



JUSTICE IN PROTEST, CHAOS ON THE STREETS



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On May 05, 2025, central Jaipur witnessed severe traffic disruptions as hundreds of lawyers protested outside the Sessions Court, Collectorate, and Khasa Kothi. The protest, which spilt over into major areas, such as like Bani Park and MI Road, brought the city to a standstill for several hours. The lawyers were reacting to an FIR filed at Sadar police station against five advocates allegedly involved in a scuffle on court premises days earlier.

Members of the legal fraternity called the FIR unjust, claiming that even those not present during the incident had been named. Protesters demanded its

withdrawal and sought disciplinary action against the Station House Officer, accusing the police of acting with malicious intent.

While the right to protest is fundamental in a democracy, the extent and nature of this demonstration raise important concerns. The protest significantly impacted daily life—disrupting the movement of office workers, schoolchildren, emergency services, and businesses. Missed appointments, traffic snarls, and delayed services added to the city's burden.

This is not the first time Jaipur has faced such a disruption. Just months earlier, a similar protest followed the reported death of a lawyer due to medical reasons.

That too brought the city's functioning to a halt, reflecting a troubling pattern. These repeated incidents prompt a larger question: Do lawyers have the right to resort to unrestrained strikes that spill into public spaces? Unlike factory workers or industrial labour, lawyers are officers of the court and are expected to uphold the rule of law. While court boycotts remain a debated issue—particularly in light of Supreme Court judgments discouraging such actions—bringing civic life to a standstill certainly goes beyond acceptable limits.

Blocking roads and disrupting essential services for professional grievances erodes public trust in the legal community and sets an unhealthy precedent. Even as the

right to protest remains constitutionally protected, it must be exercised with a sense of responsibility and in the public interest.

CONCLUSION

The Jaipur lawyers' protest highlights the need for effective protest mechanisms that balance the protection of democratic rights with the preservation of civic order. As Indian cities continue to grow, striking a balance between protest and public welfare is no longer optional—it is essential.



A WAY FORWARD: MANAGING PROTESTS RESPONSIBLY

To prevent such disruptions while safeguarding the right to dissent, a structured approach is essential:

- Authorities should identify specific areas for public demonstrations that do not interfere with daily life. Many global cities have successfully implemented this model.
- Protest organisers should inform the police and public in advance to enable traffic management and ensure public safety.
- Complaints involving professional groups, such as lawyers should be reviewed by neutral panels to prevent misuse and maintain institutional trust.
- Bodies like Bar Councils and Human Rights Commissions should facilitate dialogue between lawyers and law enforcement before issues escalate.
- Digital petitions, awareness drives, and symbolic sit-ins can convey dissent effectively without inconveniencing the public.