

Govt, CJP must have meaningful engagement

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Delhi state government's announcement against pursuing any further adverse legal action against the NEET (UG) examination irregularities' protestors is some progress, and it can possibly cool tempers on both sides. Still, it is not a very reasonable decision. It doesn't provide immunity to those with criminal antecedents. It may be recalled that the Delhi police filed cases against those who were allegedly involved in the violence that broke out during Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP's) July 20 'Chalo Sansad' march from Jantar Mantar to the Parliament. Police personnel also reportedly identified 2,873 people through CCTV footage who allegedly attacked them and van-

dalised vehicles during the march. Almost a 1000 among them are said to have criminal records. The reasonableness of this decision is questionable. Who decides whether the behaviour of a protestor is law-less? The police and other official agencies have proved to be partisan; they have done everything to kill or curtail the stir; they shut down 16 Metro stations in central Delhi and blocked the internet in the area. Worse, there are reports that the protestors, even minors, are being detained or arrested in different parts of the country.

The Supreme Court had to step in; on Tuesday, it ordered the release of all under-18 protestors, who were arrested during the agitation. Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, whose

cockroach remark led to the launch of CJP, directed the authorities to preserve the digital and personal data of the agitators. This is not to say that no agitator did anything wrong; a small section of them attacked cops, injuring many. The guilty should face the consequences, but the government's attitude has stiffened since the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as the union education minister. This reflects the repressive measures adopted by the Narendra Modi government in the aftermath of the end of the stir. In such a situation, it is difficult to determine the truth about the violence that was unleashed. What both sides, the government and the CJP, need to do is lower the temperature so that meaning-

ful dialogue can be furthered in the interests of students. Prolonged confrontation, mutual distrust, and increasingly hostile rhetoric are unlikely to produce durable solutions. Instead, they risk deepening political polarisation while diverting attention from the substantive issues that originally brought thousands of students onto the streets. A democratic society must be able to distinguish between legitimate dissent and criminal conduct.

Peaceful protest is an essential constitutional right, and its exercise should not automatically invite punitive action. At the same time, acts of violence, vandalism, or assault cannot be justified under the guise of public protest and should be addressed through fair, trans-

parent, and evidence-based legal processes. For the government, rebuilding public confidence requires more than announcing limited legal relief. It demands credible assurances that investigations into alleged offences will be impartial, that no innocent protester will be harassed, and that due process will be followed without political bias. Equally, organisations leading the agitation have a responsibility to ensure that demonstrations remain peaceful and disciplined, preventing fringe elements from hijacking a movement centred on students' concerns. Responsible leadership on both sides is essential to prevent further escalation. Only by replacing confrontation with communication can both sides contribute to an outcome that protects democratic values while addressing the genuine anxieties of the country's youth.

LETTERS

Rise in tech startups augurs well

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease" (July 31). More Indian startups are choosing to list on the stock market—18 did so last year, raising over Rs 41,000 crore, while another 28 are waiting. This shows growing confidence given the profitability rate they have achieved. Investors, especially ordinary retail shareholders, are slowly losing their fear of such companies. This shift from traditional businesses to tech startups is good for India, as it attracts foreign investment and aligns with a global AI-driven economy. But founders must price their shares fairly and deliver on their promises. Public listing is not an exit strategy; it is a tool for faster growth.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

A major boost to entrepreneurial culture

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease" (THI, July 31). India's start-up success should not remain concentrated in a few metropolitan centres. Smaller cities and towns possess talented entrepreneurs who often lack access to funding, mentoring and incubation support. Expanding digital infrastructure, improving access to venture capital and strengthening local innovation hubs can help bridge this gap. Public listing by successful startups should inspire a wider entrepreneurial culture across the country. Inclusive growth will ensure that the benefits of innovation reach every region, creating employment, encouraging local enterprise and contributing to balanced national development.

K Sakunthala, Coimbatore-641671

Take up financial literacy campaigns

THIS is with reference to "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease." The renewed interest in startup IPOs is encouraging, but retail investors should approach these offerings with careful evaluation rather than market enthusiasm. Many technology companies have promising ideas but limited profitability, making valuations difficult to assess. Investors must study financial statements, cash flows and business sustainability before subscribing. Companies, in turn, should provide clear disclosures without overstating future growth prospects. Financial literacy campaigns can also help first-time investors make informed decisions. Healthy capital markets depend on responsible companies as well as informed investors.

S M Jeeva, Chennai-32

Listing brings greater responsibility

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease". Listing on the stock market brings greater responsibility. Investors expect listed startups to maintain high standards of corporate governance, transparent accounting and ethical leadership. Strong internal controls, independent boards and timely disclosures are essential for preserving public confidence. Rapid expansion should never compromise financial discipline or compliance. Sustainable success ultimately rests on credibility.

Pon Arun Kumar, Tiruchengode (TN)-637211

A beacon of hope for H-1B visa holders

I refer to the report on Senator Alex Padilla's bill proposing a Green Card path for long-term US residents, including Indian H-1B visa holders. For decades, skilled immigrants have driven innovation and economic growth, yet laws that have not been changed since 1986 leave thousands in legal limbo. Modernizing the registry rule to grant permanent residency to those living in the US for seven-plus years is a compassionate, practical step. The lawmakers should support this vital bill to ensure stability for hardworking families.

Aahana Misra, Hyderabad

Anti-Paper Leak Bill is a welcome move

STRONG laws are necessary to prevent examination malpractices and protect students, who have worked diligently. The proposed penalties and faster investigations under the Anti-Paper Leak Bill can help restore confidence in the examination system. However, authorities should also strengthen security, improve digital monitoring, and ensure the law is implemented fairly and effectively. This reform can create a transparent and trustworthy environment for students across the country.

Himasri Nanmapaneni, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Do you have any civic issues? Are any roads in your locality damaged? Do you have any complaints against govt departments? Are any private companies taking you for a ride regarding sales and service? The Hans India will publish your complaints, concerns and grievances in these columns on every Wednesday. Mail the details along with relevant photographs if any, to hanspeoplesvoice@gmail.com -Editor

BENGALURU ONLINE

Cop's son among 9 held in hydro ganja racket

TUMAKURU: In a startling case, the son of a police officer, whose father had been involved in creating awareness against drug abuse, has been arrested for allegedly running a hydro ganja trafficking network in Tumakuru. The racket was unearthed after police received a confidential tip-off through a QR code-based public information system introduced to combat narcotics.

The breakthrough came after a tip was received on July 10 through the QR code initiative launched by Tumakuru Sub-Division Deputy Superintendent of Police Chandrashekar. The system allows members of the public to anonymously share information on drug-related activities while ensuring their identity remains confidential.

Read more at <https://epaper.thehansindia.com>

Want to feel depressed? Watch Parliament sessions



DO you want to slip into a state of depression? The easiest way is to switch on your television and watch how increasingly unaccountable and irresponsible many of our public representatives have become. Follow it up by watching prime-time television debates and the descent into despair will be even faster.

It is indeed a sad story. They do not allow Parliament to function, and the party spokespersons repeat the same, often illogical, arguments on television night after night. Ironically, leaders who constantly demand accountability from the government seem to forget that accountability is expected of everyone. No opposition or ruling party can dictate how Parliament should function or how television anchors should conduct debates. Politics cannot become a daily exercise in shifting the goalposts.

Barring the discussion on reforms to plug examination paper leaks, particularly NEET—which itself was hardly productive—and the bill on Vande Mataram, there has been virtually no meaningful legislative business during the monsoon session so far.

Having covered Parliament for long, I have never witnessed any Opposition behaving in this manner. There were always sharp confrontations, heated exchanges, protests and even walk-

PARLIAMENT NEEDS ACCOUNTABILITY FROM BOTH SIDES

outs. Proceedings were occasionally stalled for a day or two. But there was also a willingness on both sides to negotiate. After consultations with the Speaker, a workable understanding would emerge, and Parliament would get back to business.

Today, however, disruption has become the objective rather than the means.

The Opposition insists that the Prime Minister and the Home Minister must be physically present before any discussion can begin. That would have been understandable had they used this demand to compel the government to agree to discussion on law and order and the alleged police excesses during the student protests. Instead of cornering the government through a structured debate backed by facts, pointed questions and supplementary interventions, they prefer to stall proceedings altogether. Parliament cannot be treated this way.

Question Hour is among the most effective parliamentary instruments available to Members of Parliament. It enables them to raise issues about the state and their constituency, seek answers from ministers and hold the government accountable. This is followed by Special Mentions, through which MPs draw attention to pressing public concerns. Both have been sacrificed at the altar of political confrontation.

The decorum of Parliament is steadily eroding because of the "my way or the highway" approach. Whenever the Opposition is questioned about repeated disruptions, the standard response is that running



Parliament is the government's responsibility. Does that absolve the Opposition of all responsibility? Is it not equally their duty to question, challenge and expose the government through informed debate? Why prefer posting comments on X rather than confronting ministers inside Parliament?

Unfortunately, this has become a familiar pattern not just in Parliament but also in several State Assemblies. Between 2014 and 2019, Andhra Pradesh witnessed repeated disruptions by the YSRCP, accompanied by daily theatrics outside the Assembly. In Telangana, during the BRS regime, the Assembly adopted the practice of suspending members even for minor disruptions, and now they themselves protested on several occasions. Contrast that with what is happening in Parliament today, where disruptions continue for days with virtually no consequences. Perhaps Parliament should seriously consider a "no work, no pay" policy and recover the day's expenditure from all parties, including the ruling party, whenever applicable.

For the past two weeks, taxpayers' money has been wasted while Parliament has remained largely dysfunctional. Ironically, the biggest loser is the Opposition itself. Instead of cornering the government over its omissions and commissions, it is allowing the government to escape scrutiny because debates are simply not taking place.

Even when discussions are held, they rarely remain focused. The debate on NEET reforms was a classic example. Much of the Opposition's intervention revolved around rhetoric rather than presenting a credible roadmap for reforming the examination system. This only makes the government's job easier.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra resorted to an unnecessary personal remark when she referred to IIT Madras Director Dr V Kamakoti as a "gaumutra expert." Rahul Gandhi, while strongly criticising the government, neither endorsed nor specifically challenged the provisions of the proposed reforms, nor did he place a concrete alternative before the House. Instead, the debate descended into

exchanges involving words such as "idiots." Such language may generate headlines, but it contributes little to parliamentary discourse.

It was equally unfortunate to hear the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, invoke Manusmriti in a debate where it had little relevance and remark that the Home Minister would be "dragged out" of his room. Although he later clarified that he was referring to public anger, such language was unbecoming of a leader of his stature. The Rajya Sabha is often described as the House of Elders. Its members should set standards of parliamentary conduct, not lower them. Equally disturbing were the comments made by Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) spokesperson Saurav Das, who argued that there was nothing wrong with the filthy remarks made against the Prime Minister by one of the protesting girls. According to him, anyone aggrieved could seek legal recourse by filing a defamation case. Such responses only encourage the normalisation of abusive political discourse. God save the country if such Gen Z comes to power in future.

What was even more disappointing was the complete absence of empathy for the policemen injured during the June 20 protests. Nearly 250 policemen were reportedly injured. When questioned by the media, Rahul Gandhi responded by asking whether the journalist was from the BJP while one of his party spokespersons remarked that policemen were merely doing the job they were paid for. Does it mean they don't deserve sym-

pathy? What kind of attitude is this?

The Opposition also appears obsessed with pellet guns while ignoring the larger challenge of maintaining law and order. Even the Supreme Court has observed that there cannot be a blanket ban on their use. Did Congress governments never authorise their use in Jammu and Kashmir? Were crowd-control measures not employed during protests at JNU and elsewhere?

Parliament cannot be reduced to a stage for political theatre. The Congress, in particular, appears to have drifted away from parliamentary traditions established by leaders such as Indira Gandhi and several other stalwarts who combined sharp criticism with substantive debate. They fought governments fiercely, but they also recognised the sanctity of Parliament.

The ordinary citizen is left wondering whether the nation's representatives are interested in solving problems or merely producing political spectacle. In the process, the genuine concerns of students are getting buried beneath a battle for political credit.

If the Opposition believes that disruption alone will propel it to power, it is making a serious miscalculation. Public confidence is earned not through slogans, social media posts or daily headlines, but through constructive engagement, informed debate, credible alternatives and a clear long-term vision for the country. Parliament was created to hold governments accountable, not to make accountability itself a casualty.

(The author is former Chief Editor of The Hans India)

Fraud on court: Judges, advocates and the fiduciary crisis

CHOLLETI

INDIA'S courts are experiencing a crisis of institutional confidence — not from judicial malfeasance, but from structural vulnerabilities that permit conduct appearing to compromise impartiality. A lawyer defends one side, then appears against it. A judge's child receives hundreds of government cases through prosecutors appearing before the same judge. No rules forbid it. No mechanism stops it. This is not merely a governance failure but a betrayal of the foundational compact between courts and citizens — one playing out in quiet procedural rooms, far removed from grand courtroom drama.

The Kakinada Episode-Fraud named:

Advocate S Pranathi represents landowners from Kakinada in a property dispute. Months later, as the State's Special Government Pleader, she switches sides and opposes them. Her husband, Meka Rahul Chowdary, steps in to argue her abandoned brief. The Kakinada Municipal Corporation simultaneously reverses its own legal position without explanation. The Andhra Pradesh High Court on July 28 — in Review Petition No. 2 of 2026 in WP Nos. 11254 of 2013 and 13428 of 2015 — examined the docket orders, vakalatnamas, and the conduct of the counsels involved, and found evidence of collusion, professional misconduct, conflict of interest, and "a deliberate attempt to commit fraud on this court."

The court was unsparing: "The Counsel appearing for the State and its instrumentalities have failed in discharging their fiduciary duty." It ordered a criminal probe by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), calling for a report within twelve weeks. This case is a symptom — not an exception. It illuminates four interconnected failures: the collapse of professional ethics among advocates; unspoken nepotism in government counsel appointments; absence of meaningful recusal standards for judges, and inadequacy of the Bar Council disciplinary machinery.

The oath forgotten:

The Advocates Act, 1961, and Bar Council of India Rules prescribe unambiguous standards.

They demand respect for courts, impose fiduciary duty — loyalty, confidentiality, undivided allegiance. An advocate who switches sides, or whose spouse argues the opposite brief, violates this core compact. Under Section 35, State Bar Councils can punish misconduct with reprimand, suspension, or permanent removal from the roll.

Yet disciplinary action remains slow and inconsistent. In March last year, the Bar Council of India issued a directive against advocates advertising through social media influencers — a development that would have been inconceivable a generation ago, and one that speaks to how far institutional drift has gone. When the Bar Council is issuing social media advisories instead of conducting disciplinary proceedings against ethical violations, the profession's moral compass has drifted dangerously off course.

When family becomes the conflict:

Beyond individual misconduct lies a systemic question: whether children of sitting judges receiving government counsel appointments creates an appearance of institutional conflict that a democracy cannot afford to ignore. Last December, the Delhi High Court heard public interest litigations by the First Generation Lawyers' Association, challenging preferential allotment of lawyers' chambers to relatives of retiring advocates — a practice the court found prima facie violative of Article 14. In the same month, the government was asked to explain its empanelment of over 650 advocates as Central Government counsel in the Supreme Court, several reportedly enrolled only in 2024–2025, many yet to clear the All India Bar Examination.

In August 2025, the Allahabad High Court in Jubeda Begum v. UPSRTC decried an "entitlement culture" in state counsel appointments, recalling the Supreme Court's 1991 ruling in Kumari Shreilekha Vidyarthi v. State of U P that mandated transparent, merit-based procedures. Justice Ajay Bhanot observed that "modes of appointment which accord weight to accidents of inheritance and neglect achievements of merit cannot be countenanced." The human cost is felt by the first-generation lawyer — the son of a farmer, the daughter of a schoolteacher — who watches

In Rajasthan, the government amended its eligibility criteria to accommodate the son of a senior official as Additional Advocate General, notwithstanding the mandatory ten-year practice requirement. When the nepotism allegation surfaced publicly — ahead of PM Modi's visit to Jodhpur in August 2024 — the appointee resigned. Contrast this with Justice Sujoy Paul, who in early 2024 voluntarily sought transfer from the Madhya Pradesh High Court to the Telangana High Court because his son practised in the same court.

the doors of patronage remain closed while they swing open for the well-connected.

The recusal question-Justice must be seen:

No episode illustrates the tension between judicial privilege and public confidence more sharply than the Delhi High Court recusal controversy of 2026. Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, appearing in person in the CBI's revision petition against his discharge in the excise policy case, sought recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on the ground that both her children were empanelled as Central Government counsel — work allocated through the same senior law officers appearing against him in her court.

In April, Justice Sharma dismissed the recusal applications, holding that her children's professional engagements created no financial or personal stake in the outcome, and that accepting such grounds would require "a large part of the judiciary" to recuse in similar cases.

The observation, while judicially defensible, sits uneasily alongside principle. The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, adopted by all Supreme Court judges in 1997 under Chief Justice J S Verma, urges that where close relatives of a judge may gain undue advantage, the judge should — in the interests of the appearance of justice — opt for transfer. This is a voluntary ethical code with no

enforcement mechanism. The asymmetry is stark: Rule 6 of the Bar Council Rules prohibits advocates from practising before courts where a close relative serves as a judge — but that obligation binds the advocate, not the judge.

In Rajasthan, the government amended its eligibility criteria to accommodate the son of a senior official as Additional Advocate General, notwithstanding the mandatory ten-year practice requirement. When the nepotism allegation surfaced publicly — ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jodhpur in August 2024 — the appointee resigned. The system responded not to principle, but to political pressure.

Contrast this with Justice Sujoy Paul, who in early 2024 voluntarily sought transfer from the Madhya Pradesh High Court to the Telangana High Court because his son practised in the same court. That act of quiet integrity, barely reported, is precisely the standard the system needs — and rarely demands.

The way forward:

None of these amount to an indictment of the judiciary or the Bar. The overwhelming majority of advocates serve with dedication, and most judges discharge their duties with independence. The system is not broken — but its foundations are being tested in ways that demand structural response, not merely individual virtue.

India needs a binding, transparent, and institutionally reviewable judicial recusal framework. It needs merit-based, publicly disclosed criteria for government counsel empanelment. It needs the Bar Council's disciplinary machinery to function with the urgency this moment demands. And it needs ordinary litigants — carrying nothing but faith in the court's impartiality — to have that faith restored. The Andhra Pradesh High Court's order is, in one sense, proof that the system can work: a judge saw fraud, named it, and acted. That is reason enough for measured hope. The question now is whether the institutions around that judge will do the same.

(The writer is with the Cholleti BlackRose Chambers, Hyderabad, and writes on economy, politics and law)