

CityMatters

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Jaipur Streets in Peril Citizens Label Potholes After MLAs

Jaipur, the Pink City known for its rich heritage, is increasingly making headlines for a far more alarming reason — its deadly roads. From Malviya Nagar to Mansarovar, streets are riddled with enormous potholes, some so wide and deep that vehicles can get trapped or overturned.

The situation has reached such extremes that residents have started naming these craters after local MLAs, a bitter satire on political neglect. While initially intended as dark humour, this practice has evolved into a serious commentary on the city's governance failures. It underscores a grim truth: civic negligence is directly endangering lives.

The dangers of Jaipur's potholes became tragically clear when a female constable lost her life after her vehicle overturned in one of these deep road craters. Her death is not an isolated case. Reports of injuries from collisions, two-wheeler accidents, and even fatalities are rising, leaving residents fearful of their daily commutes. Roads that should connect neighbourhoods and markets safely have become life-threatening traps. For many citizens, every trip is a gamble.

The scale of the problem is staggering. Jaipur's potholes range from small but dangerous depressions to massive gaping holes capable of flipping vehicles. Motorists swerve to avoid them, often veering into oncoming traffic or onto sidewalks, risking collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. Even major highways are not spared, and emergency vehicles face delays navigating through these hazards. The city's growing traffic and rising number of vehicles only magnify the dangers. For residents, commuting has become a daily exercise in caution and endurance.

Citizens pay taxes expecting basic civic amenities, yet Jaipur's streets paint a starkly different picture. Temporary repairs often wear off within weeks, leaving deeper potholes behind. The death of the female constable is a grim reminder that these are not minor inconveniences but public safety threats. In fact, there are reported cases where victims have gone to court and been awarded damages as a tort action, underscoring that civic negligence has legal consequences as well.

Social media is flooded with photos of "MLA potholes," videos showing swerving vehicles, and posts demanding urgent action. Citizens are calling for regular inspections, long-term repairs, and strict accountability for municipal authorities. Political leaders must act beyond optics and address the real danger: roads that are a threat to life. Jaipur cannot continue to allow its streets to function as death traps.

It is time for decisive government action to restore safety, accountability, and trust on Jaipur's roads before more lives are lost.



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Pradeep S. Mehta

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

Pioneer Loco Pilot Retires

Surekha Yadav, Asia's first woman



loco pilot, retires after a 36-year career. A Thane resident and farmer's daughter, she joined Indian Railways in 1989 as an assistant driver, later becoming a goods driver and motorwoman.

Remembered for her courage and pioneering spirit, Yadav leaves a legacy inspiring future railway women. Her family includes her policeman husband and two engineer sons. (TH, 27.09.25)

Years Apart, Hearts Reunited

Naina, aged 58, vanished from Jaitala, Nagpur, India in 1989 while pregnant, fleeing her husband's alcoholism and abuse. Presumed dead, she lived in shelters across Bengal and Maharashtra, raising another daughter.

In 2025, with help from counsellors and doctors, she was finally reunited with her family in Nagpur. Her husband and son have since died, but her now 38-year-old daughter welcomed her. The reunion, after 36 years, was described as nothing short of miraculous. (HT, 14.09.25)

Venice Lights Up Anuparna

Filmmaker

Anuparna Roy from West Bengal's Purulia, became the first Indian to win the Venice Orizzonti Best Director Award for Songs of Forgotten Trees. Her cinema blends family memory with themes of women's agency, discrimination, and survival.



From working IT jobs to fund films, she rose to international acclaim. Roy is hailed as part of Indian cinema's new wave centring women and sisterhood. (ET, 09.09.25)

Life Lost Over Chicken

In Vanshiwala village of Amroha district, Uttar Pradesh, India, 21-year-old Reena Singh allegedly killed herself after her husband cooked chicken against her wishes.

During interrogation, Nigam admitted he cooked chicken while drunk, later finding Reena hanging. To conceal the death, he and relatives dumped the body in the Ganga. (IT, 13.09.25)

Girl Joins India U-18 Rugby Team

Sushila Koth, 17, a farmer's daughter from Bhurtia village, Barmer, Rajasthan will represent India in the U-18 Girls Rugby Asia Cup in China. Overcoming poverty,

her father even sold goats to buy her kit.

Practicing in desert dunes, she excelled, winning medals at state and national levels, including Khelo India. Inspired by mentors and family, Sushila now dreams of gold for India. Her journey motivates her village's youth, as she calls for a rugby stadium in Bhurtia. (DB, 06.06.25)

10,000 Years of Life Unearthed

A sample from Chennanur, Krishnagiri, India dated to 8,450 BCE by Oxford University, confirms



continuous human habitation for 10,000 years. Excavations revealed microlithic flakes, Neolithic celts, Iron Age tools, and medieval artifacts. This is Tamil Nadu's first scientific dating of the later Microlithic period.

Findings, including pottery, beads, terracotta figurines, and inscriptions, trace the region's shift from hunter-gatherers to agriculture and trade. Archaeologists say the discovery offers rare insight into South India's cultural and historical development. (DH, 26.09.25)

Educate Girls bags 'Magsaysay Award'

Educate Girls, a non-profit founded in 2007, has become the first Indian organisation to win the Ramon Magsaysay Award. Working across 30,000 villages, it has enrolled over two million girls in schools and supported 2.4 million in remedial learning.

The citation praised it for combating cultural stereotypes, empowering girls with education, and giving them agency to realise their potential. The honour recognises the organisation's grassroots impact, making it a beacon for social transformation in South Asia. (TH, 31.08.25)



Newborn Finds Loving Home

A newborn girl abandoned in a garbage van in Bareilly, Raipur, India has drawn at least 100 adoption requests after her miraculous recovery. Local police, doctors, and the child welfare committee were flooded with adoption inquiries, even from hospital staff.

Officials said she will first be placed in care, with adoption possible only after due legal process. The case sparked widespread compassion and hope. (Tol, 04.09.25)

Tied by Feet, Bound by Love

In Rajasthan's Nagaur district, a touching story of sibling love has captured hearts. A brother and sister celebrated Raksha Bandhan in an extraordinary way — the sister, born without hands, tied the rakhi using her feet.



Undeterred by her physical challenge, the siblings' bond beautifully reflects the true essence of the festival — love, protection, and togetherness. Their heartfelt gesture stands as an inspiring reminder that affection and devotion can transcend any physical limitation. (DB, 09.09.25)

Faiths United by Rakhi

Fifteen-year-old Anamta Ahmed from Mumbai, India tied rakhi to Shivam Mistry, whose late sister Riya's hand was transplanted onto Anamta after she lost her arm in an accident. The bond formed after Riya's sudden death in 2022 allowed Anamta a new life. The two families, bound by loss and healing, celebrated the festival together with love and acceptance. (NDTV, 09.08.25)



Yoga on the Frontlines

The Ukrainian concept of *volya* — inner will to overcome obstacles — is central to resisting Russia's war. Alongside it, yoga and meditation are emerging as powerful tools for soldiers and civilians. Programmes by the Art of Living have helped fighters find composure, adapt faster, and recover from trauma.

With thousands affected, Ukraine is scaling up yoga-based psychosocial support, making it vital for resilience and healing amid war. (Tol, 05.09.25)

Arora Family's Story beyond Words

The Arora family symbolises resilience and determination. All members are deaf and speechless, yet they live a happy, fulfilling life. Vijay Arora, a fifth-pass tailor, communicates with his wife and children through gestures, proving unity overcomes challenges.

Their journey reached a milestone when President of India Droupadi Murmu recognised their daughter's achievements at Rashtrapati Bhawan. A true



testament to perseverance, the family shows limitations never define potential and inspires others with hope. (ETV Bharat, 31.07.25)

Office Snacks Under Watch

Samosas and jalebis may still tempt office and hospital-goers, but



the Indian Health Ministry is promoting healthier choices. It has issued an advisory urging workplaces to display informative boards, highlighting high-fat and high-sugar foods.

While individual snacks will not carry warning labels, the boards will nudge employees toward healthier eating by showing the oil and sugar content of popular items. The initiative aims to raise awareness and encourage better dietary habits. (IT, 15.07.25)

Learning Knows no Age

In a world that celebrates youthful achievement, 71-year-old Tarachand Agarwal from Jaipur, Rajasthan, India has quietly rewritten the narrative of what's possible.

The retired banker has passed one of India's toughest exams — the chartered accountancy (CA) final — at an age when most people slow down. With this, he has not just added a new feather to his cap but has become a beacon of inspiration for generations. (IE, 20.07.25)

Army Hero Delivers Baby

Major Rohit Bachwala, an Army doctor, delivered a baby girl on the platform of Jhansi station, Uttar Pradesh, India after a pregnant woman on the Panvel-Gorakhpur Express went into severe labour.

Using a hair clip to clamp the umbilical cord and a pocket knife to cut it, he ensured the safe birth with help from railway staff.



Commended by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, both mother and baby were later shifted to hospital in stable condition. (NDTV, 06.07.25)

Halal-Jhatka Labels Mandatory

Mayor Somya Gurjar of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India has directed all meat shops under JMC Greater to display whether the meat sold is 'Halal' or 'Jhatka' within seven days, warning of strict action against violators. She also ordered closure of illegal and residential-area meat shops. (Tol, 30.08.25)

Checkmate to the Screen

To tackle children's growing mobile addiction, schools of West Bengal, India have launched a chess-based initiative. 55 teachers from



50 schools have been trained to engage children in chess, which experts say enhances concentration, teamwork, and calculation ability.

The second phase will expand training district-wide. This is the first such project for teachers and it will reduce mobile dependency, foster mental development, and promote healthier learning habits.

(DB, 11.08.25)

The Price of Feeding Wings

Mumbai Police registered the first FIR under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against unidentified persons for feeding pigeons near Mahim kabutarkhana, following Bombay High Court's directive to curb pigeon feeding at public and heritage sites. The court cited health risks and pollution from pigeon gatherings.

The accused, arriving on a two-wheeler, scattered grains before fleeing. Authorities will deploy officers in three shifts to monitor compliance with the ban.

(DB, 04.08.25)

Shared Names, Shared Futures

Husbands can now take their wife's surname in South Africa following a Constitutional Court ruling that declared the previous law unconstitutional for being gender-discriminatory.

The court ruled that the old law, which only allowed women to change their surname upon marriage, was a colonial import that perpetuated patriarchal norms. The ruling also gives men the legal right to hyphenate their surnames with their wives.

(DB, 14.09.25)

The Ageless Secret

Maria Branyas Morera, the American-Catalan super-



centenarian who passed away in 2024 at 117, credited her longevity to genetics and a calm, healthy lifestyle.

A study in *Cell Reports Medicine*, led by Dr. Manel Esteller of the Josep Carreras Leukaemia Research Institute, analysed her biological data against that of others and found that both genetic and lifestyle factors contributed to her remarkable lifespan.

(DB, 26.09.25)

A New Beacon of Faith

After a seven-year wait, devotees of Swaminarayan in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India were



delighted as the Akshardham Temple was inaugurated that drew thousands of locals and dignitaries.

The temple's opening is being hailed by locals and devotees from other states as a milestone in the city's iconic religious, cultural, and architectural masterpieces, as it offers a new identity for Jodhpur in faith, heritage, and tourism.

(DB, 25.09.25)

Childhood Under the Open Sky

Parents across all 50 U.S. states are encouraging children to engage in screen-free outdoor activities, such as playing in sand and riding bikes. Child development experts support this approach, emphasising the benefits of unstructured play and reduced screen time.

Such activities help children build vital skills, including social and emotional intelligence, while teaching them to manage boredom and resolve conflicts through hands-on, active experiences in outdoor environments.

(DB, 09.09.25)

Pregnancy Pays in Korea

Pregnancy in South Korea comes with significant financial perks. Indian-origin Neha Arora shared that the government provides a one-time payment of ₹2.33 lakh, covering medical checkups, medicines, transport, and delivery congratulations.

On top of this, mothers receive monthly allowances of ₹63,100 for 12 months, totaling ₹7.57 lakh. These benefits are designed to support both mother and child throughout pregnancy and the first year after birth, making it a financially attractive system.

(Mint, 11.09.25)

Duty Never Retires

In Chandigarh, India, 88-year-old retired DIG Inderjit Singh Sidhu has been manually cleaning streets for years, believing action matters more than complaints about poor cleanliness rankings. Using a handcart, he collects garbage daily, inspiring many with his commitment.



His efforts gained national attention in July 2025 when videos went viral. Business leaders like Anand Mahindra praised him, calling his work a model of civic responsibility. Sidhu's dedication proves that public service, purpose, and setting an example have no age limit.

(IE, 23.07.25)

Guarding Every Child's Journey

The Jaipur Regional Transport Office (RTO) has launched a 'Safe Travel' campaign to enforce safety



regulations in school transport vehicles. Bus operators were given a one-month deadline to install GPS trackers, CCTV cameras, speed governors, and panic buttons, along with mandatory police verification for drivers and conductors.

Around 2,000 buses have complied with the regulations, and regular road checks have now begun. (www.patrika.com, 23.09.25)

Pink City Shines Among the Stars

Rajasthan's Pink City, Jaipur, has earned a prestigious global honour, ranking fifth in the Top Cities in the World list by Travel + Leisure magazine, based on a readers' survey.



Scoring 91.33, Jaipur has been recognised for its vibrant Rajasthani culture, placing it firmly in the category of iconic global destinations.

This recognition has further established Jaipur as a premium cultural tourism hub, with tourism experts predicting a significant boost to Rajasthan's tourism sector as global travellers continue to be drawn to the city's rich heritage, cuisine, and royal hospitality.

(www.patrika.com, 22.07.25)

₹3200Cr Boost for Education

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma's proactive efforts have secured significant central support for Rajasthan's education system, with the Union Government approving ₹3,200 crore under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

The funding will significantly enhance educational infrastructure

Jaipur's Clean and Green Plogging Drive

CUTS International is leading a plogging drive along Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur, transforming civic duty into a community movement. What began as a small initiative has grown with enthusiastic participation from residents, shopkeepers, municipal staff, and Councillor Subhash Vyas.

The activity, aligned with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, highlights that patriotism includes keeping our surroundings clean. More than a one-time effort, it seeks to inspire long-term environmental responsibility, showcasing how grassroots initiatives can build civic pride and collective ownership of public spaces.



and help ensure quality, accessible, and modern education for every child in the state.

(www.patrika.com, 21.08.25)

Youth Voices in Democracy

The school education department has launched an electoral literacy initiative under which secondary and senior secondary schools will establish "Democracy Rooms," form Electoral Literacy Club Committees, and identify students turning 18 for voter registration.

Textbooks for classes 6-12 will be updated with NCERT guidance. The programme, under an MoU with the election department, will be reviewed half-yearly to prepare informed future voters.

(www.patrika.com, 22.08.25)

Jute Weaves a Greener Future

Dainik Bhaskar won first place at the Indian CSR Awards 2025 for its "Plastic Nahi, Jute Sahi" campaign in the "Best Avoid Use of Plastic Initiative" category.

The initiative promoted sustainable alternatives by distributing over 1.59 lakh free jute bags and installing 26-foot-tall jute bag structures across 13 cities.



The campaign successfully raised awareness and encouraged community responsibility, making a significant impact in reducing single-use plastic consumption.

(DB, 30.08.25)

Breaking walls to Build Order

The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) carried out a demolition drive against illegal colonies built on nine bighas of agricultural land in Gral Kalwara and Devi Singh Pura, demolishing roads and boundary walls constructed without approval. Simultaneously, the Jaipur Greater Municipal Corporation's vigilance branch acted against temporary encroachments.

Authorities have warned that illegal constructions and encroachments on agricultural land or public spaces will not be tolerated, and strict action will continue. (www.patrika.com, 01.07.25)

Smooth Roads, Drains, Safer Lanes

In a move to enhance urban infrastructure and improve public safety, the government announced a comprehensive set of guidelines aimed at developing and maintaining pothole-free roads and covered drains in urban areas.

The guidelines, issued by the Housing and Urban Development Department aim to improve urban infrastructure and ensure safer, more liveable cities. (ET, 05.09.25)

Guardians of Clean Streets

Jaipur Municipal Corporation Greater has formed a Swachhata Prahari team to prevent road littering.

Operating Monday to Saturday from 3/ pm to 11/ pm, the team will patrol city roads with two vehicles, spread awareness, identify offenders, and levy fines.

Since September 2025, the team has collected over ₹65,000 from Jagatpura and Sanganer zones. Officials are also monitoring single-use plastics and advising shopkeepers to separate wet and dry waste with two dustbins.

(Tol, 11.09.25)



Land of Wonders Rises High

Rajasthan ranks fifth among Indian states for tourism, attracting 180 million domestic and 1.7 million international visitors. The state plans an 'adopt a monument' scheme and aims to develop 1,000 model villages to diversify tourism.

The Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart will host over 1,000 tour operators and 8,000 B2B meetings, promoting new destinations and enhancing visitor experiences across the state.

(Tol, 04.09.25)

Green Wheels to the Golden Land

To boost tourism, Rajasthan Tourism Minister Diya Kumari flagged off a Jaipur-Delhi FlixBus service showcasing the state's heritage. FlixBus now promotes Rajasthan across Europe and India, starting with London. The Indian leg of the campaign was launched at Albert Hall, highlighting the state's vibrant culture to travellers.



Officials emphasised the partnership as a unique way to attract domestic and international tourists while enhancing the visibility of Rajasthan's rich traditions.

(Tol, 11.09.25)

City in Motion: Jaipur's Transit Future

Jaipur's Urban Development Department issued a draft Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policy, inviting public comments. TOD zones, within 800/ m of transit nodes like metro and railway stations, will feature mandatory mixed land use, including residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

'Intense Development Areas' near transit stations will prioritise government housing, commercial centres, and industries. The policy aims to boost public transit, reduce private vehicle use, ease congestion, and curb pollution.

(Tol, 12.09.25)

Steel Wings of Progress

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced two new Vande Bharat trains from Bikaner and Jodhpur to Delhi.



Manned railway crossings in major cities, including Jaipur, will be replaced with underpasses and overbridges.

Vaishnaw invited public suggestions for suburban station names like Jaipur-Gandhinagar or

Jaipur-Jagatpura, emphasising improved connectivity and modernisation across Rajasthan's railway network.

(Tol, 12.09.25)

Wheels of Compassion

The Bharatiya Pashupalan Nigam Limited has launched a new initiative in the field of animal care. In collaboration with Honda, the corporation has announced the launch of the country's first motorbike animal ambulance service.

The service aims to quickly reach sick or injured animals and provide them with immediate care. You can also contact existing pet ambulance services in Jaipur by calling numbers from listings on sites like Justdial or calling the helpline number.

(DB, 07.09.25)

Digital Eyes on the Road

From October 2025 onwards, Jaipur drivers will see speed limits and receive over speeding alerts on Google Maps. The initiative, launched in partnership between Google and Jaipur Traffic Police, aims to curb road accidents caused by speeding.

Real-time data from the police will update speed limits on the app. If a driver exceeds the limit, an alert will appear, and the on-screen speedometer will change colour, helping promote safer driving across the city.

(DB, 09.09.25)

Silver Screen Meets Justice Bench

Bollywood actors, Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgn, and Tiger Shroff have been summoned by a Jaipur consumer court to answer a complaint over a pan masala ad that falsely claims it contains saffron.

The complaint argues that a ₹5 pan masala pouch cannot realistically contain saffron, which costs around ₹4 lakh per kg, making the advertisement misleading. The promotion deceived the public and contributed to health risks.

(DB, 04.09.25)



India's Wildlife Parks are Thriving, But Not Always Animals in Them

Joeanna Rebello Fernandes*

Wildlife tourism is booming in India's hidden habitats, but poor regulation is leaving fragile ecosystems exposed to harmful human intrusion



A few years ago, word spread that the Malabar gliding frog in Amboli, a village in Maharashtra's Western Ghats, was being given unsolicited flying lessons. Tourists, desperate for photographs, reportedly launched the red-webbed amphibian into the air, discarding ethics along with it. Once a little-known hill station visited by a handful of naturalists, Amboli now attracts over 1,000 wildlife tourists each monsoon, a boon for locals but a strain on its wildlife.

Wildlife tourism, once confined to national parks and sanctuaries, is increasingly reaching lesser-known preserves as enthusiasts seek a broader range of species. While this generates revenue for local communities, it brings pitfalls. Many emerging hotspots lack regulations and conservation protocols enforced in protected areas, leaving tourists free to litter, bait wildlife, disturb nesting grounds, or interfere with hunting behaviour.

Amboli, dubbed the 'Cherrapunji of Maharashtra,' is home to 45 species of reptiles and amphibians, including the critically endangered Amboli toad and the Malabar pit viper. Most species are nocturnal, best spotted from June to September. "Imagine 20 people shining torches on a Malabar pit viper, then another 20," says herpetologist Varad Giri. "With all that light, how will the snake catch its prey? The habitat and the animal are both disturbed."

Giri, who described a new caecilian species in Amboli in 2003, regrets the attention he brought. "Two decades ago, I counted over 200 Malabar gliding frogs at a single water tank. These days, barely a dozen remain. Our love for nature has become a problem for nature. But tourism cannot be stopped—the local economy depends on it."

Community-led tourism has helped in other areas. At Bhigwan, a wetland in central Maharashtra, Sandip Nagare and his family guided birdwatchers to see flamingoes and other species. Tourism, amplified by social media, revitalised the local economy: guides, boatmen, and homestays employed locals who had migrated for jobs. The community and gram panchayat

established sustainable rules, such as diverting traffic from breeding grounds, creating rota systems, and reporting violations to authorities.

In Amboli, the local community also alerted the forest department to late-night tourist activity, prompting a ban after 6 pm in reserve forests. Visitors may still access the botanical garden until 9 pm, but only with trained local guides. Revenue from the garden's ₹100 entry fee supports conservation awareness and forest-cleaning drives, demonstrating that community-led conservation works best when locals benefit directly.

However, competition can undermine conservation. At Chilika Lake in Odisha, boats chase Irrawaddy dolphins for tourist photographs, despite regulations. With 600–700 motorised boats in the lagoon, the endangered species faces injury from propellers. Violations persist due to weak enforcement, and mortalities are often hidden. The 2025 census recorded 159 dolphins, only marginally more than in 2017, signaling that tourism pressures persist.

In contrast, the greater adjutant stork in Bhagalpur, Bihar, has thrived due to conservation prioritisation. Its population grew from 78 in 2007 to over 650 today, making the Kadwa-Khairpur floodplains a rare breeding site. Arvind Mishra of BNHS emphasises that tourism was deliberately limited to protect the single-colony site. "Until more colonies are established, we do not actively promote tourism," he says.

Responsible tourism, however, can aid conservation by creating jobs, diverting traffic, and boosting vigilance in unprotected areas. Mishra concludes: "Getting to know nature is good—but there's no need to insert a camera into a bird's beak."

As wildlife tourism expands across India, the balance between conservation and commerce remains delicate. Community involvement, local stewardship, and responsible behaviour by tourists are crucial to ensure that these ecosystems survive and thrive for generations to come.

**Journalist, Times of India. Abridged from an article that appeared in The Times of India on August 18, 2025.*

Paws at the Crossroads Justice, Safety, and Stray Lives in India

India is home to an estimated 1.5-2 crore stray dogs, making the issue of managing their population both a public health concern and a matter of animal rights. Over the years, rising incidents of dog bites, rabies-related deaths, and attacks on children have triggered widespread public anger. At the same time, animal welfare groups have highlighted the constitutional responsibility to prevent cruelty and protect the right to life of animals.

In this context, the Supreme Court's interventions on stray dog management have sought to strike a delicate balance between safeguarding human life and upholding animal rights.



The legal debate over stray dogs has been ongoing for decades. The Supreme Court and various High Courts have examined petitions filed by citizens seeking protection from aggressive strays. At the same time, animal welfare organisations have petitioned for sterilisation and vaccination to be the solution, rather than culling.

Most recently, the Supreme Court reiterated that while citizens have the right to live in a safe environment, stray dogs too are entitled to a life of dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court emphasised that indiscriminate culling of strays is not permissible and directed that sterilisation and vaccination under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, must be implemented in a systematic and scientific manner.

The order also mandated that state and municipal authorities bear the primary responsibility for dog population management, rather than leaving it to citizens or welfare groups alone.

The context of the order is significant. India accounts for 36 percent of the world's rabies deaths, with nearly 20,000 lives lost each year, mostly due to dog bites. In many cities, especially Kerala, Maharashtra, and Delhi, increasing incidents of attacks on children and the elderly have caused fear and resentment. Citizens have demanded stronger action, including culling of dangerous dogs. Local bodies, however, often lack the resources to implement sterilisation programmes at the scale required, leading to a cycle of unchecked breeding and recurring attacks.

The Uttar Pradesh government has ordered lifelong shelter captivity for stray dogs that bite twice, sparking debate. Supporters call it a deterrent against repeat attacks, while critics warn of overcrowded shelters and argue it violates the Supreme Court's humane approach to managing strays.

Animal rights groups argue that strays are not inherently aggressive but become hostile due to hunger or mistreatment. The Prevention of

Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, along with the ABC Rules, already provides a humane framework for addressing the problem. The Supreme Court's recognition of stray dogs' right to live aligns with international norms on animal welfare. However, activists acknowledge the need for effective sterilisation drives, mass vaccination, and public awareness campaigns to reduce human-animal conflict.

Recommendations

A multi-pronged approach is essential:

- strengthen municipal veterinary infrastructure;
- adopt "catch-neuter-vaccinate-release" at scale;
- integrate rabies vaccination into public health drives;
- regulate feeding of strays in designated safe zones; and
- promote community sensitisation.

Only through coordinated, science-based and humane measures can India achieve the twin goals of public safety and animal welfare.

Sources: AP: Associated Press; BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; ET: Economic Times; HT: Hindustan Times; IT: India Today; NDTV: New Delhi Television Ltd; Tol: Times of India; IJ: Infra Junction

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