

PRO BONO CLUB

SYMBIOSIS LAW SCHOOL, NOIDA



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(UN SDG 16: access to justice)



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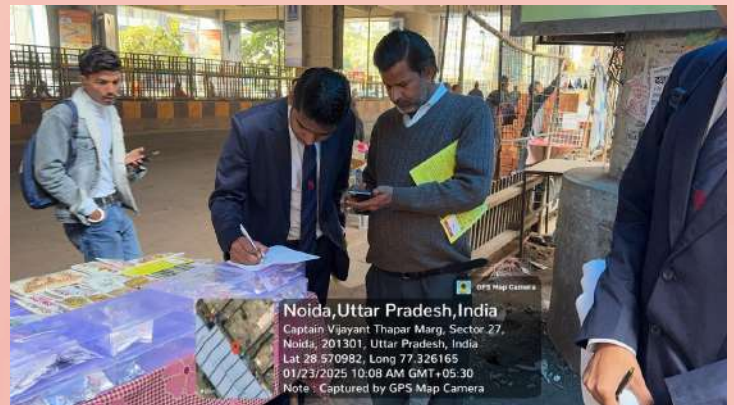
Pro Bono Activities: Jan-Feb. 2025

Monthly Meeting - 13 January 2025

The Club made considerable progress in organizing awareness camps focused on diverse social issues. A monthly meeting was held on January 13, 2025, during which updates were shared regarding the completed and ongoing PBC activities up to December 2024. A proposal was made formally by the Pro Bono Associates for conducting the SLS Intra-College Competition with proposed events including Essay Writing, PIL Drafting, Poster Making, and a Legal Quiz. The enthusiasm of PBAs was noteworthy and necessary resource arrangement and planning could be done. A proposal was made to PBAs for conducting field research on transgender issues and rights across different states, which received a positive response. Additionally, interest was sought for creating educational videos on varied themes for spreading legal awareness. Updates were also shared on ongoing and proposed camps. Beyond community outreach, the Club has significantly enhanced its digital and social media presence, including active contributions to case law posts on the SLS NOIDA social media platforms.

Street Vendors Protection of Livelihood: Legal Awareness Camp

PBC also took a new initiative to educate street vendors about their legal rights, responsibilities, and government welfare schemes. The camp was conducted by the following Pro Bono Associates - Anmol Kothari, Karunesh Jain, Shivam Singh, and Shruti Mehta, at the Vending Zone 34 and Labour Chowk Sector 62, Noida, on January 16, 2025 and focused on the rights of the vendors under the Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending Act, 2014. The Pro Bono Associates actively assisted vendors in enrolling for schemes such as Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), which provides interest-free loans for small businesses, and Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana (PMSYM), a pension scheme for unorganized workers. Additionally, many vendors registered for the e-Shram card, which is essential for accessing government benefits and a survey was also undertaken by the PBAs to understand the challenges faced by the vendors in their day-to-day lives.



On January 17, 2025, the PBAs visited the offices of NOIDA Authority & Vone India Pvt. Ltd to gain a better understanding of the policies and challenges related to street vending. The discussion highlighted several challenges related to street vendors in NOIDA.

To further explore the implementation of PM SVANidhi scheme, the PBAs visited VONE India Services Pvt. Ltd., an organization actively involved in conducting PM SVANidhi scheme camps. The PM SVANidhi program provides financial assistance to vendors. VONE India applauded the efforts and initiatives of the Pro Bono Club and expressed interest in collaborating with the Club on future camps to improve vendor outreach.

Pro Bono Activities: Jan-Feb. 2025

Financial Security: Legal Awareness Camp

The month of February saw another new legal initiative by PBC as a Financial Security Awareness Camp was carried out at Khora Colony, Sector 62, NOIDA on February 5, 2025. PBAs Harshdeep Garg, Sanvi Mathur and Vrinda focused on disseminating knowledge of finance to young adults aged 18 to 40 years, their parents and relatives of girls under 10 years of age, to create awareness among individuals to make right financial decisions, for both the current and future generations.

Amongst a total of 50 participants, the PBAs noted that 40% of the attendees were already aware of or had registered for certain government schemes, while the remaining individuals were given detailed information about two key initiatives: the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), which aims at providing financial security after retirement to people from the unorganized sector and the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY), which focuses on long-term savings designed specifically for girls less than 10 years old with tax advantages and financial development potential. The discussions between the PBAs. .



Pro Bono Activities: Jan-Feb, 2025

Consumer Protection Camp: Legal Awareness Camp



To increase the awareness about the Consumer Protection Laws in India, PBC organised a legal awareness camp on February 15, 2025 at the location of Atta Market, Sector 18, NOIDA.

The camp titled 'Consumer Protection: Know. Act. Protect.' aimed to raise awareness about unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, grievance related mechanisms and the significance of product quality certifications. The PBAs covered the areas with a larger footfall, ensuring the dissemination for awareness of consumer rights to shopowners, vendors and the general public.

The detailed information regarding filing of complaints through E-Daakhil portal and National Consumer Helpline and awareness about essential quality certifications such as ISI, AGMARK and FSSAI were the key features of the discussions between the PBAs and the consumers. Though the public took cognizance of not being aware of ethical consumer practices and positively engaged in the conversations with PBAs, hesitation was perceived from the female population as they were not responsive about the initiative.

Even with such challenges, the PBC successfully completed the camp and ensured the empowering of consumers through awareness and education about their rights under the Consumer Protection Law of India.



Pro Bono Activities: January-Feb. 2025

Pro Bono Club is “Winner” at the 2nd National Pro Bono and Legal Aid Conclave hosted by NFSU, Gandhinagar

Recipients of the ‘Justice Synergy Award’

The Pro Bono Club of Symbiosis Law School, NOIDA, excelled at the 2nd National Pro Bono and Legal Aid Conclave, Justice Synergy, held at the National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, on February 21-22, 2025. Organized with the Gujarat State Human Rights Commission, the event featured competitions and discussions on access to justice.

Representing the club, Ms. Isha Arora, Ms. Radhika Chugh, Ms. Sanvi Mathur, Ms. Anurakta Sharma, Ms. Drishti Bansal and faculty mentor Dr. Megha Nagpal emerged as over all “WINNERS”.



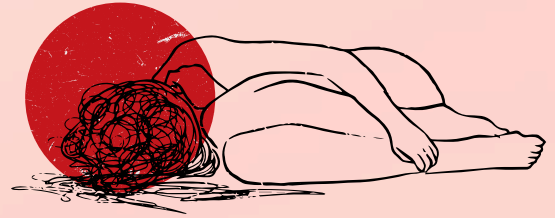
Dr. Nagpal contributed to the Faculty Round Table Discussion on ‘Bridging the Justice Gap: An Inclusivist Approach to Legal Aid’. The team delivered an outstanding performance across multiple competitions. Ms. Sanvi Mathur and Ms. Drishti Bansal were declared winners of the Consumer Complaint Drafting Competition, while Ms. Drishti Bansal and Ms. Isha Arora finished as runners-up in the RTI Drafting Competition. In the SOP & Policy Recommendation Drafting Competition, Ms. Drishti Bansal, Ms. Isha Arora, and Ms. Radhika Chugh emerged victorious, earning a cash prize of ₹4,000.

For their stellar performance under Theme 2, the team was also honored with the Justice Synergy Award, which included a cash prize of ₹12,000, a trophy, a fully discounted course on Manupatra, and Certificates of Merit. Competing against 22 teams nationwide, the Pro Bono Club of SLS NOIDA reaffirmed its dedication to legal advocacy and access to justice. Their remarkable success is a testament to their commitment and excellence in the field.

Legal News

RG KAR RAPE-MURDER CASE: CONVICTION AND SENTENCE

Tuhina Deb



In 2012, the country was shaken by Nirbhaya's case, and 12 years later, we have woken up to the horrific case of the RG Kar Rape-murder, raising the question yet again that laws alone cannot isolate crime and brutality.

The horrible event unfolded on 9th August 2024, when a woman trainee doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital was brutally raped and murdered. After much outcry from the public, the Supreme Court took up suo moto cognizance of the matter on 18th August, while Kolkata High Court was already hearing the case, which had ordered a CBI probe.[1]

On January 20, 2025 the Additional District and Sessions Court of Sealdah, West Bengal sentenced accused Sandeep Roy to life imprisonment, under sections 64 (Rape), 66 (causing injury resulting in death of rape victim) and 103 (1) (Murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. The court while sentencing reasoned its decision by saying that the case shall be "carefully considered and appropriate sentence that balances the gravity of the crime with the principles of justice, rehabilitation, and the preservation of human dignity".[6]

While CBI continues to argue for death penalty, the Sealdah Court pointed out that this was not a "rarest of the rare" cases and that a judicial decision cannot rely on public sentiments, while citing cases like *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab*[3] and *Swami Shraddananda v. State of Karnataka*[4], on how judges should "never be blood thirsty"[5]. The court reflected on responsibility bestowed upon judiciary to "uphold the rule of law and ensure justice based on evidence, not public sentiment."

The day following the sentence, the High Court was moved by the West Bengal Government seeking capital punishment for Roy. Speculations also suggest that Sandeep Roy did not single-handedly purport the crime, but through the findings of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory it could be made out that there may have been more. The probe continues. The sentencing of the convict by the Sealdah court can be seen as breakthrough in the case, raising concerns about whether the decision was fair, just and reasonable. Whether justice has been served or is yet to be served, is still a lurking question.

A fine of Rs.50,00,000 along with rigorous imprisonment for life was awarded to the accused. The parents refused to take the compensation rewarded by the court, Rs. 17 Lakh for the death and Rs.7 Lakh for rape, as per NALSA guidelines, and only wished for justice to be served for the wrong that their daughter suffered.

1. Spandan S, "R.G. Kar Medical College Rape and Murder Case: Updates from the Supreme Court" (Supreme Court Observer, September 24, 2024)
2. AIR 1997 Supreme Court
3. AIR 1980 SC 898
4. AIR 2008 Supreme Court 3040
5. Chattopadhyay SS, "R.G. Kar Hospital Murder Case: Life Sentence Sparks Public Outrage and Calls for Further Investigation" (Frontline, January 22, 2025)
6. Singh SS, "R.G. Kar Rape and Murder: Lifelong Imprisonment for Convict Sanjay Roy" (The Hindu, January 20, 2025)



Legal News

UNION BUDGET 2025

Pihoo Agrawal

The Union Budget 2025, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is an optimistic, energetic drive for speeding up the economy, empowering numerous sectors, and sustaining development. The Income Tax exemption limit under the new tax regime is raised to ₹12 lakh. Tax slab is doubled to provide relief for middle-class taxpayers. The standard deduction was also raised to ₹75,000, which will result in increased disposable income and give a boost to consumer demand

Besides, small businesses in the MSME sector with a turnover limit of ₹50 crore would benefit from the reduced corporate tax rate of 15%. The Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana will be launched to improve production in 100 low-productivity districts through irrigation systems, technology, and financial assistance. [1]

The budget allocated large funds for infrastructure development, especially in roads and railways and urban transformation. Other initiatives include extending the Jal Jeevan Mission ensuring potable water supply to all households by 2028. The government has also established a fund of ₹10,000 crores for businesses under MSME to support innovation and entrepreneurship. Other measures like decriminalized compliance and green startup incentives are also undertaken to support India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

50,000 new Atal Tinkering Laboratories will be set up to foster innovation in school students. The government also announced broadband connectivity for all secondary schools to bridge the digital divide in rural areas.[2] On the healthcare front, allocation for medical education has been increased, and it aims to establish 10,000 new undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats by 2025. The budget stamps India's commitment to sustainability by unveiling initiatives such as Nuclear Energy Mission for 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047. Renewable energy projects have seen greater allocations under the budget, particularly in solar and wind energy. Additionally, there's a continuum of incentivisation on the path to electric vehicle adoption, indicative of India's ambition towards low-carbon economy transition.

To accelerate technological development, the Budget proposes to set up a Centre of Excellence for AI with a budgetary allocation of ₹500 crore at the first stage. It is expected to catalyse research and innovation in AI in production areas like healthcare, agriculture, and education. Moreover, a heavy focus towards enabling digital infrastructure and skill development will prepare the workforce for challenges to come. [3] While the Union Budget 2025 takes a balanced approach in addressing urgent economic concerns and also provides long-term goals for economic prospects. It has planted a vision of inclusive growth and resilience. If implemented effectively, it will reflect the desire of most seekers and will have a significant impact on India's aspirations for a resilient and inclusive future.

1.Union budget 2025-2026| National Portal of India. (n.d.-d). <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/union-budget-2025-2026>

2.India budget | Ministry of Finance | Government of India. (n.d.-d). <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/>

3.Highlights of union budget 2025-26. Press Information Bureau. (n.d.). <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2098353>

Legal News

Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025 withdrawn amidst Legal Fraternity Uproar

Shatakshi Dwivedi

On 22nd February, 2025 the Central government withdrew the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025 after facing widespread opposition from lawyers nationwide. The Bill sought to amend the Advocates Act, 1961, which governs the legal profession in India. It encountered resistance because it threatened the autonomy of legal institution and Bar Council of India (BCI) independence.

The Bill gave the central government authority to nominate three independent members for the Bar Council of India (BCI) which regulates the legal profession. The proposed Section 49B also granted central government authorities to issue directives to the BCI which intensified concerns about the potential breakdown of self-regulation and independence.[1] Section 35A of the bill faced criticism because it established a prohibition against strikes and boycotts by lawyers while defining these actions as violations and punishable under the Advocates Act. The bill also sought to transfer control over foreign law firm and lawyer entry from the BCI to the central government.[2] Furthermore, the proposal to add corporate lawyers and legal associations under the definition of 'legal practitioner' faced resistance because it threatened to dilute professional distinctions while reducing regulatory control.[3]

The Union Ministry of Law and Justice responded to the broad public opposition by withdrawing the bill through an official announcement on February 22, 2025 and declared plans to modify the bill through public feedbacks and stakeholders recommendations.[4] This episode demonstrates why legal institutions must remain independent and why reforms need to be developed by inclusive processes that maintain transparency.



- 1.Shreya Vajpayee, Landmark Reforms Proposed to Modernize Legal Practice in India: Understanding the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025, Bar & Bench (Oct. 15, 2023), <https://www.barandbench.com/columns/landmark-reforms-proposed-to-modernize-legal-practice-in-india-understanding-the-advocates-amendment-bill-2025>
- 2.Ananthakrishnan G., Advocates Amendment Bill: Why Are Lawyers Opposing It?, The Indian Express (Oct. 14, 2023), <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/advocates-amendment-bill-objections-9861843/>
- 3.Staff Writer, Govt Withdraws Draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2025, Mint (Feb. 22, 2025), <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/govt-withdraws-draft-advocates-amendment-bill-2025-11740236385653.html>
- 4.SCC Online, Draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025: Key Amendments Proposed, SCC Online (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.sconline.com/blog/post/2025/02/14/advocates-amendment-bill-2025-public-comments-legal-news/>

IRAC Analysis

Bilkis Yakub Rasool Vs. Union of India. 08 January. 2024 Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 491 OF 2022

Parth Vinayak Ghare

FACTS

Bilkis Yakub Rasool and her family suffered atrocities during the Gujarat riots in 2002 after the Godhra train burning incident. Bilkis, despite her pregnancy, was subjected to barbarism, gunning and gang-rape. 14 members of her family, including little children, were murdered. The crimes were committed out of hatred, which was sprouted from communal feuds[1]. The Supreme Court transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). A special court in Mumbai sentenced 11 accused to life imprisonment.[2] Bombay High Court and the Supreme Court affirmed this judgement. On 10 August 2022, the Gujarat government granted remission to all 11 convicts, according to its 1992 policy. Bilkis spoke for her cause through a writ petition for reasons of territorial jurisdictional errors, procedural irregularities, and breach of her fundamental rights.[3]

ISSUES

1. Whether the writ petition filed by Bilkis under Article 32 of the Constitution is maintainable?
2. Whether the Gujarat government was the "appropriate government" with the jurisdiction to grant remission to the convicts?
3. Whether the remission orders complied with Sections 432 and 433A of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (CrPC)?
4. Whether the remission orders violated the rule of law and the victim's rights?

RULE

1. Article 32 of the Constitution of India.
2. Section 432, clauses (2) and (7) of the CrPC, 1973.

ANALYSIS

Bilkis Bano had rightly approached the Supreme Court under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution. This provision is the backbone of the Constitution, which is used to enforce fundamental rights. Justice Nagarathan had written in his judgement that Bilkis's petition under Article 32 could not be dismissed because of existence of an alternate remedy.

-
1. Awstika Das, Rule Of Law Must Be Enforced Unmindful Of Consequences: Supreme Court Observes In Bilkis Bano Case, Awstika Das, LIVE LAW [(13 February 2025, 12:59 PM)], [<https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-bilkis-bano-rule-of-law-246179>.]
 2. The Hindu, Bilkis Bano case: Supreme Court dismisses Gujarat review plea to take back adverse comments, The Hindu [(Feb. 13, 2025, 10:30 AM IST)], <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bilkis-bano-case-sc-rejects-gujarat-governments-plea-seeking-review-of-verdict-over-certain-observations/article68686301.ece>.
 3. Bilkis Yakub Rasool v. Union of India, 08 January 2024, Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 491 of 2022, [2024] (India).

IRAC Analysis

Bilkis Yakub Rasool Vs. Union of India. 08 January. 2024 **Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 491 OF 2022**

The Supreme Court held that the writ petition filed by Bilkis under Article 32[4] was maintainable as she sought to enforce her fundamental rights to equality (Article 14)[5] and personal liberty (Article 21)[6]. The Court emphasised that the availability of an alternative remedy under Article 226[7] did not bar its jurisdiction under Article 32, particularly in cases involving grave violations of fundamental rights.

For the question of jurisdiction, the Court determined that the Gujarat government was not the "appropriate government" under Section 432(7) of the CrPC, as the trial and conviction had occurred in Maharashtra. Therefore, the authority to grant remission rested with the Maharashtra government, not Gujarat. The remission orders issued by Gujarat were deemed illegal and without jurisdiction. The case of State of Madhya Pradesh V Ratan Singh (1976) [1] was cited in the judgement. Here, the Apex Court held that the State of Madhya Pradesh would be considered as "appropriate government" even if the punishment of the convict was being discharged in Punjab.

The Court also found that the remission orders violated mandatory procedural requirements under Section 432(2) of the CrPC. The opinion of the presiding judge of the convicting court was not taken into consideration by the Gujarat government, even though it was required by law. Also, there was no compliance by the convicts on the payment of the fine imposed, which was a part of their statement. This was a very important factor which should have been considered during the remission process.

Finally, in the verdict, the court decided that the principles of the rule of law and of justice were undermined in the remission orders. The issuance of remission orders to convicted individuals on the grounds of gang rape and mass murder, too, without adhering to legal processes, was extremely unjust and arbitrary. Such actions erode the confidence of the public in authorities and the justice system and, they also violate the victim's rights to justice and equality.

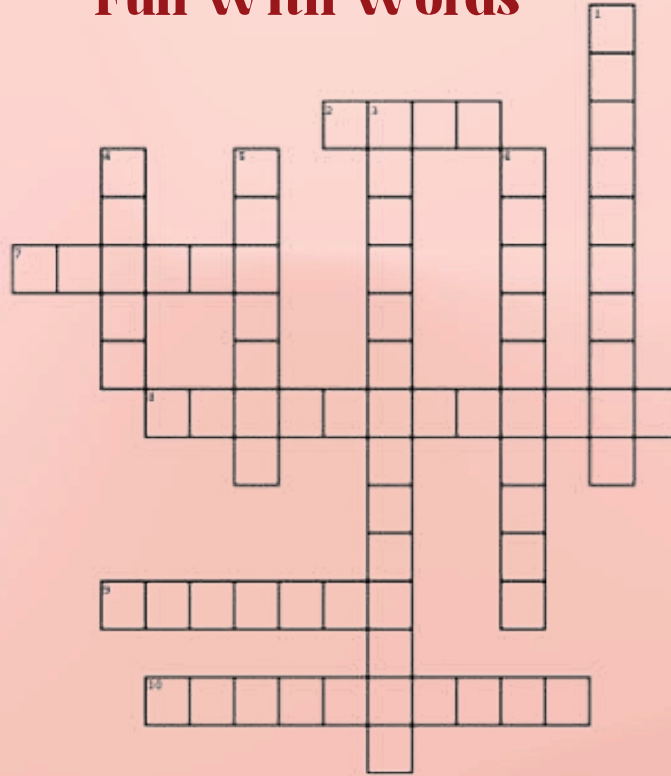
CONCLUSION

The remission orders dated 10 August 2022 were quashed by the Supreme Court. The judgement said that the orders were vitiated, illegal and beyond the jurisdiction of the Gujarat government. The Supreme Court had directed the convicts to surrender and they were sent back to prison. This verdict was an important reminder of adherence to following legal procedures and safeguarding the rights of the victim.

1. State Of Madhya Pradesh vs Ratan Singh & Ors on 5 May, 1976, 1976 AIR 1552

2. Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, § 432(2), No. 2, Acts of Parliament, 1974 (India).

Fun With Words



Crossword Designed By: Shivam Singh and Karunesh Jain

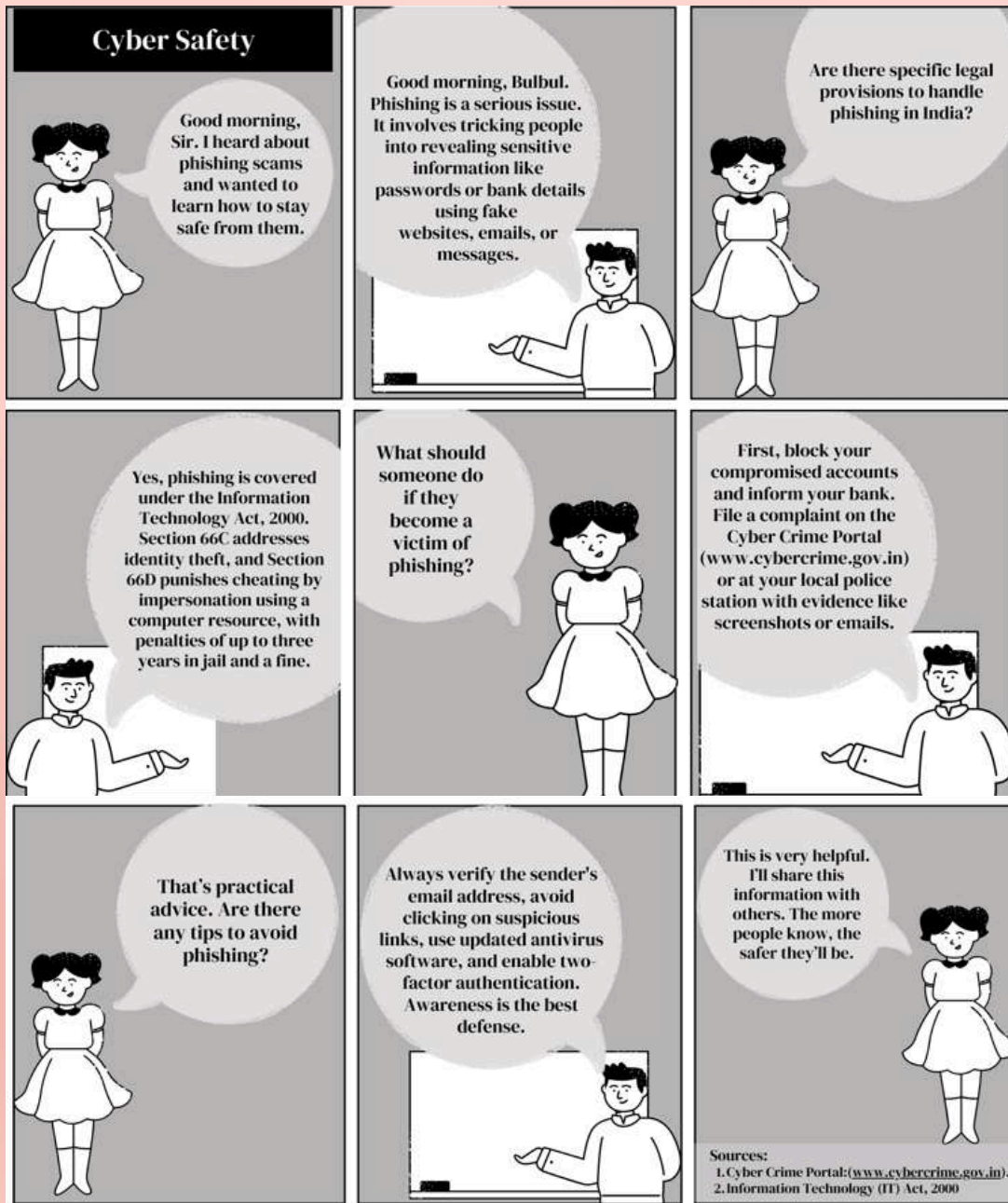
Across

2. What silent engine drives India's journey to clean skies, swapping fumes for fresh air and fueling hope with electricity?
7. What visionary program stands as a shield against malnutrition, empowering children, pregnant women, and mothers with the promise of better health, brighter futures, and a stronger nation?
8. What invisible force connects every corner of the nation, turning screens into schools, offices, and doorways to government aid?
9. What revolutionary program liberated millions of women from the suffocating smoke of traditional cooking, empowering them with clean fuel and a healthier, brighter tomorrow?
10. What is the catchy motto of the grand mission that's on a mission to quench rural India's thirst, bringing clean, piped water to every home—because everyone deserves a splash of dignity and a gulp of hope?

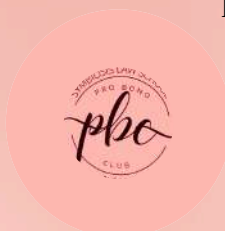
Down

- 1 Which bold initiative is equipping India's youth with the power of knowledge and skills, transforming them into architects of progress and pioneers of a new industrial era?
3. What shield protects millions from the sting of hospital bills, offering care without cost and hope without hesitation?
4. Which transformative scheme provides unorganized workers with financial support in their old age, with the government acting as a dependable partner in their journey?
5. The scheme that says, 'You dig, we pay!' Promising 100 days of work so reliable, even procrastinators can't complain. Acronym sounds 'mega,' but it's all about rural jobs and dignity.
6. Who rekindles the spirit of India's streets, lifting small-scale vendors from the shadows with the promise of hope and a lifeline of easy loans?

Learning with Bulbul



Designed and Illustrated By: Shruti Mehta



Conceived and Conceptualized by Dr. Megha Nagpal, Assistant Professor - SLS Noida

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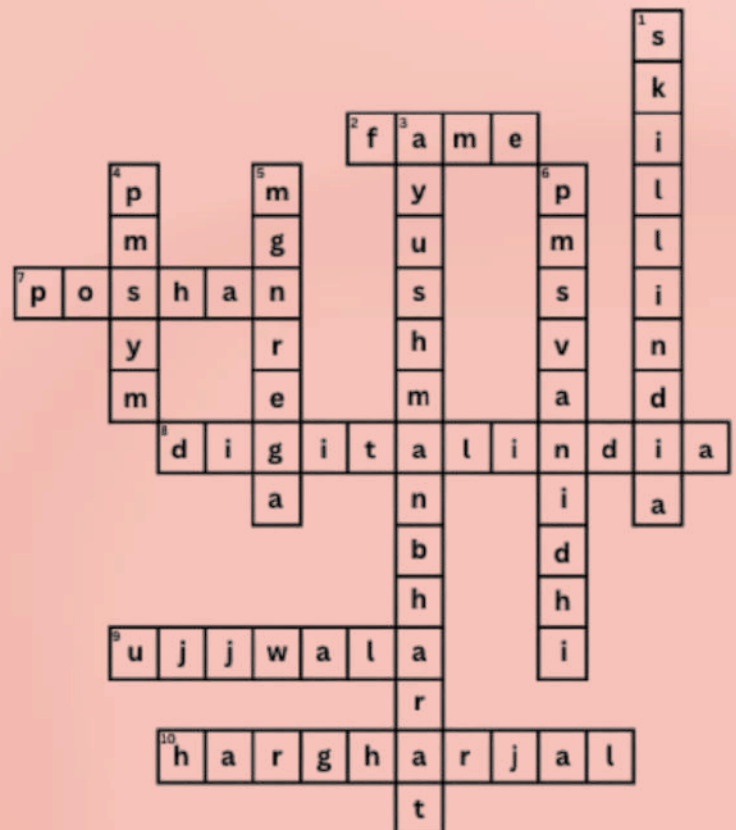


Academic Year 2024-25

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11. **PARTH VINAYAK GHARE**
12. **TUHINA DEB**
13. **PIHOO AGARWAL**
14. **SANVI MATHUR**
15. **DIKSHA**
16. **DRUTI DUTTA**
17. **HARSH DEEP GARG**
18. **ANMOL KOTHARI**
19. **SHRUTI MEHTA**
20. **SHIVAM SINGH**
21. **DRISHTI BANSAL**
22. **KARUNESH JAIN**

Solutions for the Puzzle



The Pro Bono Club, SLS NOIDA, with sheer commitment in their hearts promises to work with utmost dedication to serve and stand for the good.