

Maturity in system to not discuss cases: Chief Justice on 'PM at Ganapati puja' row

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, who is set to retire on November 10, addressed the controversy surrounding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence at his residence for the Ganesh puja festivities in September. He emphasised that such meetings are routine and focused on discussing infrastructure issues related to the judiciary, rather than judicial decisions. Following the Prime Minister's visit to Chandrachud's home during the festival, the Opposition raised questions regarding the appropriateness of the meeting.



In response, Chief Justice Chandrachud said, "There is enough maturity among judges of constitutional courts and the heads of the executive to firmly keep aside judicial matters out of the purview of any discussion." The Chief Justice said that when the judiciary and executive engage, it creates an impression that deals are being "cracked". He, however, said that such meetings are essential and only a part of robust dialogue between different arms of government. "People think there are deals being made, but that is not the case. This is part of the robust dialogue between different arms of the government. The work of all three arms is dedicated to the betterment of the nation." He further clarified, "We know our duties in the democratic system of governance, and the political executive know

theirs. No judge, least of them the Chief Justice of India or Chief Justices, can even remotely invite any threat, actual or perceived, to the independence of the judiciary." Speaking at the Loksatta lecture series, Chandrachud noted that in various states, it is customary for Chief Justices to meet with Chief Ministers. "You never meet for a judicial discussion. And the maturity of our political system lies in the fact that there is a great deal of deference to the judiciary, even in the political class," he added. Highlighting the need for such meetings, DY Chandrachud pointed to the importance of addressing judicial infrastructure, including new court buildings and accommodation for judges. "For this, you need a meeting of the Chief Justice and the Chief Minister," he said, recalling his experiences as Chief Justice in various High Courts. The outgoing Chief

Justice emphasised that these meetings are essential for maintaining robust dialogue between the judiciary and the government. "We have to understand that the work of all three arms is dedicated to one and the same goal—the betterment of the nation. So long as we trust this process, I think we must accept that there has to be continuing dialogue," he stated. He also mentioned that judges sometimes meet political leaders at social gatherings but never discuss their judicial work in those contexts.

OPPOSITION CRITICISM TO PM MODI'S PUJA WITH CHIEF JUSTICE

A massive row had erupted following PM Modi's visit to Chief Justice DY Chandrachud's house. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut had asked DY Chandrachud to recuse himself from the case linked to the tussle between Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena. Party leader Priyanka Chaturvedi expressed a similar sentiment and pointed to the repeated adjournments in the Sena vs Sena case. "Ganpati puja is a personal issue, but you are taking a camera. The message it sends is uncomfortable. The Chief Justice of India and the Prime Minister are tall personalities. So what can we say if they agreed to put out these photographs in the public domain," RJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha had said.

PM, Spanish counterpart launch Tata-Airbus aircraft plant in major defence boost

Vadodara. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Monday jointly inaugurated an aircraft manufacturing facility in Gujarat's Vadodara, which will collaborate with Spain's Airbus to develop fighter aircraft. The Tata aircraft complex, slated to manufacture 40 C-295 aircraft beginning in 2026, will be producing India's first privately built military aircraft. Addressing the event, PM Modi said that the aircraft manufacturing facility will enhance defence capabilities and strengthen relations between India and Spain. He said, "From today, we are giving a new direction to India and Spain's partnership. We are inaugurating the production factory of C-295 aircraft. This factory will strengthen India-Spain relations..."

MAJOR BOOST IN DEFENCE CAPABILITIES

A total of 56 aircraft are to be developed under the Tata-Airbus C-295 program. Of these, 16 are being delivered directly by Airbus from Spain, while the remaining 40 are to be made in India. The Tata Aircraft Complex is responsible for manufacturing these 40 aircraft in India. This facility will



"It will also strengthen our 'Make in India, Make for the World' mission. This ecosystem will help make the first civil aircraft in the country," PM Modi added.

Sanchez remarked, in addition to contributing to modernising India's defence capabilities, the facility will also drive technological development. He said, "This aircraft is a symbol of the Spanish and European aeronautical industry. In addition to contributing to modernising India's defence capabilities, it will also drive technological development, particularly for the state of Gujarat, India's leading manufacturing hub. Thousands of direct and indirect jobs will be created here and a new generation of highly qualified

engineers and technicians will be trained". be the first private sector Final Assembly Line (FAL) for military aircraft in India. The first aircraft from the Tata facility will be manufactured in 2026. The aircraft programme involves the full development of a complete ecosystem, from manufacturing to assembly, testing and qualification, delivery, and maintenance throughout the complete life cycle of the aircraft, according to officials. Apart from the Tatas, leading defence public sector units, such as Bharat Electronics and Bharat Dynamics, as well as private micro, small, and medium enterprises, will contribute to this program.

Jharkhand: JMM Alleges Chief Electoral Officer, 2 IPS Official Favouring BJP

The BJP said the JMM should put out the details of the people accompanying Murmu in the car.

RANCHI: The ruling JMM in Jharkhand has written to the Election Commission demanding the removal of Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar and two senior IPS officers, alleging that they were working in favour of the BJP. Elections to the 81-member Jharkhand assembly are scheduled on November 13 and November 20. "Giridih police today intercepted a vehicle carrying Mandal Murmu, one of the proposers of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren who has filed his nomination from the Barhait assembly constituency, along with some other persons. When asked, the people on board did not reply as to where they were going. So, the police detained the vehicle," JMM



spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said on Sunday. "Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar and two senior IPS officials, misusing their official position, put undue pressure on the Giridih administration to release the vehicle," he alleged. Bhattacharya claimed that this was a gross violation of the model code of

conduct, and urged the EC to investigate the matter.

"Hemant Soren is our star campaigner and his proposer is being influenced to adversely impact the electoral outcome," he alleged. He also urged the EC to relieve the CEO along with IPS officers Sanjay Anand Lathkar and AV Homkar of their electoral duties to ensure a fair electoral process in Jharkhand. When contacted, the CEO said a press conference has been convened on Monday on the issue. The opposition BJP also wrote to the Election Commissioner, demanding strict action against the JMM spokesperson for levelling serious charges against senior officers "without any proof".

Arvind Kejriwal urges people to reject BJP to save free schemes, party retorts

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal called on the people of Delhi to vote against the BJP in next year's Assembly polls if they wanted to continue benefiting from his government's free schemes. The BJP hit back, accusing Kejriwal of creating fear in people's minds.

New Delhi. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has "honestly" served the people of Delhi for 10 years, doing a lot of work that no other dispensation in the country had done, party chief Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday. The former Delhi Chief Minister, who was taking part in a 'padayatra' (foot march) campaign ahead of the Assembly polls scheduled early next year, also asked the public not to vote for the BJP.

"If you vote for the BJP, you will have to see whether to pay your bills or care for your children," Kejriwal said.

Hitting back at the AAP chief, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva claimed that Kejriwal knows that his party will lose the upcoming elections and that is why he was creating a "fear psychosis" in the minds of the people about his government's schemes. Kejriwal also alleged that if AAP came to power in Delhi, the BJP would stop the Delhi government's free schemes for electricity, healthcare, education and bus rides for women. "Zero electricity bills have become the norm for Delhiites now, something no other state can boast of," he said,



claiming that before the AAP came to power, electricity bills often reached as high as Rs 10,000. Responding to the charge, Sachdeva said, "We have reiterated that power subsidy will not only continue, but the benefits will reach the middle-class consumers too. We will also ensure clean water supply for all the residents of Delhi." Promising that he would waive "inflated" water bills, Kejriwal urged the people to vote for the AAP and help him become the Chief Minister again. "The elections are due in February. I will get these ('inflated' water) bills waived in March after coming to power," he said. People need to support AAP's efforts to build a Delhi that is inclusive, efficient and progressive, he said. Reacting to the remarks, Sachdeva said AAP leaders like Kejriwal know very well that they have lost connect with the people of Delhi. "It is really shameful that at the fag end of his government's tenure, Kejriwal has to plead every day that 'we are repairing roads and sewers'. This is an admission of the fact that no work was done in Delhi for more than nine years," the BJP leader said.

Amid Worsening Air Quality In Delhi, Akhilesh Yadav Calls It 'Annual' Topic; Blames BJP

New Delhi: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav described the Delhi pollution issue as an "annual" topic, noting that its effects were beginning to reach Uttar Pradesh. Yadav shared a post on X and said, "The havoc of pollution in Delhi has become an 'annual' topic. When the country's central government is unable to do anything to keep the environment clean and healthy, what of the rest of the country? This is called 'chiraag taley andheraa (darkness below the lamp) or 'dhundhalkaa (dusk)'."



The BJP government, which claims to be making the country proud across the world, is not able to save the country's image from getting blurred by the smog in the capital itself. The offices of ambassadors and high commissioners of countries from across the world are also located there, what message would this send them? This is the failure of the BJP government's governance and policies," he added. The BJP and AAP exchanged accusations regarding pollution levels in Delhi, as the national

capital's air quality fell back into the 'very poor' category after a two-day reprieve. Calm winds on Sunday hindered the dispersion of pollutants, causing Delhi's air quality to deteriorate to 'very poor' levels. Some areas in the national capital including Bawana, Burari and Jahangirpuri recorded 'severe' pollution levels. By 4 pm, the 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) for Delhi

reached 355, up from 255 the previous day, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), PTI reported.

The CPCB shared data from 37 of the city's 40 monitoring stations. "In such a situation, the public is requested to protect their lives and health themselves. Drive carefully in this twilight and protect yourself from respiratory diseases and also take special care of the elderly and children. Message of the failed BJP government to the public: Don't rely on us, take care of yourself. Your well-wisher, Akhilesh," he added. The BJP and AAP exchanged accusations regarding pollution levels in Delhi, as the national capital's air quality fell back into the 'very poor' category after a two-day reprieve.

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UP Chief Minister meets family of man who allegedly died in police custody

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met with the family of 30-year-old Mohit Pandey, who died after he was allegedly beaten by cops while he was in police custody at Chinhat Police Station in Lucknow.

Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met with the family of 30-year-old Mohit Pandey, who died after he was allegedly beaten by cops while he was in police custody at Chinhat Police Station in Lucknow. Chief

Minister Adityanath extended his condolences to the family and pledged financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh, along with government support for the education of Mohit's children. "No guilty officer will be spared," the Chief Minister assured the family, adding, "The matter is under my watch, and a thorough investigation will ensure strict action."

FIR AGAINST POLICE OFFICIALS

An FIR has been filed against the Station House Officer (SHO) on charges of murder and criminal conspiracy. Based on the family's complaint, the case has been

registered under Sections 103(1), 61(2), and BNS 2023, with the investigation reassigned to the Station House Officer of Gomti Nagar Extension for impartial inquiry.

CAUSE OF DEATH REMAINS UNCLEAR

A police press note confirmed that while the post-mortem report documented four injuries on Mohit's head, arm, and waist, it did not specify the cause of death. Police stated that the injuries were allegedly sustained during an altercation with another detainee, identified as Adesh. However, family members allege that Mohit was assaulted on instructions from Adesh's uncle.

Given the undetermined cause of death, the viscera has been preserved for chemical analysis, and the heart retained for histopathological examination.

CONCERNS OVER DETENTION

PROCEDURE

The circumstances of Mohit's detention have raised serious concerns about police conduct. Though he was brought to the station around 11.00 pm on Friday, his arrest was not officially recorded until nearly 1.00 pm on Saturday, sparking allegations of unlawful detention. Family members have questioned the 14-hour delay in recording his arrest and the lack of action against Adesh and his uncle, who have yet to be detained. In response to the incident, Chinhat Inspector Ashwini Chaturvedi has been suspended. Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak has responded strongly, saying, "The government is taking this very seriously. A high-level investigation is in progress, and strict action will be taken against all involved. The government stands firmly with the victim's family and will ensure justice."



A strategic vision for India's ties with the Gulf

INDIA'S trade and economic relations with the US, the UK and other western nations get considerable attention. There is nothing wrong with that. What does not get equal attention, but should, is India's booming ties with countries in the Gulf region.

India does have a 'Neighbourhood First' policy, but there is still uncertainty and even controversy on how one defines the country's 'neighbourhood'. Many have often been satisfied with defining it as being the area between the Khyber Pass and the Bay of Bengal. The time may have come to include the six Arab countries across the Arabian Sea and in the Persian Gulf — the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain — as part of India's larger neighbourhood. These six Arab countries are politically, diplomatically, economically and strategically linked by way of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Formed in 1981, the GCC is a regional body that seeks to promote greater economic, political and military cooperation amongst its six member-states.

India has historically enjoyed strong ties with the GCC member-states, shaped by geographic proximity, historical trade links, energy security and the presence of a large Indian diaspora. Over 8.9 million Indians live and work in the GCC countries, making it one of the largest expatriate communities in the region. The UAE hosts the largest number of Indian nationals, totalling 3.5 million, followed by Saudi Arabia (2.6 million) and Kuwait (over 1.1 million). Oman has 7,79,000 Indians, Qatar 7,45,000 and Bahrain 3,23,000. This large and thriving expatriate population is a key source of remittances for India. In 2023-24, India received \$123 billion in remittances, with the Gulf Arab countries accounting for a major part of the inflows. The UAE alone accounted for 18 per cent of India's total remittances, making it the second largest sender of foreign remittances, after the US. With the Gulf countries supplying a substantial portion of India's crude oil and natural gas needs, the GCC is one of India's largest trading partners (surpassing even the European Union) and critical for our energy security. Given the crucial importance of the six Arab Gulf countries, India has necessarily to take forward the growth of bilateral relations with all members of the GCC, with particular attention on the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Arab Gulf countries have historically had thriving two-way trade relations with ports on India's west coast, notably in Kerala. Incidentally, there are indications that the UAE and Saudi Arabia are in the process of arranging living facilities for a large number of new Indians who are expected to arrive for work. India has also been increasing its military ties with the GCC countries through joint exercises and security dialogues. The Gulf countries have tended to rely on the western powers. Notably, Qatar and other Arab countries across the Persian Gulf provide land and other facilities to the US military. Maritime support is extended by the Central Command of the US Fifth Fleet, with its headquarters located in Manama, Bahrain, together with the Royal Australian Navy. India can also play a role in ensuring maritime security of the Arab Gulf region. The Indian Navy has a wide variety of vessels that it could deploy for this purpose. India has two aircraft carriers, eight tank landing ships, 11 destroyers and 12 frigates, apart from 16 attack submarines, which it could utilise when needed. Following the escalation in attacks by the Houthis on shipping in the Red Sea, the Navy deployed at least a dozen warships in the Arabian Sea and areas east of the Red Sea, marking its largest deployment in the region. Moreover, New Delhi has constructed and commissioned two nuclear submarines — INS Arihant and INS Arighaat — which could be deployed for strengthening the security of the friendly countries in the region, when needed and requested. Such issues have to be carefully planned and taken forward in consultations with the friendly countries. India's naval forces are now receiving due consideration while determining the country's future role in regional security. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on the Gulf region and, in some cases, his strong personal equations with leaders of some countries in the region have helped add new dimensions to the relations. Modi has visited the UAE a record seven times as PM.

How data sovereignty is redefining digital governance

The rising cross-border exchange of private data, coupled with cloud computing, has made data sovereignty a critical concern.

IN the 2010s, Edward Snowden revealed that the USA's National Security Agency was tapping into the servers of major internet firms using a surveillance programme called PRISM. After these revelations, countries across the world had grave concerns about who could access their national information and the possible consequences. It, thus, served as a spark for conversations about global data sovereignty. Furthermore, any material physically located in the US might be accessed by the government, regardless of its source, as per the US Patriot Act, which was enacted in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks. The concept of data sovereignty, thus, gained traction, and more than 100 nations have enacted a variety of data control and storage regulations, representing data sovereignty to some extent. Although sovereignty refers to an absolute and overarching juridical-political authority over a portion of geographic space, its purview has now expanded to include "data". These days, massive amounts of data are used to shape policies related to businesses, healthcare, government planning, sports, elections and practically everything else. The "new oil", "new gold" or "new currency" in today's uncertain and complex environment is frequently thought to be data.

There is little doubt that the internet, social media and various online activities constitute the primary sources of data generation in today's internet-driven society. The issue of internet regulation is its natural outcome. The questions of the first generation of internet law about who should regulate the internet, if anyone, have been decisively answered by governments — they all will. The second generation question to be addressed is not whether, but how, to control the internet. The concept of "data sovereignty" holds that information is governed by the legal framework and political systems of the countries concerned. It serves as a stronghold against international corporations and foreign states. Data can be kept in the nation where it was created or, in a situation known as "data residency", it can be kept in another nation while remaining unprocessed.

An example of a normal cloud service provider would be one located in nation alpha, with sales, marketing, accounting and operations, all located there. Their call centre for customer service, though, might be located in nation beta, which needs certain personal information of accounts to contact clients and

provide support.

The rising cross-border exchange of private data, coupled with cloud computing, has made data sovereignty a critical concern. Data must be governed by the laws of the country in which it was generated as well as the country in which it resides. Different countries have varying legislations on this issue. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which unifies data protection laws for all members of the European Union, was enacted by the EU Parliament in 2016 and included the EU's own data sovereignty provisions. By



placing a high priority on safe data handling, privacy and algorithmic transparency, it gave the citizens of the EU countries significant control over their data by imposing strong laws on companies for data-handling.

A part of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978 of the USA was renewed in April 2024 through the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act. For reasons of national security, the law permits US corporations to give the US government access to communication data of international customers without a warrant. This impacts cloud services and overseas users as their data might be accessible to the US government without their knowledge or consent. As India is becoming a digitally empowered nation, data sovereignty has assumed relevance for the restructuring of data governance. It is crucial for protecting privacy, supporting national and economic security and fending off threats of global surveillance. Days after India banned 59 Chinese apps in 2020 due to worries about "sovereignty and security", the then Union Minister of Information Technology and Telecom Ravi Shankar Prasad declared that India should not compromise on data sovereignty.

The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 — India's first cross-sectoral law on personal data protection — was passed in August 2023. It covers non-citizens residing in India whose data processing occurs "in connection with any activity related to offering of goods or services" outside of India as well as Indian residents and enterprises gathering data about Indian residents. The Act "lays down a foundation, where grievance redress, access to justice and protection of personal data will become highly democratised, with equal access available to those in far-flung areas and big cities," explained Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology.

Undoubtedly, the regulations will evolve over time, making room for the fast-advancing technologies. For instance, in January 2019, industrialist Mukesh Ambani urged Prime Minister Modi to stop the rising trend of "data colonisation" by multinational firms, asserting that "Indian data should be owned by Indians." Earlier this month, Reliance Jio Infocomm Chairman Akash Ambani emphasised on the need for India to embrace AI, with focus on self-reliance and data sovereignty. In light of the technological challenges of today's world, the 2023 book edited by Anupam Chander and Haochen Sun, Data Sovereignty: From the Digital Silk Road to the Return of the State, discusses the theoretical aspects of the subject. It addresses the issue of territorial control over data flows and attempts by national and regional governments to impose restrictions on the movement of data across a global internet. It provides fresh viewpoints and provocative concepts regarding the nature and extent of data sovereignty by drawing on theories in political economy, international law, human rights and data protection, as well as by elucidating the national, regional and global legal frameworks. It also looks at the extent to which emerging technologies like AI, robotics, automation, e-commerce and sharing economy threaten data sovereignty. It offers potential solutions for these issues in relation to trade liberalisation, data localisation and human rights.

Many more significant issues are still pending. For example, can data sovereignty, AI and smart tech coexist? All stakeholders face significant challenges. Several interesting data treaties are likely to emerge. The concept of data sovereignty might also be redefined.

Reign of piracy

Focus on stricter regulation, pricing models

A new study that puts the Indian entertainment industry's losses due to piracy in 2023 at a staggering Rs 22,400 crore does not come as a surprise. Neither does the revelation that every second consumer in the country accesses pirated content. It's a reflection of how the weak implementation of anti-piracy regulations has lent social sanction to the illegal activity. The ability to access content without paying the due amount is seen as an acquired skill, not any circumvention of law that would attract fine and punishment. A global survey on why people opt for pirated content perhaps best explains consumer behaviour. According to it, Indians account for the largest proportion of those who say they could have paid for the services, but pirating was easier, more convenient and because everyone does it.

According to the study, last year, Rs 13,700 crore was



generated from pirated content from movie theatres and Rs 8,700 crore from OTT platforms. Streaming is the

largest source of piracy at 63 per cent, followed by mobile apps at 16 per cent. Several underlying factors explain the hold of piracy despite a 150 per cent rise in subscription revenues after the pandemic. High fees and the hassle of multiple payments push many to pirated content. A lack of awareness about the perils of piracy, income disparity and inaccessible theatres are the other key reasons. Besides stringent regulations, content providers need to rethink their pricing models.

The lack of collaborative efforts to mitigate the risks of unauthorised copying and distribution or use of copyright material continues to badly hurt the entertainment industry. Piracy is particularly prevalent among audiences aged 19 to 34. They are bound to be receptive to correct messaging — that piracy infringes on the rights of the original creators.

Amarinder stirs the Punjab pot

THE GREAT GAME: Even his worst detractors will concede that the ex-CM is still willing to call out a crisis

IT may be a bit of a stretch to compare senior BJP leader Capt Amarinder Singh with either Lenin or Napoleon, both of whom are variously supposed to have acknowledged that they became the leaders they did because they had seized the day.

Lenin, upon his return from London to St Petersburg in 1917, is famously believed to have commented that he found power lying on the streets of St Petersburg and all he did was to pick it up. The Russian Revolution, which changed the face of Russia and large parts of the world, followed. Just over a hundred years before, in 1815, while in exile in St Helena, Napoleon had remonstrated with his close confidant, Charles Tristan. "I have dethroned no one. I found the crown in the gutter. I picked it up and the people put it on my head."

The fact of the matter is that AAP may be in danger of becoming the focus of the farmers' ire.

It's not clear whether anyone in the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab or even in the Opposition Congress or Akali Dal or the BJP are conscious of the featherweight of history on their shoulders. And what they thought of Amarinder Singh letting the paddy grain filter through his fingers on Friday morning — as quintals of it lay in the open in Asia's largest granary, in Khanna — surrounded by ageless farmers patiently waiting for their crop to be procured by the government. The story of the unprocured paddy is at the heart of the political crisis in Punjab today. Because the state is dependent on its two-crop cycle and because the sowing, transplanting and threshing of the paddy crop has taken place in between the Lok Sabha polls in June, the Jalandhar West byelection in July, the panchayat polls earlier this October and four Assembly bypolls in the coming November, the politics of the state has been inexorably drawn in. Moreover, the ruling AAP in Punjab is midway through

its tenure. Some fatigue is naturally setting in. Rumours of large-scale corruption are rife. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has changed some of his innermost coterie, while advisers are being brought in to take charge of the government's failing finances. And then there's the election in Delhi, slated for February 2025, expected to be a do-or-die battle between AAP and the BJP. It's a no-brainer that Arvind Kejriwal & Co won't let anything in Punjab come in the way of undermining the battle for Delhi.

That's why the gathering farmer protests in Punjab are so important, even though several of them seem adept at cutting their nose to spite their face — or as the more evocative metaphor in Hindi, which invokes another body part, says, apne pair pe kulhaari maama (hurting your own foot with the axe). In the last several days, farmers have taken over railway tracks, blocked roads and highways and are staging dharna in front of the houses of politicians.

Here's the irony, and here is why, midway through AAP's tenure in Punjab, the story may once again be in danger of turning. While Punjab's farmers may still be in no mood to forgive the BJP for the three farm laws it tried to impose upon them in 2020 — and have been punishing it by not even allowing BJP candidates to campaign in villages — the fact of the matter is that AAP may be in danger of becoming the focus of their ire. The politics is both predictable and wearying. AAP is accusing the BJP-ruled Centre of refusing to move last year's paddy out of Punjab, which is why the mandis are full

and the grain is overflowing on the streets; it says the Centre had promised 17 trains daily to lift the current crop and that not enough are coming. The BJP has responded by accusing Mann of lying. Worse, the AAP-BJP face-off over paddy procurement has come in the wake of several crises, some of them self-inflicted. Civic amenities in Punjab's biggest cities are in a shambles — an ongoing The Tribune series on



garbage dumps, encroachments, open sewer lines, the unhealthy state of hospitals and lack of schoolteachers in government schools is depressing. The crisis continues in agriculture, whether relating to the healthy determination of farmers to burn the

stubble, despite penalties and red entries; free power is, meanwhile, burning a hole in the state's pocket and deepening the water table. The exacerbating heroin addiction, colloquially known as 'chitta' or 'white powder', is made possible by a conniving network of Indian and Pakistani agents who fly in the drug via drones. The rising state deficit, with subsidies amounting to Rs 22,000 crore, is an open secret, as is a growing inability to pay it. Two-and-a-half years ago, Mann dethroned the mighty Congress, didn't allow the Akali Dal to regroup and prevented the BJP from gathering in. Punjab may not be willing to still vote in the BJP, but Punjab's astute politicians are keenly aware that the BJP vote increases in every election. Meanwhile, the Sukhbir Badal-led Akali Dal either refuses or is simply unable to fill in the widening political vacuum.

The impression that "Punjab bahut saare nashey main dooba hua hai" (Punjab is sinking under the morass of several addictions), and that its leadership is finding it difficult to cope, is growing.

That's why when the 82-year-old Amarinder Singh stirs the political pot, even if it's in a granary in far-off Khanna, it still matters. He may never become the chief minister again. He didn't campaign for his new party in the recent Lok Sabha polls. He is most likely guilty of several misdemeanours, including not living up to several of his own promises. But even his worst detractors, both in his former party, the Congress, as well as in his current party, the BJP, will concede the man is still willing to call out a crisis that is fast assuming enormous political implications.

Janhvi Kapoor

Drops Unseen Glimpses With Boyfriend Shikhar Pahariya

Janhvi Kapoor is offering a glimpse into some pictures from her life, featuring special moments with her friends, from work, vacations and also with her beau Shikhar Pahariya. On Friday, Janhvi shared a carousel of pictures on her Instagram handle with the caption, "Mems that haven't made it to the gram," leaving fans happy and cheering for the actress. The post begins with a casual selfie of the Ujjah actor, showing her flaunting a no-makeup look for the camera. Next follows an adorable picture of Janhvi with pet dogs. Janhvi also uploaded an inside photo from Manish Malhotra's Diwali party with the likes of Pahariya, Karan Johar, Isha Ambani and Radhika Merchant, followed by other pictures with her friends.

Amid a couple of candid nature, food and furry friend glimpses, one that has caught everyone's attention the most is Janhvi's picture with her boyfriend Shikhar Pahariya, and one of her pet dogs. The three of them could be seen sharing a charming moment, with Shikhar lovingly reaching out to caress the actress' hair. In the last picture, Janhvi was seen enjoying a horse ride, drawing attention from her BF, who commented, "Future polo champion in the making. Proud of you." It was not long ago when the actress turned heads with her special pendant, featuring the name 'Shiku' on it. While the couple is yet to officially announce their relationship, their public outings and pictures already speak volumes about their romance. On Koffee with Karan 8, Janhvi revealed having Shikhar Pahariya's name on the speed dial alongside her father Boney Kapoor and sister Khushi Kapoor.

Janhvi Kapoor recently made her South debut with Jr NTR starrer Devara: Part 1. Also featuring Saif Ali Khan, the film is currently running in theatres and is close to surpassing the Rs 300-crore mark domestically. The movie is also expected to release on OTT soon. The actress also has Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari with Varun Dhawan and RC16 with Ram Charan in the pipeline.



Bollywood's Dream Girl Hema Malini Slays Airport Look, Greets Paps With A Bright Smile



Hema Malini, the Dream Girl of Indian cinema, needs no introduction. The actress has reigned over the entertainment industry for decades, not just with her acting chops but also undeniable beauty. Hema Malini has not faced the camera in a long time now, but she still has a permanent place in the hearts of the audience. Having said that, the actor-turned-politician was snapped at the airport recently, and she exuded nothing but sheer elegance. A video of her has surfaced on social media, and fans couldn't take their eyes off the beauty. Hema Malini wore an all-purple ethnic ensemble for her flight. The kurta featured an embroidered neckline and hem that rounded off the design elements, making her look prettiest as ever. She kept her dupatta on one shoulder allowing the embroidered neckline to attract the eyeballs.

As for accessories, she wore red bangles, a few rings and block slippers. She carried a small black bag to elevate her OOTD. Her tresses were left open in a side parting to round off her look. Her million-dollar smile as she stepped out of the car was the highlight of the day. Soon enough, fans chimed into the comment section, showering the beauty with admiration and praise. "Really dream girl," read a comment. Another wrote, "Lots of Love, Hema ji." A fan said, "Beautiful." "What a grace," a person remarked.

Hema Malini's journey in the lights-camera-action world began in 1961, showcasing her exceptional Bharatnatyam skills in a Tamil film. Later, she made her Bollywood debut in 1968 with Raj Kapoor's Sapno Ka Saudagar. However, her dual role in Seeta Aur Geeta catapulted her to stardom. Since then, her captivating performances continued in films like Amir Garib, Prem Nagar, Khushboo and Sanyasi. But her portrayal of the fiery Basanti in the cinematic masterpiece Sholay remains etched in the hearts of movie buffs. Beyond the silver screen, Hema Malini has served as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from 2003 to 2009.

Sushant Singh Rajput Death: A Timeline Of Rhea Chakraborty's Online Trolling, Jail Time And Subsequent Bail



On Friday, Rhea Chakraborty found some closure in a four-year-long ordeal that she had been facing since the death of her boyfriend, actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The actor was found dead in June 2020, during the lockdowns, at his home in Mumbai. His death, ruled a suicide, became the center of a highly publicized legal and media storm, implicating Rhea and her family. She and her brother, Showik, were arrested in a narcotics case and faced scrutiny from multiple central agencies. This week, the Supreme Court dismissed the lookout circular (LOC) against her, marking a turning point in a journey fraught with legal battles and public vilification.

On June 14, 2020, the Hindi film industry was shaken by the news of Sushant Singh Rajput's death. The 34-year-old actor was found deceased in his Mumbai apartment, and the initial cause was reported as suicide. At that time, Rhea Chakraborty had been in a relationship with Sushant for about a year. She had lived with him until a week before his death, after which she moved back to her residence. The death of a young and promising actor during the COVID-19 lockdown attracted massive media attention and speculation, leading to a series of investigations.

July 2020: Abetment Of Suicide Case Filed Against Rhea

Sushant's family filed a case on July 25, 2020, accusing Rhea of abetment of suicide, wrongful restraint, wrongful confinement, theft, criminal breach of trust, and cheating. The FIR was lodged in Patna, Bihar, where Sushant's father lived. This case sparked intense public interest and media scrutiny, casting Rhea as a central figure in the narrative surrounding Sushant's death.

August 2020: Investigations By ED, CBI, And NCB

By August 2020, the case had grown beyond the initial allegations. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched an investigation into potential money laundering in connection to Sushant's death. Rhea and her brother were questioned by the ED on August 7. Soon after, on August 19, the Supreme Court transferred the investigation into Sushant's death to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), taking it away from the Mumbai Police.

Alia Bhatt

Shares Heartwarming Birthday Post For Her Mother Soni Razdan: 'The Centre Of Our Universe'

Soni Razdan has turned a year older, and the veteran actress is celebrating her 68th birthday today. Social media has been flooded with lovely wishes for her, and now her daughters Alia Bhatt and Shaheen Bhatt have also posted heartwarming wishes on social media. Meanwhile, Alia Bhatt's mother-in-law Neetu Kapoor also showered love on her 'samdhanji' on this special occasion. On Friday afternoon, Alia Bhatt took to her Instagram and shared two beautiful pictures with her mom Soni Razdan. Extending warm wishes on her birthday, the 'Jigra' actress wrote, "the centre of our universe - happy birthday mothership." Their special bond is quite evident in the pictures shared by Alia. The two pictures show Alia holding her mom close while posing for the pictures. The mother-daughter duo seems extremely happy, and their joyous pictures are absolutely unmissable. Check out Alia's post below.

As soon as Alia Bhatt shared the post, her sister-in-law Riddhima Kapoor Sahni dropped a comment that read, "Soni aunty," along with a heart emoji. Meanwhile, Neetu Kapoor took to her Instagram stories, and shared a picture with Soni. Along with it, she wrote, "Happy birthday samdhanji."

Shaheen Bhatt also shared a sweet post for her mother. Dropping a series of their adorable pictures together, she wrote, "Happy Birthday to my mother from another mother, my bro, my vacation buddy, my favourite resident weirdo, and maker of the best scrambled eggs on earth. I love you @sonirazdan." Soni Razdan replied, "Ha ha thank you, darling. You forgot to mention my Mac and cheese but However, I shall proudly own the best scrambled eggs compliment for now... till Christmas that is heh heh."



In other news, Alia Bhatt recently slammed claims that she had a botched Botox procedure. She also slammed a video and clickbait articles on the Internet, ridiculing her facial expressions. "Absolutely NO JUDGEMENT towards anyone who chooses cosmetic corrections or surgery-your body, your choice. But wow, this is beyond ridiculous! To the random video floating around literally claiming I've had Botox gone wrong (and to the numerous clickbait articles) - I have a "crooked smile" and a "weird way of speaking," according to YOU," wrote Alia. She wrote that these are false claims with zero proof.

