

LEGAL



MITRA

more than a news paper - big stories from small towns

LAW MUST FEEL PAIN

SCAM ALERT

LOCATION TRACE

STATUS: TRACKING...

COOPERATION IS MANDATORY

BANK ACCOUNT FROZEN

DATA BREACH

KYC VERIFIED

THE DIGITAL HOSTAGE

**POLITICAL POWER
BLACK ROBES AND
THE LIMITS OF NETAGIRI**

Why India's Educated Elite is Falling Prey to Virtual Captivity, and How to Break the Psychological Shackle

Artwork created using artificial intelligence

THE FEED

That Never Let Go

An Italian mother's lawsuit against Meta and TikTok has reignited a global debate on whether algorithm-driven platforms should be held legally accountable when digital engagement turns into real-world harm for children

THE DEATH of a 12-year-old girl in Italy has once again drawn global attention to one of the most pressing issues of the digital age—the responsibility of social media platforms toward children. Her mother's legal action against Meta and TikTok is not merely an attempt to seek justice for a personal loss. It raises a larger question that governments, courts, technology companies, and society can no longer afford to ignore: Who is accountable when algorithms repeatedly expose vulnerable children to harmful content?

Unlike traditional media, social media platforms do not simply display content. Their recommendation algorithms actively learn users' behaviour and continuously push similar material to maximise engagement. While this business model increases user activity and advertising revenue, it can also trap young users in cycles of self-harm, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and other dangerous behaviours. For a child already struggling emotionally, the algorithm may reinforce distress instead of offering support.

Technology companies frequently argue that users have control over what they consume and that parents should monitor children's online activities. While parental supervision is undoubtedly important, such arguments ignore the scale and complexity of modern digital platforms. Parents cannot realistically monitor every minute of a child's online life, nor can they fully understand how artificial intelligence determines what content appears next. The burden of child safety cannot rest solely on families when billion-dollar corporations design systems specifically to maximise attention.

This issue is no longer limited to one country. Around the world, concerns are growing over the mental health impact of excessive social media use among adolescents. Research has linked prolonged exposure to algorithm-driven content with rising levels of anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, body image issues, and social isolation. Children are particularly vulnerable because their emotional judgment and decision-making abilities are still developing. Platforms that knowingly design addictive digital environments must accept greater responsibility for foreseeable harm.

The law has struggled to keep pace with technological innovation. Existing regulations often focus on privacy and data protection but fail to adequately address algorithmic accountability. Governments must now move beyond voluntary corporate commitments and establish enforceable standards. Age verification systems should be strengthened, harmful recommendation algorithms must undergo independent audits, transparency in content moderation should be mandatory, and platforms should face meaningful legal consequences where negligence contributes to serious harm.



Behind every personalised feed lies an algorithm capable of shaping emotions, behaviour, and choices. The challenge is ensuring it does not endanger the lives of children



Can platforms be held legally responsible for algorithm-driven recommendations?

- The Concerns
- Addictive content loops.
- Rising mental health risks
- Weak age verification
- Lack of algorithm transparency

Should Big Tech be liable when engagement algorithms contribute to real-world harm?

EVERY GENERATION INHERITS A POLITICAL SYMBOL. THIS ONE CHOSE THE COCKROACH

—ritesh k
Law Consultant & Social Entrepreneur

NO STRATEGIST designed it; no party commissioned it. Yet, the cockroach has become one of the most unlikely political symbols of contemporary India. The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) was not founded upon grand revolutionary ideals or calculated election tactics. It was founded upon rage.

When remarks made during a Supreme Court hearing were widely perceived as equating unemployed youth with "cockroaches" and "parasites," social media responded with outrage. The Chief Justice clarified that his comments were made in reference to individuals who hold fraudulent degrees and not about unemployed, however, the damage was already done. The public chose to embrace the insult, giving rise to an unexpected political movement.

THE ANATOMY OF FRUSTRATION

The cockroach was never the problem. It became an emblem for a generation that has believed itself to be ignored after years of schooling and numerous competitive



citizens especially youth as those that simply do not wish to work. Each label has originated in distinctly different political contexts, yet unfortunately, they all stem from the same trend, oversimplifying and overlooking the complex social issues.

Language is never casual for lawyers. In courtrooms, it is known that language creates perception. The Constitution upholds the dignity of all individuals. When people in high positions in government—judges, ministers, or politicians—say something in an arrogant manner, citizens will not only analyze the words they say but also the attitudes expressed by them.

The spectacular success of Cockroach Janta Party is just one example of this. Today's youth works in a different way than earlier generations. Earlier, youth would join parties and student unions. Now, the youth gathers using memes, satire and social media to take actions on the streets. Humour is emerging as a powerful political tool capable of bringing significant change.

Although the movement may have begun with humour, its message is loud and clear. It reflects the deep frustration of a generation whose concerns have long been ignored. Elected representatives, bureaucrats, and public institutions have fail to acknowledge these grievances and dismissing them with convenient labels. They must do better — responding with empathy, crafting meaningful policies that address the aspirations and challenges of the nation's youth, rather than resorting to hollow rhetoric.

Its evident that satire can reach places where traditional politics cannot. Statistics cannot capture the emotions satire can. Millions among us have come out not because they fancy cockroaches or like being parasites, but because they are actually being made to feel like cockroaches.

Whether the Cockroach Janta Party participates in politics or not is irrelevant. Its impact lies in sparking national conversation about pressing issues like unemployment, the failing education system, accountability and the widening gap between rulers and the ruled.

History rarely remembers the insult itself; it remembers the people who refuse to let themselves be insulted. The oppressor does not get to write the final story. So even if it is a cockroach, it stands as a symbol of a unified youth that has learned to raise its voice, loud enough to be heard.

THE COCKROACH PARTY

WE
THE PEOPLE
Who Turned an Insult into a Symbol

examinations and then years of waiting for jobs that never materialised. When combined with the government delays in filling positions, leaks of competitive examination papers, coupled with ever rising cost of living, the remarks created a face of frustration that had already existed.

A disturbing trend has taken hold in public discourse. Time and again citizens, especially the youth, have been described through various labels instead of recognising the vulnerabilities and aspirations that define their lives. Anti-national, urban Naxals, toolkits, andolanjevi, lazy, freebie seekers, and a host of others labels that attempt to describe

COURT ROOM

The Supreme Court, while dismissing a petition challenging a provision of the Hindu Marriage Act, has upheld the statutory right available exclusively to a wife to seek divorce where a maintenance decree or order has not been complied with.

The Supreme Court, while hearing a challenge filed by the Wrestling Federation of India against an order of the Delhi High Court, has allowed wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the selection trials for the 2026 Asian Games.

The Supreme Court, while dealing with proceedings concerning the management of stray dogs, has considered issues relating to public safety, animal welfare and the implementation of the Animal Birth Control Rules by municipal authorities.

The Supreme Court, while considering a bail plea under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has examined whether prolonged incarceration and delay in completion of trial can justify the grant of bail despite statutory restrictions.

The Supreme Court, while deciding a dispute concerning alleged benami property transactions, has clarified the application of statutory provisions governing ownership, beneficial interest and confiscation of properties under the benami law.

The Supreme Court, while dealing with petitions concerning the Teacher Eligibility Test requirement, has extended interim protection granted to certain teachers whose continued employment was affected by the mandatory qualification requirement.

SUPREME COURT

Questions have been raised over the fairness of EWS eligibility after several UPSC qualifiers were found to have comparatively privileged backgrounds

EWS ELIGIBILITY UNDER SCRUTINY

AN INVESTIGATION into the Civil Services Examination 2025 has raised fresh concerns over the implementation of the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) reservation. Of the 104 candidates selected under the EWS quota, several reportedly came from relatively privileged educational and professional backgrounds, including graduates of premier institutions, employees of multinational companies, and children of business owners.

The findings have reignited the debate over the 8 lakh



annual income threshold prescribed for EWS eligibility. While the quota was introduced to support economically disadvantaged candidates from the general category, critics argue that income alone may not accurately reflect financial

hardship or social disadvantage.

The Supreme Court has previously questioned whether the existing income limit adequately distinguishes genuinely weaker sections. Experts have called for a review of the eligibility criteria to ensure that the reservation reaches its intended beneficiaries. The issue has once again highlighted the need for greater transparency, periodic revision, and stricter verification in implementing the EWS reservation framework. ●●

PAY RS 75,000 MONTHLY MAINTENANCE TO FORMER SCHOOL FRIEND

Karnataka High Court stayed rape proceedings while directing the accused to pay monthly maintenance, calling the interim arrangement a unique order

THE KARNATAKA High Court passed an unusual interim order in a case involving the son of a BJP leader, who is accused of repeatedly sexually assaulting his former school friend on the promise of marriage. While staying the FIR and criminal proceedings pending before the trial court, the Court directed the accused or his parents to pay ₹75,000 every month towards the welfare of the complainant and their child. DNA testing confirmed the accused as the child's biological father. Observing the exceptional circumstances, Justice M. Nagaprasanna remarked, "Unique problem, unique order." The accused has challenged the criminal case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. ●●



ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION UPHELD



THE CONSTITUTIONAL validity of the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls undertaken in Bihar was upheld by the Supreme Court. It was observed that the Election Commission is constitutionally empowered to revise electoral rolls whenever such an exercise is considered necessary to maintain their accuracy and integrity. Allegations that the revision process was arbitrary or politically motivated were not accepted by the Court.



It was further clarified that periodic verification of electoral records forms an essential part of the democratic process. The judgment was regarded as a significant reaffirmation of the Commission's independence while emphasizing that every eligible citizen must be provided a fair opportunity to secure inclusion in the voters' list. ●●

ARE YOU 'HON'BLE'?

ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT EXPLAINS



THE OBSERVATION came during proceedings related to an FIR in which former Union Minister and BJP MP Anurag Thakur's name was mentioned without prefixes like "Hon'ble" or "Mr". The Court had earlier questioned the Uttar Pradesh Police over the omission and sought an explanation from the state government.

A division bench of Justices JJ Munir and Tarun Saxena noted that ministers of the Central and State governments, judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, Speakers and Chairpersons of Parliament, along with Members of Parliament and State Legislatures, are entitled to the use of official honorifics.



The Court further clarified that such titles are linked to constitutional or sovereign public offices and cannot be casually extended to every government official. It observed that civil servants, regardless of rank, are not automatically entitled to prefixes like "Hon'ble" unless protocol specifically permits it.

During the hearing, the state government informed the Court that the FIR had reproduced the complaint exactly as submitted by the complainant in Hindi, without alterations. Authorities also stated that police officials were later instructed to follow protocol concerning the use of honorifics for MPs and former Union ministers. ●●

ARTICLE 142 INVOKED

Fresh directions were issued to reduce delays in reserved judgments and improve judicial accountability across High Courts

IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS aimed at preventing prolonged delays in the delivery of reserved judgments were issued by the Supreme Court through the exercise of its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution.

Greater judicial accountability was sought to be ensured by requiring timely pronouncement of judgments after hearings have concluded. It was



observed that unnecessary delays may adversely affect public confidence in the administration of justice. Mechanisms for monitoring pending reserved judgments were also encouraged. The ruling was viewed as an important institutional reform intended to improve judicial efficiency while safeguarding the right of litigants to receive timely justice. ●●

CCTV SHAME RETURNS SAREES

As a result of the wide distribution of the CCTV footage of their robbery, the suspects sent back 24 stolen sarees worth about Rs 7 lakhs because they got publicly humiliated on the Internet

IN AN unusual case of saree robbery in Odisha, suspected criminals who had robbed expensive sarees worth over Rs 7 lakhs have quietly surrendered the stolen items after their crime went viral through a CCTV footage clip shared on various social media handles.

The women in the footage entered the showroom of the boutique examined several sarees, but finally, bought only one kurta worth Rs 1,400 and left. However, later on, it became known that 25 costly



sarees were stolen during this shopping session. The CCTV camera caught the act of the well-dressed women concealing the sarees under their dresses while they exited the show room. Days later, the show room staff received a large

parcel containing 24 of the 25 stolen sarees, carefully packed and returned anonymously.

Store manager said employees were shocked and relieved to see the stolen sarees returned. One of the suspects later contacted an employee over the phone to apologize and requested that the police complaint be withdrawn. The caller, believed to be a woman from Telangana, allegedly said the viral videos had caused humiliation and embarrassment in their locality. ●●

STRONGER SHIELD AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Comprehensive directions were issued to strengthen victim protection, rehabilitation, and anti-trafficking measures across India through coordinated institutional efforts

A COMPREHENSIVE framework for combating human trafficking and ensuring the rehabilitation of survivors was laid down by the Supreme Court.

Directions were issued to the Union Government, State Governments, police authorities, and welfare agencies for coordinated implementation of victim centric measures. It was emphasized that survivors should be treated with dignity and provided legal, psychological, educational, and financial assistance without unnecessary delay.

Greater accountability was also required from investigating agencies to ensure that trafficking networks are effectively dismantled. The judgment was described as an important step toward strengthening institutional mechanisms designed for protecting vulnerable women and children from exploitation and ensuring their meaningful rehabilitation. ●●



CAREER IS NOT CRUELTY

A woman's professional aspirations were held not to constitute matrimonial cruelty, strengthening judicial recognition of gender equality within marriage

THE PURSUIT of a professional career by a married woman was held by the Supreme Court not to amount to matrimonial cruelty. Findings recorded by lower courts against the wife were found legally unsustainable and were accordingly set aside.

It was observed that personal ambition, educational advancement, and professional development cannot be treated as acts of cruelty merely because marital expectations differ. Equal respect for the aspirations of both spouses was emphasized as an essential part of a modern constitutional society.

Traditional assumptions requiring women to sacrifice



professional opportunities after marriage were also disapproved of.

The judgment was regarded as reinforcing gender equality, protecting the individual autonomy of women within marriage, and promoting a balanced understanding of marital responsibilities. ●●



The Rajasthan High Court stressed the need for prompt adjudication of applications seeking temporary injunctions in civil disputes. The prolonged hearings on interim applications often delay the progress of the main suit and unnecessarily increase litigation costs. Where appropriate, trial courts were advised to proceed directly to the consideration of the principal injunction application instead of prolonging interim proceedings. Judicial efficiency was highlighted as an important element of effective civil justice

Rajasthan High Court

SPEEDY INJUNCTIONS ENCOURAGED



The Rajasthan High Court stressed the need for prompt adjudication of applications seeking temporary injunctions in civil disputes.

It was observed that prolonged hearings on interim applications often delay the progress of the main suit and unnecessarily increase litigation costs. Where appropriate, trial courts were advised to proceed directly to the consideration of the principal injunction application instead of prolonging interim proceedings.

Judicial efficiency was highlighted as an important element of effective civil justice. The observations were regarded as a practical step towards reducing procedural delays and ensuring that litigants receive timely consideration of applications seeking urgent protective relief. ●●



RARE POCSO RELIEF GRANTED

Extraordinary powers under Article 142 were exercised while clarifying that the decision should not be treated as a binding precedent

EXTRAORDINARY RELIEF was granted by the Supreme Court under Article 142 by setting aside a conviction recorded under the POCSO Act in exceptional circumstances.

It was clarified that the order had been passed on the peculiar facts of the case and should not be treated as a precedent for future matters.

The Court observed that constitutional powers may

occasionally be exercised to achieve complete justice where ordinary legal remedies prove inadequate. At the same time, it was emphasised that the statutory protections available to children under the POCSO Act remain fully intact.

The decision was described as an exceptional exercise of constitutional jurisdiction rather than a change in settled legal principles. ●●

DELAYED FIR QUASHED



A FIRST Information Report lodged nearly twenty-three years after the alleged cause of action was quashed by the Supreme Court. It was observed that extraordinary and unexplained delay may indicate an attempt to convert a civil dispute into criminal proceedings for collateral purposes.

The Court noted that criminal law should not be invoked merely as

A criminal case filed after twenty-three years was quashed after unexplained delay was found capable of indicating misuse of criminal process

a tool to exert pressure in private disputes. Since no satisfactory explanation for the prolonged delay had been furnished, continuation of the prosecution was found unjustified. The ruling was viewed as an important reminder that criminal proceedings must not be permitted to replace legitimate civil remedies or facilitate abuse of judicial process. ●●

RITUALS BEFORE REGISTRATION MATTER



Marriage registration alone was held insufficient where essential Hindu marriage ceremonies had not been validly performed under law

THE GUJARAT High Court held that the registration of a marriage cannot cure the absence of essential ceremonies required under Hindu personal law. It was observed that the legal validity of a Hindu marriage depends upon the performance of mandatory rites, including those recognised by the applicable customs and traditions. Registration was described as evidence of marriage rather than the source of its validity.

Where the essential ceremonies have not been performed, registration alone was held incapable of creating a legally valid marital relationship. The ruling was regarded as reaffirming the distinction between statutory registration and the substantive legal requirements governing Hindu marriages. ●●

DOG EVIDENCE NOT ENOUGH

Sniffer dog indications alone were held insufficient for conviction without independent corroborative evidence establishing the accused's involvement



THE ALLAHABAD High Court ruled that the indication provided by a sniffer dog cannot, by itself, constitute sufficient evidence for securing a criminal conviction. It was observed that such evidence is investigative in nature and cannot replace legally admissible proof presented before the court. Independent corroboration through reliable witness testimony, scientific evidence, or other

material was held to be necessary before guilt can be established beyond reasonable doubt. The Court emphasised that criminal convictions must rest upon credible and legally admissible evidence rather than suspicion or investigative leads. The judgment was viewed as strengthening evidentiary standards in criminal trials and safeguarding the rights of accused persons. ●●

Justice Beyond Digital Divide

Senior citizens were protected from procedural disadvantage caused by inability to access online court information and digital case updates



THE TRIPURA High Court observed that senior citizens cannot be denied substantive justice merely because they are unable to regularly access digital platforms for monitoring court proceedings. It was recognised that technological limitations continue to affect many elderly litigants despite increasing digitisation of judicial processes.

Courts were reminded that procedural fairness requires reasonable accommodation for those facing genuine digital barriers. Equal access to justice was held to remain a constitutional obligation irrespective of technological advancement. The ruling was regarded as reinforcing the principle that modernisation of the justice delivery system must not result in the exclusion of vulnerable sections of society. ●●

CLIENT CONSENT MADE MANDATORY

An advocate was held incompetent to compromise litigation without the client's clear authority, reaffirming professional ethics and client autonomy



THE SUPREME Court ruled that a compromise entered into by an advocate without the client's express authorisation cannot automatically bind the litigant.

It was observed that the relationship between a lawyer and a client is founded upon trust and informed instructions. Any settlement affecting valuable legal rights was held to require the client's clear and voluntary consent. Courts were advised to exercise

caution before recording compromise decrees where authority is disputed.

The judgment was regarded as a significant reaffirmation of professional ethics and client autonomy, while reminding legal practitioners that litigation decisions must ultimately remain under the control of the person whose rights are being adjudicated. ●●

THE DIGITAL

THE COLD NUMBERS

ANATOMY OF A SCAM

Total Cyber Crime Loss 2025

Rs 22,495 Crore

Estimated Cumulative Digital Arrest Siphoning

Over Rs 3,000 Crore

Targeted Profiles

Seniors (55+) & Urban Professionals

As thousands of tech-savvy citizens surrender their life savings to faceless screens, the terrifying rise of 'digital arrest' scams exposes a grim reality: India's cyber security crisis isn't a failure of technology, but a weaponization of fear, state authority, and psychological isolation

ARREST

Why India's Educated Elite is Falling Prey to Virtual Captivity, and How to Break the Psychological Shackle



ritesh sharma

IN THE quiet corners of India's metropolitan high-rises, a silent, invisible executioner is at work. It doesn't use weapons, and it doesn't break locks. Instead, it uses a glowing smartphone screen, a spoofed Skype ID, and the crushing weight of a fabricated state authority. This is the era of the "Digital Arrest"—a cross-border cyber-extortion phenomenon that has transformed from an occasional nuisance into a full-blown national security and psychological crisis.

Despite aggressive awareness campaigns by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), repeated warning

flashes from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and public advisories broadcasted by local police forces, the numbers continue to climb exponentially. Millions of rupees vanish into thin air every single day. The paradox is jarring: the victims are not the digitally illiterate or the gullible rural poor; they are retired bureaucrats, senior civil engineers, tech executives, doctors, and academics.

Why is an educated populace, fully aware of digital hygiene, surrendering their life savings without a physical struggle? The answer lies in the meticulous orchestration of institutional terror.

THE ANATOMY OF INSTITUTIONAL TERROR

The digital arrest scam succeeds because it does not feel like a cyber scam; it feels like an encounter with the terrifying, Kafkaesque machinery of the Indian legal system. Scammers do not mimic casual hackers; they mimic the state. They arrive clad in uniforms resembling the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), or the Enforcement Directorate (ED), set against backdrops that perfectly replicate authentic police stations or government offices.

The psychological trap relies on three pillars:

1. **Immediate Crisis Construction:** The victim is told a contraband parcel (usually containing drugs, forged passports, or illegal currency) has been intercepted in their name.
2. **The Weaponization of Shame:** By linking the victim to severe

anti-national offenses like money laundering or narcotics trafficking, the scammers leverage societal shame. The victim's immediate instinct is to keep the matter completely confidential to protect their family's honor.

3. **The Isolation Protocol:** Under the guise of a "virtual custody order," victims are ordered to keep their cameras on 24/7, forbidden from disconnecting the call, speaking to family members, or consulting a lawyer.

Once the victim is psychologically broken down over hours—sometimes days—comes the "resolution": a demand for a massive financial transfer into a "government safe-holding account" for verification, with a promise of a refund once their innocence is proven. The refund, predictably, never comes.





Story 1

The 48-Hour Siege of a Retired Professional



For 68-year-old Alok Chandra (name changed), a retired public sector administrator residing in an upscale society, the nightmare began with a mundane automated call claiming his mobile number was linked to illegal advertisements. Within minutes, the call escalated to a video conference with a man claiming to be a senior IPS officer from the Mumbai Cyber Cell.

Chandra was shown an official-looking warrant bearing his Aadhaar details, accusing him of laundering money for a cartel. For 48 continuous hours, Chandra was kept under "visual surveillance" via Skype. He was forbidden from leaving his study or speaking to his wife in the next room. Exhausted, terrified, and stripped of his critical thinking faculties through sleep deprivation, Chandra transferred Rs 85 lakhs—his entire retirement corpus—to three separate bank accounts before the line went dead.

Chronicles of the Virtual Cage: Two Tragic Tales

Story 2

The Belagavi Business Shockwave



IN ONE of the most staggering individual cases recorded by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), an 81-year-old businessman from Belagavi, Ajit Gopalkrishna (name changed), was placed under a relentless "digital arrest" that spanned an agonizing 40 days.

Fraudsters impersonating a high-ranking central investigator linked his profile to a high-profile corporate money laundering case. Over weeks of simulated judicial proceedings and deepfake video calls, the octogenarian was systematically coerced into liquidating his lifelong fixed deposits and blue-chip equity holdings, transferring a monumental 15.45 crores into multiple mule accounts before the psychological spell was finally broken.



WHY AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ARE FAILING

The government's current counter-strategy relies heavily on informational advisories: SMS blasts stating "Police will never contact you over video call." While well-intentioned, these measures fail because they address a rational brain, whereas the scam operates entirely within an induced state of primal panic.

When a person is told their freedom and reputation are hanging by a thread, the brain enters a fight-or-flight mode. The scammers intentionally create cognitive overload, leaving no psychological room for the victim to recall a standard government text message. Furthermore, systemic trust in institutional processes in India often carries an undercurrent of fear; citizens are conditioned to comply immediately with uniform-clad authority figures rather than questioning their credentials.

THE PATH FORWARD: STRUCTURAL AND

LEGISLATIVE SHOCK THERAPY

To dismantle this multi-million dollar industry, India must move past basic awareness campaigns and enforce aggressive structural roadblocks:

- ↳ **Telecom and VoIP Hardening:** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) must implement absolute blocks on international spoofed calls displaying Indian CLI (Calling Line Identification) through initiatives like Sanchar Saathi.
- ↳ **Platform-Level Safeguards:** Following recent Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directives, intermediaries like WhatsApp must deploy AI-powered impersonation detection and hard-block specific device IDs (IMEIs) rather than just banning dispensable SIM numbers.
- ↳ **Real-time Banking Halts:** The financial ecosystem must deploy AI-



Law enforcement agencies cannot serve warrants or summons via WhatsApp or Skype demanding immediate compliance. A formal summons must be served physically or through registered electronic means

driven anomaly detection. If a senior citizen suddenly liquidates stable investments to make massive, rapid transfers to unknown, newly opened current/mule accounts, banks must enforce a mandatory "cooling-off" hold.

THE LEGAL REALITY CHECK
What the Law Actually Says

To protect yourself and your family, it is crucial to understand the strict boundary lines of Indian criminal procedure. No law enforcement agency has the legal sanction to isolate you virtually.

- ↳ **No Video Custody:** Neither the CrPC nor the newly implemented Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) recognizes any concept of "Digital Arrest" or "Virtual Custody." The Rajasthan High Court cleanly affirmed this legal boundary, stating that there is no provision for law enforcement to conduct arrests or judicial proceedings via video calls.
- ↳ **Physical Warrants Only:** Law enforcement agencies cannot serve warrants or summons via WhatsApp or Skype demanding immediate compliance. A formal summons must be served physically or through registered electronic means, providing adequate time to respond.
- ↳ **No Financial Settlements over Calls:** No government agency—be it the CBI, Customs, Income Tax, or ED—will ever ask a citizen to transfer money to a private bank account for "verification" or "safe custody." All financial penalties or attachments are done through formal, written institutional bank mandates.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Statutes Weaponized Against Cyber-Extortionists

When a scammer initiates a digital arrest, they violate multiple stringent provisions of Indian criminal and cyber law. Understanding these specific sections empowers citizens to recognize these acts as severe, non-bailable criminal offenses.

- ↳ **Impersonating a Public Servant (Section 204 BNS):** Scammers dressing in uniforms or using fake ID cards/letterheads of the CBI, NCB, or Police violate Section 204 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 (formerly Section 170 IPC), which carries rigorous imprisonment.
- ↳ **Extortion by Fear of Accusation (Sections 308 & 311 BNS):** Threatening immediate jail time or public shaming to force a financial transfer violates Section 308 and 311 of the BNS





THE EMERGENCY FIRST-AID

WHAT TO DO IF TARGETED

If you receive a suspicious call that fits the pattern of a digital arrest, follow this strict protocol immediately:

1. **The Golden Rule: HANG UP.** The moment a caller claims to be an official accusing you of a crime over a phone call, disconnect. There is no penalty for hanging up on a suspected scammer.
2. **Verify Independently:** If they claim to be from a specific police station (e.g., "Andheri Cyber Cell"), look up the official, publicly listed landline number of that station and call them directly to verify.
3. **The "Golden Hour" Report:** If you have already transferred money, every minute counts. Immediately dial 1930 (the National Cyber Crime Helpline) or log onto cybercrime.gov.in. If reported within the first 1 to 2 hours (the Golden Hour), banks can freeze the recipient accounts and halt the money trail.
4. **Talk to Someone:** Break the isolation. Walk out of the room and talk to a family member, neighbor, or a lawyer. Scammers thrive only as long as you are isolated.

Ultimately, the digital arrest crisis is not a failure of intelligence, but a tragic exploitation of civic compliance

penalties on par with economic sabotage.

DISMANTLING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMPLIANCE

Ultimately, the digital arrest crisis is not a failure of intelligence, but a tragic exploitation of civic compliance. The citizens being targeted are those who respect the law; their inherent desire to cooperate with authority is turned into a weapon against them. As long as our collective response to a uniform is absolute submission born out of fear, scammers will continue to harvest fortunes from living rooms.

India cannot police its way out of this epidemic purely through post-crime investigations. We must match the technological agility of transnational syndicates with rigid financial guardrails, absolute telecom accountability, and a public that is legally literate enough to recognize that a screen can never be a cell. The virtual cage only exists as long as we choose to stay on the line.



(formerly Sections 384 and 389 IPC). Section 311 specifically penalizes putting a person in fear of an accusation of an offense punishable with death or life imprisonment (such as narcotics trafficking or money laundering) to commit extortion.

☞ **Cheating by Personation via Computer Resources (Section 66D, IT Act):** Using spoofed VoIP calls, fake Skype IDs, deepfake videos, or altered digital avatars to hide identity and cheat the victim carries up to 3 years of imprisonment under Section 66D of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

☞ **Organized Crime Framework (Section 111 BNS):** Because these scams operate out of coordinated international syndicates using structured "mule account" networks, they are increasingly classified under Section 111 (Organized Crime) of the new BNS framework, inviting severe, non-bailable



YOU CANNOT CURE A FEVER BY BREAKING THE THERMOMETER

When millions of cases remain unresolved for years—sometimes decades—judicial backlog ceases to be an abstract academic concern. It becomes a lived national reality that students, citizens, and institutions alike cannot simply be asked to ignore.



"I will take up the matter suo motu. I will not allow anybody to defame the institution. Law will take its course."

Justice Surya Kant
-Chief Justice of India



THE SUBPOENAED TEXTBOOK

When Court Backlogs Became Contraband

THE LEGAL battle over institutional self-defense has now entered India's classrooms. In a move that unsettled educators and academic circles alike, the Supreme Court recently blacklisted authors and penalized educational material—including NCERT-level content—that critically referenced judicial corruption and the massive backlog of pending cases. Reinforcing this approach, the apex court also rejected pleas seeking relaxed hate speech scrutiny, signaling that broad institutional criticism under the guise of academic freedom would not be tolerated.

This raises a serious constitutional question: Where does legitimate public accountability end, and when does protecting the "majesty of the court" become censorship?

To understand the judiciary's defensive posture, one must recognize the fragile nature of judicial authority. Unlike the executive, courts command no army; unlike the legislature, they control no treasury. Their power rests almost entirely on public trust.

From the bench's perspective, textbooks portraying the legal system as endlessly delayed or structurally compromised may not encourage critical thinking, but public cynicism. If young citizens lose faith in the judiciary before they are even old enough to vote, the rule of law itself risks weakening. Seen this way, sweeping criticism of judicial integrity becomes more than academic commentary—it becomes a challenge to institutional legitimacy.

Yet critics argue that suppressing discussions of judicial

backlog amounts to censoring reality itself. "You cannot cure a fever by breaking the thermometer," civil liberties advocates insist. When millions of cases remain unresolved for decades, backlog is no longer a theoretical issue; it is a lived national reality.

Scholars and educators further contend that contempt powers were created to prevent obstruction of justice, not to shield institutions from uncomfortable facts. Once academic criticism is labeled "systemic vilification," the danger is obvious: only praise may remain legally safe.

At the heart of this debate lies the democratic tension between public accountability and institutional integrity—the right to question failures versus the need to preserve trust in constitutional institutions.

The irony becomes sharper with the Supreme Court's recent unveiling of a redesigned Nyay Devi, the Indian goddess of justice, without the traditional colonial blindfold. The symbolism was powerful: Indian justice is no longer blind to social realities.

Yet the contradiction is difficult to ignore. The institution appears willing to see society's realities, but increasingly uncomfortable when citizens openly discuss them.

True judicial majesty is not protected through blacklists, syllabus edits, or intellectual intimidation. It is earned through transparency, efficiency, accountability, and the willingness to confront systemic shortcomings openly. If justice no longer needs a blindfold, perhaps its critics should not require a gag order either. ●●



GUARANTEED TO LEAK

Why the Judiciary's Trust in Bureaucracy is Ruining India's Medical Future



Just 21 months after the Supreme Court accepted bureaucratic pinky-promises of a foolproof exam system, NEET-UG 2026 has imploded under a massive 100-question leak. By prioritizing the academic calendar over actual integrity, did the judiciary inadvertently give a compromised system a license to fail 23 lakh students?



IN INDIA, national medical entrance examinations now collapse with such alarming regularity that paper leaks no longer feel like exceptions they feel institutionalized. This month, the National Testing Agency (NTA) officially cancelled NEET-UG 2026 after a Rajasthan-based “guess paper” reportedly matched more than 100 actual examination questions. The fallout was immediate: the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) rushed to the Supreme Court demanding a court-monitored probe and structural reform of the NTA.

But this crisis did not begin in 2026. Its foundations were laid in 2024, when the Supreme Court, despite serious allegations of leaks and systemic compromise, refused to order a nationwide re-test. The Court's reasoning was pragmatic. Cancelling an

examination of such scale, it argued, would derail the academic calendar, punish honest students, and disproportionately burden economically weaker aspirants.

At the time, the executive assured the judiciary that loopholes had been sealed, technology upgraded, and future examinations secured through “foolproof” safeguards. The Court accepted those assurances. Twenty-one months later, those promises lie in ruins.

This is where the constitutional contradiction becomes impossible to ignore. By prioritizing continuity over accountability, the system may have unintentionally communicated that examinations of this scale are simply “too big to fail.” In attempting to protect the academic calendar from disruption, the state ultimately disrupted the lives of nearly 23 lakh students anyway.

If the NTA were a patient, it would have been declared brain-dead three scandals ago

The real issue here is not merely a paper leak. A distinction must be made between an isolated criminal breach and the complete compromise of an examination. However, when leaks become cyclical rather than exceptional, the issue ceases to be isolated misconduct and becomes evidence of structural collapse. The repeated dependence on bureaucratic assurances without measurable institutional accountability has

assurances without measurable institutional accountability has

now produced a full-blown credibility crisis.

Courts traditionally operate on a presumption of administrative good faith. Yet when the same institution repeatedly collapses under identical allegations, judicial deference begins to resemble judicial complacency. The doctrine of proportionality requires constitutional courts to balance competing harms. In 2024, the Court concluded that a nationwide re-test would cause greater damage than the leak itself. The events of 2026 now expose the long-term cost of that calculation. This raises a deeper constitutional question: At what point does judicial restraint become administrative immunity?

The casualties are not abstract statistics. They are 23 lakh students who spent years studying biology, chemistry, and physics, only to discover that success in India's premier medical entrance examination may depend less on merit and more on whether a leaked PDF circulated through a Telegram group in Rajasthan.

The solution now cannot be another temporary committee or another sealed-cover assurance. The Court may eventually have to consider independent digital auditing, decentralized paper-setting mechanisms, criminal liability for institutional negligence, and statutory accountability standards for national testing agencies.

The NTA has exhausted its excuses. The executive has exhausted its promises. And students have exhausted their patience. The question before the Supreme Court is no longer whether the system can be repaired through another affidavit. The real question is whether structural accountability will finally be treated as a constitutional necessity rather than an administrative formality. ●●

When Mamata Banerjee's courtroom appearance sparked a larger constitutional debate on who is truly entitled to wear the advocate's gown

POLITICAL POWER

BLACK ROBES

THE LIMITS OF NETAGIRI

INDIAN POLITICS has always rewarded reinvention. Agitators turn into administrators, rebels into custodians of the constitution, and defeated politicians transform themselves into TV philosophers. But Mamata Banerjee's recent appearance before the Calcutta High Court in full advocate attire has triggered a more serious constitutional question “can political stature substitute professional entitlement inside a court room?”

The controversy is not about optics alone. The Bar Council of India sought clarification regarding Banerjee's enrolment and professional status from the West Bengal Bar Council. That inquiry itself reveals the real issue that advocate robes are not symbolic costumes available for political theatre. They represent regulated professional authority governed by the Advocates Act, 1961, and the Bar Council Rules.

Indian public discourse frequently confuses three distinct categories: a law graduate, a lawyer, and an advocate legally entitled to practise before courts. The distinction matters. Possessing an LLB degree does not automatically grant courtroom rights, just as watching medical dramas does not qualify someone to perform surgery. Courts function on institutional discipline, not public sentiment.

Under Section 29 of the Advocates Act, only duly enrolled advocates with valid professional standing may practise law before courts. The statute contains no constitutional shortcut stating that electoral popularity can revive dormant legal practice rights. Political success may deliver legislative authority, but it does not automatically restore professional privileges suspended by time or regulation. That is precisely why the



episode matters beyond one individual. Indian politics increasingly operates on the assumption that electoral success is a universal licence economist on Monday, historian on Tuesday, constitutional expert by prime time television. The courtroom, however, is one of the few remaining institutions where symbolism alone is not supposed to prevail.

The irony is particularly sharp because constitutional democracies rely heavily on visible institutional discipline. Judges wear robes. Advocates wear prescribed attire. Procedures exist not for pageantry, but because institutional legitimacy depends on adherence to rules.

Once professional dress becomes political symbolism, courts risk resembling campaign platforms with better acoustics.

The question remains whether Mamata Banerjee is powerful in politics, well versed in law, or capable enough as an individual. The real question is far narrower and entirely constitutional: was she legally authorised, under the Advocates Act and Bar Council framework, to appear and dress as an advocate at that moment? If the answer is yes, the controversy ends there. But if the answer is no, the republic confronts an uncomfortable lesson even the most powerful form of netagiri cannot override the dress code of the law. ●●

LAW MUST FEEL PAIN

Rape survivors' dignity, trauma, and autonomy cannot be sacrificed at the altar of rigid legal deadlines

THE SUPREME Court has urged the Central Government to reconsider the legal framework governing abortion, particularly in cases involving rape

survivors and minors who seek termination after the 20-week limit prescribed under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act.

The observations came during the hearing of a plea filed by a minor rape survivor seeking permission for abortion beyond the statutory deadline. A Bench led by D. Y. Chandrachud remarked that the law cannot remain blind to the “pain, trauma, and humiliation” suffered by victims forced to continue unwanted pregnancies. The reproductive choice is closely linked to dignity, bodily

autonomy, and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. It observed that rigid timelines may fail to address exceptional situations involving severe psychological distress and social stigma. Suggesting the need for legislative reform, the Bench encouraged the government to adopt a more flexible, case-sensitive approach rather than relying solely on fixed medical deadlines.

The remarks have intensified the national debate over abortion rights and the need for a more humane legal framework. ●●



BITES VS. RIGHTS

Supreme Court Greenlights Euthanasia for Dangerous Strays

IN A milestone ruling the Supreme Court dismissed all review pleas and formally permitted the euthanasia of "rabid, incurably ill, or demonstrably dangerous" stray dogs under strict veterinary supervision. Resolving an emotionally charged utilitarian conflict, the apex court forcefully declared that the "Right to Life with dignity encompasses the right to live freely without the threat of a dog-bite attack."

The bench sharply scolded state governments for their systemic failure to build functional Animal Birth Control infrastructure. To protect vulnerable citizens, the court ordered states to immediately secure high-footfall public zones—including schools, hospitals, and railway stations—against stray dog intrusion. ●●



The Supreme Court's legal logic is sound, but its success hinges entirely on local municipal corporations notorious for systemic apathy. Without strict independent oversight, drawing the line between a "demonstrably dangerous" dog and a harmless stray will inevitably devolve into chaotic, lawless violence on India's streets

TRIAL BY ALGORITHM

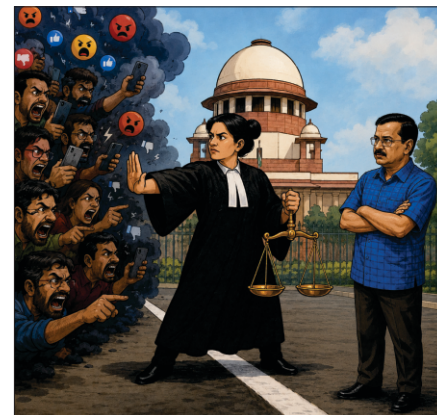
Delhi High Court Draws a Line Against the Digital Lynching of Judges

IN A time when algorithms have come to determine how things are seen in society, the judicial branch for quite some time now has been considered an impervious island of well-considered logic based on facts. This invulnerability was destroyed by the Delhi High Court that decided to prosecute some of the political bigwigs, namely Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, on charges of criminal contempt.

This decision has come after the launch of a very effective and extremely viral social media campaign directed at the judge, Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma, after her adverse ruling. By prosecuting these politicians, the court has put its foot down by telling them that silence will be seen as "a form of surrender before a powerful litigant."

The Digital Court of Public Opinion

The traditional legal architecture provides clear channels for dissatisfaction: if a litigant disagrees with an order, they appeal to a higher bench. What unfolded here was a calculated detour. Snippets of court proceedings were selectively edited, stripped of context, and paired with incendiary text attributing political bias to the judge. Within hours, these manipulated narratives were amplified by automated networks, transforming a legal disagreement



into viral character assassination.

This isn't ordinary criticism; it is the weaponization of digital platforms to systematically bully individual judges. By flooding the ecosystem with altered media, powerful litigants bypass legal scrutiny entirely, appealing directly to an outraged public to erode institutional credibility.

Institutional Threat

How can a court stay independent if its judges are subject to a concerted digital assault on their decisions?

While political figures can come out into the open and make their case, judges do not have that luxury. Judges address the public only via their verdicts. In an era where algorithms favor outrage over substance, a judge is helpless in responding to any organized dissent. This trend could prove lethal to judicial independence. As more judges realize they may face "death by a thousand cuts" if they issue unfavorable decisions against those in power, their subconscious tendency to avoid controversy might sway them.

In view of this, the judgment by the Delhi High Court comes out. However, even though the right to freedom of expression is respected, all those who try to interfere in the process of justice using technology will never be condoned.

The New Litigation Strategy: Rather than pursuing an appeal, the lawyers rely on algorithms. By creating bias through editing of the videos, the case is taken from a court of justice to a court of public opinion. ●●

As political heavyweights turn to manipulated media to bully the bench, the Delhi High Court's historic criminal contempt escalation marks the definitive flashpoint in the war between viral outrage and the rule of law

CHINA'S AI JUDGES Spark debate Over the FUTURE OF INDIAN COURTS



WITH RAPID advancements in artificial intelligence becoming an integral part of our everyday lives, the issue of using AI to tackle pending court cases becomes quite pertinent. Recent events in China brought this problem back to the forefront. An AI-based system was allegedly used by the Hangzhou Internet Court to examine evidence in ten different cases involving loans and contracts simultaneously. After reviewing legal pleadings, the system provided its findings which were later revised by a human judge, enabling the court to conclude ten proceedings within just thirty minutes.

Can AI Judges Clear India's 5.5 Crore Case Backlog?

A Pressured Judicial System

Indian courts are still facing a severe backlog of pending cases. It has been reported that there are around 4.76 crores of such cases pending in the subordinates judiciary alone, out of which close to 3.59 crores were pending for over a year. Such prolonged delays have serious repercussions for the process of accessing justice in the country.

It should be noted that, although there is increased interest in using AI technology, the Government has explicitly stated that AI will not take the responsibility of issuing judgements. This means that the use of technology will only be aimed at supporting the work of judges and judicial officials.

The Scale of the Problem

The principle that "justice delayed is justice denied" remains especially relevant today. As of 2026, district and subordinate courts had more than 1.10 crore civil cases and

3.65 crore criminal cases awaiting disposal. A significant portion of these matters has been pending for several years. When the backlog in High Courts and the Supreme Court is added, the number of unresolved cases nationwide approaches 5.5 crore.

The Dangers Behind the Possibilities

Although there are many positives to AI, there are also many negatives as well. Since the AI system learns from data, it picks up on the biases that are present in society today. This means that the AI system could create even

more prejudice in its findings.

There have been many cases of algorithmic discrimination in fields such as the health sector in the US. Given India's diverse society in terms of social, cultural, and economic conditions, it would not be difficult to imagine the repercussions of any bias that is created.

In light of this fact, many suggest that AI should be used as an aid to decision-making rather than as a replacement. It may improve the speed at which the court processes its cases, but the responsibility of justice cannot be handed over to machines, no matter how fast and efficient they are. ●●

AI is already being integrated into several aspects of judicial administration.

Smart Filing Systems: The Supreme Court has introduced AI-assisted filing mechanisms capable of identifying missing documents and procedural defects at the submission stage. Similar systems in Kerala have processed tens of thousands of filings.

Language Translation: Translation platform, SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software), has enabled the translation of nearly one lakh judgments into multiple Indian languages, making legal information more accessible to citizens.

Real-Time Transcription: During Constitution Bench proceedings, the court employs TERES (Technology Enabled Resolution and Enhanced System) to generate transcripts of oral arguments. Although human verification remains necessary.

Courtroom Support Tools: Several High Courts have either adopted or are testing AI-driven applications that assist in documenting witness testimony, recording cross-examinations, and organizing courtroom proceedings. ●●

Technology's Growing Role in the Courts



Why India's Governments Keep Announcing Restoration While Its Water Bodies Continue to Die

THE LAST LAKE STANDING

STANDING ON the bed of a shrinking reservoir in Rajasthan a farmer pointed toward fields that had gradually replaced what was once open water. The government still said it was a reservoir. The landscape told a different story. Water had moved away cultivation had increased and nature was showing a reality that official records did not want to accept.

This scene is not unusual anymore. Across India thousands of



The water had retreated. Encroachments had advanced. Nature was recording a reality that government files refused to acknowledge

ponds, lakes, wetlands, tanks, johads, anicuts and traditional reservoirs are disappearing.

Legally India has protections. Environmental laws and repeated court judgments recognise water bodies as

assets that cannot be converted for private use. Courts have emphasised their importance.

Degradation continues

The pattern is familiar. Encroachments are reported. Surveys are done. Demarcation is ordered. Files move between departments. Notices are issued. Meetings are held.

Then nothing changes

Citizens often take on responsibilities that should belong to authorities. Farmers, activists and concerned residents spend years collecting records filing applications, documenting encroachments and pursuing action. Sometimes restoration work starts raising hopes of recovery.

Often those hopes fade

Rajasthan shows how restoration can become disconnected from conservation. Public funds are spent desilting reservoirs and rejuvenating water bodies. Many projects focus only on removing silt while ignoring the conditions that caused degradation.

the last lake

LEGAL MITRA

FOR CENTURIES, INDIAN COMMUNITIES DEVELOPED SOPHISTICATED SYSTEMS TO CAPTURE, STORE, AND CONSERVE RAINFALL. RAJASTHAN, AMONG THE DRIEST REGIONS IN THE WORLD, BECAME HOME TO INTRICATE NETWORKS OF TANKS, STEPWELLS, JOHADS, AND ANICUTS THAT TRANSFORMED SEASONAL RAINS INTO YEAR-ROUND SURVIVAL. THESE STRUCTURES WERE NOT MERELY ENGINEERING WORKS; THEY WERE CAREFULLY DESIGNED ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS CONNECTED TO CATCHMENTS, FEEDER CHANNELS, DRAINAGE ROUTES, GRAZING LANDS, AND SURROUNDING VEGETATION

INDIA DOES NOT SUFFER FROM A SHORTAGE OF LAWS INTENDED TO PROTECT WATER BODIES. COURT JUDGMENTS, ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS, WETLAND RULES, IRRIGATION STATUTES, AND REVENUE LAWS COLLECTIVELY CREATE A FORMIDABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Catchments continue to erode. Feeder channels remain blocked. Natural drainage routes disappear beneath roads, fields and construction. Encroachments within submergence zones often remain untouched.

In projects excavated soil is left inside the reservoir. When monsoon rains arrive, much of that material washes back into the basin reducing storage capacity again. Public funds are spent removing sediment for nature to return much of it to the reservoir within a season.

Such failures are not isolated. They reveal a culture that often values project completion and expenditure over lasting ecological outcomes.

Nature does not measure success through completion reports or budget utilisation. Water follows hydrology. A blocked feeder channel does not reopen because paperwork has been completed. A degraded catchment does not recover because funds have been sanctioned.

Rainfall conducts its audit

The deeper problem lies in how restoration's conceptualised. Reservoirs are often treated as isolated structures than parts

of larger ecological systems. Their survival depends on catchments, unobstructed feeder channels, flood plains, surrounding vegetation and functioning drainage networks. Ignoring these connected systems makes long-term restoration almost impossible.

Courts have recognised this principle. Judicial decisions have emphasised that water bodies cannot be separated from their surroundings. Catchments, feeder channels, drainage systems and submergence areas together constitute an environmental unit requiring protection.

Implementation remains inconsistent.

Administrative fragmentation compounds the problem. Responsibility for a water body may be divided among revenue authorities, irrigation departments, municipal bodies, rural development agencies, forest officials and environmental regulators. Shared responsibility frequently results in inaction with departments shifting responsibility while degradation continues.

Political incentives also favour construction over conservation. Building infrastructure attracts attention while



protecting an existing pond or preventing encroachment rarely generates public visibility. Maintenance seldom receives the priority as new projects.

The consequences extend beyond environmental loss. Water bodies recharge groundwater, floods sustain biodiversity support agriculture and strengthen resilience against drought. As they disappear groundwater declines farmers drill borewells, energy consumption rises and agricultural productivity becomes increasingly vulnerable to erratic rainfall. Urban flooding intensifies as natural storage areas are paved, filled or encroached upon.

Climate change amplifies every one of these challenges. India is already experiencing

erratic rainfall with prolonged dry spells interrupted by intense downpours. Traditional water systems were designed to capture and store seasonal rainfall. Governments now invest heavily in climate adaptation while allowing some of the countrys effective adaptation infrastructure to deteriorate.

There is reason for optimism. Across India communities have successfully revived abandoned tanks, restored wetlands, removed encroachments. Demonstrated that effective conservation is achievable. Modern technology can identify water bodies and detect encroachments, with unprecedented accuracy.

The challenge is one of governance and

political will. The farmer standing beside the shrinking reservoir understood this without speaking of hydrology or climate resilience. He simply remembered what the reservoir once looked like. His memory reflects a truth. Water bodies rarely disappear overnight. They vanish gradually—through one encroachment, one blocked channel, one ignored complaint, one executed restoration project and one delayed enforcement action at a time.

The coming monsoons will provide the test. Rain does not recognise records or completion certificates. It simply follows the landscape we leave behind revealing whether we have truly restored our water bodies or merely excavated them.

when TREES become CITIZENS

How a Small Canadian Town Is Redefining Humanity's Relationship with Nature

What if trees were no longer treated as property but as living beings with rights? In a groundbreaking decision, a small Canadian municipality has challenged centuries of human-centric thinking, joining a growing global movement that seeks to grant nature legal recognition. The move raises an important question: Is the future of environmental conservation rooted not only in protecting nature, but in recognizing it as a rights-bearing partner?

FOR CENTURIES, humanity has viewed forests as timber reserves, rivers as water supplies, and mountains as mineral deposits resources to be owned, exploited, and consumed. But a quiet revolution is reshaping that perspective. Across the world, a growing legal and environmental movement is arguing that nature should not merely be protected; it should possess rights of its own.

That vision has now found an unlikely champion in Grand Falls-Windsor, a small Canadian

town in New Brunswick with a population of just over 2,000. In a landmark decision, the town has officially recognised trees as living beings, marking a significant shift in how local governance perceives the natural world.

Under the new resolution, trees are no longer regarded simply as public assets or municipal property. Instead, they are acknowledged as living entities deserving care, protection, and respect. The initiative also commits the town to public awareness programmes aimed at strengthening environmental stewardship and encouraging citizens to develop a deeper connection with nature.

The decision makes Grand Falls-Windsor the first municipality in Canada to endorse the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Trees, reinforcing the rapidly expanding global Rights of Nature movement. Rather than viewing ecosystems as commodities, this movement argues that forests, rivers, wetlands, and wildlife possess intrinsic value independent of their usefulness to humans.

The concept is not entirely new. In 2008, Ecuador became the first nation in the world to enshrine the Rights of Nature within its Constitution, recognising ecosystems as entities entitled to exist, regenerate, and flourish. Since then, courts and governments across several countries have explored similar legal frameworks, reflecting a growing recognition that environmental protection requires a fundamental shift in legal thinking.

LESSONS FOR INDIA

The idea of recognising nature as a living entity is not unfamiliar to India. For centuries, Indian traditions have revered rivers, forests, mountains, and trees as sacred. While these beliefs have primarily existed within cultural and

religious practices, Indian courts have occasionally reflected similar thinking in law.

In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court declared the Ganga and Yamuna rivers to be living entities with legal rights. Although the ruling later faced practical and legal hurdles in implementation, it demonstrated the judiciary's willingness to explore innovative approaches to environmental protection.

As India grapples with rapid urbanisation, deforestation, and climate change, the global conversation surrounding the legal rights of nature offers an opportunity to rethink environmental governance beyond traditional conservation measures.

BEYOND CONSERVATION

The decision by Grand Falls-Windsor is symbolic, but symbolism often shapes the future of law. It represents a transition from an era that viewed nature as a resource to be managed toward one that recognises ecosystems as partners in human survival.

Whether more governments follow this path remains uncertain. Yet one message is becoming increasingly clear: protecting nature may no longer be enough. The future may depend on recognising that humanity is not the owner of the Earth—but one member of a much larger living community. ●●

THE PHILOSOPHY

The movement rests on three simple yet transformative ideas:

- ✧ Trees are living beings and part of humanity's shared natural heritage.
- ✧ The survival of life on Earth depends upon healthy forests and thriving ecosystems.
- ✧ Human beings have a moral responsibility to treat trees with dignity, care, and kinship rather than ownership. ●●



When Justice Gets

Curious Cases That Made Courts Do a Double Take

When we think of courts, we imagine towering constitutional battles, landmark judgments, and lawyers arguing over matters that shape the destiny of millions. But every now and then, amidst the weighty debates on democracy, liberty, and justice, a file lands on a judge's desk that makes everyone wonder: "Wait... this is actually a court case?" Welcome to the wonderfully bizarre side of Indian jurisprudence a place where parrots become accused persons and deodorants fail at matchmaking.

The Parrot With a Potty Mouth (2015)

MOST CRIMINAL investigations involve suspects, witnesses, and evidence. This one involved a parrot. In Maha-rashtra's Chandrapur district, 85-year-old Janabai Sakharkar approached the police with a rather unusual grievance. According to her, her stepson had trained his pet parrot, Hariyal, to shower her with abuses every time she passed by his house.

The police, displaying admirable professionalism, summoned all concerned parties. Janabai and Her stepson came. And so did Hariyal.

The bird was placed near the complainant and officers waited for the alleged verbal assault to begin. Nothing happened. Not a single abusive word. Not even a polite chirp. Faced with a witness who suddenly discovered the right to remain silent, the police closed the case. Hariyal was later handed over to forest officials.

Perhaps India's first case where the accused escaped conviction by simply refusing to talk. ●●

The Deodorant That Failed to Deliver Love (2015)

ADVERTISING OFTEN promises confidence. A Delhi man believed it promised considerably more. Vaibhav Bedi filed a lawsuit against the makers of Axe body spray after a devastating discovery: despite using the product faithfully for seven years, women were not magically flocking to him. The advertisements, he argued, had created expectations. Reality had other plans.

Seeking Rs 40 lakh in compensation, Bedi claimed emotional distress and consumer deception. Determined to prove his case, he even submitted his collection of deodorants and grooming products for possible testing.

The lawsuit quickly became legendary. After all, it may be the only case in legal history built on the argument:

"Your product promised romance. I got deodorant." ●●

The Great Sandal-Chappal Debate (2017)

SOME LEGAL battles determine the fate of nations. Others determine whether a shoe is a sandal. The Delhi High Court found itself wrestling with an unexpectedly profound question: What exactly separates a sandal from a chappal? The answer carried financial consequences.

Export incentives for sandals were twice as attractive as those for chappals, prompting customs authorities to insist that footwear without a back strap should be classified as

the latter.

The Court wasn't convinced. After examining the matter, judges concluded that women have somehow managed to wear sandals without back straps for generations, and therefore the government's definition made little sense. Thus ended one of India's most expensive footwear identity crises.

Somewhere in the archives of legal history sits a judgment proving that courts occasionally moonlight as fashion experts. ●●

The Rs 2-Crore Haircut (2018)

BAD HAIRCUTS usually result in regret. This one resulted in litigation. Model Aashna Roy alleged that a luxury salon cut her hair far shorter than instructed, damaging her professional prospects and confidence. What followed was perhaps the most expensive haircut dispute in Indian history. Initially, consumer authorities awarded compensation worth Rs 2 crore. The figure triggered nationwide fascination.

Eventually, the Supreme Court reduced the amount to Rs 25 lakh, noting that claims of professional loss require solid evidence rather than assumptions. ●●

Maria Sharapova's Unexpected Real-Estate Adventure (2019)

IMAGINE BUYING a luxury apartment because a global sports icon endorsed it. Now imagine the apartment never arrives. That's essentially how tennis superstar Maria Sharapova found herself entangled in an Indian legal controversy.

A premium housing project bearing her name promised luxury living, a tennis academy, and even a helipad. Buyers invested heavily, partly reassured by the presence of an internationally recognized celebrity ambassador.

When construction stalled and promises evaporated, angry investors asked a question that continues to haunt celebrity endorsements: Should famous faces bear responsibility for what they promote?

The case transformed a real-estate dispute into a larger debate about accountability, influence, and whether a celebrity's signature should come with a duty to verify the dream being sold. ●●

Always remember, every locked door is eventually tested not by criminals first, but often by the curious

THE

HACKER

IN AN age where education has migrated from classrooms to servers, from answer sheets to databases, and from invigilators to algorithms, a fundamental question emerges: Who watches the digital gatekeepers?

For generations, students were expected to solve problems designed by institutions. Today, a new generation has begun solving the institutions themselves.

Recent events surrounding vulnerabilities in CBSE's digital evaluation and re-evaluation systems have exposed an uncomfortable reality. The story is not merely about a student, a portal, or a cybersecurity flaw. It is about a collision between curiosity and authority, innovation and complacency, technology and trust. Reports suggest that students and ethical hackers identified weaknesses in systems that millions relied upon for something as crucial as examination results and answer-sheet access.

The incident forces us to confront a difficult truth. We often celebrate digital transformation without questioning whether the foundations are strong enough to support it. We assume that because a system is online, it is secure. Because it is official, it is reliable. Because it is automated, it is accurate.

Yet technology possesses no magical immunity against human

oversight.

The modern student has grown up in an ecosystem fundamentally different from that of previous generations. Armed with coding tutorials, cybersecurity forums, artificial intelligence tools, and unlimited access to information, today's teenagers can investigate systems with a level of sophistication once reserved for professionals. The same internet that helps students prepare for examinations can also teach them how networks operate, how databases communicate, and where vulnerabilities hide.

This is where the story becomes fascinating.

Was the real surprise that vulnerabilities existed? Or was the real surprise that a student discovered them?

For decades, institutions have measured intelligence through examinations, grades, and standardized assessments. Yet some of the most valuable skills of the digital age—critical thinking, pattern recognition, problem-solving, and technical curiosity—often emerge outside the prescribed syllabus.

The hacker in the classroom challenges our conventional understanding of education. He forces us to ask whether learning is merely the ability to reproduce answers or the ability to question

systems themselves.

The internet has transformed students from consumers of information into investigators of information. They no longer simply accept what appears on a screen. They inspect it. Test it. Challenge it.

And perhaps that is precisely what education was supposed to achieve.

The lesson from this episode extends far beyond cybersecurity. Every institution entering the digital era must recognize a simple principle: technology does not eliminate accountability; it multiplies it. Every portal, every database, every algorithm carries with it a responsibility to safeguard trust.

Because in the end, the most powerful examination is not the one students write.

It is the one they unknowingly conduct on the systems built around them.

Welcome to the digital classroom where sometimes the student becomes the examiner. ••

IN THE CLASSROOM

Love

IN THE AGE OF AI

THE RISE of artificial intelligence has changed how people work, learn, and communicate. Now, it is beginning to reshape one of the most personal aspects of human life: romantic relationships. Across dating platforms, users are increasingly relying on AI chatbots to draft opening messages, improve profiles, suggest conversation topics, and even interpret replies from potential partners. What was once a search for emotional compatibility is gradually becoming an exercise in technological optimisation.

For many users, AI offers practical benefits. It reduces the anxiety of initiating conversations, helps overcome writer's block, and gives socially awkward individuals greater confidence in expressing themselves. In a world where first impressions are often formed through a few lines of text, AI appears to level the playing field by making communication easier and more polished.

However, this convenience comes with important ethical and emotional questions. Attraction is built not only on eloquence but also on authenticity. If an AI system composes messages, crafts witty responses, and shapes one's online personality, is the connection being formed between two individuals or between two algorithms?

The danger lies in confusing enhanced communication with genuine emotional intelligence. Relationships are sustained by vulnerability, spontaneity, empathy, and imperfection qualities that cannot be generated through predictive language models alone. While AI can

recommend what to say, it cannot experience affection, trust, disappointment, or commitment. Outsourcing emotional expression risks creating relationships founded on curated perfection rather than honest human interaction.

There is also the issue of transparency. Should people disclose that AI has written their messages? While using technology to correct grammar or improve clarity may be comparable to using a spell checker, allowing AI to conduct substantial portions of personal conversations enters ethically uncertain territory. Trust, once compromised, can be difficult to rebuild.

At the same time, dismissing AI entirely would ignore its genuine value. For individuals with social anxiety, language barriers, or communication challenges, AI can serve as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for personality. The distinction lies in whether technology assists communication or replaces it.

The future of dating will undoubtedly include artificial intelligence. Yet technology should remain a facilitator not the author of human relationships. Love has always thrived on unpredictability, emotional honesty, and shared experiences. Those qualities cannot be automated.

As AI becomes a digital wingman for millions, society must ensure that convenience does not come at the cost of authenticity. In matters of the heart, the most meaningful conversations are still the ones that belong entirely to us. ••



AI is reshaping modern romance, raising questions about whether technology is enhancing human connection or quietly replacing it

THE QUIET DISAPPEARANCE OF WATER

Rain ignores completion certificates. It follows the landscape we leave behind



A LANDSCAPE REMEMBERING WHAT WE FORGOT

Across Rajasthan, lakes, streams, and wetlands that once sustained millions are vanishing. Restoration is not just an environmental need it is our collective responsibility.

Every water body has a story.

Every story holds a solution.

Every solution needs action.

Act today. Restore forever.



EXCAVATORS, BUDGETS AND THE APPEARANCE OF ACTION

Across India, desilting and restoration projects consume crores of rupees every year. But emphasis often remains on visible works, not ecological outcomes.

LEGAL MITRA

POWERED BY - MAI BHARAT
editor-in-chief shipra sharma
editor ritesh sharma

legal board
yogendra kumar
ashwani dhanawat

news desk
rahul tripathi

circulations
rahul rajpurohit

director creative
khushboo sharma

editorial & subscription office

L-9, 2nd floor, income tax colony,
tonk road, jaipur- 302018

ph: +91 141 7968796 | +91 887 500 5000



THE LASODA LESSON

- Survey conducted
- Restoration sanctioned
- Machinery deployed
- Progress reports filed

Yet large quantities of excavated soil remain within the tank bed—waiting to be washed back with the monsoon.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Digitally map every water body
- Permanently demarcate boundaries
- Remove encroachments swiftly
- Restore catchments and feeder channels
- Remove excavated soil completely
- Monitor and maintain post-restoration
- Fix accountability for negligence



THE LASODA LESSON

- Survey conducted
- Restoration sanctioned
- Machinery deployed
- Progress reports filed

Protecting water bodies is not an environmental luxury. It is a necessity for agriculture, biodiversity and rural survival

WHO SPEAKS FOR OUR WATER BODIES ?

Citizens file complaints, gather records, attend hearings and fight for years. The grievance is not only for the relief that public water bodies deserve.



printed, owned and published by ritesh sharma, L-9, income tax colony, tonk road, durgapura, jaipur, rajasthan m. 887 500 5000 and printed at m/s print 'o' land, b-3, sudershanpura industrial area, 22 godam, jaipur- 06. editor: ritesh sharma (editor responsible for selection of news under the prb act). published for the period of June 01, 2026 to july 31, 2026. all rights reserved worldwide.