energy cooperation is the key, with India importing hydrocarbons from Russia and collaborating on nuclear projects like the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant. Bilateral trade reached \$45 billion, surpassing the 2025 target, and aims to hit \$50 billion in investments.

Despite strong defence ties, India's diversification of arms imports and dissatisfaction with Russian post-sale services pose challenges. Geopolitical dynamics, including Russia's closer ties with China and improved relations with Pakistan, complicate India's strategic considerations.

Moscow has proposed joint troop deployments and a logistics support agreement with India, deepening their strategic ties. This includes deploying military formations, warships, and fighter jets on each other's territories, enhancing operational capabilities. The logistics agreement is similar to India's LEMOA with the US, facilitating mutual use of bases. This move is significant, particularly regarding China's influence in the Arctic, as access to Russian facilities would boost India's strategic reach. India's strong defence relationship with Russia includes joint military exercises and potential new agreements, further solidifying their cooperation.

Since February 2022, India-Russia politi-



Moscow has proposed joint troop deployments (top) and a logistics support agreement with India, deepening their strategic ties. This includes deploying military formations, warships (above), and fighter jets on each other's territories, enhancing operational capabilities.

cal interactions have significantly evolved, with Russia becoming a crisis zone for India, requiring a unique approach. Modi utilised telephone diplomacy with Putin to address urgent issues, such as rescuing stranded Indian citizens. The only in-person meeting between Modi and Putin over the subsequent 24 months occurred at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Samarkand in September 2022, which was brief and unproductive. Due to scheduling conflicts, the annual leaders' summits in December 2022 and 2023 were postponed, ►

The recent bilateral meetings between India and Russia occurred mainly at multilateral events. Interactions focused on “damage control”, addressing the Russia-Ukraine conflict (right) and its impact. India aimed to mitigate the war fallout and ensure uninterrupted Russian supplies, while Moscow sought New Delhi’s neutrality and new supply chains.



leading to a lack of new agreements and stagnation of previously signed documents, such as the 10-year Defence Cooperation Programme.

Interactions between officials increased, focusing on urgent, scheduled, and ad hoc meetings. Telephone diplomacy became prominent, with eight of nine leadership interactions conducted over the phone from February 2022 to March 2024, often prompted by unforeseen events like the Wagner Group mutiny in June 2023. Political engagement shifted to lower levels, such as ministers and national security advisers, covering defence to economic matters. The ministerial “2+2 dialogue” has not reconvened since December 2021.

Bilateral meetings occurred mainly at multilateral events, driven by India’s G20 and SCO presidencies in 2022-2023. Interactions focused on “damage control”, addressing the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its impact. India aimed to mitigate the war fallout and ensure uninterrupted Russian supplies, while Moscow sought New Delhi’s neutrality and new supply chains. Consequently, India became a key market for Russian exports despite economic challenges hindering further cooperation.

Putin’s invasion of Ukraine surprised the Indian leadership, prompting intensive talks with Moscow and Kyiv to evacuate 20,000 stranded Indian students. Modi held several

phone conversations with Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Initially framing the conflict as a Russia-NATO confrontation, India maintained a neutral UN stance, emphasising cessation of violence, respect for sovereignty and a return to diplomacy.

Despite India’s neutrality, it provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine, sending 15 shipments from March 2022 to February 2024. India’s nuanced position included indirect criticism of Russia’s actions, such as condemning the killing of civilians in Bucha and opposing Russia’s proposal to ban Volodymyr Zelensky from speaking at the UN. Modi’s message during a meeting with Putin in September 2022 highlighted the need for peace, reflecting India’s balanced diplomatic approach. At multilateral engagements, including the Quad and G20, India pushed for consensus on addressing the humanitarian and economic impacts of the conflict without directly condemning Russia.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has weakened its “Greater Eurasia Partnership” by alienating most European and many Asian countries, except Iran and North Korea. Central Asia has shifted towards China’s influence, diminishing Russia’s regional clout and impacting India’s security cooperation aspirations there. India joined the SCO to reconnect with Central Asia, but has since developed independent bilateral ties. Russia and India continue collaborating on Afghan ▶

ONLY THE STORIES THAT COUNT

Every week *India Legal* will bring you news, analyses and opinion from the sharpest investigative reporters and most incisive legal minds in the nation on matters that matter to you



Bringing You
The Stories That Count
An **ENC** Publication
To Stay Abreast With Today,
Pick Up Yesterday's India Legal

INDIA LEGAL

STORIES THAT COUNT

Don't miss a single issue of this independent, scintillating new weekly magazine and get special discounts for yourself and your friends



Contact :
EN Communications Pvt. Ltd.
A-9, Sector-68, Gautam Buddha Nagar, NOIDA (U.P.) 201309
Email : contact@indialegalive.com

Russia's invasion of Ukraine surprised the Indian leadership, prompting intensive talks with Moscow and Kyiv to evacuate stranded Indian students (left). Modi held phone conversations with Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. India maintained a neutral UN stance, emphasising cessation of violence, respect for sovereignty and a return to diplomacy.



issues, although their strategies differ. India is cautious about recognising the Taliban and maintains a nuanced stance on US involvement, balancing its regional approach while engaging in Moscow-led diplomatic initiatives.

Russia has intensified efforts to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist haven post the 2024 terror attack in Moscow. Russia also aims to grip Taliban engagement

by proposing their removal from Russia's terror list, although UN sanctions remain.

India-Russia cooperation focuses on counter-terrorism and economic ties, wary of groups like ISKP in Afghanistan. The Taliban's control struggles and ties with groups like Al Qaeda pose regional security challenges. India foregrounds Taliban commitments to human rights and anti-terror



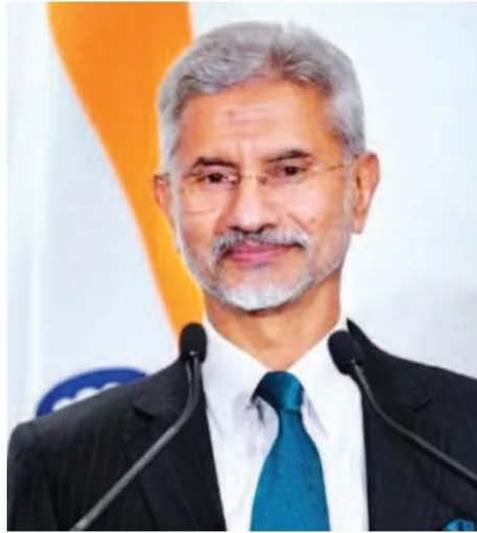
Despite India's neutrality, it provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine, sending 15 shipments from March 2022 to February 2024. India's nuanced position included indirect criticism of Russia's actions, such as condemning the killing of civilians in Bucha (above) and opposing Russia's proposal to ban Volodymyr Zelenskyy from speaking at the UN.

efforts in its engagement strategy. The US withdrawal has led to increased China-Russia-Iran involvement in Afghanistan, influencing regional dynamics and alliances.

Since 2010, the India-Russia strategic partnership, rooted in historical ties and political imperatives, has seen Russia support India's SCO membership and UN Security Council reform. Russia's "Turn to the East" policy aimed to balance economic ties with Asia, but the Ukraine conflict in 2022 accelerated its focus on India. Historically slow to convert political rapport into economic cooperation, both nations now see increased trade, with India becoming a major market for discounted Russian oil. However, strategic projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor and an FTA with the Eurasian Economic Union face delays due to geopolitical uncertainties. India's imports from Russia have surged, but its exports remain modest, highlighting trade imbalances. Strengthening trade relations requires expanding investment, creating joint ventures in metallurgy, engineering and pharmaceuticals, and enhancing cooperation in biotechnology, agriculture and high technology.

Establishing a joint innovation fund could boost bilateral strategic relations and address payment challenges in trade. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar's recent visit to Moscow signals India's cautious reaffirmation of its traditionally close ties with Russia amid the Ukraine conflict, hinting at a potential return to annual summit meetings after a hiatus since late 2021. This visit marks as an important diplomatic move, aiming to maintain relations while avoiding high-profile attention amidst geopolitical tensions. Following Russia's international isolation due to the Ukraine invasion, India's engagement is seen as a positive development for Moscow, highlighting its need to broaden international alliances.

Despite western efforts to isolate Russia, the Kremlin faces challenges with former Soviet allies like Kazakhstan and Armenia distancing themselves over geopolitical disagreements. Meanwhile, Russia seeks to strengthen ties with smaller nations in the



Global South to compensate for lost alliances. The potential reinvigoration of the Indo-Russian partnership, akin to the Sino-Russian relationship, could influence global geopolitical dynamics. The INSTC spanning 7,200 km from St. Petersburg to Mumbai connects Russia and India via Iran's Chabahar port. Amid western sanctions affecting sea trade, INSTC becomes crucial for Russia, facilitating coal exports to India through Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran. India views INSTC as a strategic alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, enhancing access to Central Asia, Iran, Russia and Baltic-Nordic nations. Despite efforts to boost renewable energy, India's coal imports from Russia are increasing, driven by demand for both metallurgical and thermal coal amid global supply shifts.

While India and Russia's relationship has faced challenges amidst shifting global dynamics and regional alignments, both nations are actively seeking to bolster ties through strategic agreements and cooperative ventures. As both navigate complex international landscapes, their continued diplomatic engagements and joint initiatives signal a concerted effort to revive and enhance their historic strategic partnership. ■

—The writer is a Research Officer at Chennai Centre for China Studies. Her research interests constitute China-WANA (West Asia and North Africa) relations and human rights

Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar's recent visit to Moscow signals India's cautious reaffirmation of its traditionally close ties with Russia amid the Ukraine conflict, hinting at a potential return to annual summit meetings after a hiatus since late 2021. This visit is an important diplomatic move, aiming to maintain relations while avoiding high-profile attention amidst geopolitical tensions.

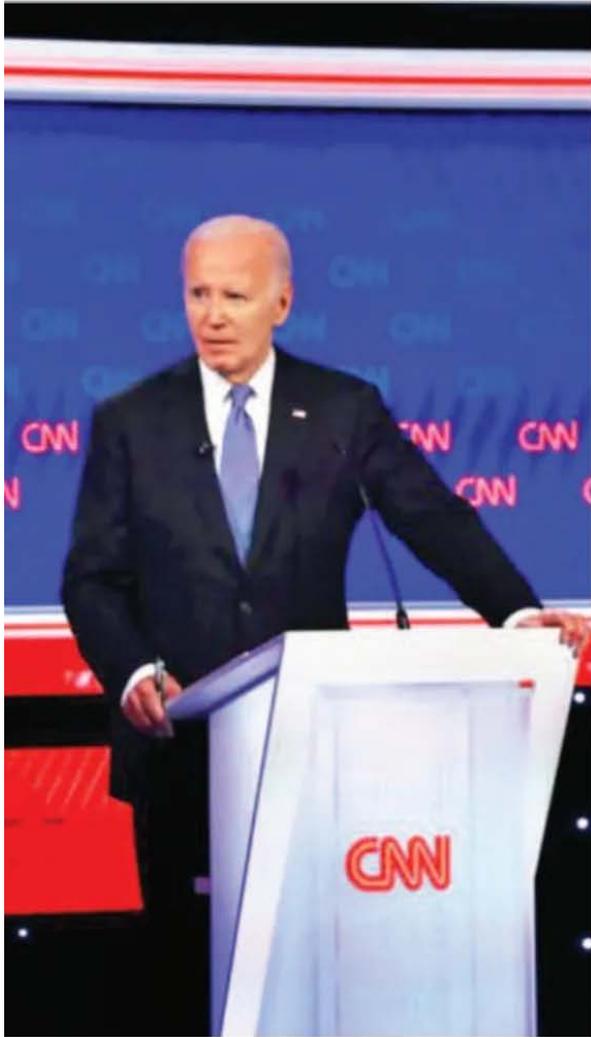
The now infamous debate was a shambles as Joe Biden seemed lost and aged, while Republican opponent and ex-president Donald Trump, belittled Biden with disrespect and a string of distortions and lies, only slightly toned down from the stream-of-consciousness fantasy he offers the MAGA faithful on the campaign trail. Trump frequently uses the golf term “Mulligan” to describe avoiding a penalty in golf. He got a golf bag full of them from *CNN* in the debate.



THE BIG BIDEN QUESTION

A televised debate on June 27 between President Joe Biden and challenger Donald Trump shredded any semblance of normality as the Democratic candidate, Biden, 81, appeared frail and unsteady. His democratic party was in a huddle, deciding whether he needed to step down and make way for a younger candidate. America is caught between a rock and a hard place.

By Kenneth Tiven



ON the eve of the 4th of July, America's most sacred political holiday, many voters are considering the reality that both the elderly men competing to be the next US president are flawed individuals, who should not be in command of a village, let alone a nation crucial to the planet's future. The now infamous debate was a shambles as Joe Biden seemed lost and aged, while Republican opponent and ex-president Donald Trump, 78, belittled Biden with disrespect and a string of distortions and lies, only slightly toned down from the stream-of-consciousness fantasy he offers the MAGA faithful on the campaign trail. Trump frequently uses the golf term "Mulligan" to describe avoiding a penalty in golf. He got a golf bag full of them from CNN in the debate.



Joe Biden's family used a gathering at Camp David to urge him to stay in the race and keep fighting despite his dreadful debate performance while he tried to figure out how to tamp down Democratic anxiety.

Asked about his role in the January 6 attack on the Capitol building, Trump rejected all responsibility and claimed that the "statements" he made at the time were some of the "strongest" you could have in calling to quell the violence, citing a tweet and speech he gave that day urging the crowd to be peaceful. There is, however, the fact that he sat in the White House dining room for nearly three hours watching the televised mayhem. Only after much urging, he finally tweeted a request that rioters leave Capitol Hill. His insistence on debate night that he called for calm referenced a weeks earlier speech urging people to come to Washington to "fight like hell" and march on the Capitol. Trump bizarrely claimed it was "a relatively small number of people that went to the Capitol" and that many were "ushered in by the police." The video, arrests and medical reports show the opposite. He also spoke of pardoning people who attacked law enforcement that day, claiming some of them are "so innocent".

The CNN programme had no plans or method to dispute any of these statements, knowing fully well that this was standard Trump rhetoric. It wasn't Biden's job to fact-check details. Five days after the debate, he delivered a strong rally speech: "I know the ►



The presidential race took an unexpected judicial turn in Trump's favour. Judicial delay is Trump's long-time favourite tactic for fighting thousands of business lawsuits. Seeking a way to delay federal criminal trials until after the election, he went directly to the Supreme Court, seeking a ruling on presidential immunity. The Court gave him a "get out of jail card" from prosecution, past, present, or future, in a 6-3 decision.

truth. When I thought about his 34 felony convictions, his sexual assault on a woman in a public, he's has been fined \$400 million for business fraud. I thought to myself, Donald Trump isn't just a convicted felon—Donald Trump is a one-man crime wave."

Vice-President Kamala Harris is still considered the most likely replacement. Biden met 20 Democratic governors from around the country, including California's Gavin Newsom and Michigan's Gretchen Whitmer. Both have been tipped as potential replacements if Biden were to stand aside, as is Harris, 59. She has received poor approval ratings, but her support has increased among Democrats since the Biden-Trump debate.

The post-debate poll data from *CNN* says that Harris is within striking distance in a hypothetical matchup: 47% of registered voters support Trump, 45% Harris. This result is within the margin of error that suggests there is no clear leader under such a scenario. Harris' slightly stronger showing against Trump rests at least in part on broader support from women (50% of female voters back Harris over Trump vs 44% for Biden against Trump) and independents (43% Harris vs 34% Biden).

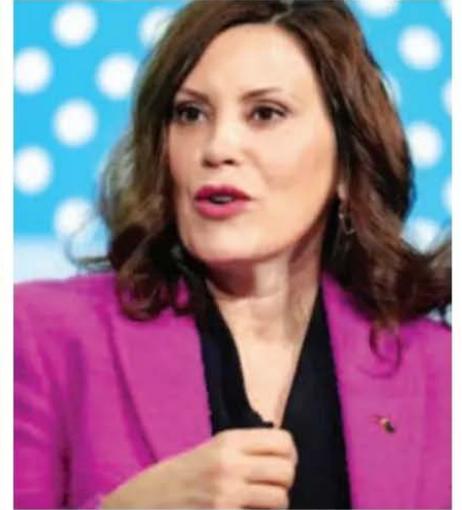
However, after meeting 20 Democratic

governors and a closed-door meeting with Harris, Biden issued a defiant statement, asking for support: It said: "Folks, I know the past few days have been tough. I'm sure you're getting a lot of questions. I'm sure many of you have questions as well. So, let me say this as clearly and simply as I can: I'm running. I'm the Democratic Party's nominee. No one is pushing me out. I'm not leaving, I'm in this race to the end, and WE are going to win this election. I've been knocked down and counted out my whole life. I'm sure the same is true for many of you. But my father had an expression. He said, 'Champ, it's not how many times you get knocked down. *It's how quickly you get up.*' As a country, when we get knocked down, we get back up. When we get counted out, we just work harder. That is exactly what I am going to do, and it's what I need you to do as well. Just as we beat Donald Trump in 2020, we are going to beat him again in 2024. But it won't be easy, and I need YOU behind me to get it done. Each and every one of you. This campaign is bigger than me or you. Everything we believe in, everything we stand for, and everyone we are fighting for are at risk in this election."

The presidential race took an unexpected judicial turn in Trump's favour. Judicial delay is Trump's long-time favourite tactic for fighting thousands of business lawsuits in hopes of bankrupting litigants. Seeking a way to delay federal criminal trials until after the election, he went directly to the Supreme Court seeking a ruling on presidential immunity. Chief Justice John Roberts both wrote the decision and used a scheduling mulligan to hold the immunity decision until the last possible day of July 1.

The nine Supreme Court members are the most elite group in the nation. They gave him a gift-wrapped "get out of jail card" from prosecution, past, present, or future, in a 6-3 decision. All Republicans. Three justices are his own appointees. They held that a president—or a former president—has absolute immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts, defining nearly the totality of a president's acts as "official".

This significantly narrows the evidence



The support for Vice-President Kamala Harris (above left) has increased among Democrats since the Biden-Trump debate. However, after meeting 20 Democratic governors from around the country, including California's Gavin Newsom (above centre) and Michigan's Gretchen Whitmer and a closed-door meeting with Harris, Biden issued a defiant statement seeking support.

and approach federal prosecutors can use in pending indictments against Trump for stolen classified documents and efforts to overturn the 2020 election. This is the “get out of jail card” that Trump sought to avoid prosecution regardless of winning or losing re-election.

In a stinging dissent slowly read aloud, Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the Supreme Court allowed a president to become a “king above the law,” limiting the scope of criminal charges. “Utterly indefensible,” she wrote, because “the court effectively creates a law-free zone around the president, upsetting the status quo that has existed since the founding.” Joining in dissent were liberal justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson, who called the ruling’s consequences a “five-alarm fire”.

For most of the 20th century, various totalitarian regimes failed to defeat American democracy with wars and terrorist activities. Now, the justices have taken a sledgehammer to critical principles of democracy, suggesting that the president is above the law. Precisely what the founders had explained they wanted to avoid in writing the Constitution 235 years ago to get out from under British hereditary royal rule. Viewing the presidential immunity decision

only through the prism of executive power misses the aggrandizement of power to the Supreme Court itself. By keeping it vague, the Court can write rules in the future that might limit a Democratic president while not committing itself to anything that would limit Trump in a second term. The Supreme Court has left narrow, contorted and highly uncertain approaches to prosecute a president. This is purposeful vagueness retained for multiple opportunities to weigh in further on the Trump prosecutions.

New voting measures were put in place during the Covid pandemic. Trump and many Republicans, opposed to absentee ballots, converted the changes into the “BIG LIE” that the election was stolen. But conspiracy theory was used by the MAGA movement to explain anything they did not understand. The core conspiracy sprouted in the spring of 2020, but didn’t fully bloom internally until the election was lost in states they expected to win—Arizona and Georgia. The Trump team lost some 60 state and local court cases trying to prove the election was stolen. The fake elector’s approach was put into play as Congress was supposed to certify the state result on January 6, 2021. It wasn’t shocking that ultimately multiple lawyers have been disciplined and several disbarred for their participation in various

Experts agree that there can't be a Trump trial before the November 4 election and may never be. Nevertheless, this will be an election where neither of the candidates seem fit to re-enter the White House (right) or occupy it for another term. Many voters are considering the reality that both the elderly men competing to be the next US president are flawed individuals.



aspects of defending Trump's claims. This past week former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani was disbarred for his role in advising Trump.

It was clear from the outset that Trump's unlawful conduct was somehow beyond the imagination of the people most immediately responsible for protecting and preserving our constitutional framework and the legal system it undergirds. Despite the televised attack on the Capitol building with the extensive Congressional investigation demonstrating Trump's role in setting it in motion and then doing nothing to stop it, the Supreme Court worried that future presidents might be intimidated if they didn't have immunity. The facts in the case got seeming short attention, perhaps alluded to in this passage from Chief Justice John Robert's majority decision. "At a minimum, the President must be immune from prosecution for an official act unless the Government can show that applying a criminal prohibition to that act would pose no 'dangers of intrusion on the authority and functions of the Executive Branch.' As for a President's unofficial acts, there is no immunity. Although Presidential immunity is required for official actions to ensure that the President's decision-making is not distorted by the threat of future litigation stemming from those actions, that concern does not support

immunity for unofficial conduct. The separation of powers does not bar a prosecution predicated on the President's unofficial acts. Taking into account these competing considerations, the Court concludes that the separation of powers principles explicated in the Court's precedent necessitate at least a presumptive immunity from criminal prosecution for a President's acts within the outer perimeter of his official responsibility. Such an immunity is required to safeguard the independence and effective functioning of the Executive Branch, and to enable the President to carry out his constitutional duties without undue caution."

Experts agree that there cannot be a trial before the November 4 election and may never be. However, *The New York Times* says that "if Judge Chutkan sticks to her practice of dealing quickly with procedural matters and is able to schedule the hearing for September or October, it could lead to something extraordinary: a mini-trial of sorts unfolding in the nation's capital in what could be the homestretch of the presidential campaign." Either way, this will be an election where neither of the candidates seem fit to re-enter the White House or occupy it for another term. ■

—The writer has worked in senior positions at The Washington Post, NBC, ABC and CNN and also consults for several Indian channels

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

All-new
CR-V

ONE LIFE. MANY LIVES!

INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW CR-V.

YOU LIVE LIKE IT. WE'RE A SERIES OF FAST-PACED MINI VIDEOS. SOME HOME MADE. SOME BIG SCREEN MATERIAL. LIVING ONE LIFE IN THE MORNING. ONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK. ONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. NINE IN THE WEEKEND. THE ALL NEW HONDA CR-V IS FOR YOU BECAUSE LIKE YOU IT HAS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE LOVE FOR LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

- AVI SYSTEM** for Audio, Video, Navigation, DVD/CD Player, iPod™, USB, Bluetooth™/iFT Connectivity & Rear View Camera.
- i-MID** for navigation that gives you information on fuel consumption, Rear Camera Display & Audio/RF Display.
- HID HEADLAMPS WITH WASHER**
- ECO AMBIENT LIGHT AND ECON MODE** for fuel efficiency & fuel efficient driving.
- 2.4L I-4 VTEC ENGINE & SRS AIRBAGS** for maximum safety. Ensures maximum safety.

REAL TIME™ AWD | **ELECTRIC SUNROOF** | **BLUETOOTH WITH HANDS-FREE CONNECTIVITY** | **VEHICLE STABILITY ASSIST** | **HILL START ASSIST** | **CRUISE CONTROL** | **PADDLE SHIFT**
For more information, visit www.hondaindia.com. **SMS -CRV> to 53030** | Follow us on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/hondaindia) | [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/hondaindia) | [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/hondaindia)



European Fears Come Right

In France, panic about the right-wing parties seizing power in President Emmanuel Macron's snap elections has forced a large number of left and centre candidates to step aside in order to try to block the far-right National Rally (RN). This is in response to the first round of voting in which the RN, led by Marie Le Pen, recorded a major victory. The left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) coalition issued instructions to all of its third-placed candidates to step down and let a centrist candidate reap the anti-RN vote.

In the Netherlands, however, a right-wing victory has already become a reality. The New Dutch government is led by a surprise pick—the former head of the Dutch intelligence service, Dick Schoof. He leads an eclectic coalition which



In the Netherlands, a right-wing victory has become a reality. The New Dutch government is led by the former head of the Dutch intelligence service, Dick Schoof (above left). He leads an eclectic coalition which includes Geert Wilders' (above right) far-right PVV as the largest party

includes Geert Wilders' anti-immigration, far-right PVV as the largest party.

Anti-immigration is a major issue all across Europe, coupled with high cost of living and environmental concerns. Mark Rutte, the Netherlands' longest-serving prime minister, moves to Brussels to take over as the new NATO Secretary General.

Wilders' party had pledged to ban the *Quran*, close Dutch borders and hold a referendum on the Netherlands' future

within the EU. However, the other members of the coalition have forced him to water down those extremist views, along with his own prime ministerial ambitions.

Wilders, who was convicted for discrimination after he insulted Moroccans at a campaign rally in 2014, managed to strike a coalition deal with three other conservative parties after he gave up his bid to become prime minister. However, as leader of the largest party within the

coalition, he is still expected to be one of the most influential politicians in parliament and his party has been given the immigration ministry.

The rest of Europe, including France, will be waiting with bated breath to see how the new Dutch government responds to multiple challenges, including immigration and the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, apart from other issues crucial to unity among the European Union.



In France, panic about the right-wing parties seizing power in President Emmanuel Macron's snap elections has forced a large number of left and centre candidates to step aside in order to try to block the far-right National Rally (RN). In the first round of voting, the RN led by Marie Le Pen (above), recorded a major victory

Climate Of Crisis

The victorious T-20 Indian cricket team had to postpone their celebrations back home for three days as flights were cancelled after Hurricane Beryl, a category four hurricane, with sustained winds of 150mph, hit the Caribbean islands. It left thousands of people without power and homes destroyed in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and St Lucia.

While there are many reasons for hurricanes and cyclones to form, rising temperatures affect these storms in several measurable ways. Warmer ocean waters mean storms acquire more energy, leading to higher wind speeds. The forecast of between four and seven major Atlantic hurricanes in 2024 is partly because of record high surface temperatures. The high temperatures are mainly due to long-term greenhouse gas emissions. The more global temperatures rise, the more extreme these changes will tend to be.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 30 percent of the world's population is exposed to deadly heat waves more than 20 days a year. Average temperatures for the five-year (2015-2019) and ten-year



Hurricane Beryl, a category four hurricane, with sustained winds of 150mph, has hit the Caribbean islands. It has left thousands of people without power and homes destroyed in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and St Lucia

(2010-2019) periods are the highest on record and 2019 was the second hottest year on record. In 2023, the summer season of June, July and August were the hottest months on record in many countries, including Europe and America. This year could break that record, and in some areas it already has. Saudi Arabia saw 1,300 deaths during the holy pilgrimage of Haj as temperatures reached 50 degrees Celsius in the shade. Delhi had 40 consecutive days over 40 degrees, also not experienced in almost 70 years.

Last month, millions of Americans

were under heat warnings; Baltimore and Philadelphia reached 40 degrees Celsius and Phoenix also hit a new high. The planet is now 1.2 degrees Celsius hotter than in the 19th Century. According to *Lancet*, excess heat contributed to an average of 4,89,000 deaths globally, mainly in south Asia.

As Earth's climate changes, it is impacting extreme weather across the planet. Record-breaking heat waves on land and in the ocean, drenching rains, severe floods, years-long droughts, extreme wildfires and widespread flooding during hurricanes are all becoming more frequent and more intense. Human actions since the Industrial Revolution, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, have caused greenhouse gases to rapidly rise in the atmosphere. As carbon dioxide, methane and other gases increase, they act as a blanket, trapping heat and warming the planet. In response, Earth's air and ocean temperatures warm. Even a small increase in average temperatures makes a big difference to heat extremes.

As the range of daily temperatures shifts to warmer levels, hotter days are more likely and more intense. This warming affects the water cycle, shifts weather patterns and melts land ice—all impacts that can make extreme weather worse. In other words, if governments don't act on key environmental issues, climate-related records will continue to be beaten.



According to the United Nations Environment Programme, 30 percent of the world's population is exposed to deadly heat waves more than 20 days a year



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's (above right) Conservative Party will now make way for the opposition Labour party. The Conservative rule will usher in a centre-left government led by Labour leader Keir Starmer, who is now Britain's new prime minister

Britain In Labour

Voters across the British Isles ended a 14-year era of Conservative rule in a momentous general election. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party will now make way for the opposition Labour party. The Conservative rule will usher in a centre-left government led by Labour leader Keir Starmer, who is now Britain's new prime minister.

A former human rights lawyer who

served as Britain's most senior prosecutor, Starmer is fairly new to the political scene. He became a Labour MP in 2015, and less than five years later was the party's leader. He inherited a party reeling from its worst electoral defeat in generations, but he undertook a major overhaul of its message and its culture, and campaigned with one stark symbol—"Change."

He has been consistent in defining the election as a referendum on 14 years of Conservative rule, seizing on public

fatigue with a party that has produced five prime ministers and overseen Brexit, a struggling economy and a series of scandals, including the most recent, when some senior members of Sunak's cabinet and advisers, placed bets on an early election, which Sunak eventually called.

Starmer's message, about the cost of living and its impact on British families, as well as the state of the country's overstuffed and stretched National Health Service has clearly hit home.

Rollers Go Electric

It is arguably the most coveted brand in the world. For well over a century, the luxury car with the Spirit of Ecstasy symbol protruding from the bonnet has graced the garages and driveways of the rich and aspirational.

Now, however, Rolls-Royce have made a major decision. Their cars already have whisper-quiet engines so much so that they advertised the ticking of the dashboard clock as the loudest sound its owners would hear at 60 mph. Now, the ultra-plush interiors will be even quieter, if that is even possible.

The latest model, called the Spectre (above), is a sign of things to come for the double-R brand. It is being advertised as the "world's first ultra-luxury electric super coupe." According to the company, by the end of the decade, every single Rolls-Royce will be fully electric. The



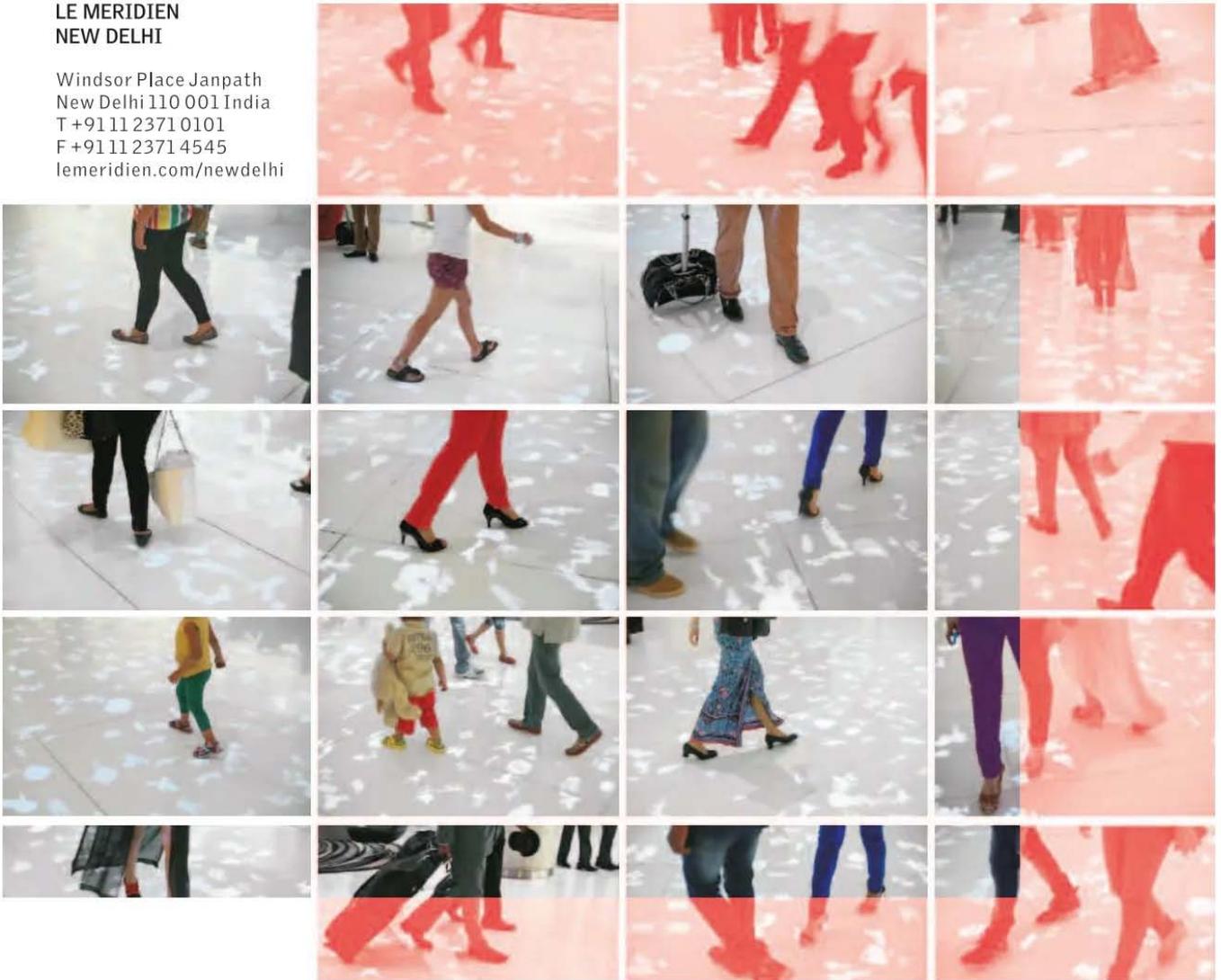
Spectre is the first battery-powered model to carry the Spirit of Ecstasy on the prow of its bonnet. The Spectre is a truly immense coupe powered by a 102kw battery which powers twin motors. That makes the Spectre the world's longest-range EV. The company's official claim is 329 miles (530km) which are produced using what the management calls "green electricity". Despite that, there is no compromise on

the luxury quotient, apart from the nod to materials that are more environmentally-friendly.

All that luxury and an EV to boot comes with a hefty price tag. In India, the Spectre is expected to sell for around Rs 7.5 crore. It may be worth it just to see the looks of envy from everyone as you drive what is being called the best and most luxurious electric car in the world.

**LE MERIDIEN
NEW DELHI**

Windsor Place Janpath
New Delhi 110 001 India
T +91 11 2371 0101
F +91 11 2371 4545
lemeridien.com/newdelhi



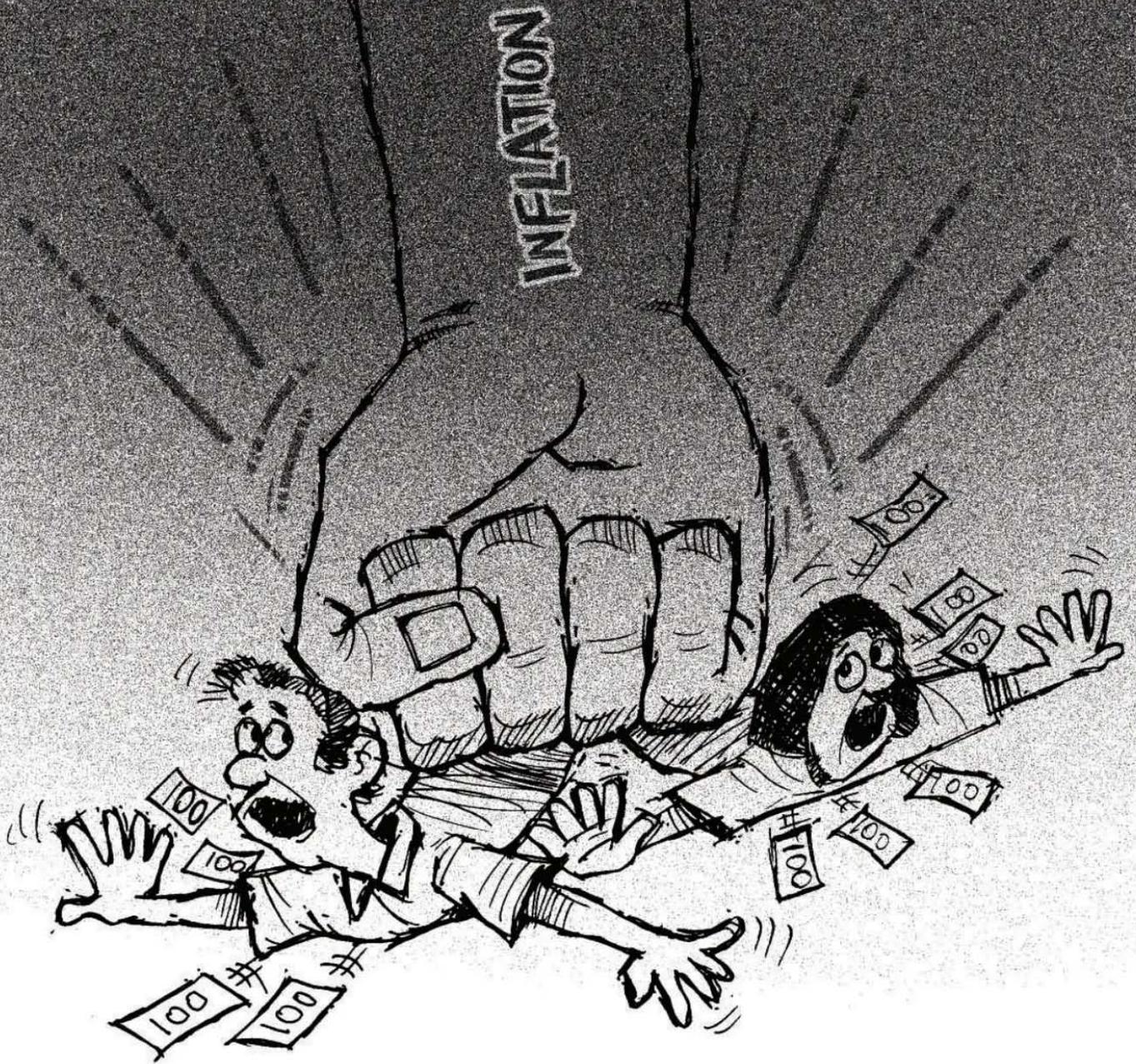
**CURIOSITY
AWAKENED**

Le **MERIDIEN**

Art and design help to create a stimulating experience for our guests. Our innovative Arrival Artwork installation engages them upon arrival with its interactive ingenuity. Works of contemporary art and architecture within the hotel are exhilarating discoveries that awaken the senses. Inspiring a new way of seeing.

N 28° 37' E 77° 13'
DESTINATION UNLOCKED

For more information or to make a reservation, call +91 11 2371 0101



खबर है तो दिखेगी

APN AVAILABLE ON

AIRTEL 328, TATA SKY 542, VIDEOCON 320, BIG TV 426, DEN 350, SITI 366, DIGICABLE 212,
HATHWAY 223, NETVISION 215, NXT DIGITAL 772, MANTHAN 182, JIO TV