

1. “SC on Maternity Leave Is a Constitutional Right”

Background

- In *K. Umadevi v. Government of Tamil Nadu (2025)*, a Tamil Nadu government school teacher applied for maternity leave for her third child under Fundamental Rule 101(a). She already had two children from her first marriage who are now in her ex-husband’s custody and she became pregnant again in her second marriage.
- The Madras High Court denied her request of maternity leave citing the rule limiting leave to women with less than two surviving children.

Supreme Court Judgement

The Supreme Court, in an unanimous judgment held that while the duration of maternity leave may be reduced under the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 but there is no limitation on eligibility of leave. It directed the state to grant the leave and disburse benefits within two months, emphasizing that maternity leave is important to reproductive rights under Articles 21 and 42, and must be harmonized and not hindered by population control objectives.

Legal Provisions involved

Article 21 – Right to life and personal liberty which also include reproductive autonomy, health, and dignity.

Article 42 – Directive to the State for ensuring just and humane work conditions and maternity relief.

Article 14 – Right to Equality, ensuring rules don’t arbitrarily discriminate against women with more children or remarried women.

2. SC Rules 2022 Act Doesn’t Bar Urdu—Promotes Language Pluralism in Maharashtra

Background

In Patur, Akola district, Maharashtra, the Municipal Council erected a signboard displaying "Municipal Council, Patur" in Marathi language, with an Urdu translation of the same beneath. Appellant, who was a former Council member, objected to Urdu’s inclusion and argued that only Marathi being the State’s official language should be

used, citing the Maharashtra Local Authorities (Official Languages) Act, 2022. The Municipal Council rejected her objection, as did the Divisional Commissioner, overturning the Collector's order. A Bombay High Court writ petition was also dismissed. The appellant then again appealed to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court Judgement

- A two-judge Bench of Justices Dhulia and Chandran upheld the High Court's ruling on 15 April 2025, dismissing the appeal.
- The Court noted the 2022 Act mandates Marathi for official purposes but does not prohibit using additional languages like Urdu or Hindi on signboards. Since Urdu is included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution alongside Marathi and is widely used locally, its inclusion supports effective communication rather than undermining state language use.

Legal Provisions involved

Constitutional Authority under Article 345 (Official languages of a state) This Article empowers state legislatures to adopt their official language(s). The Supreme Court in *Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (2014)*, where a Constitution Bench affirmed that adopting one official language does not preclude adoption of others under Article 345.

Eighth Schedule of the Constitution

The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India is a pivotal component that enumerates the officially recognized languages of the country. The original Constitution listed 14 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Over time, this list has expanded through various constitutional amendments to include additional languages, reflecting India's rich linguistic diversity. The Twenty-first Amendment (1967) added Sindhi, the Seventy-first Amendment (1992) incorporated Konkani, Meitei (Manipuri), and Nepali, and the Ninety-second Amendment (2003) included Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali bringing the total number of official languages to 22.

3. Supreme Court Upholds Artistic Expression

Background

Imran Pratapgarhi, a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha, posted a video on his verified 'X' account featuring a poem recited during a mass marriage ceremony in Jamnagar, Gujarat. The poem, titled "Ae khoon ke pyase baat suno," metaphorically addressed facing injustice with love and sacrifice. A complaint was filed that the poem incited communal disharmony and hurt religious

sentiments of the people which led to the registration of an FIR under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS).

Decision

The Supreme Court quashed the FIR, holding that no offence was committed. Court focused that the poem preached non-violence and did not incite hatred or enmity between the communities. It also observed that the poem's message was one of love and sacrifice in the face of injustice and it is non violative in nature. The Court also criticized the Gujarat High Court for not appreciating the poem's content and for not applying the correct legal provisions in the case.

Key Observations of the Court

- The Court said that freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) and that it is essential for a healthy and civilized society.
- It emphasized that the police must carefully examine the content of alleged offensive speech before registering an FIR, especially when it pertains to written or spoken words.
- The Court highlighted the importance of conducting a preliminary inquiry under Section 173(3) of the BNSS when allegations involve offences related to freedom of speech.
- It reaffirmed that the effect of words must be judged using the standards of reasonableness, strong-minded individuals, not those who perceive criticism as a threat to their authority.

4. Supreme Court Declares Arrest Illegal for Failure to Inform Grounds

Background

- Vihaan Kumar was arrested on 10 June 2024 for offences under Sections 409, 420, 467, 468, and 471 read with Section 120-B of the Indian Penal Code. He was not informed of the grounds of his arrest that violate Article 22(1) of the Constitution. Additionally, he was handcuffed and chained to a hospital bed during his hospitalization, which was found to be a violation of his dignity under Article 21 of the constitution.
- The Supreme Court allowed the appeal in this case declaring the appellant's arrest illegal due to non-compliance with Article 22(1) of the Constitution. The Court mentioned that informing an arrested person of the grounds of arrest is a mandatory constitutional requirement and not a mere formality; it also includes his right to get informed about grounds of his arrest. The Court also condemned how the appellant was chained in the hospital as a gross violation of his personal dignity under Article 21. The Court directed the State of Haryana to issue guidelines prohibiting the handcuffing of accused persons in hospitals and to ensure strict adherence to constitutional safeguards during arrests.

Legal Provisions Involved

Article 22(1): Right to be informed of the reasons for arrest and to consult a legal practitioner.

Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty, including the right to live with dignity.

Section 50 of the CrPC: Obligation to inform the arrested person of the reasons for arrest and their right to bail.

Section 50A of the CrPC: Obligation to inform a nominated person of the arrest.

5. Supreme Court Acquits Death Row Convict in 3-Year-Old's Rape and Murder Case

In a judgment of Supreme Court on May 7, 2025, the Court acquitted Ramkirat Munilal Goud, who had been sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a three-year-old girl, due to substantial flaws in the prosecution's case and investigation.

Background

The incident took place in September 2013 in Thane, MH. The prosecution's case relied on circumstantial evidence, including the 'last seen' theory, an alleged extra-judicial confession, and forensic reports. However, the Supreme Court found these evidentiary foundations unreliable.

Supreme Court's Findings:

Last Seen Evidence:

Witnesses who claimed to see the accused with the victim did not report this thing to the police promptly.

The witness's statements were recorded days later and contained many inconsistencies.

The Court noted that the investigation officer failed to record these statements at the first instance which undermined the reliability of this evidence.

Extra-Judicial Confession:

The confession which was made by the accused to a fellow inmate was not reported to the police until much later.

The witness did not inform the police despite being aware of the situation that the police were searching for the child.

This delay in reporting rendered the confession inadmissible.

Forensic Evidence:

The forensic report linking soil samples from the crime scene to the accused's location was inconclusive. Additionally, reports comparing samples from other watchmen were not presented in court which led the Court to assume that the prosecution withheld important evidence of the case.

Investigative Negligence by the police:

The investigation by the police was marked by delays in recording witness statements and a lack of compliance with standard procedures, such as conducting test identification parades and contemporaneous searches.

This negligence led the Court to describe the investigation as "shabby and perfunctory."

6. SC Rules JJB Cannot Reopen Age Verdict; School Certificate Confirms Juvenile Status

The Supreme Court dismissed the State's appeal and affirmed the Allahabad High Court decision that the respondent was a juvenile at the time of commission of offence. The present controversy arose because the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), after initially accepting the respondent's date of birth as 08-09-2003 based on his school certificate, later disregarded it. The JJB instead relied on a medical ossification (bone formation) test estimating his age at 21 years and treated him as an adult. The Uttar Pradesh government challenged the High Court's ruling.

Key Findings of the Court

No Review Power for JJB

The Supreme Court held that under Section 94(2) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the JJB cannot review its own prior orders. JJB does not have the reviewing power. Its reversal rejecting the date of birth accepted earlier and ordering a medical test amounted to an unauthorized review.

Documentary Evidence Supersedes Medical Tests

Since valid school certificates and birth records existed, the JJB was not entitled to conduct an ossification test. The Court said that documentary proof carries the highest evidentiary value, and medical assessments are subsidiary in nature. Medical tests may only be used in case such records are absent or missing.

Bail Order Upheld

The Allahabad High Court had granted bail under Section 12 of the JJ Act, as there was no reason to prove that the juvenile would endanger himself or society. The Supreme Court upheld this decision by clarifying that a preliminary adult-trial assessment under Section 15 without reliable age determination does not override the juvenile's entitlement to bail.

Final Outcome

The Supreme Court dismissed the State's appeal. It reinstated the school certificate as proof of the respondent's juvenility and upheld bail.



Juvenile Justice Board (JJB)

The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) is a statutory quasi-judicial body established under Section 4 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. Constituted at the district level each Board comprises a judicial magistrate and two social workers and one of them must be a woman. JJB has exclusive jurisdiction over “children in conflict with law,” managing inquiries, bail decisions, and individual care plans. The Board conducts preliminary assessments for juveniles aged between 16 to 18 years accused of heinous offences to determine suitability for trial as adults. Proceedings are child friendly aimed at rehabilitation of the juveniles.

7. UPSC Fake Certificates Case

Background

Puja Khedkar, an IAS probationer officer appointed after the UPSC Civil Services Exam 2022 was accused of submitting fake OBC and PwBD certificates to secure benefits of these communities to get selection into the exam. Complaints was UPSC led to the cancellation of her candidature, FIR registration under Sections 420, 464, 465, 471 IPC, Section 66D IT Act, and Section 89 and 91 of the RPwD (Rights of Person with Disability) Act, 2016. A Delhi High Court’s interim protection was vacated and anticipatory bail was denied.

Supreme Court Order

- A Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma allowed her Special Leave Petition, effectively granting anticipatory bail and making interim protection absolute.
- The Court directed her release upon furnishing ₹25,000 with two sureties, and imposed conditions: She must cooperate fully in the investigation, no witness tampering or evidence interference by the accused and no abuse of bail with liberty to cancel upon breach.

Legal Provisions involved

Section 420 IPC: Related to cheating

Section 464 IPC: Forgery of documents

Section 465 IPC: Punishment for forgery

Section 471 IPC: Using forged documents as genuine

Section 66D IT Act: Punishment for cheating by personation using digital means

Section 89&91 RPwD Act, 2016: Misrepresentation regarding Persons with Benchmark Disabilities certification

8. Long-term cohabitation between couple gave rise to a presumption of valid consent

Background

The appellant, Ravish Singh Rana, and the complainant had been in a live-in relationship since February 2021. The complainant alleged that Ravish Singh established a physical relationship with her under the false promise of marriage. She claimed that when she insisted on marriage, the appellant refused to marry and threatened her. An FIR was registered against the appellant under Sections 376, 323, 504, and 506 of the Indian Penal Code. The appellant filed an application before the Uttarakhand High Court to quash the FIR, which was dismissed by the court. He then appealed in the Supreme Court.

Judgment

The Supreme Court quashed the FIR and the following proceedings in the court and stated that the long-term cohabitation between both the parties gave rise to a presumption of valid consent. The Court focused on the fact that when two able-minded adults cohabit for an extended period, it presumes their voluntary choice of relationship and allegations of a false promise of marriage are untenable in such circumstances. The Court concluded that continuing the criminal proceedings would constitute an abuse of the law.

Legal Provisions Involved

Section 376 IPC – Punishment for Rape

Section 323 IPC – Punishment for voluntarily causing hurt

Section 504 IPC – Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace

Section 506 IPC – Punishment for criminal intimidation

9. Horizontal reservation for transgender persons

Background

- In April 2025, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) issued an admission notice and information bulletin for the NEET PG 2025-26 examination, scheduled for June 15, 2025.
- Dr. Kiran A.R. who is a transgender person from SC category, Dr. B. Venkata Bhagiradhy Mythraa (from the Other Backward Classes category in Andhra Pradesh), and Dr. Vignesh Dhananjayan (from the unreserved category in Tamil Nadu) challenged the notice, arguing that it failed to implement horizontal reservations for transgender persons, as mandated by the Supreme Court in the 2014 NALSA judgment.

- They contended that the omission in the notice violated their constitutional rights under Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(a), and 21 of the Constitution and contravened the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. The petitioners sought a directive for the issuance of a revised admission notice that includes a 1% horizontal reservation for transgender persons within each vertical category.

Judgment of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court issued a notice in response to the petition directing the Centre, state governments, Union Territories, the National Medical Commission, and the Ministry of Social Justice to respond to the plea. Senior Advocate Indira Jaising appeared for the petitioners, highlighting the government's failure to implement horizontal reservations for transgender persons in educational institutes admissions despite the NALSA judgment's directives. The petitioners argued that the absence of such reservations in the NEET-PG 2025-26 admission process would deprive transgender candidates of equal opportunities and adequate representation in postgraduate medical education.

Legal Provisions involved

Article 14 – Right to Equality
Article 15 – Prohibition of Discrimination
Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression
Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty
Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019
Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020

