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CityMatters

Enough is Enough: The Persistent Threat to Female's Safety



India, a country renowned for its cultural diversity and rich heritage, has been grappling with an alarming issue: the safety and respect of its women. Despite significant strides in various fields, the nation continues to be plagued by disturbing rates of sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination against women.

The cases of Abhaya and Nirbhaya, two young women who were brutally raped and murdered, have left an indelible mark on the nation's conscience.



The rape of the young doctor in Kolkata has brought to the forefront the pervasive threat faced by women in India. The brutal nature of the crime, which perhaps involved multiple assailants, has sent shockwaves across the country. The incident has reignited calls for justice and raised questions about the effectiveness of measures to prevent such heinous acts.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the number of crimes against women has been on the rise in recent years. 31,677 rape cases were registered across the country, or an average of 86 cases daily. Cases of rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence continue to dominate headlines, sparking widespread outrage and calls for stricter measures to protect women's rights.



www.google.com

While the government has implemented various initiatives to address the issue of women's safety, including the Nirbhaya Fund and the establishment of women's police stations, much remains to be done. The deep-rooted societal attitudes and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination must be challenged and changed.

What's even worse is the rape of infants which is mostly done by neighbours, family members, or fathers. The perpetrators of these crimes must face the harshest possible punishment which should send a strong message throughout society.

The death penalty, while a controversial measure, should be considered in cases of extreme brutality and where there is no possibility of rehabilitation. The state must send a strong message that such acts will not be tolerated and that justice will be served.

The safety and well-being of females cannot be compromised. It is a fundamental human right that must be protected at all costs.

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Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

City Briefs

Parking with First E-vehicle Charging Facility

The new underground parking complex at Rambagh Golf Club in Jaipur will have 530 car and 280



bike spaces, with bays for 100 electric vehicles and charging facilities. This development is expected to decongest Bhagwan Das Road and provide convenient parking for major events at SMS Stadium, easing traffic in the area.

(Tol, 11.04.24)

Sell scrap with JMC-Heritage's new mobile app

JMC-Heritage has introduced 'Recycle Jaipur', a mobile app enabling residents to sell household scrap for recycling. It covers items like e-waste, appliances, books, and newspapers. A ₹30 service fee applies, waived for higher-value items. Collected waste is segregated and sent to recycling plants for processing.

(Tol, 30.05.24)

Repair Potholed roads: RSHRC to Authorities

Prolonged rainfall has severely damaged Jaipur's roads, prompting civic engineers to predict that repairs may not be completed by



Diwali. Restoration efforts are being prioritised ahead of the 'Rising Rajasthan' summit in November, but ongoing rains may further delay progress, particularly for major city roads under various agencies.

(Tol, 14.09.24)

Rajasthan's Denial of Relief

The Congress accused the BJP government in Rajasthan of retracting Prime Minister Modi's promises by discontinuing reliefs, including a scheme offering 100 units of free electricity to domestic consumers. Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot highlighted that this decision would affect around 30 lakh consumers, contrasting with the Congress regime's relief to 1.04 crore consumers. (TH, 13.06.24)



Rajasthan Farmers Rue Water Crisis

Farmers in Rajasthan remain frustrated by a severe water crisis, inadequate MSP for crops, and



costly diesel and crop insurance, despite agriculture's significant contribution to the state's economy. Political promises, such as the Eastern Region Canal Project, remain unfulfilled, exacerbating their challenges amid climate change and volatile market prices. (BL, 16.04.24)

'Price Tags' on Foreign Women

A viral video of a man placing "price tags" on foreign women in Jaipur sparked outrage, leading to police action. The accused, Vinod Meena, shared the derogatory video on Instagram. Authorities responded swiftly, registering a case, with Rajasthan's Deputy Chief Minister also urging strict action against the man. (HT, 25.06.24)



Jaipur ka Spider-Man

A viral video shows a man in Jaipur dressed as Spider-Man making rotis on his terrace, amusing the internet. Shared by an Instagram user and garnered over 16 million views and numerous humorous comments, including references to Marvel. Similar Spider-Man sightings have occurred in other Indian cities recently. (HT, 20.06.24)



Rajasthan Cities Lag in Air Quality

In the Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2024, Rajasthan's major cities underperformed in air quality management, with Jodhpur ranked 34th, Jaipur 37th, and Kota 42nd. The survey revealed a lack of awareness among local bodies regarding rankings, emphasising the need for coordinated efforts to enhance air quality across the state. (Tol, 10.09.24)

CUTS Pothole Initiative

CUTS has launched the "Pothole Initiative" in Jaipur, encouraging citizens to report roads in need of renovation due to rain damage. Participants can submit images of potholes, and as part of the campaign, rewards will be given for their contributions, aiming to raise awareness and improve city infrastructure. (RP, 25.09.24)



Baby Delivered Outside Hospital

Three doctors at Jaipur's Kanwatia Hospital were suspended for refusing admission to a pregnant woman, leading her to give birth near the hospital entrance. An inquiry found serious negligence. The woman's husband repeatedly sought help, but staff ignored his pleas. A similar incident occurred in Haryana, prompting another inquiry. (HT, 05.04.24)

Husband's "Dirty" Habit

A woman from Agra, Uttar Pradesh, filed for divorce just 40 days after marriage due to her husband's poor hygiene, claiming he only bathes once or twice a month. Despite his promise to improve, she refused to continue the marriage, sparking online discussions supporting her decision.

(www.News18.com, 16.09.24)

'Botched' Surgery

Rajasthan Administrative Service (RAS) officer Priyanka Bishnoi, aged 33, died after complications from surgery in Jodhpur. Her family alleges medical negligence, leading to an inquiry. Bishnoi was moved to Ahmedabad after surgery, where she passed away. Tributes were paid by Rajasthan's leaders, and her journey towards becoming an RAS officer was celebrated.



(IE, 13.09.24)

14-Hour Delay FIR

The Supreme Court criticised the West Bengal government for delaying an FIR by nearly 14 hours



after the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar hospital. The court questioned possible attempts to pass the incident off as suicide, despite police procedures and videography cited by the government. (Tol, 23.08.24)

Port Blair's New Name

The Centre has renamed Port Blair to 'Sri Vijaya Puram', aiming to shed its colonial legacy and honour the Andaman and Nicobar Islands' role in India's freedom struggle. Home Minister Amit Shah highlighted



its historical significance, including the Chola Empire's naval base and Subhas Chandra Bose's first unfurling of the Indian flag.

(Tol, 14.09.24)

India's Largest Pork Processing Plant

Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated India's largest export-oriented pork processing plant in Sivasagar. The ₹11.44-crore facility aims to boost pork exports to South Asia, support local pig farmers, and generate employment. Funded under the central Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme, it operates in public-private partnership. (Northeast News, 13.04.24)

Kolkata Court Gives Death Penalty

A man was awarded death penalty for the rape and murder of a 7-year-old minor by the Alipore District and Session Court in Kolkata on Thursday (September 26, 2024). The crime occurred in March 2023 when the people of West Bengal had erupted in widespread protests against the heinous crime.

(TH, 27.09.24)

Amini's 2nd Death Anniversary

On the second anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death, women across Iran defied hijab laws in



tribute. Thirty-four female prisoners, including notable activists, went on hunger strike, while Amini's parents were barred from visiting her grave. Protests and strikes occurred nationwide, despite continued repression by Iranian authorities. (Tol, 17.09.24)

Labourer Rapes 4 Year-Old

Goa police have arrested a 29-year-old construction worker for raping a four-year-old European



child near his residence. The child's family has been living in India since 2016 and has frequently visited Goa. In July 2024, the family moved to Goa.

(Tol, 11.09.24)

Pollution Raises Death Risk

A study by researchers, including the International Institute for Population Sciences, found that PM2.5 pollution exceeding India's



national standards significantly increases mortality risk across all age groups. The combined impact of ambient and household air pollution further heightens this risk, particularly for newborns and children, stressing the need for cleaner fuel and kitchens.

(BS, 27.08.24)

21 Cities Under NCAP

Ninety-five of 131 cities under India's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) has improved air quality, with 21 reducing PM10 pollution by over 40 percent compared to 2017-18 levels. However, only 18 cities meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Surat, Jabalpur, and Agra were recognised for air quality improvements at the Swachh Vayu Survekshan - 2024. (BS, 08.09.24)

Mutton as Prasad

The Tarkulha Devi Temple near Gorakhpur is a unique pilgrimage site where devotees offer goats as part of their prayers,



and mutton is served as prasad. With deep historical roots linked to freedom fighter Bandhu Singh, the shrine blends faith, food, and festivity, attracting thousands during special occasions.

(Tol, 29.04.24)

₹2,000 Fine for Water Wastage

The Delhi government on Wednesday directed the DJB to impose a fine of ₹2,000 for water



wastage. The move comes amid an “acute shortage” of water faced by Delhi with Water Minister Atishi accusing Haryana of not releasing Delhi’s share of water from the Yamuna River. (TH, 29.05.24)

A Man who wore many hats



K. Natwar Singh, a former Congress leader and diplomat, passed away aged 93. Known for his sharp wit, he served as External Affairs Minister and held key diplomatic roles. Singh had a tumultuous relationship with the Congress, authored several books, and was critical of Sonia Gandhi after his resignation. (ET, 12.08.24)

Woh Bhi Hamara Ladka Hai

After winning a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, Neeraj Chopra expressed gratitude for his family's unwavering support. His mother, Saroj Devi, became a focal point for her heartfelt remarks. Neeraj shared that his mother's concern over his intense training mirrors many parents' protective instincts, and he humorously mentioned receiving ghee as a gift. (Tol, 15.08.24)



Finland is the Happiest Nation

Finland was crowned the world's happiest country for the seventh consecutive year in the global life-satisfaction rankings, but a drop in living standards among young Americans meant the world's biggest economy fell outside the top 20 for the first time.

(Bloomberg, 21.04.24)

140-Year-Old Clock Strikes again

Kolkata Restorers, a citizen group, is restoring a 140-year-old clock at the Magen David synagogue, one of Asia's largest. The synagogue, blending Italian Renaissance and Baghdadi architectural styles, has



not heard the clock chime in nearly three decades. The restoration, led by specialists, is crowd-funded.

(Tol, 08.06.24)

Subhas Chandra Bose's Fact Checks

Bollywood actor-turned-politician Kangana Ranaut sparked debate by claiming Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was India's first Prime Minister, not Jawaharlal Nehru. Bose's family clarified he was elected as the Prime Minister of the Azad Hind government in 1943, not India. Ranaut's comments

received both support and criticism from political figures and historians.



(HT, 06.04.24)

Hindus Muslims Unite

In Muthuvallur, Kerala, Muslims have played a key role in renovating the 400-year-old Durga temple,



demonstrating communal harmony. Contributions have included funding, construction materials, and vegetable donations for temple festivals. This gesture continues a long tradition of religious cooperation, with both communities supporting each other's places of worship.

(Tol, 10.04.24)

Suspended for ‘Negligence’

In Uttarakhand's Udhampur district, the acting headmistress of a government primary school was suspended for negligence after a four-year-old girl was allegedly raped on campus. The incident involved three minors and took place during school hours, triggering an investigation by education authorities and police. (Tol, 08.09.24)



Nagaon: Protesters Hit Streets

A 14-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by three persons in Assam's Nagaon district, leading to widespread protests. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma assured that stern action would be taken against the culprits. Police have arrested one individual and detained another, while a search for the third suspect continues. (ET, 23.08.24)

Rajasthan Needs Power Reforms

By VP Singh & Pradeep S Mehta



Rajasthan is a leading solar power producer, contributing 28% of India's total utility-scale solar power capacity

Carrying coals to Newcastle is the closest metaphor to Rajasthan importing coal from the distant Chhattisgarh for thermal power stations in the state. What would make more sense is that Rajasthan could promote power plants at the pithead and carry power through the national grid.

Fortuitously, the coal ministry is planning such pithead plants with a capacity of 5,000 megawatt (Mw) in the coalfields of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Jharkhand with a total generation capacity of 30 gigawatt (Gw) through partnerships with public and private sector players. What Rajasthan could do is establish power plants around coal mines and auction them to the private sector for tariff-based bids. An ever-increasing electricity demand, coupled with inefficient utilities, paints a lacklustre future, underscoring the need for immediate and comprehensive reforms in the state's power sector.

Rajasthan is a leading solar power producer, contributing 28% of India's total utility-scale solar power capacity. Despite being power-surplus, the state struggles to meet its renewable purchase obligations (RPOs) due to financial issues and lack of confidence in state utilities. The state's electricity regulatory commission also needs to ensure discoms' compliance with RPOs.

Without RPO compliance, thermal power remains the major source of electricity in a state with no coal reserves. Most of its coal is transported from Chhattisgarh or imported, significantly increasing the landing cost of coal. In 2024 alone, the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam (RUVNL) is set to procure 0.4 million metric tonnes of imported coal at ₹12,780 per tonne, resulting in an additional financial burden of ₹430 crore. This expense is likely to translate into a fuel surcharge of ₹0.35-0.4 per unit for consumers.

Recent trends show a 25% increase in electricity consumption from May 2023 to May of this year. This rising demand is driven by a growing economy and climate change effects, leading to a heavier reliance on thermal power due to poor utility conditions. The interstate transmission network can be used to evacuate power from pithead plants to Rajasthan.

The Centre has approved a new power transmission scheme to evacuate 4.5 Gw of RE from Rajasthan with a financial outlay of ₹122 billion. Rajasthan aims for 90 Gw of RE by 2030, but this requires revitalising the regulatory framework governing discoms. Additionally, the Mahi Banswara nuclear power plant, proposed in 2018, and lignite-based electricity generation in Rajasthan offer promising avenues to enhance energy security.

However, despite advancements in fossil fuel technologies like the integrated gasification combined cycle, these plants fall short of RE sources such as solar and wind in terms of economic viability and environmental benefits. Therefore, a balanced approach is crucial to address both energy security and the imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If thermal power is expected to remain the mainstay of power generation in Rajasthan for the foreseeable future, the state must pursue sensible action to ensure a long-term cost-effective strategy, such as pithead plants on a public-private partnership basis, to develop resource supply chain resilience.

(VP Singh is the former Governor of Punjab, while Pradeep S. Mehta is the Secretary-General of CUTS International. With contributions by Akash Sharma and Pracheta Acharya, CUTS International)

Rajasthan Govt, CUTS International Inks Deal to Drive Economic Growth Through Trade Promotion



Jaipur, May 24 The Government of Rajasthan took a major step towards boosting the state's economic development by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CUTS International, a global public policy think tank.

The partnership aims to facilitate increased international trade and investment in Rajasthan.

The MoU was signed between CUTS International and the Rajasthan Export Promotion Council (REPC), under the Department of Industries and Commerce.

It establishes a collaborative framework to position Rajasthan as a leading global investment destination in India.

"This collaboration aims to promote industrial development and targeted investments in Rajasthan, driving economic growth and job creation through enhanced trade promotion," said Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International.

Ajitabh Sharma, Principal Secretary of the Industries and Commerce Department, highlighted the significance of the agreement, stating, "Rajasthan is set to boost trade and investment by breaking legal and psychological barriers with this new MoU."

Under the partnership, CUTS International will play a crucial role in attracting strategic investment to Rajasthan.

This includes analysing trade agreements with foreign countries, identifying regulatory reforms to eliminate investment barriers, and streamlining processes to create a more favourable business environment.

The MoU also focuses on fostering research, advocacy, capacity building, and networking opportunities to enhance Rajasthan's strategic collaborations and make the state more self-resilient in the international market.

"It is a proven theory that countries grow when their performance in international trade is also growing. Rajasthan will do more to contribute to the national economy than before," asserted Mehta.

Sources: BL: The Hindu Business Line; BS: Business Standard; ET: Economic Times; HT: Hindustan Times; IE: The Indian Express; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; TH: The Hindu; ToI: Times of India

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