

# THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Friday, 19 November, 2021 / St Joseph's College (Autonomous) / Vol :14 ; Issue :45 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## POCSO Act: Supreme Court overturns the 'Skin-To-Skin' judgement of the Bombay HC

Niharika Bajaj

**BENGALURU** : The Supreme Court on Thursday reversed the verdict of the Bombay High Court which had held that no offence of sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act can be established if there is no direct skin-to-skin contact between an accused and victim. Pointing out to a loophole in the verdict, KK Venugopal, Attorney General of India had said, "Someone can wear a surgical glove and exploit a child and get away scot-free." The Beacon spoke to Sangita Kalra, a practicing lawyer in Delhi who said, "The reasoning of the High Court insensitively trivialized and normalized behaviour which undermines the dignity of children. The High



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Court erred in coming to such a conclusion. Skin-to-skin touching was not required as the word 'naked' was missing from Section 7 of the POCSO. When two interpretations are possible, the one which is favourable to children must be

taken." The verdict allowed the offenders to escape the law according to the legal experts. Drishti Kharbanda, founder of Sarvani, a Women Rights NGO said, "Bombay HC judgment was absurd from the begin-

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ning as the intent of the ACT to protect children against sexual offenses would be defeated. More importantly, we need to focus on intent when these crimes are committed and not narrow definitions of physical contact or touch."

Welcoming the verdict, writer Anjali Chauhan said, "SC rejected absurdity while standing by sensitivity. We never leave any opportunity to brag about the huge young population we have in our country but systematically ignore the trauma these young kids hold while stepping into adulthood. Touch or no touch, harassment is harassment and we have to face it, fight it."

An advocate of the Supreme Court, Digant Mishra said, "When a decision is being made especially on matters relating to the sensitivity of a situation faced by a child or any individual it shall be dealt with equal importance as that of any other. The court should be transparent and appropriate remarks has to be made on either quashing of the verdict or accepting it."

## Is Apple self-service a huge win for its users?

Vandana KP

**BENGALURU** : Apple has announced a "self-service repair" service that allows "comfortable users" to repair their own devices. It will cover replacing the batteries, screens, and cameras of newer iPhones when it launches in early 2022 in the United States.

On Wednesday Apple chief operating officer Jeff Williams said, "Creating greater access to Apple genuine parts gives our customers more choices if repair is needed,"

While this is considered as a great win for Apple users and they applaud the creators of the program, there are concerns about how Apple is framing Self Service Repair and its potential consequences. The customers say the Apple doesn't want people to believe they can fix their own iPhone.

"(It) May be a mixed blessing since their equipment is notably difficult to repair, owing to the fact that specific tools are frequently required, parts may be glued together, and components such as Apple's Touch ID sensor and T2 security chip may make reassembling devices difficult," said Maheep, an apple user. "iPhone 12 and 13 series are made in such a way that they are the most durable iPhones in the market. However, SE being one of the top-selling iPhones and comparatively less durable among the iPhones sold at the moment is not added to the list of phones which has the Self-service program," said Karan.

## Unauthorized construction: Pedestrians bear the brunt

Arjun PS

**BENGALURU** : Unauthorized construction on footpaths around the city has been compromising road safety for pedestrians, report Bengaluru residents as they navigate through the city in turbulent weather. Amal Sebastian, a student in Bengaluru said, "During the rainy season, the roads are filled with puddles. Due to these illegal constructions, we are forced to go down the footpath, and it's hard to walk through the muddy water." He added, "Last week one of the pedestrians was involved in an accident because he was forced to walk through the road." Arakkal Shada Amina, a PG student, said, "I am concerned about how this will affect people with disabilities. The city is already not disability-friendly, and this adds to the headache." Rino Cheriyan, a resident of Bengaluru, said, "During the rainy season, the water overflows through the road. The only walkable parts are the footpaths, and what are we supposed to do when they place their boards and other things on them?"

## Investors respond to PM Modi's statement on cryptocurrency

Afreen Hussain

**BENGALURU**: PM Narendra Modi urged all the democratic nations to work together to ensure that cryptocurrency does not end up in the wrong hands which could spoil the youth. Highlighting the significance of the digital age that the nation is progressing towards, he said that we are in the age of change wherein technology has become a new weapon.

He was delivering his keynote address at The Sydney Dialogue on Thursday when he made his first public comments on cryptocurrency. In a previous meeting chaired on



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November 13, the Modi government and its departments mooted for a strong regulatory control on cryptocurrency to avoid money laundering and terror financing, rather

than banning it entirely. An enthusiastic investor, Duke Ninan said, "Modi is not a qualified person to talk about cryptocurrency but he is the Prime minister of

a country so when he gives a statement, it drastically impacts the market and investors." He further added, "India has not yet reached the point where technological facilities could regulate full control over the market. Even developed countries are still trying to figure out how they could control and regulate cryptocurrency."

Suhas S, another investor said, "It is a good thing that the government is open about regulating the crypto markets but it should not be restricted or overtly controlled like the other financial markets."

## Return of Harry, Hermione and Ron to Hogwarts

Pavana J

**BENGALURU** : Fans are excited about the prospect of Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson reuniting for the first time in ten years, since the last Harry Potter film was released in 2011. The main three of the Harry Potter film franchise are coming together with director Chris Columbus and other cast members for a special on HBO Max to mark the 20th anniversary of their first movie, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

Pranav Shiram, a PG student residing in Bangalore and an aficionado of the film franchise said, "I'm very excited to see the trio together, especially to see Emma Watson back on-screen post her sabbatical." Nishitha Rachel, another ardent fan said, "Despite previous controversies surrounding J.K. Rowling, the news about the reunion is amazing. Especially because the majority of the original cast will be there, which is much more exciting."

## Will BCCI call the shots as ever? Bizzare history of Indian captaincy changes

Narayan B

When a captain wins a World Cup they either retire or go on to be the team's captain for a long time, but the case is different when it comes to India. Kapil Dev, India's first World Cup-winning captain was removed from captaincy the very next year and it was given to Sunil Gavaskar. Between 1980 to 1992 India had a total of nine different captains till the team found a permanent captain in Mohammad Azharuddin, who later went on to be

banned for match-fixing.

The story of Indian captains is nothing short of a mega drama. BCCI always finds a way to slip out of becoming the villain in the story. When Sachin Tendulkar was sacked from captaincy, BCCI mentioned that Sachin is too important a player as a batsman than to be pressured into the role of captain.

The present-day scenario of the captaincy is even worse; Virat Kohli who led the team in all formats of the game

was constantly followed around with controversy because of being 'Cup-less'. The controversy is still relevant whether Kohli was forcefully removed from captaincy or he quit under his own terms. Rohit Sharma, the most successful captain in IPL with 5 titles to his name replaced Virat to be the captain in T20 format. It is yet to be seen if he remains captain in all formats or would the BCCI continue to control not just the management but the career of the players.