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# CityMatters

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International

## Nationwide Crisis in Childcare Institutions Need for Stringent Monitoring and Effective Reforms



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Reports of abuse from childcare shelter homes in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Deoria, Uttar Pradesh and, the latest, from a hostel for differently abled women in Bhopal are new milestones in a long road pock-marked with abuse and neglect. Every such incident brings in its wake an outbreak of outrage, which in due course dies down – until the next time. There is lack of systemic clean up or widespread reform.



“Institutions that are meant to protect and house children in a safe environment have completely failed to do so”, states lawyer Aparna Bhat, who is *amicus curiae* in an ongoing Supreme Court (SC) petition on the state of shelter homes for children. “Further, there is no accountability and no urgency”, said Shantha Sinha, the first head of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

Despite the Juvenile Justice Act of 2000, which mandates the auditing and monitoring of childcare institutions, it took a SC order in 2013 to begin the first-ever mapping of 9,589 homes, including observation homes, special homes and open shelters, across the country.

In the wake of reports of abuse at Muzaffarpur, the Ministry has asked Chief Secretaries of all states and Union Territories to inspect all childcare institutions in the State. The exploitation was brought to light by a Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) social audit sanctioned by the Bihar government.

The audit raised ‘grave concerns’ at not just Muzaffarpur but at 14 of the 110 institutions surveyed by TISS in Bihar’s 35 districts. 15 homes were flagged for ‘grave concerns’. Apart from Muzaffarpur, sexual abuse was not reported at all by others.

Concerns have been voiced regarding children placed in shelter homes since 2007, when a journalist, Anjali Sinha, reported that children in orphanages in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu were being sold for sex to Indian and foreign tourists. Based on her report, a public interest litigation was filed in the SC.

Almost after a decade since the apex court began hearing the matter, the case has taken several twists and turns, expanding far beyond its original mandate of Tamil Nadu orphanages to cover child rights, in general.

“We found these children had no contact with their parents, not even during vacations”, said lawyer Dipa Dixit, who as former member (legal), NCPCR, was part of that fact-finding mission.

Finally, NCPCR recommended liability, transparency and monitoring of those children who were being sent to the South from different Northeast states. Parents have a right to know where their children are being sent and ought to remain in touch with them.

“Are we really concerned about child safety...Unfortunately, as a society we have general apathy towards the poor”, says Tarique Mohammad of TISS.

This malady needs to be addressed by all of us.

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*Pradeep S. Mehta*  
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

## Magsaysay Award Winners

Two Indians Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among the winners of 2018's Ramon Magsaysay Award. The two are among six individuals declared as winners. Vatwani recognised for 'his tremendous courage' and healing compassion in embracing



India's mentally-afflicted destitute, and magnanimous dedication to restore the human dignity of even the most ostracised.

51-year old Wangchuk, is being recognised for "his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven" reform of learning systems in remote northern India. Hence, improving the life opportunities of Ladakhi youth, and his constructive engagement of all sectors in local society to harness science and culture creatively for economic progress. (Tol, 26.07.18)

## Hima Das Creates History

The start from lane 4 was not good. Athletes in lanes 5 and 6 — Australian Ellen Connolly and American Taylor Mayson, respectively — had much better start. For the first 300 m of the 400 m event, it looked like the gold will go to the American.



However, suddenly after the last turn, 18-year-old Hima Das from India surged ahead in lane 4. Das crossed the finish line in 51.46 seconds at the IAAF World U20 Championships in Tampere, Finland, winning India's first gold medal at a global track event. (Mint, 13.07.18)

## Kipling's 'If' Poem Scrubbed off

Despite regarded as one of England's greatest writers, whose poems were praised as the nation's favourites. But it appears that Rudyard Kipling has fallen

out of favour with today's generation of students, after it emerged that his 'If' poem has been scrubbed off to from the wall of the students' union, by university students claiming he was a racist.



The act aimed to 'reclaim' history on behalf of those who have been 'oppressed' by 'the likes of Kipling'. Student leaders at Manchester University of UK declared that Kipling "stands for the opposite of liberation, empowerment and human rights".

(TT, 18.07.18)

## Gold in Asian Games

Swapna Barman created history by winning the women's heptathlon title at the 18<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in Jakarta on



August 29, 2018. Swapna's triumph in the women's heptathlon is the first ever gold for India in this event at the Asiad. Wang Qingling of China scored 5954 to take silver while Japan's Yuki Yamasaki produced her personal best of 5873 to bag the bronze medal.

A heptathlon is a track and field combined events contest made up of seven events. Barman was born in Ghoshpara, West Bengal. She was born with six toes on each foot and struggles to find training shoes that suit her specific needs. (Tol, 30.08.18)

## Acute Pain or Blockage

Jaipur doctors at a city hospital while performing a complex surgery treated a patient having pain in both her hands and as diagnosed with a rare disease *Vasculitis*, in which blood vessels get blocked resulting in restriction of blood flow from *aorta* to other body parts.

Dr Rahul Sharma, cardiologist at Narayan Hospital said that a 28-year old patient from Shriganganagar was brought to the hospital having acute pain in both her hands for almost two months. The doctors, by inserting stent in both hands opened the blockages. After the surgery, the patient recovered well and was soon discharged from hospital. (DNA, 31.08.18)

## Robot-cooked Hamburger

Get ready to eat burgers made entirely by a robot. A new burger store in San Francisco (California) has done away with people and is introducing a fully automated burger making machine. The Creator Storefront restaurant will be host to the Creator robot that can grind beef, cook it to order, slice the buns, and assemble toppings.



The robot is the flagship product of the culinary robotics company of the same name. The company claims you would not be able to tell the difference between a robot made and human-made burger and that its machine actually improves on everyone's favourite junk food. (goo.gl/E6uVyy, 03.07.18)

## Curious and Unusual Signature

A Peruvian man recently got his five minutes of online fame after his curious signature went viral on social media. Instead of the typical scribble or just a simple 'X', this guy always signs his name with the childish drawing of a kitten.

The man's signature went viral after a photo of his ID next to an official police document signed by him were posted online by police in the coastal town of Huarney. He along with five other had been arrested on July 18, 2018 on charges of gun possession, and after being taken to the local police station and signed into jail. (OC, 30.07.18)

## Indo-Pak Trade Ties

Pakistan's new Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan renewed his call for dialogue and trade with India a day after it emerged that Indian PM Narendra Modi in a letter to Khan had said India was looking for "constructive and meaningful engagement" with its neighbour.

Analysts in India see Khan's comments as more of what has been said by Pakistani leaders earlier rather than presenting an opportunity for an opening for peace talks with Pakistan. Khan also thanked Indian cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu for attending his swearing-in ceremony recently. (Mint, 21.08.18)

## Anything is Possible

When faced with hardships in their lives, many people find them too challenging and give up, especially on their life dreams. But not for Gabriel Heredia. Gabriel is a 20-year-old Argentinian barber who was born without hands. Despite this, he was able to grow up happy and independent.

Moreover, he also always had the support of friends and family, never feeling discriminated at all by his schoolmates. His mother was his inspiration being a hairdresser. At the age of 14, he started working as a barber and determined that this was the profession he wanted to work in.

(OC, 03.08.18)

## Google Tracks your Movements

Google records your movements even when you explicitly tell it not to. An Associated Press investigation shows that using Google services on Android devices and iPhones allows the company to record user's whereabouts as they go about your day despite using privacy settings to prevent it from doing so.



Google stores time stamped location data when its Maps app is simply opened. Automatic, daily weather updates pinpoint roughly where you are. The privacy issue affects some two billion users of Android devices and hundreds of millions of worldwide iPhone users that rely on Google for maps or search. (Money Control, 13.08.18)

## Company Ditches Offices

eXp Realty, world's most successful real estate companies, has become famous for not investing in any actual real-estate, opting instead for virtual reality offices for its agents to interact globally. Glenn Sanford, eXp Realty's CEO and could not afford to buy/rent office space, and focussed on a system to allow his team work remotely to avert company's future crisis.

Hence, eXp Realty relied on services like Google Docs and spreadsheets,

project management solutions like Trello to help its workforce work together without sharing the same space. However, the company then built a campus complete with offices, meeting rooms, auditoriums, lounges, etc. in virtual reality. (OC, 13.07.18)

## Reviving Public Transport

Delhi government is planning to follow in the footsteps of South Korea and develop streams like Chenoggyecheon Restoration Project, a drain that was revived and converted into a natural green linear river running along the heart of Seoul.



Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal announced that the Delhi government is looking forward to close cooperation with Seoul on developing such kinds of streams in Delhi. Moreover, Delhi has a continual natural water system and there is a huge potential for pedestrianising and making urban connections along these waterways. Kejriwal recommended to civic bodies to learn the Seoul's model of disposal and management of solid wastes. (Tol, 14.09.18)

## Sick Father's Caring Child

A six-year-old girl from China's Ningxia autonomous region managed to melt the hearts of millions with her dedication to her disabled father who she has been taking care of ever since her mother left them.



Tian Haicheng, a 38-year-old man from Haiyuan County, in Ningxia, had a serious car accident. He lost his ability to walk, and was left with use of arms, which made him unable to work and support his family. His wife abandoned him and their daughter. But instead of Tian having to somehow take care of his girl, she was the one who took up most of the responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, and ensuring Tian's well-being.

(OC, 26.09.18)

## Chinese Divorcee Steals Dresses

A 50-year-old Chinese man was recently arrested by Shanghai police for allegedly stealing over 70 dresses from various local sellers during the last year. Asked why, he did it, the divorced man said that he wanted to feel like he was getting married again.

Shanghai police had received a report from a wedding dress wholesaler in the city's Pudong New Area on August 21, 2018. The woman, surnamed Wang, claimed that dozens of her dresses had disappeared from her home since the beginning of this year. She decided to alert the authorities after eight gowns from her latest batch went missing.

(OC, 20.09.18)

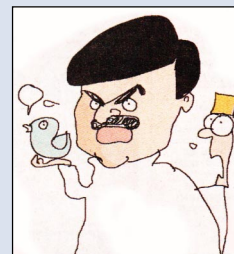
## Fur-ternity Leave for Pet Owners

A number of new parents are still fighting for adequate maternity and paternity leave in the US, but Minnesota company is taking things a step further by offering fur-ternity leave to its employees. It is exactly what it sounds like: leave from the office for new pet owners.

Unlike leave for new human babies, parents at the digital marketing company Nina Hale that take fur-ternity leave still have to work during it, but they are able to complete their work at home so they can help their furball adjust to its new surroundings. (Tol, 22.08.18)

## FB Post Gone Wrong

A Facebook post of Rajasthan Cabinet Minister, Yunus Khan's son is doing the rounds. In his comment, Khan has termed Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje as arrogant and



haughty. He writes that her arrogance is valid as she belongs to a royal family. But having said that, we do have an alternative to 'Madam', the post asks. Yunus Khan is considered to be close to Raje. Neither Cabinet Minister nor his son so far has refuted the post. (ET, 10.09.18)



## Low in Ease of Living Index

The low scores in the education, health and housing categories can be attributed to poor performance of the state cities in 'Ease of Living'



index. Among the 111 cities ranked in the index, five are from Rajasthan. However, none of them appeared among the top 30 in education or health parameters. Jaipur leads the State at 49<sup>th</sup> rank across country.

Governance apparently did not make living any better and Jodhpur at national rank of 38, scored best in the State, followed by Jaipur at 64<sup>th</sup> position. Other cities fell way behind and Ajmer was at 94<sup>th</sup> position in the index. (DNA, 18.08.18)

## Cleanest Railway Stations

Tourist destinations Jodhpur and Jaipur, both in Rajasthan, have clinched the top two spots in the railway station cleanliness survey conducted by the Quality Council of India (QCI) for Indian Railways. A majority of the top stations were in Rajasthan, which comes under North Western Railway.



The survey, *Swachh Rail, Swachh Bharat*, declared Jodhpur the cleanest railway station in the A1 category, followed by Jaipur and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh). Among the category A stations, Marwar (Rajasthan) was adjudged the best, followed by Phulera (Rajasthan) and Warangal (Telangana). The stations were ranked on the basis of the audit by the QCI-trained team.

(DNA, 13.08.18)

## Fake Recovery under SBM

A gang is active across Rajasthan that is illegally collecting money from people in the name of *Swachh Bharat*

Mission (SBM). The gang is collecting money by going door to door in various cities across the State including Jaipur.

BJP councillor Dinesh Kanwant caught six members of the gang red-handed, while they were collecting money from the people in Vidhyadhar Nagar. (DNA, 29.08.18)

## Funds Needed for Safety Device

Struck by rising crime against women, a class XII girl from Kota has come up with a women's safety device that can be equipped with a wrist watch and would without Internet or data card connection send message with location navigation to the family members in moment of emergency.



The device, weighing about 500 gm is functional, but needs funding so it can be reset to nano size to adapt with watches and become practically feasible. (DNA, 19.08.18)

## No-bag Day – Weekend Joy

Students in State government schools will now have no-bag day after recess on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays. The initiative



has been undertaken as a part of the 'Joyful Saturday' programme initiated by *Samgra Shiksha Abhiyan* (SMSA). An order to this end has been issued by Shivangi Swarnkar, State Project Director of SMSA to all district education officers.

The objective is to teach mathematics, language, and environment in a playful manner. On Saturdays, the department shall conduct activities like debate, poetry recitation, story writing, acting in play and recitation of stories pertaining to lives of great people. (DNA, 01.09.18)

## Faulty Drainage System

Jaipur, which is listed under Union Ministry's smart cities continued to witness roads inundated by stagnant water like every year, after it received

an average rainfall of 40 mm, the situation on the roads was no different than previous years as they were flooded by stagnant rainwater.

Residents alleged that the condition arose as civic bodies in the state capital have neglected storm water drain system running parallel to arterial to arterial roads. Moreover, the mushrooming encroachments along the drains have become the major reason for frequent clogging as vendors dumps solid waste inside these drains.

(Tol, 21.08.18)

## Jaipur Foot Walks to Vietnam

For the first time in an eight-year-old Vietnamese, Nguyen Hien's life, he will be able to walk, jump and even dance due to his Indian prosthetic legs known as the **Jaipur Foot**. Ever since both his legs were amputated below his knees, Hien's life had come to a standstill. But in July 2018, the **Jaipur Foot** changed his world.

Recently, the **Jaipur Foot** has transformed the lives of about 500 people in the rural villages of Vietnam suffering under-knee amputations. But had it not been for the wife of Vietnam's President, this free fitment of prosthetic legs would have never been possible. (BL, 24.08.18)

## CM among the 100 most Influential

Rajasthan Chief Minister (CM) Vasundhara Raje features among the most influential people in digital government around



the world. In a survey by Apolitical, in 130 countries, Raje is the only one alongside Union Minister of Law and Justice, and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad, who features on the select club.

Apolitical stated, "We are excited to present our 2018 list of the world's 100 most influential people in digital government. It is the first of its kind to show the international spread of the field, and includes individuals from every continent". (DNA, 11.08.18)

## VAT Reduction by Four Percent

Vasundhara Raje has announced a four percent reduction in value-added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel prices. This will reduce their prices by 2.5 per litre in the State. The announcement comes on a day when the petrol prices crossed the 80 per litre mark in Jaipur, according to the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).

VAT on petrol will be reduced from 30 to 26 percent and on diesel from 22 to 18 percent, Raje announced. The decision will cost the exchequer 2,000 crore and will provide the people a relief of 2.5 per litre on petrol and diesel.

(Zee News, 09.09.18)

## Vajpayee's Feats in Textbooks

Milestones achieved during the regime of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari will be included in school textbooks in Rajasthan from the next academic session, Education Minister Vasudev Devnani said soon after Vajpayee's death.

"Major transformation and achievements during the tenure of Vajpayee will be highlighted in school textbooks. "Students should know about his great and influential leadership during Kargil war, nuclear tests in Pokhran in Jaisalmer and unforgettable contribution to the country through various programmes which took the country on the path of development", he mentioned.

(<http://allindiannewspapers.com>, 23.08.18)

## Ensuring Cheating-free Exams

The telecom operators association, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), has written a letter to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) after the Rajasthan government announced its decision of suspending Internet and data services to ensure no cheating during exams.

COAI said that the Internet services were suspended for more than fifty times in the past six months by the Rajasthan government and these suspensions were made during various examinations. Since August 2017, the Internet services were suspended for more than 140 times in the State.

(<http://allindiannewspapers.com>, 09.08.18)

## City Mayors' Learning Platform

The Asia Foundation (TAF) is implementing urban governance intervention in the State, since 2012 using social accountability approaches under "Rajasthan City Mayors' Learning Platform". This project aims to create space for Mayors to discuss common issues of Urban Local Bodies.

CUTS International in association with NITI Aayog organised a conference where experts across India, working on urban local self-governance shared their experiences. "No government can enact a rule or a law which can claim to deliver 100 percent implementation", quoted Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director (MU) of NITI Aayog who was the keynote speaker in the event.



## I Asian Woman Judge in California SC

Rajasthan has once again been glorified in the judicial area as Manjari Chawla, a native of Pragpura Gram Panchayat of Jaipur district has been appointed a Judge in San Francisco Bar Court. Manjari Chawla is the first Asian woman to be appointed a Judge by the California Supreme Court (SC).



Manjari has completed her studies from one of the world's most prestigious US Yale University. Manjari, hailing from rural Rajasthan, has raised the level in the judicial area of the State after Justice Dalveer Singh Bhandari, who was appointed as a judge in the International Court.

(DNA, 10.09.18)

## Slip of Tongue



In a classic example of 'slip of tongue', Rajasthan Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Madan Lal Saini addressed CM Vasundhara Raje as the first Prime Minister of India who has done a lot of the welfare of the farmers. The 75-year old BHP veteran was speaking at Ramdvra, Jaisalmer. This left everyone including Raje in peel of laughter. Saini is well-known for such fumbles.

(ET, 27.08.18)

## JMRC to Lease out Stations

Despite several failed attempts, the Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) is once again gearing up to increase its non-fare revenue Jaipur Metro. The Corporation has invited tenders to lease out Metro train stations to install ATMs and retail stores.

According to JMRC officials, tenders have been invited to lease out retail space for ATM machines at six stations. The JMRC has decided to lease out for five years and provide two years' extension after the completion. For the same time, applicants can deposit the tender forms till August 21, 2018.

(ToI, 20.07.18)

## Delay in the ATO Operations

The JMRC is facing delay on automatic train project, as the permission from the Commission, railway safety has not been granted. After successfully completing trial, the



JMRC will start the operation work of Automatic Train Operation (ATO) system by the mid/end of August 2018.

The role of driver, when the trial is in ATO mode will limit just pressing a button to open and close to train door at the Metro stations".

(Metro Rail News, 23.07.18)

# Urban Renaissance taking Place in the Country: Venkaiah Naidu

*Naidu recommended some measures for making sustainable smart cities, such as keeping in mind architecture, culture and nature for a better future; pedestrian paths and cycle tracks; rain water harvesting; use of solar energy and recycling of urban water, among others*



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said an urban renaissance was taking place in India with increased realisation among the people about culture, tradition, rule of law, transparency, accountability and innovation.

Speaking at the inauguration of **Smart City Expo India 2018**, Naidu said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Smart City Mission' of making 100 smart cities in India will act as lighthouses and inspire and motivate other cities in India as well as across the globe.

"65 percent of India's population is below the age of 35 years, giving the country a huge demographic dividend. The youth of India needs to reform, perform and transform to accelerate urban renewal", he said.

Naidu also suggested some measures for making sustainable smart cities, such as keeping in mind architecture, culture and nature for a better future; pedestrian paths and cycle tracks; rain water harvesting; use of solar energy and recycling of urban water, among others.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for housing and urban affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said that Smart City Mission is one of the flagship programmes of the Prime Minister. It follows a three-pronged approach – poverty alleviation, affordable housing and cleanliness on the first level, water supply and Ease of Living on second and third levels respectively. Puri

said at present 433 smart city projects worth 7,958 crore have been completed in the country.

Furthermore, over 800 projects worth 32,500 crore are being implemented. 48 out of the 100 smart city projects in India are based on the public private partnership (PPP) model, he added. The Governor of South Australia Hieu Van Le AC, who was also present at the event, said that smart city mission is a giant step toward improving the quality of life for millions in the country.

He said that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Rajasthan Government and South Australia last year for smart city initiatives. Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Arun Chaturvedi said a smart city must have robust government structures, sufficient outlets for recreation as well as sustainable mass transportation.

"The four smart cities in the state have in place special purpose vehicles (SPVs). The Jaipur SPV – Jaipur Smart City Ltd. – is working on three primary verticals – waste management, water management and energy management", Chaturvedi added. Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) Commissioner Vaibhav Galriya said delegates from more than 20 countries participated at the Smart City Expo to make it a success.

*This has been abridged from news published in Hindustan Times on September 27, 2018*



Sources: BL: The Hindu Business Line; DNA: Daily News and Analysis; ET: The Economic Times; OC: OddityCentral; ToI: Times of India; TT: The Telegraph

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