

When Marriage Becomes a Moral Obsession

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ABOUT THIS PIECE

An opinion column examining why India's historically low divorce rate coexists with alarmingly high rates of marriage-related suicides. Drawing on NCRB data and UN Women reports, the piece challenges the social pressure to remain in unhealthy marriages and calls for reframing separation as a choice of dignity rather than failure — and why society must stop treating suffering as virtue.

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Six Jharkhand girls script history, selected for India's U-18 Women's Hockey Team for Asia Cup

SURENDRA SOREN : RANCHI

In a proud moment for Jharkhand, six young women hockey players from the state have been selected in the Indian squad for the upcoming Women's U-18 Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Kakamigahara, Japan, from May 29 to June 6, 2026. The announcement made by Hockey India on May 22 marks a historic achievement for the state's sports ecosystem.

What makes this feat remarkable is that all six selected players have been trained at state-run residential training centres in Simdega and Ranchi. Hailing from districts like Simdega, Khunti, and Ranchi, these athletes have consistently represented Hockey Jharkhand in national sub-junior tournaments over the past two years and recently attended a month-long



national camp in Bhopal. Pushpa Manjhi - Midfielder, Sandeepa Kumari - Forward, Shruti Kumari - Midfielder, Sugan Sanga - Defender, Neelam Topno - Defender, Khilli Kumari - Goalkeeper. Hockey Jharkhand President Bholanath Singh termed the achievement a result of sustained grassroots development and structured

training. "Having six players in the national team at once reflects the strength of Jharkhand's hockey culture and the effectiveness of government training centres," he said.

The Jharkhand Sports Department also congratulated the players, reiterating its focus on nurturing rural talent and providing them

international exposure. Officials noted that this success will inspire many more young athletes from remote regions to pursue sports professionally.

The Indian team, led by captain Sweety Kujur, underwent an intensive preparatory camp in Bhopal under the guidance of former Indian captain Rani Rampal. The

camp focused on fitness, tactical discipline, and team coordination. India also played a four-match preparatory series against Australia ahead of the tournament. India has been placed in Pool A and will play its first match against Malaysia on May 30, followed by matches against Korea on May 31 and Singapore on June 2.

The top two teams from each pool will advance to the semifinals on June 5, followed by the final on June 6. Coach Rani Rampal expressed confidence in the squad, stating that the team aims to play fearless hockey and compete strongly for the title.

With six players from Jharkhand donning the national jersey, all eyes are now on these rising stars as they prepare to carry the Indian tricolour onto international turf in Japan.

When Marriage Becomes a Moral Obsession



BY NIVEDITA PANDEY

Recent reports of a male judicial officer in Delhi and a former Miss Pune allegedly dying by suicide amid severe marital distress have once again raised difficult questions about the pressures surrounding marriage in India. The incidents have sparked debate over why many people continue to remain in unhappy or abusive relationships despite emotional suffering.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India report, marital problems were linked to nearly 37,591 suicides between 2016 and 2020 - averaging around 20 deaths every day. During the same period, India continued to record one of the world's lowest divorce rates. Data cited from UN Women's Progress of the World's Women report showed that only 1.1 percent of women aged 45-49 were divorced.

The contrast highlights a troubling reality. Experts argue that low divorce rates should not automatically be viewed as proof of successful marriages. NCRB figures suggest that far more people lost their lives because of troubled marriages than because of separation or divorce. Only a small percentage of mar-

riage-related suicides were directly linked to divorce proceedings.

By 2022, marriage and relationship-related issues had emerged as one of the leading causes of suicides in the country, with the number of male and female victims remaining nearly comparable. The trend indicates that emotional distress within marriages is not limited to one gender but reflects a larger social crisis.

In Indian society, marriage is often treated as a symbol of morality, stability and social legitimacy. Unmarried adults frequently face societal pressure, while married couples are expected to meet further expectations related to children, family and social approval. As a result, many individuals organise their lives around fulfilling societal milestones rather than prioritising emotional well-being or personal peace.

The pressure becomes more intense when marriage is linked to cultural and religious notions of duty and fulfilment. However, many believe that personal purpose and dignity cannot be confined to a single social template. Meaningful lives can also be built through caregiving, service, work, creativity and spiritual pursuits, irrespective of marital status.

A more concerning issue, observers say, is the pressure to remain married even in situations involving emotional trauma, violence or abuse. Cases of domestic violence often reveal how institutions and society continue to prioritise preserving marriages over ensuring personal safety.

One such example is that of a domestic worker who allegedly endured years of abuse from her alcoholic husband before finally leaving with her children. Despite repeated violence, many responses she received - including from support systems - focused on reconciliation and saving the marriage instead of helping her live safely and independently.

Children are also frequently cited as a reason to continue troubled marriages. However, psychologists point out that children absorb the emotional environment around them and often internalise unhealthy ideas about relationships, dignity and silence.

The debate is not about encouraging impulsive separations, as many relationships can improve through communication, counselling and mutual effort. But experts argue that when a marriage consistently damages a person's dignity, emotional stability or physical safety, society must stop treating separation as a greater failure than suffering itself.

The larger concern remains that no individual should feel trapped to the extent that death appears easier than leaving an unhealthy relationship.

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Dumka DC flags off census 2027 awareness vehicle

KUMAR PRABHAT: DUMKA

Dumka Deputy Commissioner-cum-Principal Census Officer Abhijit Sinha on Friday flagged off a special awareness vehicle from the Collectorate premises to sensitize residents about the upcoming Census 2027 operations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the census is the nation's most vital administrative and statistical exercise. It serves as the bedrock for formulation of development schemes, equitable resource distribution, and public welfare initiatives by the government. Sinha informed that the initial phase of Census 2027, focusing on house-listing operations, has already commenced in the district on May 16 and will conclude on June 14. During this month-long drive, designated enumerators will conduct door-to-door visits to collect details



regarding housing structures and household configurations. The top district official further explained that the digital exercise involves a structured questionnaire comprising 33 queries. The collected data will be logged directly into the system by enumerators via the specialized HLO mobile application. Assuring the public on data safety, the Deputy Commissioner stated that all shared details will remain strictly confidential and will

be utilized solely for official planning and statistical purposes.

Sinha urged the residents of Dumka to extend their full cooperation to the visiting enumerators and ensure that their houses are successfully registered in the listing drive. He reminded citizens that providing accurate and updated information is a civic responsibility that directly impacts the effective delivery of future welfare benefits to every section of society.

BSL security cracks down on illegal power theft in Bokaro

PNS : BOKARO

A tense situation reportedly developed in the Bokaro Niwas peripheral area during an operation against alleged illegal electricity tapping linked to Bokaro Steel Limited (BSL) infrastructure. The drive was carried out under the leadership of Colonel Rajinder Singh Shekhawat, DGM Security, SAIL-BSL, along with the BSL security team and local police personnel.

According to information received, the team reached the location following reports of unauthorized electricity usage and alleged attempts to illegally draw power from BSL infrastructure. Such activities are considered a matter of concern due to potential risks to public safety and loss of public resources.

During the operation, officials reportedly encountered resistance at the site and



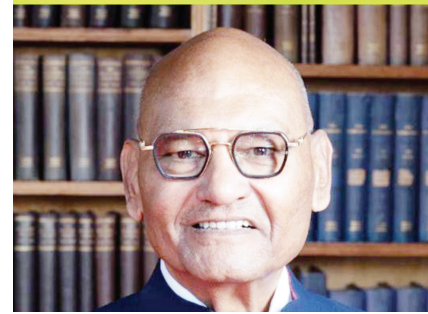
some local individuals allegedly turned aggressive, leading to a tense atmosphere. Inputs suggest that attempts were also made to obstruct officials during the course of the action.

BSL security officials expressed concern over recurring incidents of illegal power tapping in the peripheral areas of Steel City, stating that unauthorized electricity connections not only impact infrastructure but also pose serious safety risks for residents and nearby areas.

Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal calls for Bihar's own IPL team



PNS : BOKARO



tioned Ishan Kishan, who created history with his record ODI double century, along with emerging cricketers Vaibhav Suryavanshi and Saqib Hussain as examples of Bihar's growing cricket potential.

He said that despite producing talented players, Bihar has not yet received the recognition and opportunities it truly deserves in the cricket ecosystem. Stressing the need for better facilities, Agarwal said players should have access to world-class infrastructure, quality coaching and a strong support system within the state.

Expressing confidence in the younger generation, he said that with proper opportunities and resources, Bihar could develop one of the strongest and most inspiring cricket teams in the future. He also assured his full support towards the growth of cricket and young talent in the state.

Admin provides Rs 1 lakh compensation to accident victim's kin

PNS : DEOGHAR

Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner Shashi Prakash Singh, the district administration continues its efforts to implement public welfare schemes on the ground and provide swift assistance to common citizens during times of crisis.

In this sequence, the family of Gauri Devi, a resident of Billi village under Gonaiya Panchayat in the Madhupur block, has been given significant relief. In the wake of a tragic road accident, the administration took prompt

action as per departmental provisions.

The district administration has accorded administrative approval for the payment of Rs1,00,000 (One Lakh Rupees) as compensation to the bereaved family. This amount will be transferred directly to the family's bank account at the earliest. It is noteworthy that, on the instructions of the DC, the affected family had already been sanctioned a pucca house under the state government's ambitious Abua Awas Yojana and benefits under the Sarvajan Pension Yojana.

WITHOUT MOUNTAINS, RIVERS WILL DISAPPEAR: WATERMAN RAJENDRA SINGH

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

A two-day national conference on mountain and river conservation commenced on Friday at the auditorium of Motilal Nehru Public School in Jamshedpur, bringing together environmentalists, water experts, social activists, and intellectuals from across the country to deliberate on the urgent need for ecological preservation and sustainable environmental policies.

The conference is being organized on the initiative of Saryu Roy, who declared during the inaugural session that "mountains are India's primary infrastructure," stressing that the nation's ecological and hydrological security depends heavily on the protection of mountain ecosystems.

The event began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Retired Chief Justice V. Gopal Gowda attended the conference as the chief guest, while noted water conservationist Rajendra Singh, popularly known as the "Water Man of India," delivered the keynote address.

Addressing the gathering,



Rajendra Singh said that mountains and rivers form the foundation of India's civilization, culture, and way of life. He warned that if mountains are not protected, rivers would eventually disappear, leading to severe water scarcity and ecological imbalance for future generations. He emphasized that environmental conservation is not merely the responsibility of governments, but a collective duty of society as a whole.

Detailed discussions during the conference focused on issues related to mountain degradation, river conservation, climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological

sustainability. Experts deliberated on the proposed "Mountain Conservation Framework" aimed at creating a long-term strategy for preserving mountain ecosystems across the country.

Speakers highlighted that mountains are not merely geographical formations but are vital for water continuity, ecological balance, biodiversity conservation, agricultural sustainability, and disaster resilience. They also discussed a proposed constitutional framework titled the "Indian Mountain Continuity and Protection Act, 2026," intended to provide legal protection specifically for mountain regions.

Participants pointed out that while India has several laws related to forests, wildlife, mining, and environmental protection, there is currently no dedicated constitutional mechanism for safeguarding mountains. The conference strongly advocated the need for a national-level policy discourse on mountain conservation.

Several speakers noted that mountains preserve the country's cultural heritage, spiritual traditions, and hydrological wisdom. They warned that unchecked destruction of mountains contributes to floods, landslides, groundwater depletion, and climate-related disasters, directly affecting the nation's economy and security.

The conference also emphasized the need for extensive public awareness campaigns to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. Over the next two days, experts from various fields will continue discussions on strategies for conserving rivers, mountains, and the

DC resolves pending death certificate case during Public Hearing

PNS : RANCHI

Deputy Commissioner Ajay Nath Jha ensured prompt resolution of public grievances during the Hum Apko Sunte Hain public hearing on Friday, directing officials to take immediate action on issues raised by citizens from different parts of the district.

In a key intervention, the DC addressed a six-month pending death certificate case after a woman from Chandankiyari block complained that despite submitting an application following her husband's death in December 2025, the document had not been issued. Acting on the complaint, the administration facilitated issuance of the certificate within hours and the concerned Panchayat Secretary was reprimanded for negligence.

The DC also appreciated the initiative of a differently-abled resident who sought repairs of a local school and directed officials to take necessary action. Citizens from multiple blocks attended the hearing and presented grievances related to education, revenue, social security, land and civic issues.



JE-AES awareness workshop held at Deoghar Sadar Hospital

SHATRUGHN PRASAD: DEOGHAR

A district-level reorientation training programme on Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) was organised at the auditorium of Deoghar Sadar Hospital under the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP).

The workshop was chaired by Civil Surgeon-cum-Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ramesh Kumar, who stressed the importance of prevention, early diagnosis and public awareness regarding JE and AES. He said Japanese Encephalitis spreads in areas where animals, birds and humans live in close proximity, with infected pigs playing a major role in transmission.



District VBD Officer Dr. Abhay Kumar Yadav informed participants that the disease mainly affects children aged between one and 15 years. Describing JE as a dangerous viral infection also known as "brain fever", he said

delayed treatment can result in death or long-term physical and mental disabilities.

Doctors explained common symptoms including high fever, severe headache, vomiting, unconsciousness, seizures and

loss of body coordination. Health workers were instructed to immediately refer suspected patients to nearby hospitals for timely treatment.

During the session, Dr. Shabdkant Mishra gave a detailed

presentation on prevention, treatment and control measures related to JE and AES. District VBD Consultant Dr. Ganesh Kumar Yadav explained the role of female Culex mosquitoes in spreading the disease and highlighted surveillance, reporting and community awareness activities.

District Epidemiologist Dr. Manish Shekhar briefed participants on the online reporting system for JE and AES cases. The workshop was attended by 54 health workers, including ANMs, MPWs, Sahiyas and officials from various health institutions. Authorities also urged residents to maintain cleanliness, prevent mosquito breeding and seek immediate medical care in suspected cases.