

IN STORE INSIDE

It's a march of
Pride on street

On July 14, 2025, Patna witnessed more than just a march—it witnessed a movement. The Bihar Pride Parade 2025, organized by DostanaSafar and led by transgender activist Reshama Prashad, turned the streets into a canvas, literally, of rain and rainbow from Sahitya Sammelan to Premchand Rangshala. The once hesitant city embraced colour in all its hues. Silence finally found its voice.

Full report P 3

The business of
pursuit of beauty

Societal beauty standards are negatively impacting mental health, fueling insecurity, self-doubt, and depression. Experts warn of the consequences and advocate for a more inclusive definition of beauty. Patna is witnessing a similar trend, with many putting in pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty ideals.

Full report P 4

When life came
alive on canvas

A painting and sculpture exhibition held at the Bihar Lalit Kala Academy from July 6 to 9, 2025 reflected, in the words of Aristotle, that art can give life shapes. Titled 'Abhidha 2025 -- A Journey into the Realm of Beauty', it was organized by Vichitra, a unit of Dayal Chitradarpan.

Full report on P 3

PinkToilet: Year
on, reality check



Patna's Pink Toilet initiative aims to provide safe sanitation for women, but privacy concerns plague the project. A toilet at Boring Road Chauraha, installed under Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, sees women hesitant to use it due to crowds and lack of privacy, sparking calls for relocation or added security measures

Full report on P 3

That Sinking Feeling



A waterlogged neighbourhood in Nandnagar Colony of Saidpura, Mahendru

Pic credit: Akriti Singh

Eight years after Patna was put on the list of the Smart Cities Mission, with deadline extensions in between, the city goes under water, literally, following a heavy rain. A team of reporters from *The Voice* records voices from the ground to gauge how bad the situation is for average residents

The Voice Team

It was in 2017 that Patna was included in the list of the Smart Cities Mission (SCM). A slew of projects were envisaged to be completed in five years so that this ancient seat of imperial power, which was once the envy of the world, will regain its lost glory. The idea was to pave for its residents a clean and comfortable city equipped with civic facilities of world standard. Eight years down the line, there is little to crow about. That too when the SCM deadline for the capital of Bihar has been extended thrice – first till June 2023, then by another year and again till March 31, 2025. According to an October 2024 report in *The Times of India*, only 50 per cent of the projects were completed then. Any official claim to the contrary will fall flat if someone were to just look at the months gone by. Patna in August and September received a fair amount of downpour this monsoon. And with every decent pour from the sky, this flourishing city, a state as well as district headquarters, would sink knee-deep. Obviously, the ob-

jective of automation of drainage pumping stations and clear drainage, the priority among SCM projects, is a far cry. At the receiving end are the average residents -- students, office-goers, wage earners, small neighbourhood businesses among others. Reporters from *The Voice* went about the city to understand the woes of the general public which is an annual feature. Antara Singh, a student of BMC in Patna Women's College, is a resident of Kankarbagh Colony and usually commutes to her college by shared e-rickshaws. She says during heavy rain, it becomes difficult to reach even the e-rickshaw stand as almost every road is waterlogged. Potholes and poorly constructed road make the situation worse and it is risky walking or driving a two-wheeler. A budding journalist, she rues that covering even a short distance takes a lot of time and the daily schedule goes for a toss. She often gets late for her classes. Besides, due to the collection of stagnant water breeding of mosquitoes is a major problem. Since rain water gets mixed with



overflowing sewage, it creates other health issues. A number of residents living in her vicinity had similar complaints. For them, waterlogging is the result of an apathetic administration. Despite repeated promises of better infrastructure, the reality is still unsafe and inconvenient for residents. Shuchita Shyama, another PWC student of the Department of English, stays in Raja Bazar and travels by auto rick-

shaw or bike. "Often, there's a pool of water accumulated on road sides that makes it difficult to walk. When travelling by an auto or by a bike, our dresses get dirty due to the splashing mud and water by other vehicles' tyre. We often get wet and dirty by the time we reach college," she says, looking visibly angry. She says there are security concerns too. For example, an uncovered

wire could even be fatal for someone. "The ground reality vis-a-vis city's civic facilities is far from what is shown on television and spoken in political speeches, she adds. Priya Bhushan is a working mother. A resident of Lohani-pur, she has to take her children to school and also fetch them after dispersal. Then she has to go for work too. She says waterlogging not only makes it difficult, every schedule is thrown haywire. As she is a multi-tasker being a homemaker too, she also complains about the price rise of vegetables and other items of daily use. The condition of roads and drains hardly makes Patna look like a smart city, she says. She could be speaking for hundreds of women like her. "I have to take an e-rickshaw to reach Jagdeo Path and then an auto-rickshaw up to my college on Bailey Road (now Nehru Path). When it rains heavily and there is waterlogging, the fares are raised by auto-drivers and commuters have no choice but to pay." That's Aditi Raj, who stays at Gandhipuram, Rupaspur. "It is not just that I am suffering, but every resident in this

area undergoes the same predicament. The rain water here gets mixed with drain water, making it highly contaminated. And it stays like this for 15 or more days. This polluted water is causing health problems for residents like rashes, and poses the risk of spreading viruses, bacteria, and fungal infections. Despite this serious problem, no one from the Municipal Corporation has come to inspect or take any action. The stagnant water makes the situation worse day by day. If there is more rainfall in the next three or four days, it will become nearly impossible for the residents of this area to step out of their homes," she adds, bringing to the fore almost the inhuman conditions in her area. Ritika, another student, has to commute daily from Jaganpura to Patliputra Roundabout to take tuitions. She says it takes hours to commute during waterlogging. "Every year, the government says that there are arrangements in place to check rain water from accumulating, but every year their claim falls flat," she adds angrily. Obviously, the situation takes a toll on her study schedule. Rajiv Singh, a daily wage-

earner, has to reach Ashok Rajpath for work daily from Patliputra Colony. His mode of commute is either a bicycle or a shared auto-rickshaw. A person with limited means, his problems are many which are aggravated due to waterlogging. Getting late for work means that wage paid will be less. Dropping children at school becomes arduous and since his house is small and lies in a low-lying area, water enters the house making daily living a nightmare. Rajiv Singh too could be the voice of thousands of his type who locate to the state capital to earn a living. Of course, the city is grappling with a legacy of decades of unplanned urban growth. For its humongous population it creates an existential problem. In the 21st century, with technical wherewithal waterlogging is something that can be certainly tackled. What is needed is the political and administrative will. One only hopes that the government takes cognisance.

Inputs by Ridhi, Adrika, Rishika, Anjali & Rewrite by Ridhi Kaushik
Photographs and Interview, P2

No zugzwang, they're making all the right moves

Aditi Raj

Cricket is passé, chess is in. And it is only natural. India, where Chaturanga, now chess, originated is passing through the game's 'golden phase'. Over three decades after Viswanathan Anand became India's first Grandmaster in 1988 and then wowed everyone by winning the World Championship five times, a new breed of young players from the country have followed on his footsteps. Of late, it has been an incredible run by Indian chess players. In December last year, Gukesh D. became the youngest World Champion. In July this year, Divya Deshmukh provided the icing on the cake when she became the first Indian to win FIDE's Women's World Cup, defeating compa-

triot Koneru Humpy. These two feats have followed other landmark wins by Indian men and women. Today, besides the names mentioned above there are a lot of young players from India – Rameshbabu Pragganandha, Arjun Erigasi, Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali Rameshbabu among others – without whom the global chess will lose its identity. Inspired by this new breed of players, a revolution is spreading across small towns across the country and young players are getting enamoured of the game which demands intense cerebral calisthenics. Towns in Bihar are no exception. Grandmaster Sriram Jha, from Madhubani, paved the way years ago by putting Bihar on the chess map through national titles and international appearances. Today, that legacy con-



(L-R) Reyan Md with his coach; and Mariam Fatima in the middle of a game.

tinues with remarkable players like Mariam Fatima, who made headlines by winning the 12th National Amateur Chess Championship. Similarly, Reyan Md, a rising star in the Under-13 category, recently claimed the national title and is already

being watched for his tactical play and tournament potential. Among the rising stars of Bihar's chess scene is Ayush Raj, a 17-year-old IIT aspirant from Bihar Sharif. His chess journey began at school, when his elder brother introduced



Pics credit: Chessbase.in

him to the game. Ayush is largely self-taught, training through online platforms like Chess.com and Lichess, and is inspired by Gukesh and Magnus Carlsen. While he also plays badminton and table tennis, chess holds a special place

in his heart. "I've always loved sports in general, but chess connects with me on another level," he says. "It sharpens your thinking, builds patience, and teaches you how to stay calm under pressure. My dream is to represent India on the

global stage one day." Krishna Kumar, 20, from Rosera is another emerging name. He is pursuing B.Tech at Government Engineering College, Samastipur. He recently made headlines as the runner-up in UMGANG 2025, a major state-level sports event organized by the Bihar government. "The Bihar government should encourage youth to take part in chess and other competitions. Many talented students fall behind because they don't see a career in sports. We need to be shown that there is a future here," he says. Another on the list is Raj Shekhar, a 21-year-old final-year undergraduate at S. Sinha College, Aurangabad. Inspired by Viswanathan Anand, Raj has been representing his college in various tournaments for the past three years.

Mariam writes history

Mariam Fatima has put Bihar on the world map by becoming the first Woman FIDE Master from state. This means that she has achieved an international standard of play with a rating over 2000.

"Since childhood, I've loved chess. I've played for my college and take inspiration from Viswanathan Anand. I want to become like him and my dream is to be World No. 1 someday," Raj says.

From Chief Editor's Desk



Sr. M. Rashmi A.C.

As the sixth edition of *The Voice* is put to bed, it is time to applaud the Semester III students and teachers of the Department of Mass Communication. Started with the intention of providing budding journalists of the department a hands-on understanding of ideating, reporting and editing before a newspaper takes its shape, the content quality of this annual broadsheet has seen a steady improvement with every edition.

This year, the lead story is about water-logging and inundated streets that the residents of this capital city of Bihar have to encounter every monsoon. It not only makes daily commute a problem but also has health repercussions with overflowing drain and sewage sludge staying stagnant for days on the streets. Student reporters bring voices from ground zero for readers. Inside, there is an interesting mix of city life, art and cuisine, creativity, et al. I am sure this one will make a good weekend read for the reader.

From the Desk of Editor



Roma

Five years ago, the Department of Mass Communication launched *The Voice* with the vision of giving students hands-on exposure to the world of journalism. Since then, the lab journal has been published each year under the guidance of Principal Dr. Sister M. Rashmi A.C., becoming a platform where learning meets practice. The Sixth Edition of *The Voice* (2025) reflects our students' curiosity and dedication to meaningful reporting. This issue opens with the water-logging lead story, amplifying civic concerns through an exclusive interview with a Ward Councillor. The words "Journalism is printing what someone does not want printed; everything else is public relations," different versions of which are attributed to Lord Northcliffe and George Orwell, inspire our student journalists to show the authorities the mirror. With new sections and diverse content, this edition offers something for everyone. I commend the **Batch of 2024-2028** and extend special thanks to Mr. Amitabh Ranjan & Mr. Ajay Kumar Jha for their invaluable support.

WHEN TEACHERS TOOK TO RAMP

On the Teachers' Day eve, on September 4, the college witnessed an interesting show named 'From Guru's Feet to Google Meet: A Journey of Gratitude'. It was marked by fun and creativity. Teachers played 'Match the Bottles' game, the college choir enchanted with melodies, and students expressed gratitude through poetry and dance. The highlight of the event was 'Shades of India' when teachers took the stage with pride and elegance.

From page 1

Water world right here



(Clockwise from top) A woman navigates a submerged street at Patliputra Colony; a man manoeuvres his motorcycle on a waterlogged Jagdeo Path; a boy is helped out off an auto-rickshaw stuck somewhere in the Shivpuri area; a school boy and his sister wade through water on their way back from school at New Patliputra Colony

Pics credit: Amitabh Ranjan, Sonal, Janvi

'It's common... a problem existing for past 20 years'

Ridhi Kaushik gets into a tete-a-tete with Kumar Sanjeet, a social worker and Councillor of Ward No. 34, over water-logging and other issues. Questions and answers below capture the gist of the conversation

Q. What is the reason for repeated waterlogging?

When it rains beyond a limit, waterlogging is very common anywhere in the world. What is crucial in such cases is to get the water out in the shortest possible time. We have a time slot of four hours in which this has to be done. Arrangements like sump houses have been installed by the Patna Municipal Corporation to get rid of accumulated water quickly. As we reside in a saucer-shaped low-lying area, waterlogging is something which is natural.

Q. Are there mobile teams to inspect and clear waterlogging, and if yes, how many such teams are there in the Patna Municipal Corporation area?

What about disruption of normal life like schools, colleges, offices, etc.?

Yes, we have mobile teams which are activated within an hour after receiving a call for help. This is only for emergencies like repairing of damaged or overflowing drainage or repair of electricity poles. Areas affected by water-logging are treated by super sucker machines. They suck all stagnant water quite fast. There are three mobile teams in total comprising three members each for sewage cleaning and for water removal from differ-



ent areas all around the city. It is a common phenomenon and it's not affecting corporate workers or students of higher education institutes. Yes, little ones have to skip school for one to two days...not more than that. For the Kankarbagh area, waterlogging in low-lying old colony is common but water is pumped out within an hour. The problems you are stating are the problems of the past 20 years. Now Kankarbagh is free from such adversities. People are creating havoc for our area and if there is any such issue, the District Magistrate declares guidelines for residents.

Q. Do you have any message for youth?

They should work for social welfare...today's youth have become self-centered. At least half-an-hour to one hour should be invested in social welfare work. This will help in development of both individuals and society. An attitude of selfless service to others must be inculcated.

THE VOICE TEAM

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CAMPUS BUZZ

Bhasha Voyage makes Resonance



The 'Bhasha Voyage' exhibition, part of the Resonance Language and Literature Festival, was held at Patna Women's College on April 3, 2025. What made the event special was the showcasing of a vibrant confluence of foreign languages like English, German,

French, Korean, and Spanish, alongside regional languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, and Bhojpuri. Students from the college represented these languages through meticulously crafted models and artifacts. They did so through innovative models on the Indian knowl-

edge system, interactive presentations on language preservation, and demonstrations of artificial intelligence tools that can help revitalize endangered languages and enhance translation accuracy. The Korean stall also had things like food items and beauty products.

Grooving to Dandiya beats

Patna Women's College on September 26 organised a Dandiya dance competition. The competition witnessed enthusiastic participations by students divided into 10 groups. Each group showcased true spirit, energy and cultural richness through its dynamic performance to popular songs like *Nagada sang dhol baje, Dholida; Ho kaliyo kaliyam; Dhol re*

Wagara among others. A panel of judges comprising Dr. Manjula Sushila, Dr. Priyanka Kumari, and Ms. Amrita Prakash evaluated the performances based on expressions, costumes, and group coordination. Dr. Sister M. Rashmi A.C., Principal of Patna Women's College, graced the event, appreciating students for keeping cultural traditions alive.



A lesson in cyber security



The Department of Mass Communication, in collaboration with *India Today* group, organized a session on Project Shield, an initiative to raise awareness about the growing threats of cyber frauds, scams, and other forms of digital deception. Held on August 13 at the MVEIC Hall, the session featured expert discussions and practical guidance on identifying and preventing online

scams, including scam calls and hacking techniques. Mr. Balkrishna, Senior Executive Editor, *India Today* group, was the chief guest. Mr. Priyesh Sinha, a standup comedian, was a guest of honour. The session was moderated by Ms. Manya of the Department of Mass Communication. Ms. Roma, Head of the Department, honoured the guests with plant saplings.

Proudly, Pride takes a walk on street

Aditi Komal
It did not actually rain on the parade. Everyone was soaked though, in a spirit of love, peace and a spirit of belonging. On July 14, 2025, Patna witnessed more than just a march—it witnessed a movement. The Bihar Pride Parade 2025, organized by DostanaSafar and led by transgender activist Reshama Prashad, turned the streets into a canvas, literally, of rain and rainbow from Sahitya Sammelan to Premchand Rangshala. The once hesitant city embraced colour in all its hues. Silence finally found its voice.

Participants, including college students, activists, families, mentors, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, walked together with pride shedding inhibitions. Students from Patna Women’s College were a conspicuous presence showing a rare solidarity for a cause worth pursuing. Placards reading “Stop Blackmailing”, “Love is for Everyone”, and “Protect Trans Siblings”, students, activists, mentors, families all walked together, drenched not just in monsoon rain but in pride. “This Pride isn’t just celebration. It’s our revolution,” said a lesbian couple, one of them a



Participants walk with posters and placards during the Bihar Pride Parade 2025
Pic credit: Aditi Komal
Bihar’s first transgender fashion designer, popularly known

as Rani and a participant of the Parade, said: “I’ve designed many outfits, but people rarely see me. Being queer is not abnormal – it’s just human”. Pride in Bihar began in 2012 with just 20 participants. Today, the numbers have grown, and so has the courage and resolve. This Parade was not just a reflection of rights—it was a reminder of resilience and hope. As the march ended at the Rangshala bedecked with balloons, a soaked banner read “Bihar Pride Parade 2025”. Implicit in the words was a message that were loud and clear: We’re here. We’re proud. And we will claim our space.

Safety, privacy: mobile toilets not in the pink...

The Voice in its previous edition had carried a report on the Pink Toilet initiative to provide safe, dignified and hygienic sanitation facilities to women. A year on, **Saumya Verma** makes a reality check on one of the six such toilets in the city

As part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0, the Bihar government plans to have 100 pink toilets across select cities and towns in the state. As of January 2025, six pink toilets were installed in Patna. One of them is placed at the Boring Road Chauraha, one of the busiest markets in the city. Its location, right in the middle of a buzzing thoroughfare, has sparked privacy concern. While designed to provide safe and accessible toilets, many women hesitate to use it due to lack of privacy and the surrounding crowd. Shivani, a second-year student of the Department of Sociology at Patna Women’s College, says, “The bus toilet is very useful during emergencies, but when there is a large crowd or men standing nearby, many girls feel insecure and choose not to use it.” “The idea is good but I have seen that very few women actually use the toilet. Maybe the location is not appropriate. The authorities should take feedback from women before selecting such sites,” says Avinash Gupta, a shopkeeper in the area.



One of the pink toilets located at the Boring Road market area
Rekha Devi, a homemaker, says that “the pink toilet is a good initiative but since it is placed right in the middle of the market, we feel shy using it. It should have been in a covered location.” Residents and students have raised similar concerns, urging the authorities to relocate the bus to a more discreet and safer area, where women can access it without discomfort. The Pink Toilet initiative was launched to improve sanitation for women in public spaces and reduce health risks caused by lack of proper facilities. The

service includes basic hygiene amenities and is part of the Patna Municipal Corporation’s urban sanitation plan. Municipal officials have indicated that feedback is being reviewed and possible new locations are being considered. Additional measures such as security and better signage may also be introduced. The Pink Toilet remains a step forward for women’s hygiene facilities in Patna, but its full benefits will only be realized when privacy, safety, and accessibility are addressed effectively.

...मेरा वाला पिंक: Commuters say this is the ride

Priya

पटना। बिहार में महिलाओं की सुरक्षा और सुविधा को ध्यान में रखते हुए राज्य सरकार ने विशेष पिंक बस सेवाओं की शुरुआत की है। ये बसें सीएनजी से संचालित हैं और पूरी तरह महिलाओं को समर्पित हैं। खास बात यह है कि इनके संचालन की जिम्मेदारी भी महिलाओं को दी गई है। प्रत्येक डिवीजन में महिला कंडक्टर और नोडल अधिकारी की नियुक्ति की गई है। यात्रियों की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के लिए इन बसों में पैनिक बटन, जीपीएस टैकिंग और सीसीटीवी कैमरे जैसी आधुनिक सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराई गई हैं। यह सेवा पटना में प्रमुख मार्गों पर शुरू की गई है। गांधी मैदान, बोरिंग रोड, राजेंद्र नगर पटना जंक्शन, एम्स रोड, पालीगंज, बिहटा जैसे रूटों पर पिंक बसें चलाई जा रही हैं। बसों की लोकेशन और रूट की जानकारी के लिए यात्रियों को “Chalo” ऐप उपलब्ध कराया गया है। इस ऐप के माध्यम से बस की लाइव टैकिंग, अनुमानित समय और किराया देखा जा सकता है। आर.पी.एस. कॉलेज, पटना से बी.एड. की पढ़ाई कर रही छात्रा सुश्री कुमारी ने बताया, “यह मेरी पिंक बस में पहली यात्रा है और मैं बेहद उत्साहित हूँ। यह बस अन्य शहर की बसों की तरह भीड़भाड़ वाली नहीं है और इसमें केवल महिलाएँ ही सफर कर रही हैं। पहले अक्सर भीड़ देखकर मैं बस में चढ़ने से परहेज करती थी, लेकिन अब पिंक बस सेवा शुरू होने के बाद से आगे की यात्रा में हमेशा इसी का इस्तेमाल करूँगी।” ऑनल अपिता, बी.एससी प्रथम वर्ष, पटना वुमैस कॉलेज की छात्रा। “ऑटो में कई बार बदतमीज़ियाँ का सामना करना पड़ता था, जिससे लड़कियाँ असहज हो जाती थीं।



नेहरू पथ क्षेत्र में नई शुरू की गई एक पिंक बस

लेकिन पिंक बस के आने से अब इज्जत भी है, आराम भी है, और सबसे बढ़कर इसका ऐप है जो हमें हमेशा सुरक्षित महसूस कराता है।” 70 वर्षीय सेवानिवृत्त अध्यापिका मीना देवी ने कहा, “हमारे समय में लड़कियों के लिए अलग जगह की सोच भी मुमकिन नहीं थी, लेकिन आज पिंक बस देखकर लगता है कि बिहार सचमुच नई सोच की ओर बढ़ रहा है। इससे लड़कियाँ आगे बढ़ेंगी।” सिलिल सेवा की तैयारी कर रही पूजा सिंह (25 वर्ष) ने अपने अनुभव साझा करते हुए कहा, “पहले ऑटो चालक रोज़ मनमाना किराया माँगते थे और अक्सर ठीक से बात भी नहीं करते थे, लेकिन अब गुलाबी बस में मैं सुरक्षित और सम्मानजनक माहौल में यात्रा करती हूँ।” छात्रा रिचा राज ने कहा कि गुलाबी बस में यात्रा का अनुभव बेहद अच्छा रहा। “बस साफ और सुरक्षित थी। इसमें पैड वेडिंग मशीन, सीसीटीवी कैमरे और पैनिक बटन जैसी सुविधाएँ उपलब्ध हैं। यह महिला यात्रियों के लिए एक बेहतरीन विकल्प है।” अंकिता कुमारी ने अपना अनुभव साझा करते हुए कहा कि महिलाओं की जरूरतों का ध्यान रखते हुए पिंक बस में सेनेटरी पैड और मैट्रिकल किट की व्यवस्था है इसके अलावा इस बस में सुरक्षा के लिए जीपीएस टैकर , पैनिक बटन , सीसीटीवी कैमरा और मोबाइल चार्जर की सुविधा सरकार ने हम महिलाओं को दी है वहीं, एक अन्य यात्री ने कहा, श्रुति-पुरुष यात्रियों के साथ सफर करना कई बार असहज हो जाता है। गुलाबी बस के बारे में मुझे इंस्टाग्राम से जानकारी मिली और मैंने अपनी सहलियों को भी इसे अपनाने की सलाह दी है। गर्मियों में अगर इन बसों में एयर-कंडीशन की सुविधा भी उपलब्ध हो जाए तो सफर और भी आरामदायक होगा।” महिलाओं के लिए बड़ा कदम: विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि गुलाबी बस सेवा महिलाओं के लिए न केवल सुरक्षित यात्रा का साधन है बल्कि उन्हें आत्मनिर्भर और निडर होकर आगे बढ़ने की दिशा में भी प्रेरित करेगी।

GLASS CEILING? WHERE’S THAT

The list below profiles women from India who recently hogged limelight by virtue of their rare achievements

Taking wings in style

Squadron Leader Shivangi Singh is India’s first woman Rafale pilot. She was inspired by aviation history and hails from Varanasi. Commissioned into the IAF in 2017, she was part of the second batch of women fighter pilots. She initially flew the MiG-21 Bison before joining the elite ‘Golden Arrows’ 17 Squadron with the Rafale in 2020. Her dream was



realized as she proudly stood with President Murmu following the President’s historic Rafale sortie from Ambala.

Queen on the move



Vaishali Rameshbabu doesn’t need an introduction. And this is also not the first time that she

hogs the limelight. But what makes her feat exceptional this time is that she has become the first chess player to win the FIDE Women’s Grand Swiss title twice in a row. The win came after she drew with Chinese Tan Zhongyi at Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Vaishali has now secured her spot in the Women’s Candidates 2026!

Booker-double in sight

She shot to fame as the author of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, which was put between the covers in 22 countries. *The Inheritance of Loss* got Kiran Desai the Booker Prize in 2006. Now, *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny* has put her, with five others from across the globe, in the Booker Shortlist 2025. In 2015, *The Economic*



Times had her listed as one of 20 most influential global Indian women.

Eyes on the bullseye



Sheetal Devi, 18, from Jammu & Kashmir, embodies the spirit of “never give up”. Born with-

out arms due to a rare congenital condition, she has scripted history by becoming the women’s compound individual world champion at the 2025 World Para Archery Championships in Gwangju, South Korea. This was her third medal at the championships, adding to a mixed team bronze and a women’s team silver.

Hitting one for a record

Move over Virat, Smriti’s here. The Vice-Captain of the Indian women’s cricket team, Smriti Mandhana, entered the game’s record books by smashing the fastest-ever ODI 100 recently, at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. The record she pursued over belonged to the former Indian men’s ODI and Test Captain Virat Kohli. While



Kohli had done it in 52 balls, Mandhana reached the mark in 50 balls.

Educate and empower



As the driving force behind the NGO, Educate Girls, Safeena Husain has done a commend-

able work by liberating girls from the scourge of illiteracy. Her organisation has become the first from India to win the Magsaysay Award, for 2025, which is also called the Asian Nobel. The alumna of the London School of Economics is also the first Indian woman recipient of the WISE Prize for Education.

On the horizon, a star

Anuparna Roy from Purulia, West Bengal, has won the Oriz-zonti Award at the Venice Film Festival for her directorial debut *Songs of Forgotten Trees*. Unlike some of Bengal’s globally celebrated filmmakers, Roy, 31, grew up like common small-town Indians, pursued a college degree, worked at a call-centre job, before going off the beaten track



to be behind the camera. She does live up to the proverb “slow and steady wins the race”.

Answers to ‘PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAP’

1. AI slop
2. Lurker
3. Phonetic alphabet
4. A cappella
5. Cookie
6. Gutter space
7. Advertorial
8. Shivananjini

When life’s forms, moods came alive on canvas

Adrika Adesh
Ridhi Kaushik
In the words of Aristotle, “the object of art is to give life a shape.” A painting and sculpture exhibition held at the Bihar Lalit Kala Academy from July 6 to 9, 2025 reflected the words of the Greek polymath and philosopher in true sense. Titled ‘Abhidha 2025 -- A Journey into the Realm of Beauty’, it was organized by Vichitra, a unit of Dayal Chitradarpan.

The exhibition showcased the artworks of 87 artists, including young children and senior artists, created using various mediums such as oil paint, watercolour, sketch, and mixed media. Inaugurated by renowned painter and art critic, Padma Shri Shyam Sharma, the event was graced by the presence of such esteemed guests as Dr. Jitendra Mohan, Ashok Kumar Sinha, Dr. Rakhi Kumari, Birendra Kumar Singh and Dr. Rakesh Ranjan. Vichitra’s founder and director, Shri Madheshwar Dayal, honoured the guests with mementos and unveiled the catalogue published by the institution. The exhibition featured artworks



Clockwise from top: Mr. Dayal with his students; Navrasaa of Life by Prachi; and Adishakti on canvas by Preeti.
Pics credit: Adrika and Ridhi

that explored themes such as natural beauty, peace, and folk art, reflecting the artists’ insight and sensitivity. A unique aspect of the exhibition was the showcasing of artworks by young artists alongside those of children. The institution motivated the children by presenting them with certificates and mementos. During the exhibition, Vichitra also organized a lecture series on ‘Challenges and Employment Opportunities in Art Education’. Senior painter and art critic Manish Manjul Upadhyay and painter and Assistant Professor of Hindi, Dr.

Rakesh Ranjan, shared their insights on the current situation and challenges in the field of art. Talking to *The Voice*, Dayal emphasized the importance of practice, innovation, honesty, and dedication for success in the field of art. He also highlighted the need for creating an environment that fosters creativity and new ideas in Patna. Going by the number of visitors, the exhibition was a grand success, and Vichitra’s efforts to promote art and creativity in the community were appreciated by all. The institution plans to continue organizing such

events in the future to foster a love for art and creativity among people of all ages. A watercolour and acrylic colour workshop was conducted by Gopal Sharma on the third day of the exhibition for the students of the institution. Prachi, a budding painter from Delhi University, says, “My painting, *Navrasaa*, is a self-portrait that explores the nine emotions of the Navras theory. Through this artwork, I aim to depict the complexity of human emotions by showcasing different rasas within myself. The painting is inspired by two personal incidents, includ-



ing an experience where I got injured and applied dettol on my burns, which accidentally entered my eyes, resulting in redness. This incident influenced my use of colors in the artwork. The painting took me around 15 days to complete.” Preeti, an alumna of Patna Women’s College, says, “I’ve been passionate about art for the past seven years. I’d like to introduce you to my painting, *Adishakti*, which measures 2.5 x 3 feet and is created with acrylic paint on canvas. The title

Adishakti represents the supreme power, and I’ve tried to capture her aura and essence in this piece. To create this artwork, I started with a wash base, built up the structure, and then highlighted the entire body. The result is a semi-sculptural effect that adds depth to the painting. I worked on this piece for about seven days, and it was a wonderful experience. As an artist, I’ve experimented with various mediums, including acrylic, oil, and pencil on canvas.

‘Beauty is not caused; it is’

Adrika Adesh
Stereotypes, pressure, that Surge to look spiffy on Instagram and Snapchart, or the business of beauty itself have made the pursuit of looking chic pervasive. Patna, the capital of Bihar and a sprawling metropolis, is fast catching up with bigger metros as a fashion hub. Being the administrative headquarters, a commercial hub, and a centre of educational institutes, it is natural that the city's demography has a fair share of young and style-conscious residents going about their everyday lives. So, while looking snazzy is cool, is it all hunky-dory? *The Voice* looked around for answers. Meet Simran Singh, a model and interior designer. She says beauty standards have played a role in her career. "Sometimes they have opened doors, but at other times they have made me

feel I have to fit into a narrow box. I have learnt that the industry values certain looks and that can make you question your individuality. But over time, I have realised that what makes me stand out is my uniqueness, not my ability to fit into a set standard." She has often felt pressure to undergo beauty treatment to fix things like skin, body or something else. It did create a self-doubt initially, but now she has decided to define her worth in her own ways. "I believe real beauty comes from how comfortable you are in your skin, and I hope that message comes through in everything I do," Simran adds. Kripa Seth, another model and a finalist of 'Star Miss Teen India 2023', agrees that societal pressure to look good could give a sense of insecurity. I have seen fellow models struggle with such thoughts. "Things I



Dr. Jyotirmay Bharti

ike fair skin, slim body, or sharp features are often seen as the standard, and that makes people feel they're not good enough". Like Simran, Kripa too has left her initial obsession to meet people's standards and has decided to focus on personality and professionalism rather than fret over "flawless skin or a certain body type". Usha, a beautician who runs a beauty parlor in Gardanibagh, echoes



Model Simran Singh

what Simran and Kripa have to say, albeit from the other side. "As a beautician, I've seen how societal beauty standards can influence people's perceptions of themselves. Many of my customers come for specific facial and massage, not just to look good, but to feel accepted. They've been led to believe that a certain look or feature is more desirable. I get customers requesting creams and serums that may not be suitable for

their skin type. As a beautician, my role is to guide them while respecting their choices," she says. Vijiya, a VLCC trained beautician running a beauty parlor in Patel Nagar, has encountered numerous women who struggle with self-doubt and insecurity about their appearance. "They often express dissatisfaction with their skin, facial features, or body shape, feeling they don't measure up to others. By providing a supportive and non-judgmental space, I help women overcome their insecurities and develop a more loving relationship with them," she says. Dr. Jyotirmay Bharti, a cosmetologist, a dermatologist, and a hair transplant surgeon rolled into one, has two decades of experience. She is concerned about the fact that a trend has set where even those who have just become teenagers are wearing amakeup. She says till the age of 25 the

skin does not need any special care. "I keep telling patients, many of whom are pretty young and want a beauty treatment for skin, washing the face regularly and wearing a sunscreen is enough." "This obsession with looks has caught up in Patna. Many who come looking for a treatment are good-looking but have a fixed notion of looking pretty. Many young women and housewives come with the fantastic idea of looking as attractive as movie stars. Due to societal and peer pressures, they have this feeling that something is wrong with their body and appearance. We call it 'Body Dysmorphic Disorder'. I advise them to be their natural self the doctor adds. So, the expression in the headline, taken from a poem by Emily Dickinson, sums up what experts feel about chasing beauty and should be taken note by the youth.

PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAP

Ridhi Kaushik

1. A term for low-quality media, including writing and images, made using AI technology, characterized by an inherent lack of effort, logic, or purpose. _I _L _P [2+4 letters]
2. A person in particular a user of an internet message board ,chatrooms , social media or other interactive system but rarely or never participate. L _ _K _ _ [6 letters]
3. A standardized set of words used to spell out letters in radio communication (e.g., Alpha, Bravo, Charlie). PH _ _ _T _ _ _LPH _ _ _ _ [8+8 letters]
4. In radio broadcasting , A segment of a jingle or song performed without music, just vocals. _ CA _ _E _ _A [1+8 letters]
5. A small text file stored on a user's computer to track their online activity. C _ _K _ _ [6 letters]
6. In newspapers, it refers to the blank space, or margin, between columns of text or facing pages. GU _ _E _ S _ _C _ [6+5 letters]
7. A newspaper or magazine advertisement giving information about a product in the style of an editorial or article. A _ _ER _ _ _I _ _ _ [11 letters]
8. The signature tune of All India Radio (AIR), also known as Akashvani, was composed by Walter Kaufmann, a German-born composer .The tune is based on the Indian classical raga named? _ _I _ _R _ _JI _I [12 letters]

ANSWERS: PAGE 3 BOTTOM RIGHT

Agla station Zero Mile hai...



Pics credit: Adrika Adesh, Aditi Raj, Annu Agrawal

Metro Moods

“

Good but early days. Once it is fully operational we will see how actually the system runs

— Niku Singh, Mukhiya, Jurawanpur Karari

Wonderful to see metro come to Patna. Had never imagined this would happen. Cleanliness is good, fare a little high.

— Raj Nandini, a college student

I first travelled by metro in Kolkata almost 20 years back. It felt like I was in a foreign country. Now, I have just travelled by Patna Metro. It is the same feeling that I had felt in Kolkata two decades back.

— Mahendra Kumar, a private company employee

STUDENTS RHYME WITH REASON

स्वत्व का अन्वेषण

क्या करूँ इस आरोपित स्वातंत्र्य का, जो केवल उद्घोष है, पर सार नहीं। दुपट्टे की गिरह में लिपटी तुम्हारी कुत्सित दृष्टि की अभिव्यक्ति, मुझे नहीं चाहिए वह "स्वीकृति" जो चुप्पी की शर्त पर दी जाती है।



तुम्हारे उपहास की कषायवाणी, मेरे स्त्रीत्व पर प्रहार करती है, मैं कोमल हूँ, किंतु जर्जर नहीं, मेरा मौन, प्रमाद नहीं — प्रतिरोध है।

तुम्हारी कामना की ज्वाला में मेरी संवेदना की आहुति नहीं होगी, मैं वह "काव्य" नहीं जो केवल श्रृंगार में सीमित हो।

मैं जागरण की प्रतीक हूँ, रात्रि के नीरव क्षणों में असंख्य विचारों का विस्फोट हूँ।

निद्राविहीन मैं, आत्मावलोकन में लीन, अंतर्मन की अराजकता को आकार देती हूँ। मेरे अधरों पर कोई छंद नहीं अब, बल्कि युगों के संचित अन्यायों की विवेचना है। मैं कविता नहीं, "कर्तित" अस्तित्व की वाचालसाक्षी हूँ।

यह मेरा एकान्त नहीं, यह मेरे स्वत्व का उद्घोष है।

अदिति कोमल

INK OF FREEDOM

I write, not with ink, but with fire. A girl from the shadows, reaching higher. Bound by the walls they think I can't see. But my mind, my words, are wild and free.

In the quiet corners where they placed me, I built my wings, so they couldn't trace me. Freedom isn't just in breaking chains, It's in breaking thoughts, that bind like rains.

I'm more than a body, more than a name. Not a puppet to play in their social game. Gender they say is a box, a role. But I, a writer, refuse their control.

From whispers of judgment, I break away, For in my words, I have my say. Isolation is no prison for me, My stories are where I truly breathe free.

A girl, yes, but with skies in her mind, Breaking the norms they have tried to bind.

Low class, they say, but they don't see, The heights my dreams take quietly.

I write for freedom, for those like me, Girls with dreams, unseen, yet free. In my ink, I carve a way, For freedom is mine, come what may.

-Aditi Komal

संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे

अब रास्ते पर टोकना जुर्म हो गया है, मोहल्ले की चाची-ताई में बातें कम हो गई हैं। सब्जों का भाव पूछ नहीं पा रहे, संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे।

रमेश के बैठ पर अब धूल लगते जा रहे, मैदान से वो शोर नहीं आ रहे। रानी और उसके दोस्त अब घर नहीं आते, कित-कित छोर सब फेसबुक चला रहे, संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे।

तीज त्योहारों में लोग नहीं जा रहे, ऑर्डर करके खाना घर पर खा रहे। दीदी-भाईयों को पहचान नहीं पा रहे, संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे।

रहे। पूरी दुनिया को एक मोबाइल पर जोड़ने वाले, आज अपने ही पड़ोसी से लजा रहे।

चाचा मामा के कंधे पर चढ़ते थे तब, अब मुस्कुरा के कुछ कह नहीं पा रहे, संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे।

शब्दों का अकाल महसूस कर पा रहे, सुख-दुख को इमोजी से बता रहे।

तकनीकी के जमाने में आगे तो बढ़ रहे हैं, पर वो जुड़ाव महसूस नहीं कर पा रहे, संवाद की कला हम खोते जा रहे।

वर्तिका सुमन

What's cookin'? Little on new grub street

Annu Agrawal

Earlier, when evening arrived in Patna, people would look for a little comfort after a busy day. The area near Maurya Lok used to be one of those places. The fast-food stalls there were always full of college students, families, office workers, and friends. The smell of hot momos, chaat, golgappas, rolls, and coffee made the whole place lively and cheerful. Maurya Lok was not just a shopping complex. It had

become a popular street-food spot where people from different parts of the city came every day. Schools, colleges, offices, and bus stops were all nearby, so it was easy for everyone to come here. It was a place where people met, talked, and spent time. But recently, the city administration came out with an order to remove all the food stalls from the Maurya Lok area. They want to make that space a parking zone. Because of this, all the stalls were shifted to the Patna Museum



Waiting for customers.

Pic credit: Annu Agrawal

area. Sanjeev Kumar, who owns a food stall, said: "Earlier, there was so much crowd in the evening that it was hard to even stand. Shops stayed open till midnight. But at the new place, only a few customers come. And by night, the whole area becomes silent." Rekha Devi, who sells golgappas, said: "We raised our children and managed our house hold with this stall. At Maurya Lok, we had our own identity. People came from different parts of the city. Now nobody

knows where we are." Customers are also unhappy. Sakshi, a college student, said: "After classes, we always used to go to Maurya Lok. Now it's hard to find the new place. The Patna Museum area becomes empty after evening." Municipal Corporation officers say that the move was needed to reduce traffic and crowding. But at the same time agree that the fast food stall owners should have been given a better and more crowded place to run their businesses.

