Supreme Court Chronicle

Issue XV | January 2025

Highlights

- *Justice C.T. Ravikumar retires*
- *Justice Manmohan takes oath as the Judge of the Supreme Court*
- *Human Rights Day Celebrations*
- *Paper release on 'Curriculum and Learning Methodologies in Judicial Academies'*
- *Team Building and Leadership Adventure Camp at NIM, Uttarkashi*



Chief Justice's Corner



Dear Readers,

As we step into the new year 2025, it is my pleasure to present the January edition of the Supreme Court Chronicle. This issue not only captures the essence of the legal and administrative milestones of December 2024 but also sets the tone for the year ahead with a blend of insightful retrospection and forward-looking perspectives.

While the 'Fresh from the Bench' segment highlights certain notable judgments delivered in the past month, reflecting the Court's commitment to justice and societal progress, the 'Supreme Court Initiatives' section chronicles key workshops, public outreach efforts, and new programmes that underscore our institution's evolving role in society. The 'Bar News Bulletin' and 'Events and Conferences' sections offer a glimpse into the vibrant engagements of our judges and legal luminaries on national and international stages.

This edition also celebrates Justice Manmohan's distinguished journey to the Supreme Court bench. A highlight is an exclusive conversation with Justice C.T. Ravi Kumar as he retires, and his reflections on decades of service are a must-read for all.

On a lighter yet deeply inspiring note, the 'Beyond the Court' section continues to showcase the creative talents of our staff. From evocative poetry to stunning paintings, this space is a testament to the diverse passions within our Supreme Court family. Finally, we bid farewell to retiring staff members in 'Bid Adieu', honouring their invaluable contributions and cherishing their memories of service.

I commend the collaborative spirit of our editorial team, whose dedication has brought together a publication that informs, inspires, and celebrates the essence of our institution.

As you browse through these pages, may you find knowledge, inspiration, and a renewed appreciation for the work that defines our collective mission.

Here's wishing you all a prosperous and fulfilling 2025!

Sanjiv Khanna
Chief Justice of India

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Fresh from the Bench

Inordinate delay in dealing with mercy petitions and in the execution of the death sentence results in the violation of the fundamental rights of the convicts

State of Maharashtra v. Pradeep Yashwant Kokade
(2024 INSC 947)

Coram: Justice Abhay Oka, Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, and Justice Augustine George Masih

Decision: In the judgment dated 9 December 2024, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court held that inordinate delay on the part of the executive in placing mercy petitions before the Governor and the President results in the violation of the rights of the convicts guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The Court also held that an undue, unexplained, and inordinate delay in execution of the sentence of death entitles the convict to approach this Court under Article 32. The Court added that such delay caused by circumstances beyond the prisoners' control mandates the commutation of a death sentence and that a convict can even invoke the jurisdiction of a High Court under Article 226. The Court issued directions to different authorities to ensure that there are no administrative delays in dealing with the mercy petitions or issuing warrants for the execution of the death sentence:

- The Court directed the State Government to set up a dedicated cell in either the Home or Prison Departments to ensure the prompt and expeditious processing of the mercy petitions and to issue executive orders to ensure this.
- The Court directed the jail authorities to promptly process mercy petitions by forwarding relevant documents, including criminal antecedents, family details, and period of incarceration, and conducting reports to the dedicated cell and Home Department.
- The Court tasked Sessions Court with tracking the status of death sentence appeals, reviews, curative petitions, or mercy petitions, ensuring regular case listing, issuing execution warrants only after proper notices to convicts, and providing a 15-day gap between warrant issuance and execution.

Classification of pure coconut oil, packaged and sold in small quantities as 'edible oil'; and 'hair oil' only when sold as cosmetics under the Central Excise Act

Commissioner of Central Excise, Salem v. Madhan Agro Industries (Pvt) Ltd
(2024 INSC 1002)

Coram: CJI Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Sanjay Kumar, and Justice R Mahadevan

Decision: In the judgment dated 18 December 2024, a three-judge bench of the Supreme

Court held that for the purposes of classification under the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985, pure coconut oil, which is packaged and sold in small quantities, would be classified as 'edible oil' unless its packaging satisfies the requirement of cosmetics; in that case, it would be classifiable as 'hair oil'. The matter arises from a reference by a division bench that delivered a split verdict on the classification of coconut oil packed in small containers as hair oil and edible oil, respectively. The Court noted that the First Schedule to the Act of 1985 was amended by the Central Excise Tariff (Amendment) Act, 2004, in line with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (hereinafter referred to as HSN). The Court, therefore, compared the relevant headings in the First Schedule to the Act of 1985, pre-2005 amendment, and post-2005 amendment with the corresponding headings in the HSN. The Court observed that the 'common parlance test' cannot be applied in this case as there is no ambiguity and no difference in the clear heading in the First Schedule and the corresponding entry in the HSN. The Court determined that:

- The specific heading of 'coconut oil' in Chapter 15 would not mean its exclusion from being classified as a cosmetic product in Chapter 33.
- The coconut oil that is suitable for use as a 'hair oil' and also packaged with labels, literature, or other indications that the product is intended for use as a cosmetic would be classified as 'hair oil'.

Quashing of FIR registered under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and Section 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, based on vague and omnibus allegations

Dara Lakshmi Narayana & others v. State of Telangana & another (2024 INSC 953)

Coram: Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh

Decision: In the judgment dated 10 December 2024, a division bench of the Supreme Court held that generalised accusations against family members in matrimonial disputes must be curtailed to prevent misuse of legal provisions and harassment of innocent individuals. The Court perused the FIR registered under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (hereinafter referred to as IPC), and Section 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 by the respondent-wife in the present matter, and observed that FIR contained vague and omnibus allegations, lacking specific details or concrete allegations.

- The Court observed that Section 498A IPC aims to protect women subjected to cruelty in their matrimonial homes, primarily arising from unlawful demands for property or valuable security as dowry.
- The Court cautioned against invoking Section 498A IPC to prosecute husbands and their families without a clear prima facie case, as it is sometimes misused to enforce unreasonable demands by the wife.

On consideration of the facts and circumstances in the present matter, the Court noted that there is a misuse of Section 498A IPC as the FIR was registered as a retaliatory measure against the divorce filed by the appellant-husband. The Court quashed the FIR registered under Section 498A IPC and Sections 3 and 4 of the Dowry Act, the charge sheet, and the pending criminal proceedings before the trial court against the appellants.

The quantum of maintenance is subjective to each case, depending on various factors

Pravin Kumar Jain v. Anju Jain (2024 INSC 961)

Coram: Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Prasanna B. Varale

Decision: In the judgment dated 10 December 2024, a division judge bench of the Supreme Court held that it cannot lay down strict guidelines or a fixed formula for fixing the amount of permanent maintenance and that the quantum of maintenance is subjective to each case and depends on various circumstances. The Court was deciding upon the quantum of maintenance and the factors that needed to be considered to arrive at a just, fair, and reasonable amount of permanent alimony. The Court observed:

- The objective of granting permanent alimony is to protect the interests of the dependent spouse and not penalise the other spouse.
- Certain relevant factors to be looked into while deciding the question of permanent alimony: the social and financial status of the parties, reasonable needs of the wife and the dependent children, parties' individual qualifications and employment statuses, independent income or assets owned by the applicant, standard of life enjoyed by the wife in the matrimonial home, any employment sacrifices made for the family responsibilities, reasonable litigation costs for a non-working wife and financial capacity of the husband, his income, maintenance obligations, and liabilities.

The Court, in the present matter, while deciding a one-time settlement amount of Rs. 5 crores to the wife, considered the standard of living enjoyed by the wife during the subsistence of the marriage, the prolonged period of separation, and the husband's financial capacity.

Preventive detention is not permissible when the acts of a proposed detainee do not have the tendency to disturb public order

Arjun s/o Ratan Gaikwad v. State of Maharashtra (2024 INSC 968)

Coram: Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice K.V. Viswanathan

Decision: In the judgment dated 11 December 2024, a division bench of the Supreme Court held that preventive detention is not permissible when the acts of a proposed detainee are the ones that do not have the tendency to disturb public order.

- The Court elaborated on the distinction between public order and law and order and held that every breach of peace does not lead to public disorder.
- The Court explained that if a person in a public space where a number of people are present creates a ruckus by his behaviour and continues with such activities in a manner

that creates terror in the minds of the public at large, it would amount to a threat to public order.

The Court observed that the present matter comprised six cases involving charges of selling illicit liquor, and the excise authority did not find it necessary to make arrests in any case. The Court directed the appellant's release on the ground that the detaining authority has not substantiated with a subjective satisfaction that the appellant's activities were prejudicial to the maintenance of public order.

Trial must not be delayed in cases where there is legitimate doubt regarding sanction for prosecution under Section 197 CrPC

Om Prakash Yadav v. Niranjan Kumar Upadhyay (2024 INSC 979)

Coram: Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra

Decision: In the judgment dated 13 December 2024, a division bench of the Supreme Court held that in cases where there is legitimate doubt as regards whether sanction for prosecution under Section 197 CrPC is required or not, the progress of the trial must not be hampered or unnecessarily delayed. In the present matter, criminal proceedings were initiated against the respondents (who are police officers) who were involved in police firing while allegedly apprehending an accused in another case that led to the death of the appellant's brother and caused grievous hurt to his nephew. The issue before the Court was whether the alleged acts or offences committed by the respondents could be considered as having been done "while acting or purporting to act in the discharge of official duty", which would require prior sanction for prosecution under Section 197 of the CrPC. While the Court reiterated that the application of Section 197 CrPC must be decided based on the peculiar facts and circumstances of each case, it elaborated upon principles for determining the protection under Section 197 CrPC. The Court observed:

- The phrase "acting or purporting to act in the discharge of official duty" must be interpreted carefully, balancing strict and liberal approaches.
- Courts must assess whether the act is integrally connected to official duties and whether a reasonable connection exists between the act and the discharge of duty.
- Protection under Section 197 CrPC extends even to acts exceeding official duties, provided they are reasonably connected to the performance of those duties.
- Ultimately, the determination of applicability depends on whether the omission or commission of the act would otherwise constitute dereliction of duty, thereby warranting protection under this provision.

Arbitrator not functus officio and acted within the jurisdiction to issue the clarification on award beyond the period of 30 days as parties consented to clarificatory proceeding

North Delhi Municipal Corporation v. M/s. S.A. Builders Ltd. (2024 INSC 988)

Coram: Justice Abhay S. Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan

Decision: In the judgment dated 17 December 2024, a division bench of the Supreme Court held that the arbitrator did not become functus officio and retained jurisdiction to issue the clarification on the award beyond the statutory period when the parties had consented to such clarification.

- The Court expounded on the phrase "unless another period of time has been agreed upon by the parties" in Section 33(1) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and observed that the arbitrator could give an interpretation of a specific point or part of the award within the statutory period of 30 days from the date of receipt of the arbitral award, which can be extended if agreed upon by the parties.

Further, the Court analysed the provisions under Sections 31(7)(a) and 31(7)(b) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 to determine the criteria for deciding the post-award interest.

- The Court observed that unless the parties in the contract agree upon the interest, the 'sum' so awarded by the arbitral tribunal, which may include interest from the date when the cause of action arose to the date of the award, would carry further post-award interest as directed by the arbitrator. Otherwise, the interest of 18 per cent from the date of the award to the date of payment would be applicable.
- The Court explained that the provision aims to discourage delay in the payment of the awarded sum. The Court noted that this observation is consistent with the clarification in the judgment of M/S Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd v. Governor of Orissa, which overruled the decision in the State of Haryana v. S.L. Arora.

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In Conversation With
Justice C.T. Ravikumar

Closing the Bench: Reflections on Justice C.T. Ravikumar's Storied Career

Supreme Court Chronicle is honoured to bring you an exclusive interview with Justice Chudalayil Thevan Ravikumar, a distinguished Supreme Court judge known for his humility, sharp legal acumen, and unwavering commitment to justice. Growing up as the son of a Bench Clerk in the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court, Changanassery, he was introduced to the judicial system at an early age. From his initial practice in Mavelikkara to his decision to move to the Kerala High Court, his journey has been one of steady ascent. His expertise in civil, criminal, labour, and service law earned him a reputation as a formidable advocate. His appointment as a Government Pleader in 1996 and later as a Senior Government Pleader in 2006 showcased his ability to navigate complex legal challenges with finesse. These formative years as an advocate and government pleader laid the groundwork for his subsequent elevation to the judiciary.

As Justice Ravikumar retires on 5 January 2025, he leaves an indelible mark on the Indian judiciary. His career, spanning nearly four decades, is a testament to his dedication to upholding the rule of law, fostering judicial education, and ensuring equitable access to justice for all. A trailblazer in his own right, he has contributed significantly to landmark decisions while championing the values of humanity, empathy, and fairness. In this candid conversation, he reflects on his inspiring journey and shares insights into the principles and experiences that have shaped his illustrious career.



Sir, as you reflect on three to four decades of distinguished service, how do you view your journey and experiences over the years?

"My life as an advocate started in 1986. Of course, I had to have bitter and better experiences. With the support of my partner in profession, who is also my partner in life, I managed to navigate everything, though it was undoubtedly a tough journey. Coming from a village and building a profession was incredibly challenging, especially since I come from a modest background. My father served as a Bench Clerk in a Magistrate Court, and I am the sixth among my siblings. Despite these challenges, the way my parents



raised me, the guidance of my seniors, and, of course, my own principles and determination all played a significant role in shaping my career and helping me steadily climb the ladder of success."

Sir, could you share some insights about your childhood? What are some of your fondest memories, and how did you spend your time growing up?

"I was born in a hilly area called Peermade village in Idukki district, Kerala. I studied there until the second standard, after which I moved to Changanassery in Kottayam district, Kerala. My schooling continued in a government school, and from the fifth standard onward, I developed a keen interest in sports. I played badminton, football, and shuttle badminton, joining both the junior and senior teams.

After passing SSLC, I pursued my studies at St. Berchmans College, a prestigious institution in the area, where I had the honor of being the captain of the badminton team. Later, I completed my degree at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikkara, where I continued to be a part of the shuttle badminton team and also served as its captain. During this time, I was fortunate to represent Kerala in ball badminton at the national level. Alongside my passion for badminton, I enjoyed football and had a deep love for cricket, participating in several tournaments while pursuing my studies."

Sir, given your keen interest in sports, how do you believe participation in sports contributes to shaping one's personality, particularly in developing qualities that are valuable in the practice of law?

"Sports, I think will help you a lot. Whether it is in sports or in law, the common trait I find is sportsmanship—or sportsman spirit, as I should say.

In both law and sports, no one can always be assured of winning. Even the great Roger Federer



in tennis had to face defeat. The ability to face success or failure with the same spirit is crucial in both fields.

This principle holds true in the practice of law. When you receive a favorable verdict, you may smile and appreciate the court's reasoning. But when the decision is not in your favor, a true professional refrains from blaming the judge or the court personally. A good sportsman, one with genuine sportsman spirit, carries that same sense of fairness and resilience into professional life.

Having said that, I want to emphasise that I am not against making criticism against judgments. In fact, healthy criticism is essential, especially when a judgment has public significance or touches the lives of people. Such criticism, however, must be constructive and healthy. Scathing criticism of the judgment or the judge should not be there. True sportsmanship — and professionalism in law — demands respect for the individuals and institutions involved, even when expressing disagreement."

Sir, your journey from being a government pleader to a judge is remarkable. How did your experiences as a government pleader shape your approach when you took on the role of a judge?

"I was appointed as a government pleader, and my journey began under the guidance of my senior, the former Advocate General, M.K. Damodaran. Initially, I served as a government pleader, then as a senior government pleader, and later as a special government pleader, holding these roles for about seven years.

As a government pleader, while your primary duty is to represent and defend the government, you must always remember that you are also an officer of the court. I vividly recall an instance when I was appearing before Justice A.S. Venkatachala Moorthy, who had been transferred to Kerala from

Tamil Nadu. In that case, a junior lawyer arguing on the opposing side failed to cite a precedent that was clearly in his favour. As an officer of the court, I felt it was my duty to assist the court by citing that decision. The judge appreciated this gesture, emphasising that this is the true duty of a government pleader — not just to defend the government but to aid the court in dispensing justice. So that is the duty.

But upon transitioning to the dais, you are in a position to receive assistance; however, the ultimate responsibility for adjudication rests with you. You must analyze, assimilate, and apply the law effectively. Beyond this, I believe that a judgment should also reflect humanity, compassion, and sympathy."

Sir, who are those personalities that inspired you in your journey?

"Of course, there were many who inspired me and shaped my outlook. I had the privilege of observing several great lawyers in Kerala.However, on rare occasions, some of them appeared before the High Court benches.

One vivid memory that stands out is when Fali Nariman argued a case before a five-judge bench. As junior lawyers, we were eager to see him in action, expecting the proceedings to last for days because it was an exceptionally complex matter with numerous issues.

What struck us was his remarkable advocacy. He began by outlining all the points involved in the case, which the judges noted. Then, with incredible precision, he directed their attention to one critical question, stating, 'if this particular issue is resolved in my favour, the rest would become insignificant.'

He argued that single point with such clarity and conviction that he succeeded within one session. What we anticipated to stretch over days was resolved swiftly. That demonstration of advocacy left a profound impact on me. While one cannot replicate such unparalleled competence, experiences like these deeply influenced and guided my approach."

Sir, after decades of serving in the legal profession, what advice would you offer to young aspirants entering the field?

"Very few points, but the first and foremost is this: there are no shortcuts in this profession. Hard work is the one and only path to success. Equally important is sincerity—both to your client and to the court. While you must argue for your client, you also have a duty to assist the court. If you are aware of a particular fact or aspect that is crucial, you must present it honestly.

Convincing the court that you are not someone who misleads but someone who aids in the pursuit of justice is itself a significant achievement. You may lose a case, but if you earn the trust of the court, you are truly winning in the long run. So, for a single case, if you are misleading the court, then you are virtually ruining your profession."

Sir, now that you have retired, how do you plan to spend your time, and what pursuits are you most looking forward to?

"I have always been an avid sports viewer. Even during my years on the bench, not a single day passed without spending some time watching sports—it was my way of relaxing.

At the time of my elevation, I made a commitment that I would never do anything to shatter the confidence of the people in the judiciary. I believe that responsibility extends even after retirement. Holding such an esteemed office requires one to uphold its dignity, not just while serving but throughout life.

I remain committed to the promise I made in my farewell speech: that I will not do anything to diminish the trust people place in the judiciary. It is a principle I intend to uphold for the rest of my life."

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Oath-Taking Ceremony
Justice Manmohan takes Oath as Supreme Court Judge



Justice Manmohan took oath as a Supreme Court judge on 5 December 2024

An alumnus of Modern School, Hindu College, and Campus Law Centre, Justice Manmohan was enrolled as an Advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1987. He practised in the Supreme Court and the High Court of Delhi in civil, criminal, constitutional, taxation, arbitration, and intellectual property rights litigations. He appeared in various important cases, including Dabhol Power Company, General Electric's John F. Welch Technology Centre, Hyderabad Nizam's Jewellery Trust matter, and Claridges Hotel dispute, and has also participated in various seminars and conferences of national and international repute. He was designated as a Senior Advocate in 2003.

He was elevated as an Additional Judge of the High Court of Delhi in 2008 and appointed as a Permanent Judge in 2009. He has delivered a number of significant judgments concerning the duty of the Government to ensure economically weaker sections have access to essential medicines even for rare diseases like enzyme replacement [*Mohd. Ahmed (Minor) v. Union of India & Ors.*, (2014 SCC OnLine Del 1508)]; right of every child to access digital education during the COVID-19 pandemic [*Justice for All v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi and Others*, (2020 SCC OnLine Del 1217)]. Through his judgment, he has ensured the creation of a universal administrative protocol by local bodies to deal with rescue and



Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna administers oath of office to Justice Manmohan during the swearing-in ceremony on 5 December 2024

rehabilitation of children who are victims of human trafficking [*Court on its Own Motion v. Government of NCT of Delhi*, (2009 SCC OnLine Del 1958)]. Remarkably, his judgment permitted children to use their mother's surname in legal documents if they wish [*Shalu Nigam & Anr. v. The Regional Passport Officer & Anr.*, (2016 SCC OnLine Del 3023)].

Several of his judgments are considered pioneering precedents, for instance, on the issues of the standard essential patent [*Nokia Technologies OY v. Guangdong Oppo Mobile Telecommunications Corp Ltd. & Ors.*, (2023 SCC OnLine Del 3841)]; dynamic injunction [*UTV Software Communication Ltd. & ors. v. 1337X.To & ors.*, (2019 SCC OnLine Del 8002)]; formula to compute damages in trademark matters [*Koninlijke Philips N.V. & Anr. v. Amazestore & ors.*, (2019 SCC Online Del 8198)]; and regarding international treaties like the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement [*Union of India v. Vodafone Group PLC United Kingdom & Anr.*, (2018 SCC Online Del 8842)].

He was appointed the Acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court on 9 November 2023 and was appointed Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court on 29 September 2024. Thereafter, he was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India on 5 December 2024.

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Celebrations of Human Rights Day at the Supreme Court



Celebrations of Human Rights Day, 2024, organised by NALSA at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Block-C, Administrative Buildings Complex, Supreme Court on 10 December 2024

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) celebrated 'Human Rights Day 2024' at the Supreme Court of India under the theme 'Every Right, Every Life'. 10 December 2024 marked the 76th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which documents the international commitment to safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all human beings, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or background.

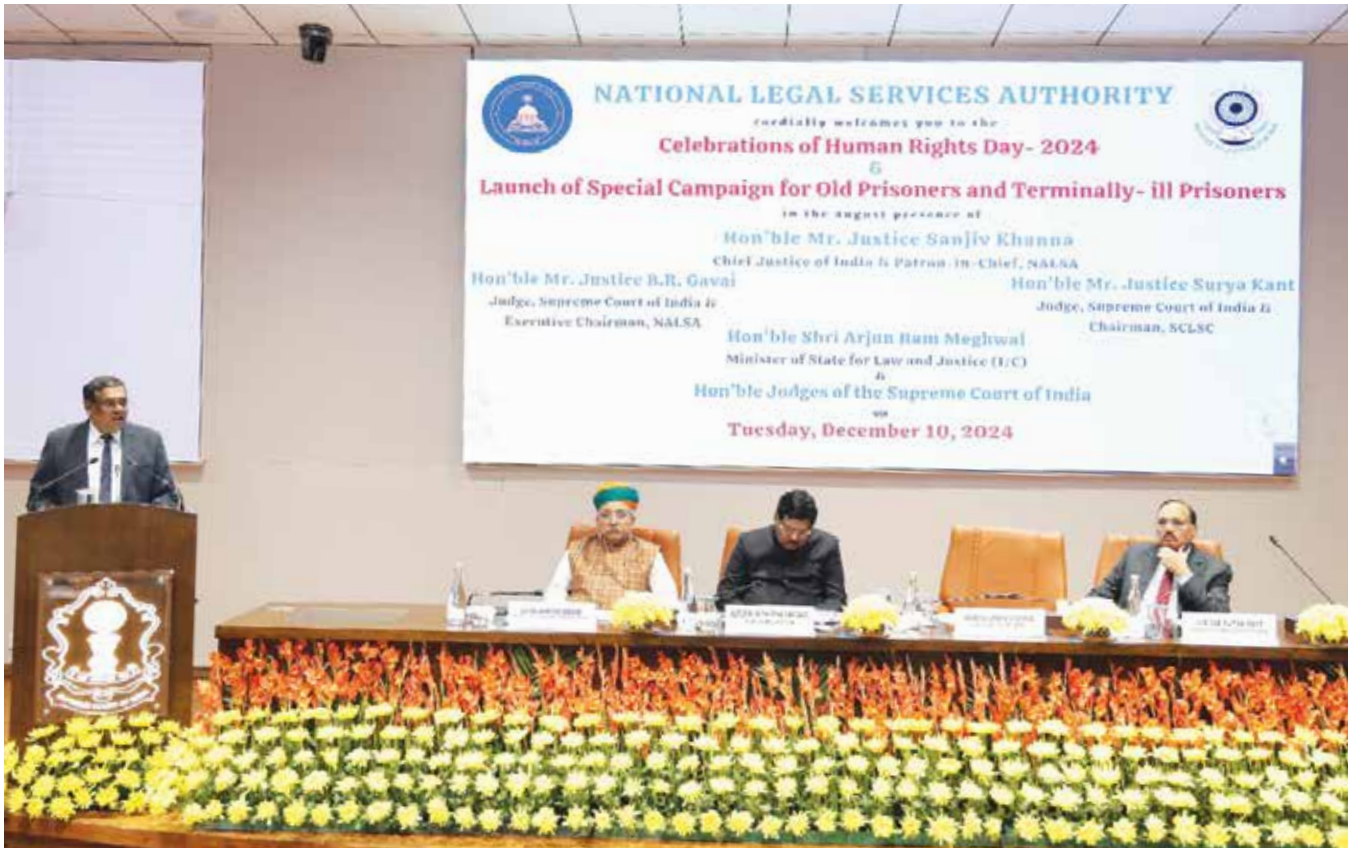
Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Chief Justice of India and Patron-in-Chief, NALSA; Justice B.R. Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA; Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairman, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee; Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Law and Justice (Independent Charge); and the Judges of the Supreme Court of India graced the event. Member Secretary and other officers of NALSA; Secretary, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee; officers of the Supreme Court Registry; senior bureaucrats; members of the Supreme Court Bar Association and Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association, etc., also attended the programme.

Further, Patrons-in-Chief and Executive Chairpersons of different State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA), Chairpersons and High Court Legal Services Committees, Member Secretaries and other officers of different SLSAs, secretaries of High Court Legal Services Committees, Director Generals of Prisons, and other senior bureaucrats virtually attended the programme.

Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal stated in his address that "*human rights are not merely abstract ideals, but they are the foundation upon which we build a just society. Today, as we celebrate this day, we honour the work done by organizations, institutions and individuals who have worked tirelessly to bring these rights into the lived experiences of the most vulnerable and marginalised*".

Justice Surya Kant commended NALSA's special campaign for old prisoners and terminally ill prisoners. He underscored consideration on compassionate grounds and stated that there was a thin line of difference between appropriate and inappropriate detention, and no matter who the incarcerated person is, he should be provided adequate and competent medical care and attention.

Justice B.R. Gavai, in his address, reaffirmed NALSA's commitment to safeguarding the human rights of all individuals in India by providing free legal aid mechanisms. He highlighted that the focus of NALSA's activities is to empower the citizens and to make justice accessible to them, even in the remotest locations of India. He shared that NALSA's vision for the next few months has a focus on ensuring that its free services are known to every citizen in this country, enhancing the reach of legal services through the NALSA Toll-Free National Helpline, and ensuring access to prompt and effective legal services at all stages of the inquiry, investigation and a criminal proceeding.



In his Presidential Address, Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna termed human rights the bedrock of human society, which is imperative for ensuring global peace. Quoting the Hon'ble President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, citing the need to counter the "Blackcoat System," which arises because of deep-seated fear and a sense of alienation among the common man towards the criminal justice system, Justice Sanjiv Khanna called for a compassionate and humane justice system by simplification of laws and decolonisation of laws.

On this occasion, NALSA launched a "Special Campaign for Old Prisoners and Terminally-ill Prisoners" with the objective of expediting the release of old prisoners and terminally ill prisoners by providing them with effective legal aid services, keeping in mind the individual vulnerabilities and needs of such prisoners. This three-month campaign will be carried out by Legal Services Institutions across the country from 10 December 2024 to 10 March 2025. It aims to identify such prisoners, move appropriate applications for their release and ensure humane treatment for such prisoners who cannot be released, as well as facilitate the societal and familial reintegration of old prisoners and terminally ill prisoners after their release. NALSA also virtually released "Awareness Material," such as a poster on free legal services, beneficiaries of legal services, and the Schedule for the conduct of the Quarterly Meetings of the Under Trial Review Committees in 2025 and an awareness video enlisting the rights of suspects and arrested persons.

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Paper Release

"Rethinking Judicial Education: A Detailed Study of Curriculum and Learning Methodologies in Judicial Academies"



Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Justice B. R. Gavai, Justice Surya Kant, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, and Justice Abhay S. Oka, alongside Dr Sukhda Pritam, Additional Registrar (CRP), at the release of a paper titled "Rethinking Judicial Education: A Detailed Study of Curriculum and Learning Methodologies in Judicial Academies" on 18 December 2024

On 18 December 2024, the Chief Justice of India, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, accompanied by Judges of the Supreme Court, unveiled a paper titled "Rethinking Judicial Education: A Detailed Study of Curriculum and Learning Methodologies in Judicial Academies". This comprehensive study marks a pivotal step toward advancing judicial education in India.

The paper, a collaborative effort between the Centre for Research and Planning (CRP) of the Supreme Court and the National Judicial Academy, provides a thorough evaluation of the current judicial education curricula. It highlights both strengths and areas needing improvement while introducing innovative methodologies and drawing from global best practices. The study offers actionable recommendations to modernise and enhance the training of judicial officers nationwide.

The release of this landmark paper sets the stage for a National Consultation, bringing together judicial leaders, scholars, and policymakers to deliberate on its findings and recommendations. This consultation aims to establish a roadmap for implementing the proposed reforms in judicial education.

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Supreme Court Initiatives

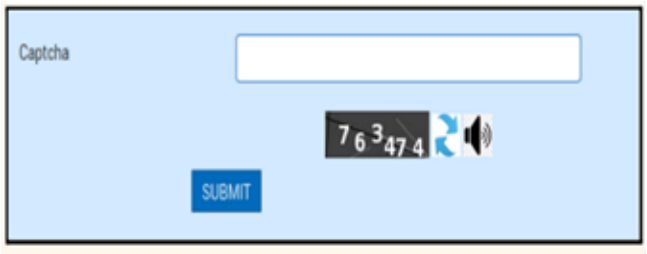
Digital Accessibility Initiatives of the e-Committee, Supreme Court of India

(International Day of Persons with Disabilities Special)

The e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India has taken significant steps to make the judicial system's digital infrastructure accessible to persons with disabilities, aligning with constitutional and legal rights. The key initiatives are detailed below:

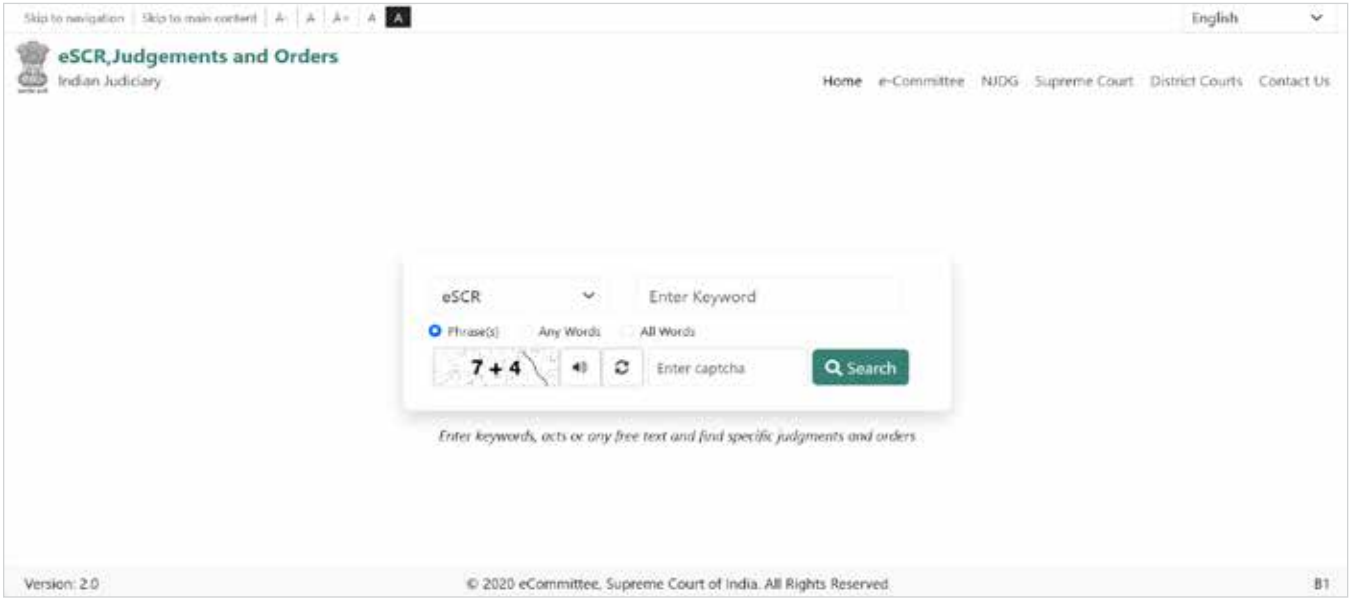
Accessibility Standards for High Court Websites: The committee developed a six-parameter action plan to ensure High Court websites are accessible. These parameters include access to judgments, cause lists, case status, contrast themes, text resizing, and screen reader compatibility. The e-Committee trained Central Project Coordinators and technical teams of all High Courts to ensure accessible digital interfaces and generate accessible PDFs. Most High Court websites now meet accessibility standards, with a few still working on screen reader access.

Accessible CAPTCHA Implementation: It implemented accessible CAPTCHA on all High Court websites, introducing text and audio options to assist visually impaired users.



Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Accessible Documents: The e-Committee introduced SOPs to ensure court documents are user-friendly and compatible with assistive technologies. The SOP addresses the issues of watermarks, entering content by hand, improper placement of stamps, and inaccessible pagination of files.

Judgment Search Portal: The committee launched a Judgment Search Portal, which provides access to over 37,000 Supreme Court judgments and 1.56 million High Court judgments. The portal supports multiple languages, advanced search tools, and accessible navigation.



Accessible Websites: Both the e-Committee and e-Courts websites now meet accessibility standards, enhancing their usability for all users. The e-Committee webpage is created on the S3WaaS platform, which complies with the standards for making websites accessible for persons with disabilities.



Digital Accessibility Training for Judicial Officers and Court Staff: The e-Committee conducted the Pan India Digital Accessibility ICT Training that covered various assistive technologies, including screen readers, magnifying software, optical character recognition tools, refreshable braille displays, braille notetakers, and assistive mobile applications. It was conducted for 558 visually impaired judicial officers and staff in 28 batches, in five zones at IIPA, New Delhi, Delhi Judicial Academy, Kerala Judicial Academy, Tamil Nadu State Judicial Academy, and Karnataka Judicial Academy through the special educators from the National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) and the National Association for the Blind, India (NAB).





Capacity Building for Advocates: The e-Committee conducted capacity-building training on accessibility for the advocates to encourage the adoption of accessible filing practices and court documents.

National Recognition: In recognition of these efforts, the e-Committee received the National Award for Institutions Engaged in Empowering Persons with Disabilities, 2021, for its performance as "Sarvshrestha Sugamya Yatayat ke Sadahan/ Soochana Evam Sanchar Prodyogiki" by the Hon'ble President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, at a function held at Vigyan Bhawan on 3 December 2022. This award highlights its impactful contributions to making the judicial system more inclusive.


GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NATIONAL AWARD FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN) - 2021

THIS NATIONAL AWARD IS GIVEN TO

E-Committee, Supreme Court of India

IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

(Contributors: R Arulmozhiselvi, District Judge/ Member, Human Resources, and Bharat Beniwal, Law Clerk, e-Committee, Supreme Court of India)

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Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan
at Supreme Court of India

The AYUSH Holistic Wellness Centre at the Supreme Court of India hosted the "Prakriti Parikshan" initiative under the Ministry of AYUSH's nationwide campaign, "Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan", from 11-24 December 2024.

The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) conducted comprehensive Prakriti assessments at the Centre, located on the Ground Floor of Block-E, Administrative Buildings Complex. Officers and staff of the Registry, along with visitors to the Supreme Court premises, participated in this health-focused initiative. Participants were guided through the principles of Ayurveda and received personalised insights into their Prakriti, as well as practical recommendations for lifestyle and dietary adjustments to enhance their well-being.



❑ ❑ ❑

Events and Conferences





Justice Amanullah attends the inauguration of the Ahmadi Foundation with its Inaugural Lecture on "Secularism and the Indian Constitution" by Justice R. F. Nariman (Retd.) and book launch of "The Fearless Judge", a biography of Former Chief Justice A. M. Ahmadi, at Imperial Hotel, New Delhi on 5 December 2024



Justice B. R. Gavai delivers a lecture on the topic "Fali Nariman's Role in Shaping Constitutional Jurisprudence" at the Bombay High Court Lawns, organised by the Advocates Association of Western India, on 6 December 2024





Justice B.R. Gavai, Justice M.M. Sundresh, Justice Dipankar Dutta, Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, and Justice P.B. Varale attend the felicitation function for Justice V.M. Kanade, who is appointed as Lokayukta for the State of Maharashtra, and Justice Ranjit V More, who is appointed as Chairman of the Central Administrative Tribunal at Bombay, at the Bombay High Court Lawns, organised by the Advocates Association of Western India on 6 December 2024





Justice B.V. Nagarathna delivers a speech on the Launch of Year-Long Awareness Programmes at the High Court and at the District Level for Gender Sensitisation and Elimination of Violence Against Women at the Madras High Court on 7 December 2024





Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice M.M. Sundresh at the cricket match for the Bhausaheb Bobde Trophy organised by the Advocates Association of Western India at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, between the Hon'ble Chief XI and President XI on 7 December 2024



Shri Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat; Justice Suryakant, Judge, Supreme Court of India; Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal, High Court of Gujarat and Shri Rushikesh Patel, Law Minister of the state of Gujarat at inauguration and foundation of various key projects aiming at Strengthening the State's Judiciary Infrastructure at the Gujarat High Court, Gandhinagar on 7 December 2024.





Justice Suryakant addresses at the valedictory session of the first RRU International Moot Court Competition, 2024, organised by the School of Criminal Law and Military Law of Rashtriya Raksha University on 8 December 2024



Justice K.V. Viswanathan and Justice Manmohan attend the Book release of 'Ramanujan's Patent Law' along with Justice Prathiba M. Singh, Judge, High Court of Delhi, and Mr Adarsh Ramanujan, author, at Judge's Lounge, High Court of Delhi on 11 December 2024

Justice Suryakant attends the International Law Conference, 2024 organised by the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh in collaboration with the District Bar Association, Amritsar at Amritsar on 14 December 2024











Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice P.S. Narasimha attend the Justice E.S. Venkataramiah Centennial Memorial Lecture organised by NLSIU, Bengaluru, at Khincha Auditorium, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru, on 22 December 2024. Justice Mukul Mudgal, Former Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court, paid tribute to the legacy of Justice E.S. Venkataramiah.



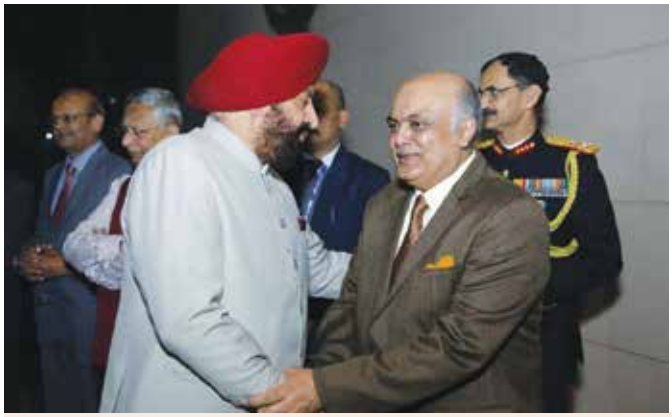
Justice B.V. Nagarathna delivers an introduction of the Speaker Justice P.S. Narasimha at the Justice E.S. Venkataramiah Centennial Memorial Lecture organised by NLSIU, Bengaluru, at Khincha Auditorium, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru, on 22 December 2024



Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice P.S. Narasimha at the Justice E.S. Venkataramiah Centennial Memorial Lecture organised by NLSIU, Bengaluru, at Khincha Auditorium, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru, on 22 December 2024



Justice P.S. Narasimha delivers the keynote address on "Reimagining Constitutional Institutions: Integrity, Efficiency and Accountability" at the Justice E.S. Venkataramiah Centennial Memorial Lecture organised by NLSIU, Bengaluru, at Khincha Auditorium, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru, on 22 December 2024





Justice Amanullah attends the Function of Corps Day of the Judge Advocate General's Department at Manekshaw Centre, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt. on 20 December 2024



Justice Rajesh Bindal attends the 19th Foundation Day Celebration and Seminar on Income Tax and GST organised by the Tax Advocates' Association of Bengal on 8 December 2024



Justice Amanullah attends the reception to mark Intelligence Bureau Day at 9, Tughlaq Road, New Delhi on 23 December 2024



Justice K.V. Viswanathan attends the 27th Convocation of the Central Law College, Salem, Tamil Nadu, as the Chief Guest, on 28 December 2024



Justice Joymalya Bagchi, Judge, High Court of Calcutta, Justice C. Hari Shankar, Judge, High Court of Delhi, and Mr Santosh Kumar, a Member of the Jharkhand Higher Judicial Service, presently on deputation as OSD (Registrar), Supreme Court of India, participate in the 'Asia Pacific Judicial Convening on Environment and Climate Law Adjudication', jointly organized by ClientEarth, Judicial Training Centre (JTC) of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law, from 2 to 6 December 2024 at the JTC, in Ciawi, Bogor, Indonesia

❑ ❑ ❑

Legal Aid

On 14 December 2024, the 4th National Lok Adalat of the year was held across taluks, districts, and High Courts in 36 States and Union Territories (except Rajasthan). The Lok Adalat facilitated the resolution of various types of cases, including compoundable offences, revenue matters, bank recovery cases, motor accident claims, matrimonial disputes (excluding divorce cases), cheque bounce cases, labour disputes, and other civil cases. Both pending court cases and pre-litigation matters were taken up and resolved during this initiative.

A total of **2,31,93,430** cases were settled, comprising **41,44,467** pending cases and **1,90,48,963** pre-litigation cases. The total settlement amount achieved in these cases was an impressive **₹19,945.77** crores.

In Rajasthan, the National Lok Adalat was held on 21 December 2024 at the High Court of Rajasthan and on 22 December 2024 in the District Courts. Various types of cases, including compoundable offences, revenue matters, bank recovery cases, motor accident claims, matrimonial disputes (excluding divorce cases), cheque bounce cases, labour disputes, and other civil cases, were taken up. Both pending court cases and pre-litigation matters were resolved, with a total of **40,62,824** cases settled, comprising **7,28,013** pending cases and **33,34,811** pre-litigation cases. The total settlement amount reached **₹1,175.64** crores.



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Training Hub

The Leadership and Team Building Adventure Camp for Supreme Court Staff Members was organised by the Training Cell, Supreme Court of India in coordination with Nehru Institute of Mountaineering at Uttarkashi from 23-27 December 2024.





Staff members of the Supreme Court participate in various activities such as trekking, mountain stream crossing, rappelling, rock climbing, and jumaring during the training camp



Staff members of the Supreme Court participate in evening tent pitching, which required physical coordination and mental clarity as teams worked together to set up their makeshift homes

This adventure camp was not merely a training exercise but a transformative journey that left an indelible mark on everyone involved and their surroundings. It was a powerful reminder that growth occurs when we step out of our comfort zones and face challenges as a team. Such initiatives transcend the boundaries of being mere events; they are profound investments in people, fostering resilience, camaraderie, and self-discovery. The lessons learned amidst the rugged mountains of Uttarkashi will resonate far beyond the camp, enriching our workplace and inspiring us to approach our daily endeavors with renewed vigor and unity.



Training Cell conducts English Learning Course, in collaboration with STEP from the Hindu Group, for Registry officials from 2-4 November and 9-11 November 2024, focusing on enhancing legal and administrative communication skills





Training Cell, in collaboration with STEP from the Hindu Group, conducts a certification test for participants of the English Learning classes held between 2 September and 11 December 2024. The test was organised in two batches on 16 and 17 December 2024

The Training Cell conducts an Advanced English Course for Registrars and Additional Registrars of the Supreme Court on 20-21 December 2024, in hybrid format. The course focused on improving articulation and communication skills, with an online self-study package provided for one month.







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Bar News Bulletin





Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Justice C.T. Ravikumar, Mr. R. Venkataramani, Attorney General, and Kapil Sibal, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, at the farewell function of Justice C.T. Ravikumar, organised by SCBA on 3 January 2025





Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice N. Kotiswar Singh at the Lawyers' of India Day 2024 Award Ceremony, organised by the Bar Association of India, on 3 December 2024



Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA) organises an online lecture on 'The Tenth Schedule: A Necessary evil' on 14 December 2024

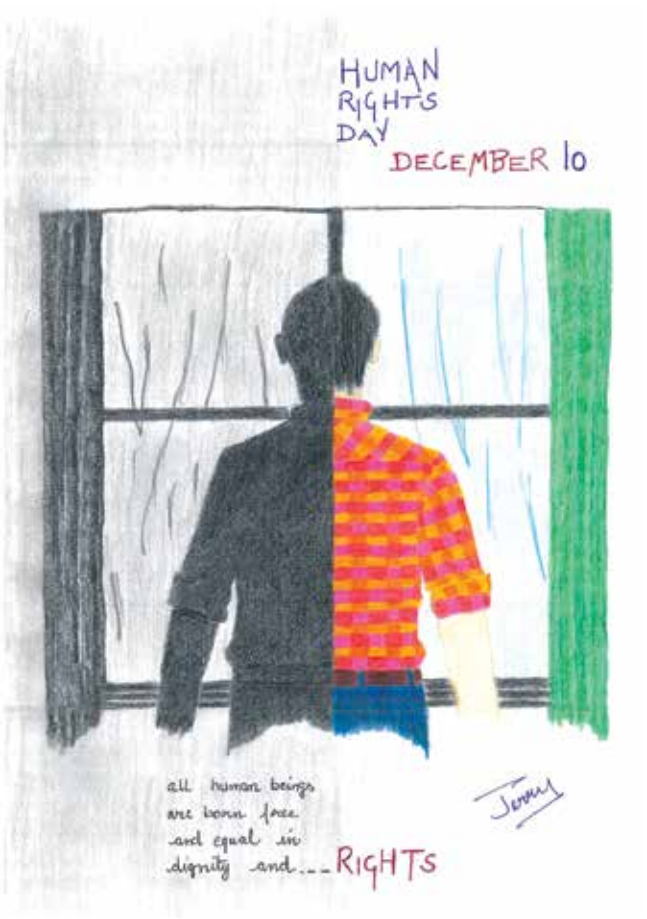
❑ ❑ ❑

Beyond the Court: Creativity Abound

Human Rights Day - December 10



— **Ankita Zadoo**, Court Assistant



— **Ankur**, Junior Court Assistant

मानवाधिकार दिवस

आजादी की हवा, सम्मान की धूप,
हर दिल में जगे, मानवता की उमंग।

न्याय का सूरज, चमकेगा हर दिशा,
हर व्यक्ति का जीवन, होगा सुखमय, निष्कर्ष।

अधिकारों का दीप, जलाएगा हर घर,
समानता का सन्देश, पहुंचेगा दूर-दूर।

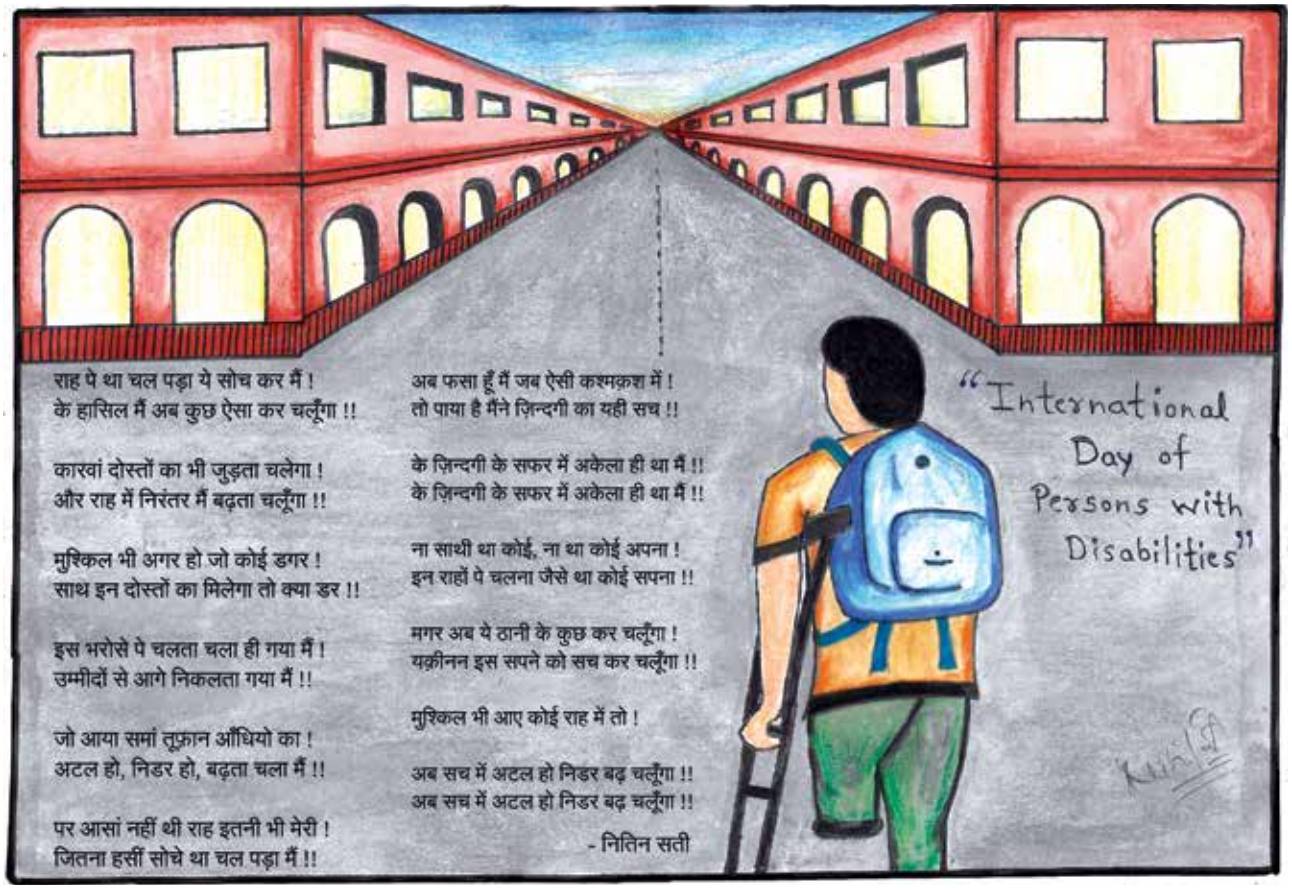
भेदभाव की दीवार, टूटेगी धराशायी,
एकता का नया सूरज, उगेगा उज्ज्वल।

मानवता की रक्षा, हमारा कर्तव्य,
हर दिल में जगे, प्रेम और करुणा।

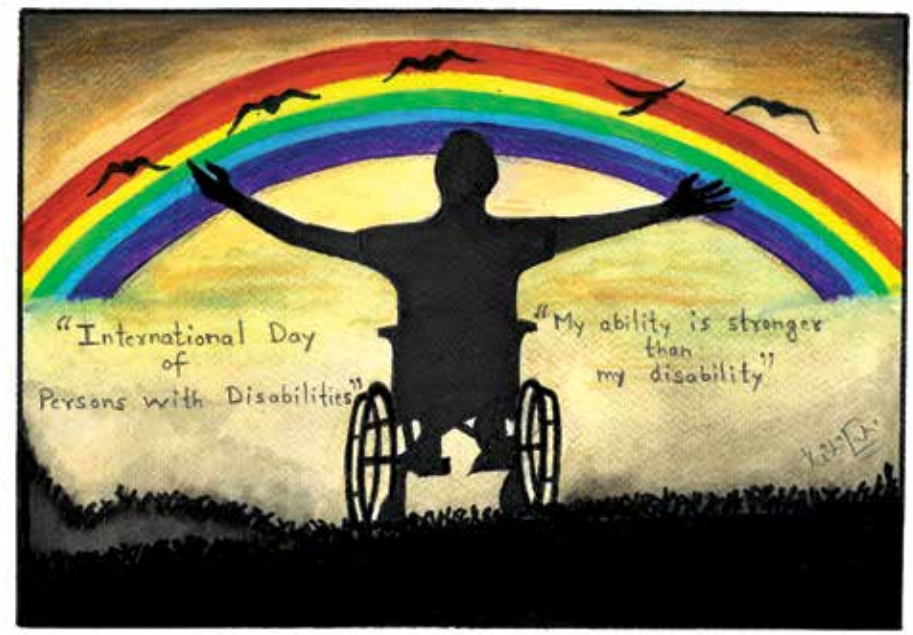
आओ, मिलकर बनाएं, एक नया संसार,
जहाँ हर व्यक्ति, जीए खुशहाल।

— **रफ़ीक़ उद्दीन**, न्यायालय सहायक

International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December 3



— **Nitin Sati**, Senior Court Assistant

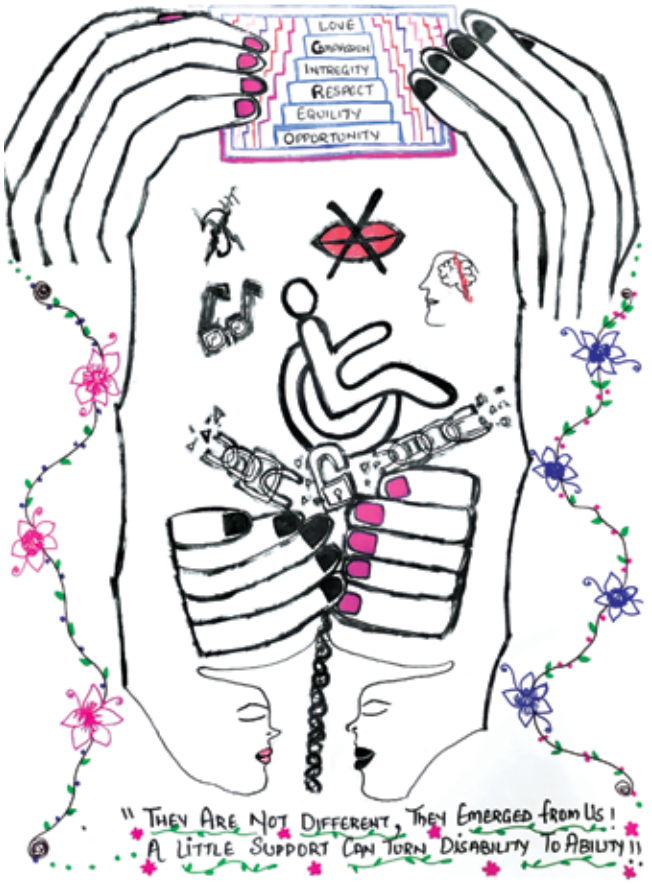


— **Nitin Sati**, Senior Court Assistant

Disability: A Strength in Disguise

A body may falter, a step may slow
but within the heart, a fire will grow
Eyes that can't see still dream so bright
Ears that can't hear still sense the light
Hands that tremble yet create with grace
Minds that soar to a boundless space
Disability isn't a prison or a chain
It's the seed of courage born from the pain
Each struggle faced, a battle won
Each day begins with a rising sun,
Limitations bend to a will so strong
Turning silence into a powerful song
For strength isn't found in perfect form
It's the soul's resilience in life's storm
Celebrate the beauty that many can't see
For true ability lies in humanity
Let's honour their journey, their unyielding fight
Their spirits shine, a guiding light
Disability is not the end, but a start
A tribute to the Human Heart.....

— **-Naina Bakshi**, Junior Court Assistant



— **Ankita Zadoo**, Court Assistant

Disability

They see her in a chair, still and wide,
A world that moves while she abides.
Yet, in her eyes, a fire burns bright,
A spirit that dances, soaring in flight.
They see him struggle, slow to rise,
But they don't see the dreams in his eyes.
He may walk with a limp, but his heart beats loud,
A warrior unseen beneath the crowd.
They whisper of limits, of what can't be done,
But they don't know the battles already won.
For in their silence, in their doubt,
They miss the strength that echoes out.
She does not need their pity or praise,
She walks her path in her own way.
He doesn't wait for their helping hand,
For he's already built his own land.
They watch, unaware of the fire they hold,
The strength in their souls, the courage so bold.
They are not defined by what others see,
For they are more than just a disability.

—**Sonia Bhasin**, Court Master

Care for Disability

For "We the people," justice must be accessible, and fair,

A right, not a privilege, for all, without a single care.

In justice's temple, grand and fair,

The Supreme Court guides with a gentle care.

A beacon for rights, pure and bright,

For "We the People," it shines with all its might.

The Registry's efforts, to implement accessible design,

Enable all, to approach the temple of justice, with dignity and pride.

With ramps and doors wide open, all can enter in

No barrier too high, no challenge to give in

Disability's diverse face, strength to behold

Empathy and kindness help hearts unfold

Barriers abound, physical, social, and systemic too,

But inclusivity is the key, to unlock a world anew.

Governments, organizations, and communities must unite,

To remove obstacles, and promote accessibility and right.

Barriers we break, societal and systemic too,

To build inclusivity, robust and dynamic, anew.

Stigma and bias we must erase,

To foster respect and equal space.

Let compassion lead, let justice thrive,

For a world inclusive, let us strive.

Disability is no limit, but strength in disguise,

Together we rise, embracing all ties.

The Supreme Court guards both land and life,

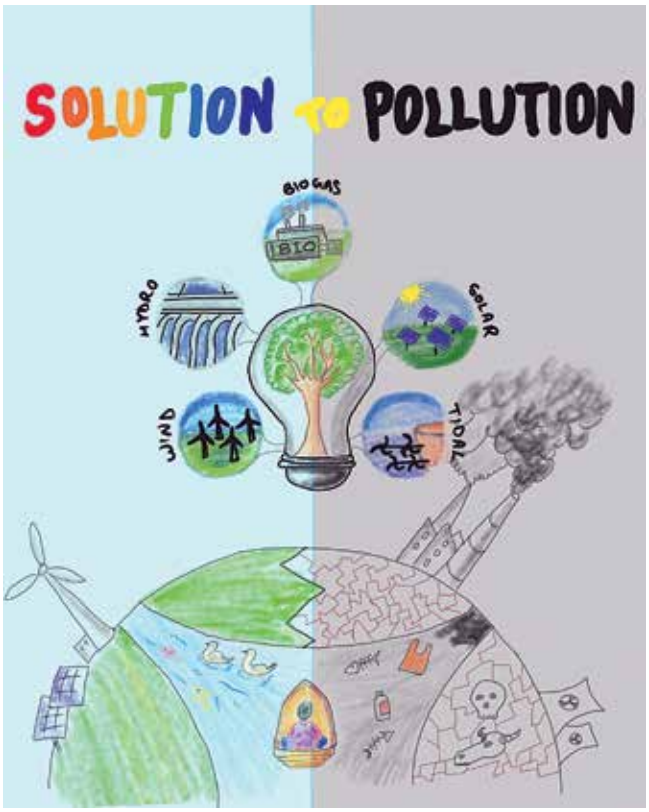
Upholding rights through justice's strife.

For We the people.., for nature, for disabled grace,

It paves a future all can embrace.

— **Manoranjan Kumar**, Building Supervisor

National Pollution Control Day - December 2



— **Mohit Kumar**, Junior Court Assistant

क्या बना वही संसार?

हे प्राणियों में श्रेष्ठ मानव, तनिक रुक कर विचार,
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

घुला जहर जल हवा में?, प्रकृति में क्यों पैदा विकार?
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

दे दिये बलिदान जंगल, सोच कर होगा कि मंगल,
क्यों खोजता अब उन वनो को?, कर चुका अपना अमंगल,

कहीं सूखे खेत बिन जल, कहीं वर्षा हो अपार,
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

जा नदी में हैं समाते, शहरों से निकले गंदे नाले,
कारखानों के रसायन ने, प्यासे पंछी मार डाले,

कुछ हुए विकृत, कुछ को दिया इस विष ने मार,
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

विलासिता का इंसान पर, जब से नशा चढ़ा है,
इस धरा का ताप, तब से ही बढ़ा है,

गरमी झुलसती, बाढ़, बारिश, असमय मौसम का प्रहार,
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

योजना बनी कागजों पर, क्यों धरातल पर न टिके?
जोश नारों का, क्यों ज़मीन पर न दिखे?

क्यों न होती साफ गंगा? धुएँ का हर पल गुबार,
जो बनानें तू चला था, क्या बना वही संसार?

प्रदूषण है अब चरम पर, समय व्यर्थ न गवायें,
इतिहास में दफन हुई हैं, लापरवाह सभ्यतायें,

संतुलित उपभोग करके, भूल, चूक कर सुधार,
पा जाएगा इस दिशा से, अपने सपनों का संसार।

—**Arvind Singh**, Senior Court Assistant

Oh Man! My Modern Man!

Oh Man! My modern Man!
what have you done
what did you learn
and what you burn
Will you fund COP with crypto gold,
And use machines to make mines fold?
Will you burn the waste in fire's light,
And cleanse it all with waters bright?
Thou fruits of nature, take with care,
Don't break the keel that lets us share.
Her gifts bestowed with grace profound,
Don't let her wounds extend or rebound.
Let Guttenburg fuel the steam engine
to realize the wise potential of woods
Let Armstrong sit with Edison
to see how power plant be should
Save some air devoid of explosion
save some soil before erosion
hold some dirtied water before it smothers
save some flora and fauna before it bothers
So mend the past, make mistakes few,
And craft a world both fresh and new.

—**Sagar Sharma**, Junior Court Assistant

वृक्ष

महापुरुष तज महल कभी, जब वृक्ष तले थे आए।
अजित हुए महावीर व्रती, तब ही गौतम कहलाए
उनके ज्ञान-चक्षु वैभव के बीच कभी न सरसे
वृक्ष तले उपजे सद्गुण, जो विश्वधरा पर बरसे ।।

योग पुरुष जिसने अर्जुन को कर्मयोग सिखलाया।
उनको भी यमुना तट पर था "कदंब वृक्ष" ही भाया
सुश्रुत, चरक, पतंजलि ने जब वृक्षों को अपनाया
दिया चिकित्सायोग, दुखी जग को नीरोग बनाया।
हुई सभ्यता विकसित तब हम वृक्षों पर निर्भर थे
कहां आधुनिक वाहन, ए.सी. और कहां ये घर थे
बढ़ा प्रदूषण, दूषित वायु, दूषित सांसें, जल है
पर्यावरण बिगाड़ा हमने, उसका ही ये फल है

ऊँचे महल बनाए हमने, वृक्षों को कटवाया ।
गया संतुलन, आज प्रकृति ने खोई अपनी काया
होता प्रलय आज टुकड़ों में, कहीं बाढ़ कहीं सूखा
नित आते भूकंप, बनाते पल में उपवन रूखा ।।

सागर ने खोई मर्यादा, जल स्तर बढ़ता है।
कहीं ठिठुरते लोग कहीं पर पारा अब चढ़ता है
अगर वृक्ष न रहे तो जग में अंगारे बरसेंगे
धरती के प्राणी सासों और पानी को तरसेंगे ।।

—**बृजभूषण खरे**, चीफ लाइब्रेरियन

Pollution: A Man-made Menace to Mankind

Once the sky was clear and blue,

With birds of all species who flew.

Swiftly their numbers are dwindling,

Pollution being the primary cause contributing.

The air we breathed was fresh and pure,

But with the advent of industrialization, the air has become impure.

Pollution has adversely affected even the quality of water,

Which has posed a serious threat to humans as well as species living in water.

The environment, so serene,

Sudden increase in cacophony has deteriorated the scene.

Soil, uncontaminated, which has been our source of food,

Release of chemicals, toxins, use of pesticides has not left the soil crude.

Time has come, together we must act,

Make the planet a better place to live in by making a pact.

Plant trees, use public transport, avoid use of plastics and make the air breezy and pure,

Reduce the use of chemicals and pesticides, properly dispose the waste and prevent the water from getting impure.

Lower the volume, reduce the usage of horn, timely maintenance of vehicles and machines creating noise,

Reduce the use of pesticides, increase the use of organic fertilizers, dispose of and recycle the waste materials and rejoice.

Time has come, together we must act,

Make the planet a better place to live in by making a pact.

—**Poulami Paul**, P.S. to Registrar



— **Komal**, Court Assistant

World AIDS Day - December 1



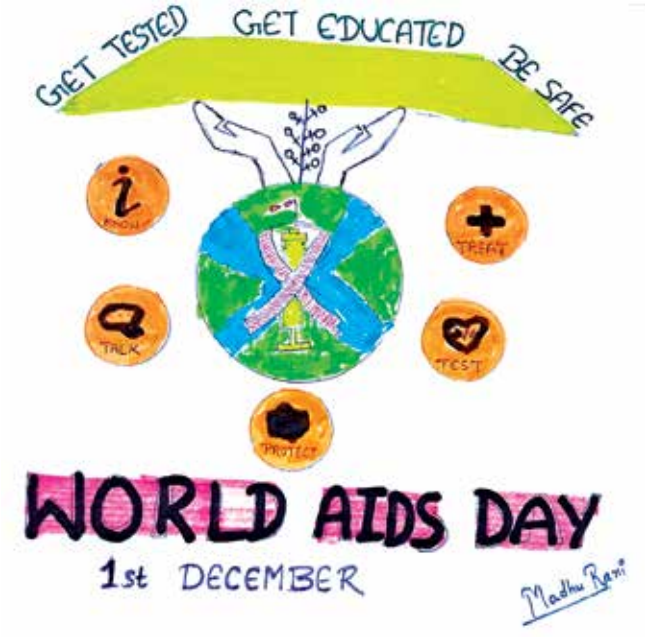
Rajarshi Sharma, *Senior Court Assistant*

World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day is celebrated every year on 1st December. The theme for World AIDS Day 2024 is "Take the right path: My health, my right!". The World Health Organisation (WHO) aims to eliminate AIDS by the year 2030. On World AIDS Day 2024, the WHO called on global leaders and citizens to speak up for health equity and help to ensure that everyone has the right to quality healthcare services in the fight against HIV and AIDS. AIDS, the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (sometimes called "slim disease"), is a fatal illness caused by a retrovirus known as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which breaks down the body's immune system, leaving the victim vulnerable to a host of life-threatening opportunistic infections, neurological disorders, or unusual malignancies. The term AIDS refers only to the last stage of the HIV infection. AIDS can be called our modern pandemic, affecting both industrialised and developing countries. When the virus was first identified, it was called "lymphadenopathy-associated virus (LAV)". In May 1986, the International Committee on Taxonomy gave it a new name, i.e., human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus has been found in greatest concentration in blood, semen and CSF (cerebrospinal fluid). Lower concentrations have been detected in tears, saliva, breast milk, urine, and genital secretions. At present, there is no vaccine or cure for the treatment of HIV infection/ AIDS.

However, the development of drugs that suppress the HIV infection itself, rather than its complications, has been a significant development. Until a vaccine or cure for AIDS is found, the only means at present available is health education to enable people to make life-saving choices. Health is a human right. Everyone should have access to the health services they need, including HIV prevention, treatment, and care services when and where they need them. Protecting rights means ensuring that healthcare is available to everyone without any discrimination, regardless of their HIV status, background, gender, or where they live. It has been observed that most HIV-infected people are suffering from discrimination within the society itself due to a lack of health education. Proper awareness is a must to ensure they are not ill-treated and can live longer with proper health care and positive motivation.

– Brijesh Singh Yadav, Building Supervisor



Madhu Rani, *Senior Court Assistant*

AIDS Epidemic: A Philosophical and Legal Conundrum

The AIDS epidemic, a global health problem, goes beyond conventional medical concerns. It dives into significant philosophical issues about human rights, individual liberty, societal responsibility, and the very existence of justice.

From a philosophical standpoint, AIDS presents a stark challenge to the concept of individual autonomy. While individual liberty is a cornerstone of many societies, the actions of individuals with HIV/AIDS can have significant public health consequences. This raises complex questions about the balance between individual rights and the collective good. Should individuals be compelled to disclose their HIV status, even if it infringes upon their privacy? Can society justify restrictions on the behaviour of individuals with HIV/AIDS to prevent the spread of the virus, even if those restrictions may seem discriminatory?

These ethical quandaries are exacerbated by the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. Fear and misinformation are frequently used to justify prejudice and discrimination against HIV- positive individuals. This stigma can have severe implications, such as social isolation, job loss, and even violence. From a philosophical standpoint, such discrimination is essentially wrong. It deprives individuals of their fundamental human dignity and breaches the idea of equality.

The legal framework governing HIV/AIDS is similarly complex and changing. Laws vary greatly between countries, reflecting different cultural and social values. Some countries have criminalised HIV transmission, whereas others prioritise public health initiatives such as education and preventive programmes.

Mandatory testing and disclosure is one of the most controversial legal problems regarding HIV/AIDS. Mandatory testing presents significant privacy and individual rights issues, despite the fact that it may appear to be a sensible public health strategy. For those with HIV, forced disclosure can have serious social and financial repercussions, including the possibility of stigmatisation and discrimination.

In addition, the criminalisation of HIV transmission presents difficult moral and legal issues. Critics contend that these regulations do little to stop the virus's spread and are frequently disproportionately applied to marginalised groups. They contend that criminalisation can discourage people from getting tested and receiving treatment, which would eventually undermine public health initiatives.

Many legal professionals support a public health-centered approach rather than a punishment-only one. This strategy places a strong emphasis on access to care and treatment, prevention, and education. It acknowledges that combating the AIDS epidemic necessitates a multifaceted strategy that incorporates social and economic actions together with legal measures.

Our sense of social justice, human rights, and striking a balance between individual freedom and the common good are all seriously threatened by the AIDS epidemic. It calls on us to create reasonable and efficient legal systems and to wrestle with difficult ethical issues.

– Dev Vrat Mishra, Junior Court Assistant

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Bid Adieu



MRS POONAM SHARMA retired in December 2024 after over 35 years of service, including 33 years at the Supreme Court of India. Joining as Assistant Librarian in 1991, she retired as Chief Librarian, also holding the charge of Director (Library) for three and a half years. She contributed significantly to the "Courts of India - Past to Present" publication, Hindi judgment translations, and managed the National Judicial Museum and Archive. Known for her leadership, which is marked by humility and teamwork, she fostered unity and a sense of collective responsibility. Her dedication, professionalism, and kind nature leave a lasting impression on colleagues and the institution.

MR RAKESH KUMAR SHARMA joined the Supreme Court in 1989 as a Junior Clerk and served with dedication for 35 years, contributing across various branches of the Registry. His notable roles included managing Special Leave Petitions, coordinating protocol for Hon'ble Judges, and facilitating domestic and international tours with cross-departmental collaboration. He attributed his success to the values instilled by his parents and the unwavering support of his family. Upon his retirement on 31 December 2024, he reflected on his fulfilling journey and cherished the relationships and experiences that enriched his career.





MR PURUSHOTTAM DUTT, a resident of Ramnagar, Uttarakhand, joined the Supreme Court of India on November 19, 1984, as a Junior Court Attendant and retired as Restorer Grade I (Library) in December 2024. Over his 40-year career, he served in various branches, including 17 years in the Listing Branch, 10 years in the Research and Development Branch, and two years in Section II B. Before his retirement, he was posted in the Supreme Court Library, where he managed the legislative team with dedication and precision.

MR DEENA NATH YADAV, a resident of Basti, Uttar Pradesh, joined the Supreme Court of India in March 1989 as a Junior Court Attendant and retired in December 2024 as Restorer Grade I in Section X. Over his 35-year career, he served in various capacities, including the Paperbook Godown, Copying Branch, and Section XVI. He was known for his hard work and commitment throughout his service.





MR JAI KISHAN, a resident of Kapashera, New Delhi, joined the Supreme Court in February 1987 as a Junior Court Attendant. After a career spanning nearly 38 years, he retired in December 2024 as a Restorer Grade I. His primary responsibilities included receiving and escorting the Hon'ble Justices of the Supreme Court and providing other necessary assistance as required. Reflecting on his journey, Mr. Jai Kishan shares that he had a wonderful and fulfilling experience during his decades of dedicated service.

MR RAM PAL SINGH, hailing from Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, began his journey in the Supreme Court on 16 December 1988 as a Junior Court Attendant. Over the course of his 36-year tenure, he has contributed to various departments, including the Judge's Residence, Section I, Section II, and the Paperbook Godown. He retired as Restorer Grade II, in December 2024.





MR RADHEY SHYAM, a resident of Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, joined the Supreme Court in October 1987 as an Assistant Halwai and retired in December 2024 as Assistant Manager-cum-Store Keeper. He served in the Departmental Canteen in the Administrative Buildings Complex of the Supreme Court and was known for his sincere service.

MR RADHEY SHYAM belongs to Mokama in Patna district, Bihar, and came to New Delhi in 1989. He joined the Supreme Court on 25 February 1994 as a Cook/Junior Court Attendant. He has since then worked with the judges and was attached to Justice B.R. Gavai in the months before his retirement. He fondly remembers former Justice Vineet Saran for his attentiveness and patience towards staff members. He retired on 31 December 2024.



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Supreme Court of India
Tilak Marg, New Delhi-110001

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