

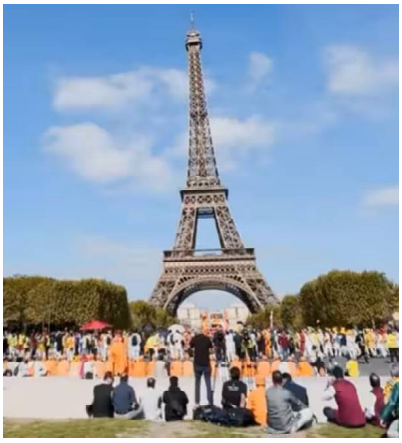
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CityMatters

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When Religious Accommodation Meets Workplace Equality



A few years ago, while flying business class from Nairobi to Mumbai on Kenya Airways, I was surprised to find no female passengers or cabin crew. A male steward explained that, because several Hindu monks from the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) were travelling, women had been barred from travelling or serving passengers in business class. I found this deeply objectionable. When I questioned a monk seated beside me, he said their religious order prohibited such interactions and that monks could not marry. As we parted, I asked whether he had descended from heaven or been born from his mother's womb.

The issue resurfaced when female employees at Paris's Eiffel Tower reportedly protested after being moved from their workstations during a visit by a BAPS delegation. The incident raised important questions about religious accommodation, workplace equality and institutional accountability.

The Eiffel Tower Incident

Around 100 members of the delegation visited the Eiffel Tower on September 05, following the inauguration of a major BAPS Hindu temple near Paris. According to the tower's operator, Société d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel (SETE), arrangements had been made to limit interactions between the delegation and women. Staff representatives said female employees had been asked to leave certain workstations and replaced by male colleagues.

The incident triggered a staff protest, temporarily closing the monument to visitors. French political leaders criticised the reported exclusion of women, while Paris authorities ordered an investigation. BAPS maintained that the visit had been coordinated with management to minimise disruption and that, to its knowledge, nobody had been denied access. An independent investigation subsequently identified operational failures, including the exclusion of female staff.

Governance and Institutional Accountability

The controversy raises a fundamental question: how far should public institutions accommodate religious practices without compromising workplace rights and non-discrimination? Adjustments for security, privacy and accessibility may be justified, but religious preferences cannot automatically override employees' equality and dignity.

Religious institutions may regulate access to their premises, but imposing restrictions on women in public workplaces is different. Institutions hosting international delegations must distinguish reasonable accommodation from discrimination. While religious traditions vary in their access rules, restrictions on non-Muslims entering some mosques and lower-caste communities entering certain Hindu temples illustrate how religious practices can conflict with equality and inclusion.

Reforming Practices for a Changing World

Traditions evolve as societies change. In many Indian households, menstruating women were once expected to remain separate from other family members. Such practices have declined in many places as lifestyles and social attitudes have changed.

The Eiffel Tower episode demonstrates why institutional accountability matters: public spaces must uphold equality, dignity and non-discrimination. Respect for faith cannot mean accepting every demand, particularly when it requires women to surrender their rightful place in the workplace.

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

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Italy Weighs Veils, Student Curbs

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has announced proposed education measures to ban burqas and niqabs in schools and cap foreign students in classrooms. The proposals also include compulsory Italian lessons for some parents of foreign students facing integration difficulties.



Italy already limits foreign students to 30 percent per class, while the new measures require parliamentary approval. The plans come as immigration remains politically prominent ahead of Italy's 2027 general election. *(DB, 21.09.26)*

88 Hours, One Impossible Equation

OpenAI said an unreleased AI model solved the Navier-Stokes problem, one of seven Millennium Prize Problems, in about 88 hours. The problem concerns equations describing fluid motion and has remained unsolved for decades.

OpenAI deployed 10,000 AI agents and spent millions of dollars on computing. Mathematicians Tristan Buckmaster and Levent Alpoge disputed OpenAI's credit, saying it followed their earlier AI-assisted work. *(BBC, 08.09.26)*

Himalayan Monal Finds a New Voice

Human-generated noise is altering the calls of Uttarakhand's Himalayan Monal, a study by HNBGU researchers found. Comparing birds in Madmaheshwar Valley and noisier Chopta Valley, researchers analysed 719 calls recorded between April 2023 and June 2024.

Birds exposed to greater human noise consistently raised their calls' peak frequency and tended to call longer, apparently adapting to reduce masking by low-frequency environmental noise. *(ToI, 14.09.26)*

Where Wood Comes Alive

The famous "village of toys" near Bengaluru is Channapatna, located about 60 km away in the Ramanagara district on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway. Known in Kannada as Gombegala Ooru ("toy-town"), it is globally celebrated for its 300-year-old tradition of handcrafted, eco-friendly wooden lacquerware toys. *(DB, 21.09.26)*

Mothers Against the Flames

In Indonesian Borneo, more than 100 women are fighting fires while battling gender prejudice. Members of The Power of Mama, formed in 2022, these volunteers balance household chores with daily patrols for smoke and flames.



Spread across a dozen villages in rural Kalimantan's Ketapang regency, they risk their lives to protect communities from fires that threaten public health, despite facing a sexist backlash. *(DB, 14.09.26)*

Turning Pages, Earning Rewards

Singapore has launched an innovative national programme to encourage reading by rewarding citizens financially for spending less time on smartphones and more time with books.



Under the initiative, participants can earn incentives by reading for at least 15 minutes daily. By gamifying the reading experience, the government hopes to nurture a stronger reading culture, promote healthier digital habits and make books an appealing alternative to screen time. *(DB, 17.09.26)*

Chasing the Dawn of a 150-Year Life

A human lifespan of 150 years may sound far beyond the limits of modern medicine. But Harvard geneticist David Sinclair believes the first person who reaches that age may already have been born, as researchers work on therapies designed to reverse some effects of biological ageing. *(DB, 15.09.26)*



Get Off Our Roads, Mr Singh

A now-deleted US Department of Homeland Security poster showing a brown man addressed as "Mr Singh" alongside the message "America for Americans" has sparked backlash. Sikh, Hindu, Punjabi American and immigrant organisations criticised the imagery as targeting immigrants and stereotyping Sikhs. The Sikh Coalition cited FBI data showing 177 reported anti-Sikh hate-crime incidents in 2025, according to its analysis. *(IT, 14.09.26)*

At 97, Still Shaping Divinity

At 97 master artisan Magata Mahapatra from the village of Surangi in Ganjam, Odisha, continues to actively craft beautiful clay idols.

While most people have long since retired, Mahapatra sits daily before lumps of clay, patiently shaping figures of gods and goddesses by hand. He inherited this centuries-old tradition from his father, representing a line of craftsmanship that the Mahapatra family has kept alive for nearly 150 years. *(DB, 22.09.26)*

A Mother's Dying Wish

In an emotionally poignant moment, a woman married her partner beside her mother's ICU bed, fulfilling her dying wish amid her battle with stage four cancer. The intimate



ceremony transformed a hospital room into a place of love and commitment, allowing the mother to witness her daughter's special moment.

Amid uncertainty and heartbreak, the wedding became a lasting testament to family bonds and a mother's final blessing. *(DB, 20.09.26)*

Where Birds Sing, Nature Rejoices

The annual bird-singing competition in Narathiwat, southern Thailand, brings together bird enthusiasts to celebrate the melodious calls of their feathered companions. Colourful cages line the gathering as birds compete through their distinctive songs, attracting participants and spectators alike.



Rooted in local tradition, the event showcases the region's cultural heritage and the enduring human fascination with birdsong, turning nature's melodies into a vibrant community celebration. *(DB, 19.09.26)*

A Fishy Ride Through Town

Invercargill residents were in for an unusual treat as a vehicle inspired by McDonald's Filet-O-Fish sandwich toured the New Zealand city. The quirky, food-themed ride turned heads and sparked curiosity, bringing smiles to onlookers along the way.

Blending fast-food nostalgia with playful street spectacle, the unusual vehicle offered residents a fun change from everyday traffic and a memorable sight on wheels.

(DB, 19.09.26)

A Daughter After Two Centuries

A family in Maharashtra, India is celebrating a remarkable birth after reportedly going nearly 200 years without a girl being born in the household. The arrival of the newborn has brought immense happiness, turning an extraordinary family milestone into a moment of celebration.



The story has drawn attention for its unusual circumstances, highlighting how the birth of a child can carry deep emotional significance and create cherished memories across generations. *(DB, 03.09.26)*

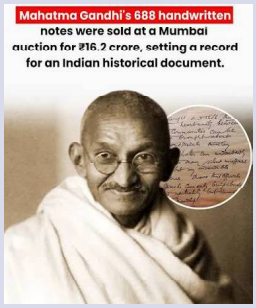
A World of Lost Languages

A study suggests that humanity once spoke tens of thousands more languages than it does today. Researchers estimate that linguistic diversity peaked between 1,000 and 3,000 years ago, when languages flourished across communities worldwide.

Today, approximately 7,500 languages remain in use. The decline reflects the expansion of empires, the absorption of smaller communities and language replacement. The findings highlight the importance of preserving endangered languages and the cultural heritage they carry. *(ToI, 28.07.26)*

Gandhi's Words Set a Historic Record

A collection of 688 handwritten reflections by Mahatma Gandhi fetched ₹16.2 crore at a Saffronart auction, setting a world record for an Indian historical document sold at auction. Titled A Thought for the Day, the writings explore truth, non-violence, self-restraint and service.



Addressed to Gandhi's close associate Anand T. Hingorani, the reflections offer an intimate glimpse into the Mahatma's personal philosophy and enduring commitment to ethical living.

(IE, 28.08.26)

Wild Stripes Cross into Rajasthan

Two female cheetahs brought from Botswana to Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park have ventured into Rajasthan's Baran district, reaching the Shahabad forest area. Identified as OKAD-1 and OKAD-2, the approximately two-and-a-half-year-old animals were among nine cheetahs translocated from Botswana in February 2026.

Their movement beyond the park highlights the challenges of managing free-ranging wildlife. Forest officials from Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are monitoring their movements and ensuring their safety. *(ToI, 27.08.26)*

Young Researcher Shines Globally



Komal Verma Saluja, a final-year MBBS student at Government Medical College, Kota, has become the youngest and first medical-student recipient of the ACP India Chapter's Researcher of the Year Award 2026.

Her research includes MRI-based detection of early cognitive decline in diabetes and echocardiography-based screening for fatty liver disease. She also received a $2,000 international travel grant and was selected for the Khorana Scholars Programme.

(ToI, 14.09.26)

A New Shield Against Dengue

India has received its first dengue vaccine from Japan, marking a potential milestone in the fight against the mosquito-borne disease. The development offers hope for reducing infections and easing the burden on healthcare systems, particularly in regions experiencing seasonal outbreaks.



As dengue cases continue to concern public health authorities, the vaccine's availability could strengthen prevention efforts, subject to regulatory approvals, clinical evidence and decisions on its recommended use. *(Mint, 21.07.26)*

Kerala Builds a Greener Future

Kerala is increasingly embracing green building practices as environmental awareness and sustainable development gain momentum.

Architects, developers and homeowners are exploring energy-efficient designs, natural ventilation, rainwater harvesting and eco-friendly construction materials.

As climate concerns grow, the shift towards greener buildings offers Kerala an opportunity to combine traditional architectural wisdom with modern technology for a more sustainable future. *(DB, 20.07.26)*

When Streets Rewrite History

Kolkata could rename streets honouring Communist figures Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx and Ho Chi Minh after West Bengal's new BJP government formed a committee to review place names. Proposals concern Lenin Sarani, Karl Marx Sarani and Ho Chi Minh Sarani, names dating back decades of Left rule.

The panel is expected to consider proposals after Durga Puja. The move reflects changing political priorities in Bengal and reassessment of Kolkata's street nomenclature. *(ToI, 14.09.26)*

TRAI Maps Building Connectivity

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has launched a Digital Connectivity Rating platform and mobile app to assess buildings on connectivity. The system will provide publicly searchable ratings and verifiable certificates, helping consumers compare homes and offices based on network readiness.



The framework makes digital connectivity a property-selection factor, alongside parameters such as water and power usage.

(ToI, 26.09.26)

Clean-Air Stars Shine in Rajasthan

Alwar and Udaipur ranked among India's top 10 cities in the 2026 Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan, placing sixth and eighth respectively among cities with populations of three to 10 lakh.

Jaipur ranked 20th among cities with populations above one million, while Jodhpur and Kota stood 24th and 37th in their categories. The survey assesses pollution-control measures and clean-air action plans, rather than annual air-quality levels alone.

(ToI, 11.09.26)

A Lesson in Punctuality

In Beawar, Rajasthan, students found a creative way to make teachers realise the importance of punctuality. Teachers arriving late were gently confronted by students, who used the opportunity to highlight the value of discipline and respecting time.

The unusual initiative turned the tables in the classroom, reminding educators that leading by example is an important part of teaching. The incident sparked conversations about responsibility, punctuality and mutual respect in educational institutions.

(DB, 05.09.26)

Orangutan Expose Wildlife's Dark Trade

Five baby orangutans found abandoned in Odisha's Balasore district have highlighted India's growing role in illegal exotic wildlife trafficking. The animals, three males and two females, are not native to India and were rescued after apparently being trafficked from abroad by smugglers.

They were shifted to Nandankanan Zoological Park while authorities investigated their origins.



Conservationists are urging repatriation. The episode highlights growing exotic-pet demand and wildlife smuggling risks. *(BBC, 09.09.26)*

Science Takes Flight in Classrooms

The Rajasthan education department plans to establish science clubs in 5,000 government schools to promote practical, experimental STEM learning. Over 1,100 clubs are already registered. Priority will be given to Swami Vivekananda Model and PM SHRI schools.

Students will undertake experiments, build models and rockets, and develop solutions to local problems. The initiative aims to strengthen scientific thinking and prepare students for research and science competitions. *(ToI, 23.09.26)*

Lighting the Way for Tribal Schools

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) will launch its 'Adivasi School Thik Karo' campaign to inspect tribal schools and highlight gaps in infrastructure and educational services.The campaign will cover tribal



areas across Rajasthan, including Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara.

CJP said teams would document deficiencies and follow up with authorities. The campaign will also extend to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and the Northeast.

(TH, 16.09.26)

A Station Yet to Welcome All

Jaipur Railway Junction has been criticised for inadequate facilities for Divyang passengers. Wheelchair assistance is difficult to access, while some wheelchairs have malfunctioning wheels. Lifts face queues and breakdowns, and designated toilets have damaged grab handles and limited space.

Tactile indicators for visually impaired passengers are also damaged. Railway officials said redevelopment work caused temporary modifications and assured that deficiencies would be rectified. *(ToI, 18.09.26)*

Rajasthan Launches 'Prasav Sakhi'

After several maternal deaths in the last few months, the Rajasthan government has introduced the 'Prasav Sakhi' (Birthing Companion) system in the government hospitals of the state. The initiative is aimed at providing better support, guidance,



and timely treatment to high-risk pregnant women coming to government hospitals.

The initiative is an outcome of a five-day special campaign in which 37,558 high-risk pregnant women were identified as suffering from anemia, hypertension, diabetes, and other complications by examining the records of more than 3.56 lakh women. *(ABP News, 23.07.26)*

Jaipur's One-Window Civic Dream

Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) Mayor Sunil Kothari has directed officials to provide single-window civic services, strengthen field monitoring and resolve public grievances quickly.

Ahead of Diwali, officials were asked to intensify sanitation, remove construction waste, repair roads and improve street lighting. Weekly ward-level cleanliness drives will target high-need areas. *(ToI, 30.09.26)*

JDA Charts AI Traffic Future

Jaipur Development Authority's AI-based traffic management project will now be implemented in phases over 10 years, replacing an earlier August-end completion target. The ₹350-crore project will deploy AI cameras and sensors at about 330 junctions, with plans to expand further.

Adaptive signals will adjust timings to traffic volumes, while the system will detect violations, recognise number plates and support e-challans. A central command centre will monitor traffic and incidents such as potholes and waterlogging. *(ToI,30.09.26)*

Jaipur to Get 450 E-Buses

Jaipur is set to receive the largest share of Rajasthan's planned electric-bus expansion after a review in Jaipur. The state has been allocated 1,150 electric buses under the PM e-Bus Seva scheme.



Officials reviewed the operational groundwork needed to get the buses on the road, including depot readiness, charging stations, funding approvals and coordination between departments. *(DB, 07.07.26)*

GIB Conservation Wins National Honour

Rajasthan's Great Indian Bustard Conservation Project has won the Special Projects/Best Project Award at the 4th Eco Warrior Awards 2026 in New Delhi. The initiative, focused on saving the critically endangered, Schedule-I protected Godawan, was recognised for species conservation and grassland protection.



Conservation centres at Sam and Ramdevra have produced nearly 100 captive-bred birds.The programme uses captive breeding and artificial insemination to support future reintroduction into the wild. *(ToI, 30.10.26)*

27 Govt. Services at Your Fingertips

No long queues, no unnecessary office visits. Rajasthan's e-Mitra WhatsApp Service brings access to 27 government services right to your



phone. Simply send "Hi" on WhatsApp and get information and assistance from the comfort of your home. A step towards Digital Rajasthan, easier public services and citizen convenience. *(ToI, 01.07.26)*

A Return to Faith

A man from Jhansi, who had converted to Islam nearly two decades ago after moving to West Bengal's Malda for work, has reportedly returned to Hinduism with his wife. The couple underwent religious rituals at an ancient Shiva temple in Jhansi. The man had faced pressure to convert and later sought permission from the district administration to return to his previous faith. *(IT, 26.09.26)*

A Grand Celebration Still in the Making

Jaipur is preparing to mark its 300th anniversary in 2027, but its official celebration programme is yet to take final shape. Founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II on November 18, 1727, the Pink City is expected to host year-long festivities showcasing its rich history, architecture, art and traditions.

The celebrations offer an opportunity to bring residents together and highlight Jaipur's cultural heritage to visitors from across India and abroad. *(ToI, 04.10.26)*

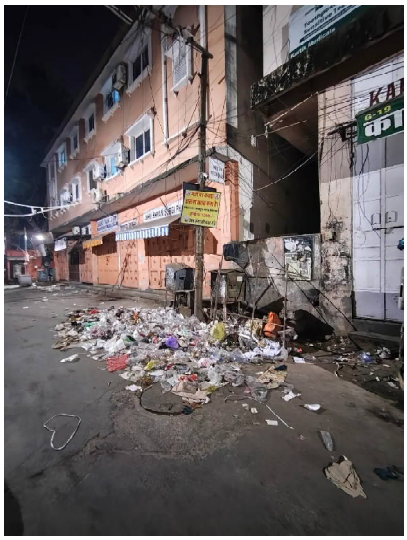
Building Up for Better Governance

Rajasthan is planning to accommodate government departments in shared multi-storey office complexes across Jaipur, moving away from allocating separate plots to individual departments. The proposed policy aims to conserve scarce urban land, reduce construction costs and improve the utilisation of public assets.

The complexes are expected to provide common facilities, including parking, meeting rooms, lifts and security systems. The initiative could streamline administration while making better use of the capital's limited land resources. *(ToI, 27.09.26)*

Clean Streets, Stricter Fines

JMC is tightening its efforts to keep the city clean by using CCTV cameras to identify people dumping garbage in public places. In a recent enforcement drive, officials reportedly collected more than ₹2.57 lakh in fines over two days for violations captured by surveillance cameras.



The initiative aims to discourage littering, improve civic responsibility and maintain cleaner streets. Sustained monitoring and public cooperation remain essential to creating a healthier urban environment. *(DB, 24.09.26)*

Organ Donation Drive Recognised

Rajasthan has won the State Award for Excellence in Organ Donation Awareness at the 16th Indian Organ Donation Day celebrations held in New Delhi on August 03, 2026.

Presented by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), the award recognises the state's public awareness campaigns, institutional coordination and efforts to encourage organ donation. The recognition highlights progress while underscoring the need to strengthen transplant infrastructure and improve access to lifesaving procedures.

(ToI, 04.08.26)

Smarter Skies Ahead

Jaipur International Airport is set to strengthen its air traffic management infrastructure with a proposed high-tech Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower. The project reportedly involves a 35-40 metre tower and a five-storey technical block, with an estimated investment of ₹250 crore.

The modern facility is expected to improve flight monitoring, operational efficiency and safety, supporting Jaipur's growing air traffic and future aviation requirements.

(DB, 05.09.26)

Astronauts Land in Jaipur

In an unexpected twist, astronauts reportedly landed in Jaipur after mistaking its crater-filled roads for the lunar surface. Potholes across the Pink City offered an experience seemingly out of this world, with motorists navigating lunar-like terrain daily.



While the Moon remains a distant destination for space explorers, Jaipur's roads provide a closer encounter with craters, raising concerns about road maintenance, public safety and civic accountability.

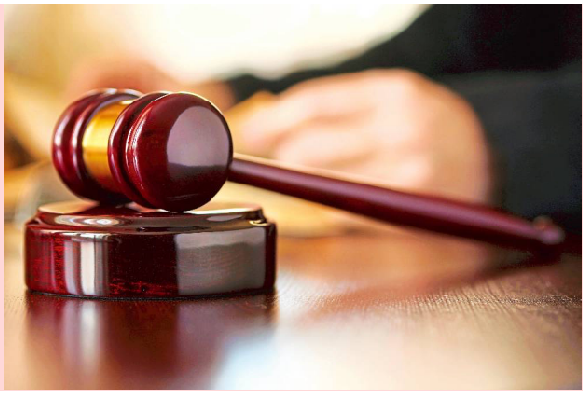
(TN, 14.08.26)

Let's Look Before We Leap

Why India Must Study the Actual Impact of Every Regulation

Pradeep S. Mehta and Tasmita Sengupta***

India's deregulation drive needs evidence-based assessment to ensure reforms reduce burdens without creating unintended costs, distortions or regulatory gaps.



India's push for deregulation under the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision is welcome. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been urging ministries and governments to simplify regulations and improve the ease of doing business. In this context, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) Guidebook for Union ministries and departments, drawing on CUTS International's RIA toolkit.

The move reflects growing recognition that deregulation should not simply mean eliminating rules. Instead, India needs optimal regulation based on systematic assessment of costs, benefits and unintended consequences.

Well-intentioned regulations can produce undesirable outcomes when they are not adequately tested. For instance, the ban on online gaming platforms, introduced to protect consumers from illegal betting and curb money laundering, reportedly pushed users towards offshore and unregulated platforms and increased daily usage. The experience illustrates a broader lesson: regulatory effectiveness depends not only on policy objectives but also on evidence-based design and implementation.

Regulations remain essential for economic governance. They address market failures, protect consumers and the environment, and promote financial stability. However, poorly designed or implemented rules can increase compliance and administrative costs, discourage innovation, distort markets and push activities into informal or unregulated spaces. Small enterprises are often disproportionately affected.

RIA is a diagnostic tool for policymaking, like a medical diagnosis before treatment. It assesses new and existing legislation, anticipates regulatory consequences, identifies corrective measures and, alongside careful legal scrutiny, helps prevent drafting errors with potentially significant implications.

More than 80 jurisdictions have institutionalised RIA within their governance systems, according to World Bank Global Regulatory Practices data. India should now consider giving RIA statutory backing and establishing an independent apex oversight body, supported by state-level RIA commissions. While some may favour assigning RIA responsibilities to sectoral regulators, potential conflicts of interest and capacity constraints make independent oversight important.

The economic case for RIA is also significant. Critics often argue that impact assessments are costly and time-consuming, but international experience suggests that their benefits can outweigh the costs. In the US, the cumulative cost of conducting 15 RIAs was reportedly US$10mn, while three of those assessments alone generated net benefits exceeding that amount. Regulatory guillotines — assessing legality, necessity and proportionality — along with pilots and partial RIAs can further improve efficiency.

Resistance may come from bureaucratic inertia, political preferences and vested interests that benefit from regulatory complexity. Yet the UK experience demonstrates potential gains: addressing red tape through RIAs reportedly removed more than £155 million in annual regulatory costs faced by businesses.

Other countries are experimenting with innovative approaches. The UK and South Korea have adopted variants of the "One-In, Two-Out" principle, under which regulators seek to remove two existing regulations for every new one introduced. India has made progress through regulatory simplification and digitalisation, but it should also develop a dedicated cadre of trained RIA professionals.

A robust RIA framework can strengthen investor and citizen confidence, improve the effectiveness of domestic and foreign investment, support innovation and promote sustainable growth. It can also reduce regulatory overlaps and ambiguities while making governance more transparent and efficient.

India's next generation of reforms should therefore move beyond deregulation towards smarter regulation — rules that are proportionate, predictable and grounded in evidence. Institutionalising RIA can help build a more competitive economy governed by stable and effective rules.

**Secretary General and*
***Senior Research Associate, CUTS International.*
Abridged from an article that appeared in Mint, on August 11, 2026

Jaipur's Heritage at a Crossroads: Saving the Pink City for Future Generations

Preserving Jaipur's heritage through effective urban governance and sustainable development

Jaipur, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage City in 2019, is celebrated for its pink façades, historic markets, traditional havelis, temples and distinctive urban design. However, illegal construction, encroachments and inadequate enforcement threaten the architectural character that makes the Rajasthan capital unique. Protecting this legacy requires a coordinated approach that balances conservation with the needs of a growing, modern city.

The issue has gained urgency following recent observations by the Rajasthan High Court concerning heritage conservation. The state government must also submit the Special Area Heritage Development Plan (SAHDP) to UNESCO by December 2, 2026.

Beyond Monuments: Protecting Living Heritage

Heritage conservation extends beyond preserving individual monuments. Jaipur's character lies in the relationship between its streets, façades, public spaces, traditional markets and residential neighbourhoods. Unregulated alterations, demolition of historic houses and inappropriate construction can gradually erode this architectural harmony.



The challenge is to protect the Walled City without turning it into a museum. Residents must continue to live, work and conduct businesses there. Conservation policies should accommodate essential repairs, sanitation, fire safety, accessibility and improved civic infrastructure while respecting traditional architectural principles.

From Plans to Enforcement

Jaipur has institutions and planning mechanisms for heritage protection. The greater concern is their consistent implementation. Multiple agencies oversee urban development, municipal services and conservation, making coordination essential. Overlapping responsibilities and weak enforcement can allow unauthorised construction to continue despite existing regulations.

The proposed heritage management plan must be more than a document prepared to meet an international deadline. It should establish clear conservation priorities, identify vulnerable structures, assign responsibilities and set measurable targets. Regular inspections, transparent approval procedures and timely action against violations must become standard practice.

A publicly accessible inventory of heritage properties, supported by geographic information systems and updated photographic records, could help authorities monitor changes.

Citizens as Partners in Conservation

Heritage cannot be protected through government orders alone. Residents, traders, property owners, architects, historians and civil society organisations must participate in conservation decisions. Their involvement can identify practical challenges, strengthen public trust and encourage compliance.

Financial incentives, technical guidance and simpler approval procedures could motivate property owners to maintain traditional buildings rather than replace them. Supporting local craftspeople would also help preserve traditional construction techniques and architectural details.

Conservation is equally important for Jaipur's economy. Its heritage attracts tourists and sustains livelihoods in hospitality, handicrafts, retail and transport. Neglecting the historic environment could weaken this valuable economic asset.

Turning the Deadline into an Opportunity

Meeting UNESCO's December 02 deadline is important, but submitting the plan alone will not guarantee Jaipur's future. Success depends on sustained implementation, effective monitoring and accountability. Authorities should publish a time-bound action plan, disclose progress regularly and involve independent conservation experts in evaluating outcomes.

Jaipur's heritage is not merely a legacy inherited from the past; it is a responsibility shared by the present generation. Development and conservation need not be competing priorities. Through coordinated planning, citizen participation and consistent enforcement, the city can modernise its infrastructure without sacrificing its distinctive identity.

The Pink City deserves more than recognition as a World Heritage destination. The current challenge presents an opportunity to demonstrate that urban progress and heritage conservation can advance together.

Abridged from news items published in The Times of India, on October 03, 2026; and in India Today, on October 02, 2026 respectively.

Sources: BC: British Broadcasting Corporation; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; IE: Indian; Express; IT: India Today; TH: The Hindu; TN: Times Now; ToI: Times of India

The news/articles in this Newsletter are compressed from several newspapers. The sources given are to be used as a reference for further information, and do not indicate the literal transcript of a particular news/story. CUTS International is a not-for-profit organisation and the listing of paid news/articles is for informative and educative purposes only.

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