

Mumbra: Illegal shops, homes destroyed after HC orders. But only victims are unsuspecting buyers

MUMBAI: Shah Mohammad stares blankly at the pile of rubble that used to be his grocery shop in the Madina Complex building. Anxious about his bleak future, he has barely slept or eaten in the past two days. “I had built this shop just five months ago thinking I could start a career as a businessman after struggling with a poorly-paid job. I spent Rs 16 lakh, of which Rs 4 lakh is a loan. But now everything is destroyed. All my savings are gone. I have nothing left. I will have to restart everything from scratch,” says 36-year-old Mohammad, wiping his tears. Shah Mohammad is among hundreds of unfortunate individuals who bought a house or a shop at Shil village, near Mumbra, on the outskirts of Thane. This area housed many lower income group families and the houses were worth an average of Rs 20 lakh. On 12 June, the Bombay High Court, taking strict note of the 17 unauthorised structures in Shil Daighar near Mumbra, passed an order that paved the way for the demolition of 17 buildings that were constructed on a five and half acre plot owned by an elderly woman. The Bombay High Court described this case as one “which would shock the con-



science of the Court”. The order was challenged in the Supreme Court but on 17 June, the apex court refused to intervene with the high court order; instead it appreciated the high court for taking up a “courageous stand”. “It’s shocking that some people have the guts to come to this court. For once, the high court has woken up and tried to establish the rule of law. How many buildings have you constructed without taking any sanctions? Please go. Unless and until you take any action against these unscrupulous builders, this trend will continue, people will continue to do gorilla fighting using your shoulders, it must stop,” Justice Manmo-

han of the top court said. Both courts said that if this was not stopped, such illegal structures could mushroom across Thane and Mumbai. The high court also said, “Such construction could not have come up except with the blessings of the Government and Municipal Officers. It is also shocking that the persons who have rampantly undertaken such construction could spend such huge amounts in undertaking such brazen illegal construction and ultimately to defraud innocent flat purchasers to purchase flats/tenements in such construction,” the high court observed in its order dated 12 June. (ThePrint has copy of it.)

This area falls under the Kalyan Rural constituency and the sitting MLA is Rajesh More of the Shiv Sena Shinde. ThePrint tried to reach out to More via calls. This report will be updated once we get a response. The court also pulled up the Thane Municipal officers over their neglect. “The situation is so serious that it would be difficult to believe that there is at all any rule of law when it comes to illegal constructions and whether the Thane Municipal Corporation is at all alive to what is happening under its feet and under the blessings of its officers,” the court observed. Just filing police complaints

and issuing notices is not enough when illegal construction has been going on, the court observed. “Considering the seriousness of the matter, this is a clear case of land grabbing as also the complaints having fallen on the deaf ears of the Municipal Officers. Today we do not know how many such illegal constructions are overlooked, neglected and no action has been taken by the Municipal Corporation and more particularly in the interest of innocent tenement purchasers, who are likely to invest their money in purchasing tenements, in illegal and unauthorised constructions, also at the cost of their life as there is no certainty about the legality and quality of the construction which they would occupy,” the court observed while passing its operative order on 12 June. The court has asked Thane’s principal district judge to appoint a judicial officer to conduct an inquiry into those who are behind the illegal construction. The report has to be submitted in six weeks. ThePrint reached out to Saunabh Rao, Thane Municipal Commissioner, via calls, for a comment. There was no response. Shil is in Thane district, about 25 km from Thane City. It is a part of the Mum-

bai Metropolitan region and has, over the years, absorbed the spillover population of Mumbai. Much of the population of Shil and Mumbra comprises of people from low income groups who work as masons, labourers, carpenters, drivers, commuting to Mumbai everyday. Human lives at stake as the court admonishes officials, the lives of the thousands who live in the Madina complex are completely disrupted. The road to their complex is now a kaccha road filled with sand and stones. The compound that housed the 17 illegal buildings is now just rubble and debris. Once an area that was bustling with shoppers and laughing children, now the only sounds are of the JCBs and tractors. The demolition drive started on 12 June, the day of the high court order. Residents say they got no formal notice. They were just told verbally to vacate the compound. Residents whose houses are yet to be demolished are living in fear. Most of those ThePrint met had not gone to work, but were huddled outside their homes, making emergency plans. It’s stifling inside their homes anyway, with the electricity having been cut off the day the demolitions began.

Ludhiana West bypoll: All arrangements in place for counting of votes, says DEO



LUDHIANA: District Election Officer Himanshu Jain on Saturday said all arrangements are in place for the counting of votes for the Ludhiana West Assembly bypoll on June 23. “Counting of votes and postal ballots will commence at 7 am in the presence of election observers, candidates and their authorized representatives,” he said. The district election officer (DEO) said that robust security measures, including the deployment of paramilitary forces, have been made at all counting centers. Continuous monitoring will be ensured through closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance, he added. Jain said the entry to the counting centers will be strictly regulated, allowing only candidates, their representatives, media personnel

and authorized individuals with valid identity cards issued by the Election Commission. There were a total of 14 candidates in the fray. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) fielded Sanjeev Arora (61), a Rajya Sabha member and a Ludhiana-based industrialist. The Congress placed its bet on former minister and Punjab Congress working president Bharat Bhushan Ashu (51), who represented the seat twice between 2012 and 2017 before losing to Gurbpreet Bassi Gogi by a margin of 7,512 votes in the 2022 assembly polls. The BJP fielded Jiwan Gupta while Parupkar Singh Ghuman was the Shiromani Akali Dal’s candidate. The Ludhiana West seat fell vacant following the death of AAP MLA Gogi earlier in January.

Naidu's Rs 82,000-cr Banakacherla project to link 3 river basins faces opposition from protégé Revanth

HYDERABAD: Five years ago, it was Pothireddypadu, and now, Banakacherla. Despite friendly political and personal relations between then-chief ministers Jagan Mohan Reddy and K. Chandrabab Naidu, and later their respective successors Chandrababu Naidu and Revanth Reddy, river water sharing continues to be the bone of contention between the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana governments, 11 years post the bifurcation. The Telugu sibling states are now feuding over Godavari flood water. The Chandrababu Naidu government has proposed an ambitious Godavari-Banakacherla link project, but Revanth Reddy has said it is “against natural justice, interests, and water rights of people of Telangana”. The Telangana CM has also requested Jai Shakti Minister C.R. Paatil to reject the pre-feasibility report submitted to the Central Water Commission by the Naidu administration to stop the project. Paatil may soon call meetings of the apex council, headed by him and including the chief ministers of the two states. Five years ago, then-minister of Jai Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat convened apex council meetings to resolve the issue of the Pothireddypadu capacity expansion by the Jagan government. The Jagan administration, in a May 2020 order, allocated Rs 6,829 crore for the Rayalaseema Lift Scheme and the supporting canal system. The expansion project aimed to draw three TMC (thousand million cubic feet) per day from the Pothireddypadu Head Regulator on the Srisailem

reservoir. The then-KCR government had objected to the move, leading to the apex council meetings. According to the 2014 AP Reorganisation Act, Telangana side says, any new project must first be discussed and approved by the Godavari River Management Board and the Central Water Commission. Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu envisaged the ambitious project linking the Godavari-Krishna-Penna basins during his previous term. Resuming power after five years, Chandrababu Naidu, the leader of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the principal National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ally, reinitiated the project’s planning last year and wrote to the Union finance ministry for financial support. The Andhra government, which now plans to partly use the nearly 3,000 TMC of Godavari flood water running into the Bay of Bengal on average every year, proposed the river link from the Polavaram dam in north central Andhra to Banakacherla in the parched Rayalaseema region. The project is important politically too for Naidu, as it could enhance the TDP’s image in Rayalaseema, especially Kurnool and Kadapa regions which are a stronghold of YSRCP despite the losses it suffered there in 2024 elections. The project, which includes building a 416 km network of open canals, pipelines and lifts to draw 200 TMC of flood water at two TMC per day during the Godavari flood season, is estimated to cost at least Rs 82,000 crore.

NEW DELHI: The National Institute of Immunohaematology in Mumbai under the India Council of Medical Research has for the first time created a national ‘rare blood donor registry’ for patients with rare and uncommon blood types who need frequent transfusion especially in conditions such as thalassemia and sickle cell disease. The ICMR-NIHH is now in talks with the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) so that the rare donor registry portal can be integrated with e-Raktakosh, a platform which currently provides information about blood availability, Dr Manisha Madhakar, Director of ICMR-Centre for Research Management and Control of Haemoglobinopathies (CRHMC) in Nagpur said. The integration will help people with rare blood groups easily trace blood banks and procure blood. It will also assist the blood banks man-

age their stock and donors through a centralised system. India, with a population of more than 142 crore, has over 4,000 licensed blood banks, according to the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). India relies heavily on transfusions due to a higher prevalence of blood diseases and complications during pregnancy, Dr Madhakar said. “Thalassemia itself contributes to 1 to 1.5 lakh patients who require recurrent transfusions,” she said. Additionally, with more than 1,200 road accidents occurring every day in India, and with every year 60 million surgeries, 240 million major operations, 331 million cancer-related procedures, and 10 million pregnancy complications, a serious call for blood transfusion is recognised, she said. In majority of blood banks in India, only ABO and RhD



are antigens matched prior to cross-matching for issuing of red blood cell components. However, the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) has recognised more than 360 antigens in 47 blood group systems. Blood banks do not perform testing of these minor blood group antigens routinely, explained Dr Madhakar. “As a result, a mismatch of minor antigens between donor and patient blood group (BG) profiles can lead to red

cell alloimmunization (1-3 per cent in the general population, 8-18 per cent in thalassaemic patients). About 25 per cent of all immunized patients have been reported to receive unsatisfactory transfusion support due to presence of multiple antibodies or antibodies to high frequency antigens (HFA),” she said. Rare blood groups are those which lack HFA (1:1000 or less), or are negative for a combination of common antigens, or have a null pheno-

type. “Meeting a demand for rare blood supply is challenging and time consuming for such patients. The need of a patient for rare blood can be the start of a series of events that may extend beyond the local blood centre and become a national or even an international search,” Dr Madhakar said. To overcome this challenge, an inventory of extensively typed blood donors and rare blood type donors is required, she said. For this, internationally 27 countries have operational national rare donor registry programmes. India, however, is not a contributor country, she said. In 2019, however, ICMR-NIHH was granted Centre of Excellence project under the aegis of ICMR, where an initiative was taken to screen 4,000 ‘O’ group regular blood donors for all clinically important antigens using high throughput molecular assays,

from four different regions of India in collaboration with the big blood banks from KEM Hospital Mumbai, PGIMER Chandigarh, MCH Kolkata and JIPMER Puducherry. “More than 600 donors negative for combination of antigens were identified along with 250 very rare blood group donors. The registry also includes 170 Bombay blood group donors, which is the commonly required rare blood type in India (approx 120-150 units/year). To access this inventory (ICMR-Rare Donor Registry of India (RDRI)), a web-based portal has been developed for systematic requisition and provision of blood to patients on time,” Dr Madhakar said. “There is a plan to integrate this rare donor registry with e-Raktakosh of DGHS so that all the blood banks can contribute their rare donors and help in expansion of the registry.

Nagaland Guv urges people to make yoga sustainable part of life

KOIHIMA: Along with the rest of the globe, Nagaland marked the International Day of Yoga across the state with a grand public event at the Indira Gandhi Stadium, Kohima, on Friday, drawing hundreds of participants from various departments, educational institutions, and the general public. The Department of Health & Family Welfare under the National Ayush Mission Nagaland in collaboration with the Department of Youth Resources and Sports organised an event on the theme “Yoga for One Earth, One Health – Yoga Sangam”. Minister for Health and Family Welfare, P Paiwang Konyak and the advisor for Youth Resources



& Sports, S Keoshu Yimkhuing, along with senior government officers and students performed yoga under the guidance of

trained instructors. Speaking at the event, State Programme Officer (AYUSH) Dr Seyiekhrietuo John emphasised the

significance of yoga in promoting preventive healthcare and mental well-being. “Yoga is not tied to any religion, it is universal in nature. It is a practice that everyone can embrace for the well-being of humanity,” Dr John said. Urging people to adopt yoga without misconceptions, he said that Ayush Mission in Nagaland is working to integrate traditional wellness systems into the mainstream healthcare system, particularly at the grassroots level. Meanwhile, on the occasion, Nagaland Governor La Ganesan extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of the state highlighting yoga’s timeless relevance and its power to bring balance to modern life. In his

message, the governor emphasised that yoga, originating from ancient India, transcends boundaries and cultures, offering a universal path to holistic well-being, inner peace, and resilience. Observed annually on June 21, the International Day of Yoga serves as a global reminder of the mind-body harmony that yoga promotes, he said. “In our fast-paced modern lives, yoga is more relevant than ever. It is an important tool to combat stress, enhance physical vitality, and cultivate mental clarity,” Ganesan said. “By integrating yoga into our lives, we not only invest in our health but also contribute to the vitality and harmony of our beautiful state,” the governor said.

Toilet clinic: Bihar village’s women-led initiative restores sanitation facility, dignity

NEW DELHI: In a small village in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur district, a unique clinic led by woman is healing lives in an unexpected way without checking pulses or prescribing pills. The “Toilet Clinic” in Bisnampur Baghnagari is the first of its kind in the state, offering repair and restoration services for broken or disused toilets. Operated entirely by local women trained as masons and sanitation workers, the clinic is restoring both sanitation and dignity in the village. The facility was set up in early 2024 under the leadership of Mukhiya Babita Kumari, after it was found that nearly 190 of the 1,269 toilets built



under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen had fallen into disrepair — unused, ignored, and in some cases, abandoned altogether. The clinic offers affordable and repair services through local women’s self-help groups supported by the

Jeevika Livelihoods Mission. Consumables like tiles or taps are billed as per actual use. The women labourers ensure that families do not defecate in the open. “When a toilet breaks, people feel ashamed to talk about it.

But silence only deepens the problem. I wanted a place where repairs could be made without shame where women could lead the solution,” Babita said. “Agar shauchalay toot gaya, toh sammaan bhi toot jaata hai. Hamne socha, kyu na izat ki marammat bhi shuru ho? (When a toilet breaks, one’s dignity also suffers damage. So we thought why not repair both),” she told PTI over phone. Elected in 2021, Babita’s story could have easily followed a familiar script — one where male relatives take over the reins, but when her husband stepped aside to support her leadership, she seized the opportunity not

just to govern, but to re-imagine what a panchayat can look like when women lead from the front. Supported by the District Water and Sanitation Committee along with the UNICEF, and backed by women’s self-help groups under the Jeevika Livelihoods Mission, the clinic has restored over 15 toilets within months. Labour is provided by trained women and materials billed as per use, making the service both affordable and empowering. “We were proud of being an open defecation free village, but when toilets broke, people silently went back to the fields.

Assam: Special court orders framing of charges under POCSO, IPC against IPS officer

DIPHU: A special court in Assam has ordered the framing of charges under the POCSO Act and other sections of the IPC against IPS officer Gaurav Upadhyay in a six-year-old alleged sexual molestation case. The special judge, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court, Karbi Anglong, R Lal, in the order, said that there were “two incidents of sexual assault on the survivor” by the accused, who was the superintendent of police of that district at the time of the incident. “The first assault occurred in the SP Bungalow at Diphu. The second assault took place in the hotel room

where the survivor was staying with her mother and brother,” it said. A copy of the order, which was passed on Wednesday, was made available to PTI on Saturday. The incident, involving a 14-year-old girl, took place in December 2019 and a police case was registered in January 2020. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had probed the case and submitted its charge-sheet against the IPS officer subsequently. An IPS officer of 2012 batch hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Upadhyay is currently the additional secretary of the state Transport Department; State Project Director, Assam Inland Water

Transport Development Society; and Project Officer, Assam Integrated River Basin Management. The judge noted that as Upadhyay was the Karbi Anglong SP at the time of the incident, it occurred within the limits of his jurisdiction and control as a police officer, attracting clauses (i) and (l) of Section 9 of the POCSO Act and punishable under Section 10 of the same law. Use of “criminal force to kiss” the victim and “physical contact and advances” by touching her private parts, as stated specifically by the minor in her statement, leads to charges under Sections 354 and 354A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the order said.