



Paris Paralympics: India bags 24 medals, ranks 13
Pg. 6

Kerala's Mullaperiyar Dam: A Time Bomb Ticking?
Pg. 5

Women's Safety: Failure of Government Initiatives
Pg. 3



INKuilab

By Shubhangi Chauhan



RG Kar Hospital Incident Fall Out: Kolkata Doctors Fear Call of Duty

Junior and senior residents of government medical hospitals voice out their concerns for safety

By Ishita Malakar & Janhvi Ahuja

KOLKATA: "A mindful deplorable mindset that often sees women as lesser beings - less powerful, less capable, and less intelligent. Enough is enough," said the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu, referring to the rape and murder case of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on 10 August. The incident has raised concern over women doctor's safety in the city as doctors express their concern over working in the hospitals. On the morning of 10 August 2024, the victim's body was found half-naked by some of the medical students at the hospital. The grave condition in which the body was found and the severity of the crime has agitated the whole country, especially the doctors and the medical students.

The *INK* spoke to some medical students and doctors in the city about the lack of proper safety measures for women in hospitals. One of the medical students from the RG Kar Medical College, on the condition of anonymity, said: "In our country women don't feel safe at night or going all alone to a deserted place but the recent case that has happened in the college campus is truly terrifying. I do not have much idea about other workplaces but one thing that I can say is that in government hospitals there are lack of safety measures for both men and women. Doctors get beaten up, assaulted by the patient party."

Speaking of the absence of safety measures, a woman resident doctor from the Calcutta Nation-



People rallying at the Nabanna Abhijan Protest, source - India Today

al Medical College and Hospital said, "There was no provision for separate rooms for male and female staff. Separate washrooms are non-existent. Ward boys frequently entered the rooms at random hours of night, disrupting sleep. Many departments lack on-call rooms entirely. Seminar rooms were our only hope for some amount of rest in these hectic and long duty hours."

She further adds, "Female interns were sometimes solely responsible for the entire ward. The fear of dealing with patients accompanied by intoxicated acquaintances is indescribable. The security incompetence was evident, relief came only in the morning with increased hospital staff."

The West Bengal Junior Doctors Front has demanded the identification of the culprits involved in the incident and to bring justice to the victim by demanding the arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits. They also ask for the identification and investi-

gation of all individuals directly or indirectly involved in the destruction of evidence and demand the resignation of the CM of the state who has failed to take appropriate actions against the offenders of the crime. With the evident failure of Kolkata police, adequate security measures and amenities for doctors working in hospitals, especially in night shifts, the government and institutions should ensure that these facilities are provided immediately.

On 14 August, the peaceful protest by medical students called "Reclaim the Night" was disrupted by a mob of political goons who ransacked RG Kar Medical College, clashing with the police and even tampering with evidence related to the crime.

As the protests continue and politics surrounding the issue deepens, it acts as a reminder that at the heart of a massive row lies a personal tragedy, a family's loss of a dream, the loss of a dream as the caregiver turns into a victim.

A post-Kolkata Case reflection: Unseen battles of India's doctors

Team INK

PUNE: A dark shadow has been cast over India's healthcare industry by the rape and murder case of a woman doctor that occurred at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, women doctors and medical students from across the country are now raising their concerns that have long been simmering beneath the surface which includes their safety, respect, and the glaring lack of security in hospitals.

Trusha Kenkre, a doctor from Goa Medical College, summed up the broader implications of this pervasive insecurity, saying: "It comes as an instinct to doctors to think about patients first, to go through the darkest of lanes for an urgent blood report or a blood pint. But now, we have to think twice. We have to wait until we find someone to accompany us. The public doesn't understand this, but the more you make a doctor feel unsafe, the longer they'll wait to take a risk for your life."

Aanchal Pandey, a medical officer at National Institute of Medical Science (NIMS) in Hyderabad, said, "Every rape shatters something within us, every rape incident leaves a dreadful scar, we might have excelled when it comes to technology but we have failed miserably in our social development. Be it Nirbhaya or Abhaya, only the name has changed, the rapes and cases of rape are continuously surging and thus we need to tap the most suitable punishment and the correct cause for the unkind fates that women face."

Continued on Page 2

INK Briefs

Prime Minister's two-day visit to Singapore

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Singapore on Wednesday for his two-day visit which will further strengthen bilateral ties between the two sides. Both the PMs will visit a semiconductor manufacturing facility which will help build a synergy between the two countries' semiconductor ecosystem.

Human Rights Commission issues notices to Andhra and Karnataka Government over 'Hidden cameras' found in girls' washrooms.

The NHRC issued a notice to the Directors general of Police and Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka regarding various incidents that were reported about hidden cameras found in the washrooms of a girls' college and popular eateries.

Andhra Pradesh Government provides the kin of 20 flood victims with Rs 5 lakh

Andhra CM Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday provided the kin of 20 people who lost their life in rain related incidents in the state with ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh, even as rescue operations continue in the state.

President Murmu inaugurated the Vishwashanti Buddha Vihar

The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the Vishwashanti Buddha Vihar on Wednesday in Maharashtra's Latur district. The statue was installed inside the Vihar and the President paid tribute to Dr. Ambedkar by offering flowers.

Compiled by Vidhi Thacker

'Indian Researchers Can Solve World's Problems'

President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Chief Guest at SIU Convocation, also lauds Symbiosis Arogya Dham initiative

By Kashifa Wisal & Disha Gupta



Many Indian and international students received awards from President Murmu.

PUNE: The President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu highlighted the importance of fostering research within the education system, asserting that the Indian scholars have the expertise and innovation abilities to address both national and global challenges. "Research scholars from India are capable of finding solutions not only to domestic problems but also to global challenges. The National Education Policy 2020 has given research a strong impetus," said the President, while addressing the 21st convocation ceremony of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in Pune on Tuesday.

Addressing the students, Smt. Murmu said, 'Nari Shakti' is

a significant source of pride and a key indicator of national development and called on all educational institutions to support and create a safe environment for women students to pursue higher education. She stressed that advancing gender equality is vital for a nation's overall progress and prosperity.

The convocation ceremony was also attended by Maharashtra Governor Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan and Maharashtra's Minister for Higher and Technical Education, Shri Chandrakant Patil, in the presence of SIU Chancellor Professor (Dr.) S.B. Mujumdar, Pro-Chancellor Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Ramakrishnan Raman, Provost Rajiv Yeravdekar, Deans, Directors, and Heads of various Symbiosis...

Continued on Page no. 4

A post-Kolkata Case reflection: Unseen battles of India's doctors

By Team INK

PUNE: Be it Nirbhaya or Abhaya, only the name has changed, the rapes and cases of rape are continuously surging and thus we need to tap the most suitable punishment and the correct cause for the unkind fates that women face."

Amisha Barupal, MBBS student, Diamond Harbour Government Medical College and Hospital, West Bengal shares the aftermath of Kolkata rape case and how it impacted her both physically and mentally. "When I heard about the incident, I got traumatized after that. We started protests in our college as well, and I was part of the protest. But, then we learnt about the attack in R G Kar Medical College and Hospital on those who were protesting... And, I just couldn't handle all these thoughts, my mind was a complete mess and I rushed back to my home in Haryana. The impact this incident has left in my mind is very deep." Ananya Tripathy, a third-year MBBS student from Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital, Odisha, shared a poignant account of her recent experience in a government hospital.

"In government hospitals, there is no security. Anybody can enter any ward at any time without any security checks or procedures," she said. After suffering a leg injury, Ananya felt vulnerable and uneasy



when a stranger approached her in the emergency ward. "Instead of feeling relieved, I felt nervous and uncomfortable for the first time."

In Guwahati, Dr. Reema Das Mallick from The Illumis Clinic reflected on how little has changed over the years. "Female doctors were never treated like male doctors; we were often called 'sisters,' and there was always a lack of safety for female students in government medical colleges," she said. Even after opening her own clinic across Northeast India, she closes it by 6 pm to ensure the safety of her predominantly female staff. "We should teach our sons how to behave rather than telling our daughters to stay back home and come back before it's late," she added.

Dr. Shruti Mehta, a third-year postgraduate student at Gov-

ernment Multispecialty Hospital in Chandigarh, echoed these concerns regarding, lack of serious safety measures in hospitals remains a significant issue. "Doctors work long hours, often 12-24 hours at a stretch, with inadequate security. There are fewer guards at night, no designated duty rooms for rest, and a shortage of CCTV cameras," she explained.

Dr Kamna Kakkar, a resident doctor from Max Hospital, Delhi, said, "My first reaction was that of absolute horror. I could feel the anger in my bones," and "Hospitals are supposed to be places which are safe and revered like temples", she added.

Dr Anjali Dave, Veterinary Doctor, PetCetera Animal Clinic, Pune - "There are a few instances which have happened especially if you are doing house calls and you're

going to people's houses, sometimes you get an uneasy feeling. People are a little aggressive so we get intimidated by their aggressive behavior, so that happens.

Dr. Naiya Nasa, a Dentist in Delhi, shades light on the situation of women doctors having a burden of professionalism on their shoulders every time - "I'm a dentist and there was a time when a male patient just caught my hand and as a woman you can sense when a person is doing something with a certain intent or is doing it otherwise. I could sense that he was trying to get away with it by his privilege so he was reported and the case was transferred. We don't take the law very seriously here as compared to the repercussions outside as they are more immediate. So here, it is a process even to bring the matter out. We don't feel that we

have the safety of the law with us in our country."

A 30-year-old resident doctor at KIMS Hospital Hyderabad stated, "Feelings of safety at the workplace can vary greatly depending on individual experiences and the specific environment. Personally speaking as a woman who comes under the minority I do fear for my safety a lot, especially since the multiple cases that we have seen as well as victim blaming... to enhance safety and prevent assaults, workplaces should enforce strong anti-harassment and anti-assault policies and regularly train employees and management on these policies. Establish confidential and accessible channels for reporting incidents of harassment or assault."

These voices from across India paint a grim picture of the challenges faced by women medical professionals in the wake of the Kolkata case. While the administration has promised improvements, the need for systemic change is urgent. Until hospitals become safe spaces for those who dedicate their lives to saving others, the fear and hesitation among these doctors will continue to cast a shadow.

(Story compiled by Krishika Dinesh Rathod and Shweta Jena; with inputs from Sidhima Choudhary, Anushka Rajvedi, Rounak Khare, Prachi Mishra, Shweta Jena, Sucheta Roy, Ira Deshpande, Disha Gupta)

India Stays Digitally United as RG Kar Rape Case leads to Social Media Outrage

Social media users point out the irony that the rape of the female doctor took place in a state which worships Goddess

By Rounak Khare & Aditi Bade

PUNE: The brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old resident doctor on August 9 in the RG Kar hospital in Kolkata lead to protests across the country demanding justice for the victim. The social media outrage continues to be in motion where netizens are targeting the lack of internal security at the premises, as well as the failure of the political leadership in this regard. While many are questioning the internal law and order over the absence of a call for action, most are focussing on the fact that if women are unsafe at their place of work, then where are they safe?

Google Trends, which depicts the real time searches made by individuals over a particular point of time, showed that 'justice for RG Kar' had the maximum hits and searches in the week following the incident, with a rating of 650%. Most social media users are comparing the incident with 2012 Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi.

Another case from Badlapur which took place not more than a week later, where two minors were raped by a worker in their school, received attention on social media following this incident, where many targetted how protecting 'Ladki Bahin' should be the priority rather

than giving out a thousand rupees, referring to the 'Mukyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana' where the Maharashtra Government shall provide a monthly assistance of Rs. 1500 to young girls and women whose family income is below 2.5 Lakhs.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has demanded that all social media platforms remove the name and photograph of the victim, which had previously started circulating online. As per section 72 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (previously the Indian Penal Code), anyone who prints or publishes the name or any information that could reveal the identity of a victim of rape or sexual assault could be punished with imprisonment for upto two years. The Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, on the hearing of the case on 20th August, asked the counsel representing CBI to not rely on social media for court arguments.

On 5th September, the Calcutta High Court directed the CBI to file a report on the offensive social media posts being spread online, noting the unacceptable comments made under the victim's photograph, after a petitioner produced copies of the posts in front of the Court. The CBI has to file the report by 18th September, in accordance with the High Court order. The PIL filed by



the petitioner stated that the CBI should be directed to investigate the cyber offenses in connection with the "unfortunate and brutal incident".

A significant trend, popular on social media platforms like Instagram and X on Independence Day, was on how social media users questioned whether this Independence Day is worth celebrating, considering how women and doctors are being robbed of their freedom. This resulted in multiple posts being circulated with captions such as "Is India really free?" or "Tryst with Destiny or Death?" along with poetry and illustrations to highlight the demand for justice for the victim.

In the aftermath of the RG

Kar rape case, an advisory was issued by a state-run medical college in Assam, which was aimed at women doctors and students, imposing behavioral guidelines such as "avoiding situations where they are alone" and to "graciously interact with the public, so that they don't attract unnecessary attention from unscrupulous people." This received immense backlash from the staff and students of the college and went viral on Instagram with people commenting on the "inherent misogyny" of the official notice as well as on the lack of focus on enhancing security. As a result, the advisory was withdrawn by the institution.

Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee on 16th August, led a protest rally from Moulali to Dorina demanding justice for the victim of the RG Kar hospital rape case.

This led to a meme fest on the internet as users asked who the CM is protesting against, considering she herself is the Health Minister as well as the Home Minister for West Bengal. The Nabanna Abhijan protest held on 27th August in West Bengal demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister, accusing the government of its failure to ensure the safety of their citizens.

On the eve of Independence Day, people across the country took part in a march titled "Reclaiming the Night" which was symbolic of women taking back their agency in the spirit of independence while denoting that they are unstoppable and can not be hindered by the inculcation of the constant fear of rape or assault.

While this initiative received support from social media users, a lot of them claimed that this isn't going to bring a change in the laws and the actions of authorities.

However, people continue to post on social media platforms seeking justice for the victim with the intent of not letting the issue get buried in the chatter and buzz of other trendy topics without justice being served.

HER STORIES

Dark Psyche Behind Rape: What Drives Certain Men to Commit Such Crimes?

Psychologists analyse the psyche and mentality of rapists and discuss their behavioural patterns

By Naysa Shrivastava & Anushka Rajvedi

PUNE: The candles were lit yet again, with people marching together, years passed by and we lost another daughter to the horror of rape.

The terror of Kolkata rape case has brought back the question, of why certain men in our society commit such offences. The tragedy on 9 August 2024 has put the nation in a state of disbelief as the 31-year old victim was found in a brutal state at the hospital she worked at. Since the years have passed on, cases of rapes have been increasing, the society is suffering, people are agitated but among all, this question remains unanswered, 'what is the psyche of these rapists?'

Over the years psychologists have tried to understand the offender's state of mind. A research conducted by National Institute of Mental Health states that, "Extensive research over more than past three decades from the west suggests that several mental health issues underlie sexual violence and offenses, particularly rape.



Neuro-biological impairments, psychiatric disorders, paraphilia, intimacy problems and others can be contributing factors to the reasoning of the behaviour of rapists."

Dr. Gomathi, a rehabilitation psychologist from National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID) said, "The prefrontal cortex of the frontal lobe is responsible for the executive functioning which if damaged hampers the

judgement, thinking and decision making capabilities of the offender."

Agreeing to this, Dr. Devashree Kalpa, a counselling psychologist said, "Any mental health issue is not about diagnosis, it's the society after all. It is political and environmental and everyone in the society plays an important role. The offenders might have witnessed normalisation of domestic violence or suffered from a childhood trauma."

A trauma counsellor, Dr. Shilpi Upadhyay also stated, "The psyche of the offender comes from his traumatic past, who might have witnessed sexual harassment in childhood and it leads to normalisation of such crimes in his mind or there's a feeling of vengeance that drives him to commit rape." According to the psychologists, offenders who commit crimes like rape are mentally impaired or might have experienced something similar that led to the normalization of such crimes in their minds. It is thus very important for people to understand the psyche of offenders as they themselves might have been the victims of such heinous crimes.

Far-fetched claims by women safety apps: Are they effectively functioning?

The INK takes a look at how efficient women safety apps are in emergency situations

By Shreyanka Nandan & Sucheta Roy

PUNE: With the increasing concerns about women's safety, a surge in usage of women safety apps has emerged. Women safety apps typically come equipped with different features like SOS alerts, GPS tracking and real time updates.

According to reports, the top 8 women safety apps in India are 112 India, My Safetipin, Sheroes, bSafe, Smart 24x7, Shake2Safety, Himmat, and I'm Safe. The promise behind these apps is simple yet powerful. With just a tap, a woman can alert her family, friends, or authorities if she finds herself in a dangerous situation. For instance, 112 India, is a comprehensive safety app launched by the Indian government which allows users to send an SOS alert with a single tap, integrating with existing emergency services.

The Himmat app, developed by the Delhi Police, sends an SOS message directly to the police control room, ensuring a rapid response. Similarly, apps like My Safetipin promises its users with real-time updates on the safety of their surroundings, using crowd-sourced data to rate areas based on factors like lighting and public transport availability. Whereas apps like bSafe and Smart 24x7, provide live tracking features, allowing users to share their real-time

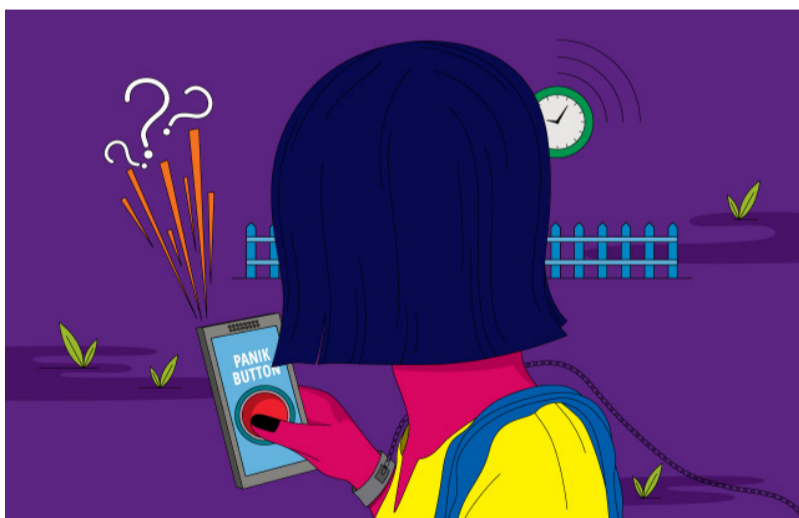


Illustration by Shruthi Venkataraman

location with trusted contacts.

Smt. Smriti Irani, Former Minister of Information and Broadcasting of India said, "We need to leverage technology to ensure women's safety. Mobile apps designed for women's safety can play a crucial role in providing timely help and support". These safety apps can be a lifeline for women who might feel vulnerable while traveling alone at night. But the real question is, do these apps truly work when women need them the most?

In Delhi (2020), a woman attempted to use the 112 app during a distressing situation involving harassment. Despite multiple attempts, she faced issues with the app not functioning properly or failing to connect with emergency services.

In Mumbai (2022), there was a case where a woman used My Safetipin to report harassment in an unsafe area. The app's crowd-sourced safety ratings and reports failed to trigger a timely response, partly due to the lack of real-time alert integration with local authorities.

In Lucknow (2021), a woman in distress used Sheroes to seek support but encountered delays in receiving responses. The app's support system faced issues in providing immediate assistance.

Similar incidents occurred in Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Kolkata, Bengaluru etc. in recent years with the apps not functioning properly when needed the most highlighting the fact that a lot of work still needs to be done in this sector.

Women Safety in India: Unfulfilled Operational Failures and Execution

Govt. initiatives for women's safety continue to face implementation challenges, resulting in NGOs bridging the gaps



Government initiatives for women's safety face implementation challenges
Source: Youthkiwaaz.com

By Sidhima Choudhary & Nethra Sailesh

PUNE: According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2022 report, India recorded a total of 4,45,256 cases of crimes against women, a significant increase from the 3,71,503 cases registered in 2020. The Government of India has implemented numerous initiatives such as 'Mission Shakti' comprising two sub-schemes: Sambal and Samarthya, focused on the safety, security and empowerment of women.

Sambal includes the foundation of One Stop Centres (OSCs), the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme (BBBP), the Women Helpline (WHL) and Nari Adalats. Samarthya sub-scheme entails initiatives like Ujjwala Homes, Swadhar Greh and Working Women Hostels, the National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers, the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and hubs for the empowerment of women.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched the One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme in 2015, a single window platform to help women affected by violence for assistance in medical, police, legal aid, shelter, and counseling services.

However, a recent investigation by the INK reporters revealed the troubling gaps in the system. Out of 733 functional One Stop Centres listed across India, several in Mumbai, Nasik, Nagpur, and Satara were unreachable or went unanswered. Whereas the Sakhi One Stop Centre, Rajiv Gandhi Hospital, Yerawada, Pune, the OSC was non-operational, a status not updated on the website.

As part of the Government initiatives, the Women Helpline (WHL) 181 was set up to provide 24-hours of immediate and emergency response to women in

distress. As per the INK reporters, the calls go unanswered due to the line being busy, with no follow up.

A Delhi-based independent organisation, People Against Rape in India (PARI), and Mumbai based NGO, SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action) provides psychological counselling, financial, medical, and legal assistance to survivors, and hosts interactive sessions to educate the public on these issues. SNEHA's 'Little Sister' application, enables community women volunteers to easily report and identify gender-based violence, making reporting cases more accessible.

Jyoti Pathania, the founder of a Pune-based NGO Chaitanya Mahila Mandal, stated to the INK, "The services offered include a broad range of actions, from emergency pick-ups, counseling, filing police complaints, providing medical support and arranging access to shelter homes." Currently, the NGO runs a shelter home 'Shakti Sadan' for victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other social issues. "Initially, we would get around 175-200 cases every year where women or girls would come stay for one night up to a maximum of three years," Jyoti Pathania said. She revealed that the organization has received no external funds for the past five years. "My experience has been that most companies don't come forward when it comes to women in difficult circumstances."

While these different government initiatives are aimed at providing a comprehensive space for women's safety towards violence, their effectiveness can often be undermined by significant operational failures and gaps in accessibility. The lack of proper administration demonstrates the need for immediate and better reforms.

POCSO Act: Impact, Relevance and Implementation in India a Decade Later

The Centre has allocated Rs 1,900 crores for continuation of Fast Track Special Courts till 2026.

By Somya Panwar & Savikalpa Thapa

PUNE: The Government of India in 2012 introduced the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. It is a gender-neutral law that deals with punishing the assaulter, supporting victims and advancing methods to catch offenders.

In 2019, a significant amendment widened the definition of sexual assault, which was previously limited to penile penetration, without taking into account the other forms of sexual acts. The amendment also made child pornography or any sexually-graphic content involving children including videos, photos or computer-generated images, as an offense, synchronizing it with the Information Technology Act. In addition, the Central Government passed a judgment on cases of sexual offenses against children in fast-track Special Courts. However there are 2,43,237 pending cases as of January 2023, raising questions about the implementation of the act against child sexual abuse.

Sanya Talwar, a legal journalist and POCSO Act expert, said, "The law is balanced and theoretically sensitive. However, additional measures of execution and its implementation can be added to the law. This will ensure it is followed in letter and spirit on ground. Additionally, creating a public database of POSCO convicts is essential.



Source - aboutislam

Everyone should have access to this portal so children can be protected or at least persons who have been convicted under the law are not employed around children."

In 2022, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), reported 38,444 cases under POCSO Act, including 38,030 female victims, 843 children below the age of 6 years and 414 male victims. Many cases go unreported as most of the time the perpetrators are known to the child,

including family members as well.

In July 2022, an initiative taken by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and National Legal Service Authority (NALSA), in order to facilitate functioning between the police and legal service authorities, launched a POCSO Act tracking portal for sharing information. Under Section 39 of POCSO Act the NCPCR has mentioned the guidelines for support persons to provide psychological, emotional and rehabilitation support to the child and their families.

Susmita Roy, a consultant at NCPCR and a criminologist, said: "As a consultant I have come across a lot of cases where abuse was seen as entitlement by the perpetrators due to the culture they belonged to. Therefore, cultural norms and attitudes towards child abuse can also influence the prevalence of the crime. While laws can help to address legal aspects of abuse, they may not be sufficient to change deeply ingrained cultural beliefs."

In the end, the effectiveness of laws depends on their enforcement. Enhanced awareness, better reporting systems, regular inspections at professional level at schools for better communication for children should be implemented. Execution of punishments with statutes under the act should be executed in order to keep the children safe in our country."

Our Reserchers Can Solve World's Problems, says President Murmu at SIU Convocation Ceremony

Continued from Page No. 1

Institution, faculty, students and parents.

In his address, Governor Radhakrishnan appealed to students to build leadership qualities to serve humanity in the future. "Today's globalisation of workplace, organisations activities seek candidates with an outstanding cultural differences unlike a few decades ago. Workplaces are becoming inclusive of all nationalities," he said. Referring to Pune's emergence as an IT hub, he added: "It's important for us to adapt to new changes coming everyday. Artificial Intelligence and machine learning can make many jobs redundant but it is also creating new jobs."

On the occasion, Prof. Mujumdar explained how Symbiosis International is differ-

ent from other universities.

"One side of the triangle is Placements and Entrepreneurship and the other side is Teaching; and then the third important side of the triangle is Moral Values, Wisdom of Power, and Wisdom of Ramayan," he said.

Meanwhile, The President appreciated the establishment of 'Symbiosis Arogya Dham', and noted that Symbiosis is operating mobile family health clinics in the villages around the campus.

The ceremony saw about 9,059 students, including 52 PhD scholars, graduating in different disciplines such as law, management, computer studies, medical and health sciences, media and communication, humanities and social sciences, engineering, and architecture and design.



A student from Nigeria receiving an award from the President. Source: PIB

Awareness Today, Safety Tomorrow: Promoting Equality to Build Safer Spaces for Students in Primary and Secondary Schools

Post-Badlapur Case: The sexual awareness schemes in schools should not only be promoted at the primary level but also at the secondary level, say teachers

By Anushka Rajvedi & Naysa Shrivastava

PUNE: Recently, many cases have come up regarding sexual violence against children. The Badlapur sexual harassment case in which two minor girls were assaulted in the school vicinity raises a question for schools about whether they have any awareness programs for women safety, and what measures are there for the protection of children against sexual crimes in schools?

These incidents have concerned parents and teachers regarding the safety of the children, especially at the school level. Mrs Minakshi S. Kumar, Principal of a school in Hyderabad, said, "The CBSE and state board has made it mandatory to spread awareness regarding women safety among students, for example, making the students aware about the concept of "good touch" and "bad touch". Even during the process of affiliation, schools have to show papers as evidence, proving that the school en-



Promoting equality and sexual awareness among students. Source- Factly

courages education on women safety and equality. When it comes to teaching staff, sub staff and parents, POCSO training is strictly mandatory."

She stressed upon the urgency of the measures in schools and said, "The mindset of each individual has to change. Explaining students about the menstrual cycle has been included in the school curriculum. However, sex education is

not included and talked about, as we live in a conservative society." She further stated, "Apart from sensitising students good touch and bad touch, the schools can open windows to discussion on sexual offences for students to understand about it and talk about it, and these conversations should be more open now. In a civilised society we have our own boundaries, but equality and com-

munication between students, especially boys and girls should be more normalised in schools. We say that the school is co-ed, but we do not practise equality. These are the areas where we, as an educational institute, could work. While private schools are working towards it, the government schools still have a long way to go to accept and work on this."

Seema Kulkarni, a CBSE school teacher, added, "The awareness about all these matters should not only be encouraged at primary level but also at secondary level, with school counsellors making them aware about menstruation, self-defence training for both boys and girls and seminars on sex education and helpline numbers, as the students by then have a developed brain and learn more from their surroundings."

While quoting the importance of spreading awareness at primary level, she mentioned, "At primary level the minds of the students are still moulding, the student will obey what is being said to him/her, so it is very important to edu-

cate them about how to respect the other gender, maintaining boundaries, asking for consent, as students at that age will listen and agree to what is being said which will help them in later stages of life."

She emphasised on educating parents, stating that, "Along with educating students, training sessions for parents should also be initiated. This will help parents to understand the mindset of their children in a better way. The children will also be able to talk about these incidents with their parents as both parents and children would be aware and could guide each other in a better way."

While schools have few provisions for the protection of children, this approach is limited to very few institutions. Until the schools remain hesitant to discuss sexual offences and educate students about these issues, such crimes will keep increasing. When schools start promoting and talking about women safety and equality only then we will be able to see a difference in our society.

Mullaperiyar Dam: Kerala's Ticking Time Bomb?

The 138-year-old Surki composed Mullaperiyar dam in Idukki district of Kerala is undergoing serious questioning on its working, durability, and infrastruc-

By **Thamanna Sadique & R. Rakendu**

PUNE: "We have been raising a very vital issue concerning our state and our people for the last several decades. But unfortunately Tamil Nadu, the principal beneficiary of the Mullaperiyar waters and even the next government at the centre have been ignoring our very genuine concern so far" said Ex-MP of Kerala, Kottayam Francis in a local editorial in 2019.

Mullaperiyar Dam, a gravity dam, is made of burned brick powder, also referred to as 'surki'. The tension struck when one of the crust gates of 70-year-old Tungabhadra dam, Karnataka, also made of 'surki' collapsed. Mullaperiyar dam serves as a source of electricity and irrigation in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

There have been discussions on safety of Keralites and concern towards increase in the water level of the dam beyond the capacity. According to an editorial written by Adv A.P Paul,



Mullaperiyar Dam is undergoing serious questioning on its infrastructure

'continuous occurrence of natural disasters caused by climate changes are one of the reasons that sabotage the security of the dam.'

After 24 years of negotiation with the then-King of Travancore, the British government was given the land to build a dam across the Periyar river. The dam was constructed by John Pennycuik between 1887 - 1895, to draw water to the Madras presidency in British India.

The agreement signed by King Moolam Tirunal Rama Var-

ma states that 'the dam is given for lease to the Madras presidency for a time period of 999 years.'

This ancient dam stands as a ticking bomb, which can potentially destroy the districts of Idukki, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kottayam and partially affect Thrissur. Visible cracks in the dam have increased the tension. The dam, a composition of limestone, surki and concrete with stone, has been washed off over time. There was consistent grouting, but the foundation re-

mained untouched. In 1979, a huge seepage was found, following an investigation of the dam under the central water commission. Locations were found to construct a new dam, but there was no further progress. The dam serves as a source of water to five states of Tamil Nadu.

There are several cracks under the surface, and change of these surface positions causes earthquakes. According to a study done in IIT Roorke, the dam won't survive an earthquake of 6.5 magnitude as it has a holding capacity of 12 Thousand Million Cubic feet (TMC).

In case of a disaster, water can reach the ports of the state within 26 minutes covering a distance of 3597 meters at a speed of 12.41 meter per second.

The water can reach Vandiperiyar within 31 minutes covering a distance of 7422 meters at a speed of 9.36 meter per second, followed by it reaching the reservoir of Idukki dam within 120 minutes. Other available dams are Cheruthoni and Kulamavu. Kulamavu dam is situated in Puliyanmala

road in Thodupuzha, near Kilivalli.

The area comprising the bus stop of Kilivalli is a filling portion. Water coming from the dam may cause it to wash away which will cause a huge catastrophe.

'Save Kerala Brigade,' is an initiative under the leadership of Adv. Russel Joy, which is portraying the seriousness of the issue in front of the authorities. Adv. Russel Joy says, "Draw a 52 km pipeline from Kakki dam to Mullaperiyar dam through penstock pipeline and decommission Mullaperiyar dam as soon as possible." He believes that making a new dam can cause the same problem after a few years. James Wilson, deputy chief civil engineer at Kerala State.

Electricity Board states "If you go to a doctor today and do a check-up, you might be fit. But there is no certainty that you will not be sick 10 days later.

Similarly, as of now, the dam is not in a dangerous situation, but that does not guarantee that the dam will stay as such for the next 10 years."

Netas with criminal cases winning polls more than ever; face serious charges: ADR report

Another ADR 2024 report claims as many as 150 MPs and MLAs from the last five years face charges of crime against women

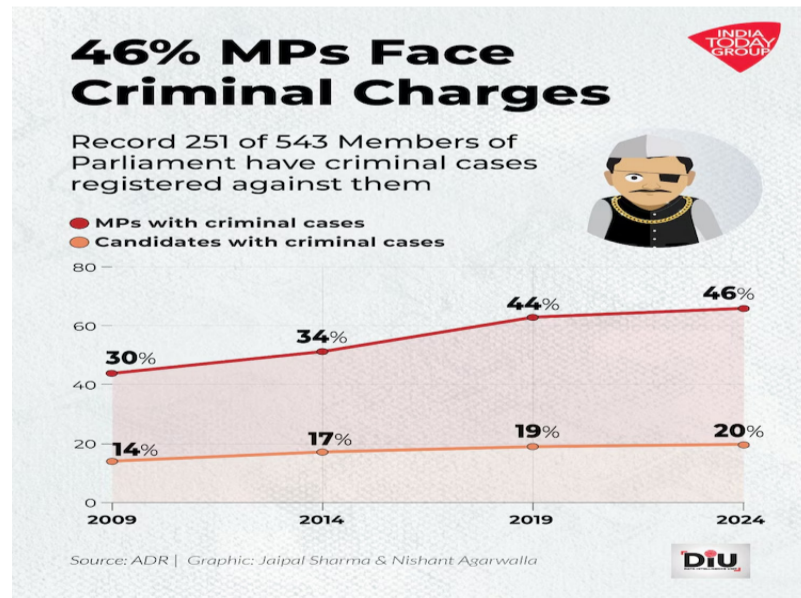
By **Ira Deshpande**

PUNE: There is a significant increase in candidates with a criminal record, including crime against women, says an Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) 2024 report. Of 543 newly-elected MPs, 251 have a criminal history, it says, about 170 have been accused of serious charges such as rape, murder, or kidnapping. 15 winning candidates have declared cases of crime against women, out of which 2 candidates have declared charges related to rape.

The ADR report titled, 'Analysis of Criminal Background, Financial, Educational, Gender and other details of winning candidates' found a consistent increase in the number of lawmakers with criminal records getting elected over the years - 185 Member of Parliament in 2014 (34%) and 233 Member of Parliament in 2019 (43%).

The data further reveals that MPs with criminal records have a higher success rate in winning seats than candidates with a clean background. Not only are the candidates with criminal backgrounds elected more often, they also get re-elected, the report noted. As of 2024, we see a 124% increase in candidates with declared serious criminal cases compared to previous terms.

Political parties including BJP, Congress, and regional parties such as DMK, Samajwadi Party, and Shiv



Number of MPs/cases reported by ADR in 2024. Source: India Today

Sena have significant numbers of Member of Parliament with criminal records. Of 240 elected BJP MPs, 39% have cases filed against them, whereas in Congress, the percentage with a criminal record is 32% among its 99 Member of Parliament according to the ADR report.

A member of the Advisory Committee to National Commission for Women, who The INK spoke to, said on the condition of anonymity: "Despite reports claiming them to be good administrators, a candidate with a serious criminal background should not be endorsed in our election, because they cannot tell the difference between right and wrong and hence, cannot be fit for gover-

nance. This is a very sensitive issue that we are facing in today's political scenario. Only a person with a moral compass can help society."

Among the five states with the majority Lok Sabha seats, i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu, the ADR's report shows Tamil Nadu having the highest number of MPs with a history of registered cases against them, amounting to 67%. The state is followed by Bihar with 53% and West Bengal with 52% of tainted lawmakers.

The ADR report also reflects systemic issues of parties continuing to endorse candidates with criminal backgrounds, possibly due

150 LAWMAKERS FACE CHARGES OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

PUNE: In another report released on 21st August, by the ADR and NEW (National Election Watch) Titled, 'Analysis of Sitting MPs/MLAs with Declared Cases Related to Crimes against Women' as many as 150 lawmakers face criminal case related to crime against women. Of 755 sitting Members of Parliament (from the last five years), 16 face cases of crimes against women. Likewise, 134 of 3938 sitting MLAs (from the last five years) have similar charges against them. According to the report., BJP has the highest number of MPs and MLAs facing the said charges i.e. 53, followed by Congress with 23 MPs, MLAs and TDP with 17 MPs and MLAs.

to their popularity and influence. With major parties like the BJP and Congress fielding these candidates, the electoral reform and accountability issue is further complicated.

After the report's release, the ADR called for political parties to exercise greater caution while selecting candidates and the need for comprehensive electoral reforms. This was done to prevent candidates with serious criminal charges from contesting elections. The ADR also pushed for faster judicial processes in cases involving lawmakers. Finally, the ADR stressed increased transparency in the candidate's criminal records and the importance of having aware voters.

INK Briefs

Ezra Frech breaks the record and wins two gold medals at the Paralympics in Paris.

American athlete Ezra Frech won two gold medals and nearly broke the world record for the highest jump, setting a new record of 1.94 meters. The 19-year-old's victory in the T63 100-meter sprint further demonstrated his dedication to encouraging disability inclusion

China's Digital TV Promise to African Villages Faces Challenges After Free Trial End

Chinese President Xi Jinping's promise to provide digital TV access to 10,000 remote African villages is nearing completion, with over 9,600 villages receiving satellite infrastructure through StarTimes. However, after initial free trials, many villagers in Kenya found the subscriptions costly, leading some to discontinue using the service, tempering China's goodwill efforts.

Ukrainian Soldiers Face Fast-Track Training as Zelensky Seeks More Military Support

As Ukraine steps up its attempts to counter Russia, soldiers—many of whom are in their 40s and 50s—are receiving expedited training in the Chernihiv region. The trainees get ready for any battle, including excursions into Russian territory, despite worries about their lack of preparation for the impending war since the post-pandemic era.

Compiled by:
Krishika D. Rathore

Duleep Trophy 2024 Raises High Expectations for Rising Cric Stars

This season emerging talents will merge with experienced players for an enthralling game.

By Prachi Mishra & Anushka Rajvedi

PUNE: India's premier domestic first-class tournament, the Duleep Trophy, is all set to start on 5th September 2024. This year's tournament will see youngsters competing keenly for places in the Indian playfield team.

The Duleep Trophy will be played on the league basis where four teams will play against each other and the top 2 positions team will play the final. The matches will be played at different parts of India. The tournament offers a chance to the youngsters to perform against the best domestic talents. It is also an advantage for the selectors to pick out players who would become a part of the national cricket team in future.

The overall expectations for this year's Duleep Trophy are high as Tushar Dutt, Assistant Editor, The Times of India, Pune said, "I have high hopes from the tournament, especially, this year as most of the A-listed players will be participating in the prestigious tournament this year. As we all are aware, the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) has made it mandatory for all contracted players to play domestic cricket when they are not part of the national team, we will be seeing many big names in the tournament this year." Many young players are participating in the tournament. Fans and cricket aficionados are excited to watch them play.

Dutt further added, "I would be keen to see the contract-

Squads	Players
TEAM A	Shubman Gill (C), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat.
TEAM B	Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant, Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy*, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohd Siraj, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK)
TEAM C	Ruturaj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abishek Porel (WK), Suryakumar Yadav, B Indrajith, Hrishik Shokeen, Manav Suthar, Umran Malik, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khamboj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (WK), Sandeep Warrier
TEAM D	Shreyas Iyer (C), Atharva Taide, Yash Dubey, Devdutt Padikkal, Ishan Kishan (WK), Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Tushar Deshpande, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (WK), Saurabh Kumar

Squads announced for year 2024

ed players in action, and some youngsters rubbing shoulders with them." This season the players are gearing up for a phenomenal start.

He further added, "I feel the tournament has been very important to prepare the players for the upcoming seasons. This marks the beginning of a new season, followed by the Ranji Trophy, which again is a good way to prepare the young cricketers play days format."

These tournaments are not just a match but an opportunity for budding players to get selected in the Indian cricket team. When

asked about the same, Dutt said, "Of course, the domestic cricketers get a good platform by playing in tournaments like the Duleep Trophy, Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and the Ranji Trophy, which are the best place to showcase their talent to the selectors. Players who do well in these three tournaments, have high chances of getting picked for the national teams for various formats."

Fans however, are eager to see who will be the 'show-stealer' this season and who convincingly puts his hat in the ring for an Indian team roster.

US Open: Fierce Clashes in Final Grand Slam of 2024

This year, the game played on hard courts is fiercer than ever.

By Aditi S Bade & Rounak Khare

PUNE: One of the oldest Tennis Championships, the US Open starts on the first Monday of August every year. It is the fourth and final grand slam of the year, being held in New York's Queens. The tournament hosts five championships: men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles.

This year, the game played on hard courts is fiercer than ever.

Along with the biggest tennis stars, it is the rising talents that makes it so competitive. The 2023 edition has kept the hopes high as it set the stage for historic wins, shocking exits and breakthrough debuts.

Djokovic, Medvedev, Sinner and Alcazar have been the hot picks this season in Men's singles category to win but third seed, 4-time grand slam Alcazar's loss on day 4 to Botic van de Zandschulp has left the fans upset also setting the narrative that sports is unpredictable. Djokovic aims to defend his title to hit an all time career high.

Coco Gauff carries America's hope as she is a home-grown superstar as well as 2023 champion. Players like Sabalenka and Rybakina are also in the race to claim the title along with Iga Swiatek, who has been dominating the season. Two-time champion Naomi Osaka had to face early exit, continuing the wait for a comeback.

The semi-finals of the tournament will see clashes between T. Fritz and F. Tiafoe in Men's singles, and E. Navarro against A. Sabalenka in the women's singles. After defeating Rohan Bopanna



Open tennis court in New York

and Aldila Sutjiadi, the atlantic duo Taylor Townsend and Donald Young will play the final against Sara Errani and Aleksandar Kovacevic in the mixed doubles event.

The Women's and Men's doubles has been a total page-turner event till now with shocking exits of Gabriela Dabrowski and Erin Routliffe and Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury respectively, wherein both the pairs were the defending champions.

Every year the US Open strives for better with new technologies and upgraded viewing experiences introduced. The meet-and-greets, interactive exhibits and fan engagements makes the tournament more awaited than ever. This blend of entertainment with professional tennis makes it a palatable deal for people.

The US Open continues to showcase the highest quality of tennis game. Keeping the tradition alive with amalgamation of modernity appeals to sports lovers worldwide. As the 2024 tournament advances, it promises nail-biting matches, new champions, competitive air and sportsmanship under the New York city lights.

Paris Paralympics 2024: India Breaks Tokyo Record with 26 Medals

With 84 players competing in 12 sports - its largest contingent to date - India has so far won six gold, nine silver, and 11 bronze in the ongoing tournament.

By Ira Deshpande, Nethra Sailesh & Prachi Mishra

PUNE: India is all set to break its own record at the Paralympics, with a tally of 26 medals at the ongoing tournament in Paris (till going to the press). In the last Tokyo Paralympics, India had won a total of 19 medals.

India, with 84 players is competing in 12 sports at the Paris Paralympics 2024, with its largest contingent to date. The games kicked off with an opening ceremony on August 28, featuring 4400 competitors across 168 delegations.

This year, javelin thrower Sumit Amrik and shot putter Bhagyashri Jadhav represented India at the flag-bearing ceremony. The games will conclude with a closing ceremony on September 9.

From its first appearance at the 1968 games in Tel Aviv, Is-



India currently ranks 14th in the medal tally. Image: www.news18.com/

rael, India has gradually improved its performance over the years. The 2020 Tokyo Paralympics marked India's historic performance with a whopping 19 medals on its tally. With 5 golds, 8 silvers, and 6 bronzes, this showcased India's growing strength in para-sports.

India's performance at

the 2024 Paris Paralympics has been historic, setting a new record with 26 medals - six gold, nine silver, and 11 bronze. This achievement surpasses the 19 medals won during the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, making it the most successful Paralympics in Indian history.

Over two days, India won

a record 24 medals. Sharad Kumar and Mariyappan Thangavelu gave remarkable performances and achieved a double podium finish in men's high jump T6, winning silver and bronze respectively.

Another double podium went to Ajeet Singh and Sundar Singh Gurjar, who won silver and bronze medals in the men's javelin throw F46 event. Kapil Parmar is all set to play in the 60 kg Men's para judo bronze medal match against Brazil's Elielton de Oliveira.

For the 100 m T12 event, Para-Athlete Simran has qualified for the final match. Bringing more accolades to the country, Harvinder Singh and Pooja Khanna have qualified for the quarter-final match in Para-Archery.

Matches on 6th September
Dipesh Kumar (Javelin - F54),

Pravin Kumar (High Jump - T64), Kasturi Rajamani (Powerlifting up to 67 kg), Sonam Rana and Hokato Sema (Shot Put - F57), and Bhavanaben Chaudhary (Javelin - F46) are ready to contest at the finals. Sonalben Patel (Table Tennis WS3 singles) to compete at the semis. Yash Kumar (Kayak single 200m - KL1), Prachi Yadav (Va'a single 200m - VL2), and Pooja Ojha (Kayak single 200m - KL1) are set to compete in heats and Dilip Gavitt (T47) is set for round 1.

Matches on 7th September:
Navdeep Singh (Javelin throw -F41) and Simran Sharma (200m T12) are up for the finals. Jyoti Gaderia (Cycling) and Arshad Shaikh (Cycling) will perform at the road race. Suyash Jadhav (Swimming) will compete in the heats.

The tournament will conclude on 8th September, Sunday.