

The Consumer's Voice – Value for Price, People and the Environment

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# All consumer courts to hear cases online from 15 April

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NEW DELHI

**T**he consumer affairs ministry has directed all consumer courts to start hearing cases online from 15 April. The National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has released standard operating procedures (SoPs) for these hearings.

The NCDRC is the apex appellate body of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), which reports to the ministry.

The decision is expected to make it easier for consumers to resolve their complaints and save them time and money. *Mint* reported on 28 January that the CCPA, which was formed in July 2020, was preparing to roll out e-court services in all 35 state consumer dispute redressal commissions (SCDRCs) and 10 benches of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC).

NCDRC deals with cases exceeding ₹2 crore (in compensation), while SCDRCs



The national commission to hear cases in hybrid mode from its premises. ISTOCKPHOTO

handles cases between ₹50 lakh and ₹2 crore. District consumer dispute redressal commissions (DCDRC) have jurisdiction over cases that entail up to ₹50 lakh in compensation.

The ministry has directed the national commission to hear cases in hybrid mode from its premises. Hybrid hearing of cases will be rolled out as a pilot until further orders, it said. It also asked the NCDRC to provide video-conferencing or hybrid hear-

ing links to streamline the hearings and make them accessible to all those involved. The NCDRC said these links would not be sent directly to advocates and aggrieved parties and be made available on the 'cause list' instead.

Under the SoP for virtual court appearances, advocates and complainants must maintain all courtesies and protocols that apply in a physical court when appearing before the national commission via video conferencing.

The SoP also specifies that advocates and complainants must keep their microphones muted at all times until they are called upon to make their submissions.

They are also required to keep their mobile phones silent, switched off, or in airplane mode during the case hearing. However, senior advocates or litigants appearing in person should keep their microphones on. The SoP also specifies that a hearing can be reviewed and appropriate measures taken in case of interruptions or security concerns.

*The views expressed in 'Keemat' do not necessarily reflect those of CGSI, but rather are personal opinions of the author(s) concerned.*

## CONSUMER GUIDANCE SOCIETY OF INDIA (CGSI)

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We all love food. We read food blogs, we exchange recipes, we watch MasterChef. A good meal is one of life's biggest pleasures. But eating well is different from eating healthy. So, what should we eat, what should we avoid? Is it possible to eat healthy without feeling like we are starving ourselves?

The Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Nutrition have been studying these questions for decades. Every 10 years or so, the two institutions update the health ministry's dietary guidelines, providing recommendations on nutritional requirements, preferred foods, and healthy cooking methods. The 2024 guidelines were released last month. Most of us know the basic principles, but let us remind ourselves.

## New generation, new foods

India's food habits have changed substantially in the last 20-30 years. Calorie intake has increased, acute hunger has almost vanished, but inadequate nutrition is still a problem, not only among the poor but even among middle-class urban families. Too much sugar, too many *chatpata* snacks, too little protein and fiber... poor diets cause or contribute to a host of problems from obesity to anemia, hypertension and diabetes.

According to the ICMR, more than half the country's disease burden is caused by unhealthy diet. About 25% of Indians are overweight or obese, because physical activity has reduced and a huge variety of convenience food is available at reasonable prices.

A healthy, diverse, balanced diet... this is both simple and complicated. Complicated because scientists are only beginning to understand how the hundreds of food constituents interact with the human body and with each other. Simple because you do not need a PhD to cook healthy meals; you just need some basic understanding and some extra effort while shopping and cooking.

Different foods provide different nutrients, you need to mix and match. Most fruits and vegetables are low in calories, high in nutrients and fiber. Starchy foods like potato (and bananas) are calorie-rich and energy-rich. Leafy vegetables are a great source of carotenoids, iron, folate, calcium, and other nutrients. Pulses, eggs, and meat are the best sources of protein. (Cereals have low protein content, but because we consume large quantities, they provide a large share of daily protein intake.)

In general, the more colorful your plate – lots of green, yellow, orange and red – the healthier it is. Just make sure the color comes from the right foods, not from *haldi* or chilli powder!

A healthy diet does not have to be expensive. Dal and vegetables, fruits and dairy as often as your budget permits. For non-vegetarians, meat once or twice a week or 3-4 eggs per week.

Baking or steaming is healthier and cheaper than frying. Instead of jam or ketchup, have home-made chutney. Instead of Coke, drink water. Instead of fruit juice, eat fruits. Caesar salad looks great on Instagram, but why not replace it with a few tomatoes and a cucumber, topped with a handful of roasted peanuts or boiled *chana*?

What should your plate look like? According to ICMR, rice and *chapatis* should comprise less than half of your calorie intake (for most people, it is currently 60-70%). About 15% should come from high-protein foods like pulses, eggs and meat; 10% from nuts, oilseeds and dairy; and the remaining 30% from fats, and remember that many foods contain fat, so use as little cooking oil as possible.

You could fine-tune these numbers, for example replace regular rice or wheat with unpolished grain or millet, but the guidelines are adequate unless you have special dietary needs or training for the Olympics.

## Convenience that kills

The ICMR guidelines, and dietary guidelines in every country, are fiercely critical about ultra-processed foods. Most foods are processed in some form, peeled, chopped, boiled, fried etc. But this is basic processing, very different from the ultra-processed foods we see everywhere: cornflakes, chips, noodles, biscuits, and most ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat convenience foods.

Modern ultra-processed products are less about cooking and more about chemistry and engineering. Essentially, manufacturers take foodgrains like rice, wheat or pulses, break them down into their chemical components (starchy flours, protein isolates, fats, oils), and then reconstitute them into products that bear no resemblance to the original ingredients. In the process, they add lots of chemicals: preservatives to increase shelf life; emulsifiers to prevent ingredients from separating; anti-foaming, bulking, bleaching, gelling and glazing agents; artificial coloring to improve appearance; and importantly, sugar, salt and fats to make it tasty.

This sounds complicated, but is much cheaper and more efficient than producing the same products



using traditional cooking. What you finally get is lots of calories but no nutrition, an affordable, convenient, nicely packaged product with good shelf-life, but the health costs are substantial. Processing at high pressure and temperature leads to loss of nutrients; extrusion alters the physical structure of constituents.

Why doesn't the government ban these products? At a common-sense level, the issue is easy to understand. These products are unhealthy; or at the very least, they are replacing more nutritious foods in our diet. But food regulations must be based on scientific data. It is hard to prove conclusively that ultra-processed foods affect health or increase disease risk because many factors are involved, not only diet but also exercise, stress, pollution etc.

It is almost impossible to determine which products, eaten in what quantities, are acceptable. A ban would immediately be challenged in court. It is up to us, as consumers, to make sensible decisions. If the carton has a long list of ingredients with unpronounceable names, think twice before buying.

### **Salt and sugar**

Ultra-processed foods are often the center of attention, but salt and sugar are equally damaging. Your body needs only one teaspoon of table salt per day (5 grams), but most of us consume far more, leaving us vulnerable to a host of problems from hypertension to heart attack, stroke and kidney problems later in life.

Sugar is even worse – not so much the sugar found naturally in fruits but “added sugar”, which can be found not just in sweets but also in ketchup, bread, even in spicy condiments. Recommended consumption is 20-25 grams per day, most of which should come from natural carbohydrates. Refined sugar contains no vitamins or minerals.

Completely avoiding sugar will do no harm; your body will get enough from fruits and dairy. Sugar substitutes are probably better than sugar, but they too offer only taste, not nutrition. Best is to avoid them completely.

### **Body-builders, beware**

Dietary requirements vary. Teenagers need much more protein and energy than senior citizens; pregnant and nursing mothers may have to take extra care. But the typical office-going adult, with a sedentary lifestyle, needs less than 1 gram of protein per kilo body weight. This much is easily obtained from commonsense cooking, with no need for expensive supplements or superfoods.

If you want a six-pack, eat less and exercise more. Supplements like protein powder or protein shakes are usually a waste of money. Beyond a point, excess protein does not help to build muscles. The body absorbs what it needs. Whatever is not burnt for energy is either excreted or converted to fat and stored; instead of abdominal muscles you might get love handles!

### **Baby steps**

Nutrition is important for everyone but especially for babies. What a child eats for the first 2-3 years has a huge influence on its physical and mental development, and some of this influence carries into adulthood. Once the baby is off breast-feeding, give fresh milk, not powder. Do not add sugar or health supplements; they will not make your baby taller or smarter. Plenty of vegetables, starting with pureed veg. Your baby will learn to enjoy it, and this healthy habit will continue as she grows older.

There was a recent controversy with Nestlé baby food. In Europe, where regulations are strict, their products contained no added sugar. In India, they contained as much as 3 grams per serving. No wonder babies love Cerelac! The ICMR guidelines are clear: zero added sugar for children below 2 years. The guidelines contain simple tips such as the use of amylase-rich foods (ARFs) for children during weaning.

Every grandmother knows this simple recipe. Take wheat, rice, or millet (ideally, add some *chana* or *mung*), add water in the ratio 1:2 or 1:3, let it soak for 8 hours, drain out the water and leave overnight to germinate/sprout. Then dry, roast lightly, and grind to powder. Add a teaspoon of the ARF powder to your baby's meal. Maybe not fashionable, but nutritious and affordable.

### **Fine print**

One of the ICMR guidelines says, read food labels carefully. Yes, but do not be disappointed if the labels make no sense. The manufacturer's job is to persuade you to buy, not to help you choose healthy options. Corn syrup, dextrose and trehalose are simply fancy names for sugar. Labels like No added sugar or fortified with vitamins can be misleading.

Claims that a product improves health or reduces risk of some disease, are often false or unproven, but some of the labeling can be useful even if you do not have a degree in food science.

The FSSAI (Food Standards and Safety Authority of India) logo indicates the manufacturer is licensed. The ISI logo on packaged water and some processed foods is a guarantee of quality, unless the logo is fake!

Date of manufacture/expiry are important. Labels can also provide clues about nutritional value. If you can read the tiny print and do the math's you will find, for example, that most chocolates contain more sugar than chocolate!

### Food for thought

I showed a draft of this article to a foodie. He had one question: What about *samosas*? Traditional Indian snacks, whether sweet or savory, are both irresistible and unhealthy because they contain lots of salt, oil,

or sugar. Fortunately, they are not as bad as ultra-processed. If you have a craving for *chaat*, go ahead. A few *samosas* or *gulab jamuns* once a week will not do much harm. Just make sure it is only once a week.

Reliable nutrition information is available, but often buried under hundreds of articles advertising specific products, peddling half-truths, or highlighting the latest "superfood". Take the trouble; it is important to understand what you are eating. Good nutrition leads to good health, which allows you to enjoy more good food! Bon Appetit.

*Birds of the same feather flock together and protect one another!*

## Services by Lawyers Will Not Fall under Consumer Protection Act: Supreme Court (Courtesy: Moneylife Digital Team)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that legal services rendered by lawyers will not fall under the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act and litigants cannot make claims of deficiency of service against advocates, says a report. The apex court also mentioned that its 1996 decision on medical negligence in the Indian Medical Association (IMA) vs Shanta needs to be reconsidered.

According to a report from Bar & Bench, the bench of justice Bela M Trivedi and justice Pankaj Mithal says that legal profession is *sui generis* (unique) and cannot be compared with any other profession and the relationship between advocate and client indicates unique attributes since the client has direct control over the advocate.

"Advocates have to respect the client's autonomy and are not entitled to make concessions without express instructions from the client and transgress authority. A considerable amount of direct control is with a client of advocate", the SC opined.

Consequently, the bench says, services provided by lawyers would stand excluded from the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act. "This strengthens our opinion that contract is of personal service and is excluded from the definition of service under CPA".

The 1996 landmark judgement held that medical professionals would be accountable under the Consumer Protection Act and that the definition of 'services' under the Act would cover the healthcare and medical sector.

"Very purpose of the Act was to protect consumers from unfair trade practices. Nothing to suggest that the legislature wanted to include professionals. Having said that, we have opined IMA vs Shanta decision needs to be revisited", the bench of justice Trivedi and justice Mithal says.

Hence, the bench says that the issue regarding the same should be placed before the chief justice of India is referred to a larger bench.

This is the story of a 5 years old son, who, after watching a story of a Sultan on TV, said to his mother: "Mum, I also want 7 wives, one will cook for me, one will read for me, one will go for walk with me, one will sing for me, one can bath me..."

Mum smiled and said: "Then night time I don't have to accompany you to sleep".

After some thought, son said: "Not possible, I still want to sleep with you mummy!"

Mom's eyes fill up with tears of happiness: "My sweet son!" "Then who will sleep with your 7 wives?"

"Let them sleep with daddy!"

Dad's eyes fill up with tears of happiness. "My sweet son!"

A math professor gets back home at 3 AM.

"You're late!" his wife shouts. "You said you'd be home by 11:45!"

"Actually", the professor replies calmly, "I said I'd be home by a quarter of 12".



What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?

In a capitalist society, man exploits man, and in a socialist one, it is the other way around.

# Challenges of being your own 'lawyer' at the consumer court

Liffy Thomas, Courtesy: **TH** Free Trial

*Consumer organizations say although the Consumer Protection Act 2019 has witnessed reforms as part of exercises to make it more people-friendly, many still hesitate to file a case because of the complexity and intricacies inherent in the procedures at the court.*

Jinu Johnson from K.R. Puram finds himself in a “protracted battle” against a car dealer. One-and-a-half years have elapsed since the “battle lines” were drawn, and Mr. Johnson has no intention to walk away from the “fight”. He ended up forking out ₹10,000 more than he had to pay this car dealer for handling and logistic charges for his new car.

The fact that he must make many visits to the district consumer court does not matter to Mr. Johnson. He reads up on similar cases uploaded on the website of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. “With every hearing, my knowledge of what more needs to be produced to make my case strong is getting better”, says Mr. Johnson.

For the next hearing, he has collected the price list from other car dealers in Bengaluru to present before the commission. The Consumer Protection Act empowers a consumer to present their case in consumer court without hiring a lawyer. How many consumers are aware of this provision, let alone exercise it?

An RTI on the number of litigants who fight their case on their own in the Bengaluru urban courts, with request from data from III Additional District Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission, returned this reply: “The commission is not maintaining separate data on those who fight a case on their own, but in the complaint register, we mark whether the case is filed by an advocate or in person”.

The “in person” tag need not necessarily mean the complainant has not engaged a lawyer during the case and there is very little scope for knowing it. The book makes a list of hearings a complainant has been called for and the solved cases. It also highlights when a senior citizen has filed a case “in person”.

Most of the cases are filed against companies in sectors such as banking and insurance, airlines, telecom, education, postal, housing and transport. Under most of the complaints being fought “in-person”, the complainant has not appeared for hearings beyond the first two.

Working professionals Sandeep K.M. and Deepika S. from Vasanthapura are fighting a case against a furniture shop in Bengaluru that refused to replace a newly-bought chair whose handle broke within two months.

“I have fought and won a case in the consumer court

in the past and that gave us the confidence to take up this issue as the store was not ready to replace the chair”, says Mr. Sandeep. They received help from the staff at the consumer court and online forums but feel the process of appearing before the commission every time between their schedules at work can deter people from approaching such forums.

Consumer organizations say although the Consumer Protection Act 2019 has witnessed reforms as part of exercises to make it more people-friendly, many still hesitate to file a case because of the complexity and intricacies inherent in the procedures at the court.

Gopal Ratnam V., secretary, Consumer Care Society, a consumer organization, says to resolve a case through the consumer court takes anywhere between three months and three years.

The e-Daakhil portal only enables filing a complaint with ease from any city, not requiring the person to carry out the filing in person. To attend each hearing is tough for many and some drop out before seeing a closure in the case”, says Mr. Ratnam. Their first advice, he says, to a consumer who approaches them is to sort it out with the opposite party and that in some cases they intervene.

Mr. Ratnam says alternative media like Twitter have also become a platform for consumers to take a service provider on. He says, “This especially works when a company is well known or active on such platforms.

## Important Yet Hilarious

Rajendra Prasad (76 years old) from Kollam near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala a retired Librarian of the Panchayat Board, Kerala went to vote on Friday 26th April 2024. Rajendra Prasad on going to poll, found mention of his gender as Female in the Voter’s List, so not allowed to vote.

Profoundly annoyed, he borrowed a woman’s maxi, a chain, ear-rings, bangles, coolers from his neighbor. He then went back to vote in this get-up along with a copy of the *Indian Constitution which states that “if a person presents himself/herself as portrayed in the voter’s list, the person has the right to vote”.*

The Polling Officer obviously taken aback, after checking his credentials, allowed Rajendra Prasad to cast his vote. 🤔 🤔

# Bank liable for wrong done by its employees: SC orders bank to compensate man

In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court has held the District Cooperative Bank in Varanasi accountable for service lapses, affirming its vicarious liability for the actions of its employees. The apex court directed the bank to compensate a man with Rs 25,000 nearly three decades after he was wrongly denied access to his fixed deposit.

A bench comprising Justices P S Narasimha and Aravind Kumar upheld the decision of the district consumer forum from 1997, which had initially granted compensation to the aggrieved individual. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission's (NCDRC) contrary ruling was overturned by the apex court.

The case revolves around the non-release of fixed deposit receipts totaling Rs 1,60,000 by the District Cooperative Bank in Varanasi. The petitioner alleged

that the bank had unlawfully prevented him from withdrawing his funds. The district consumer forum, upon review, ordered the bank to refund the amount along with 15% interest, and an additional Rs 25,000 in damages.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment, emphasized, "It is seen from the record that the district forum was satisfied that the appellant had, in fact, handed over Rs 1,60,000 to the bank's officials. This is evidenced from the bank's ledger".

The court noted the establishment of an inquiry committee that recommended criminal proceedings against certain officials, which the bank had duly pursued. Additionally, it acknowledged the periodic renewal of fixed deposit receipts, thereby affirming the bank's

*Courtesy: The Economic Times*

## Consumer Court Orders Cinema Hall to Compensate for Damaging Cloths Due to Faulty Seat

In a notable consumer rights case, a man in Jaipur received compensation from a local cinema after his kurta was torn by a broken seat during a movie screening.

The District Consumer Commission ordered Carnival Cinema to pay the complainant a total of INR 23,500, which includes reimbursement for the kurta priced at INR 1,500 and an additional INR 22,000 for mental anguish and damage.

The complaint was lodged after the plaintiff's kurta, valued at INR 1,500, was damaged due to a defective seat in the theater. The seat, which was reportedly known to be in disrepair, led to significant tearing of the garment when it snagged on exposed metal.

Despite requesting a seat change, the theater staff allegedly denied the request, forcing the complainant to endure discomfort and eventual property damage.

The judgment was delivered by a bench including Commission President Devendra Mohan Mathur and Seema Sharma, who emphasized the cinema's duty to ensure a comfortable viewing experience for its patrons. They stated that providing a safe and comfortable seating arrangement is a basic expectation that was not met, resulting in both physical damage to the kurta and mental distress for the complainant.

This case highlights the functioning of consumer courts in India, which are designed to protect individuals from fraud and unfair business practices. Historically, consumers faced challenges from vendors who would sell substandard or counterfeit products. However, modern consumer courts actively address these injustices, offering a venue for redressal and enforcement of consumer rights.

*Courtesy: Law Trend*

One day, a drunk man busted into the mayor's office shouting "This country is c\*ap! This country is c\*ap!" An irritated police officer ran towards him and asked, "What did you say?" The drunk replied, "A disgraced country, c\*ap, I said!"

The officer decided to arrest the man, handcuffed him, and took him to the police station. The next day, when they went to court, the drunk claimed that he indeed said 'this country is a disgrace', but he meant Iran.

The judge irritated at the officer for wasting his time, imposed a hefty fine on the officer for abusing his power.

As they were leaving the court, the officer said, "How is it that you curse and I get fined?" "Didn't I tell you?" said the drunk, patting him on the back, "This country is c\*ap." ...



# Understanding the Consumer Court System in India: An End-to-End Comprehensive Guide on Filing a Complaint

By Ishika Kumar (Courtesy: Pune Pulse)

In India, the Consumer Protection Act of 2019, stands as a pillar of support for consumers encountering issues with goods and services. Navigating the consumer court system requires a deep understanding of the processes, courts, types of complaints and the rights bestowed upon consumers.

Consumers are, after all, citizens of this country and can often face difficulty in choosing such legal recourse for their grievances, and redressal does not come easy. Hence, let us break it down for you and delve deeper into each aspect to provide a comprehensive guide for individuals seeking justice in consumer disputes.

## Processes Involved in Filing a Complaint

**Pre-Filing Steps:** Before initiating formal proceedings, the aggrieved party may opt to send a legal notice to the goods and service provider, detailing the defects or deficiencies encountered and the intention to pursue legal action. While this step is completely optional, it is essential, preferred and recommended by lawyers as it aims to resolve disputes amicably and without a prolonged legal battle in the court or months spent resolving the issues of the case.

In conversation with the Pune Pulse, Hrithik Gone, a 24-year-old from Pune, revealed how he had to send a legal notice to a bike company from which his brother and he booked and purchased the bike. They shall later file a consumer complaint and pursue the case further if the notice is not complied with or the compliance, they are offering is an unsatisfactory one.

He explained how these legal notices before filing a complaint are very necessary, as they not only notify the goods and service provider but also determine their stance, whether the demand or claim is being met with or not, and any other counter-reply on the matter, which becomes a decisive point in whether or not to pursue the complaint further by filing a consumer complaint in the commission.

**Drafting the Complaint:** Should the goods and service provider fail to offer the due compensation or remedy, the next step involves drafting a formal complaint under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. This complaint must adhere to prescribed guidelines, including essential details such as the name(s) of the parties involved, addresses, cause of action and relief sought.

**Choosing the Right Forum:** Consumer disputes can be adjudicated at three levels of consumer forums: District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDR), State Consumer Disputes

Redressal Commission (SCDR) and National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC). The choice of forum depends on the value of the claim for damages or redressal, with each forum having its prescribed jurisdictional limits and limits to the sum of the claim.

**Filing the Complaint:** Consumer complaints can be filed offline directly at the relevant consumer court or commission, or online through the E-Dakhil portal. The process involves submitting necessary documents, paying a prescribed fee and ensuring compliance with all the procedural requirements.

**Timeline for Resolution:** While the Consumer Protection Act mandates a timeline of three months for resolving disputes, the actual duration may vary based on case complexities. Hearings are typically scheduled within a few weeks to months after filing the complaint, with the final judgement taking anywhere from six months to even several years.

**Review Petition:** Parties dissatisfied with the decision and order of the consumer commission have the option to file a review petition. This allows the commission to reconsider its decision based on certain grounds such as jurisdictional errors, material irregularities and additional information, providing an avenue for seeking recourse against perceived injustices.

## Types of Complaints:

**Adoption of Unfair Trade Practice:** Consumers can file complaints against service providers engaging in unfair trade practices, such as misleading advertisements, false claims or deceptive pricing strategies.

**Defective Goods:** Complaints related to defective goods, whether already purchased or agreed upon before purchase, fall within the purview of consumer protection laws. Consumers have the right to seek redressal for any product defects affecting their utility, purpose or safety.

**Deficiency in Services:** Issues arising from deficiencies in services, including delays, wrong goods, misplaced goods, negligence or substandard quality, are all grounds for filing complaints in consumer courts. Consumers are entitled to receive services commensurate with their expectations and contractual agreements as soon as they have purchased, booked, reserved or ordered them.

**Overcharging of Goods & Services:** Complaints regarding overcharging of goods or services, exceeding the price fixed by law or displayed on packaging, can be addressed through consumer forums. For example: grocery products which do not



comply with the MRP. Consumers have the right to fair pricing and transparency in transactions.

### **Selling Hazardous Goods & Services:**

Consumers encountering hazardous goods or services posing threats to life and safety have the right to seek redressal. Service providers are obligated to exercise due diligence, issue advisory or information on display of the product, and ensure the safety of their offerings, be it in ingredients, raw materials etc.

### **Understanding the Consumer Courts**

#### **1. District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDR):**

Established in each district, the DCDRC hears cases where the value of the claim is up to Rs 50 lakhs. It serves as the primary forum for resolving consumer disputes at the grassroots level.

#### **2. State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDR):**

Operating at the state level, the SCDRC entertains cases with claims exceeding Rs 50 lakhs and up to Rs 2 crores cap

amount. It serves as an appellate authority for disputes escalated from the DCDRC.

#### **3. National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC):**

Located in New Delhi, the NCDRC serves as the apex consumer forum, hearing cases with claims exceeding a minimum of Rs 2 crores with no cap amount. It functions as both an original and appellate authority, providing a platform for addressing complex consumer disputes.

The consumer court system in India embodies a commitment to protecting consumer rights and ensuring fair and transparent transactions in the marketplace.

Understanding the processes, types of complaints and the hierarchy of consumer forums, individuals can navigate the legal landscape with confidence and seek redressal for grievances encountered during transactions of goods and services. Consumer protection laws stand as a beacon of hope, empowering consumers to assert their rights and hold service providers accountable for any wrongdoing.

## **Eventual Outcome of Indian National Congress Wealth Distribution Policy!**

An economics professor at a local college made a statement that he had never failed a single student before, but had recently failed an entire class.

That class had insisted that Indian National Congress vision of socialism worked and that no one would be poor and no one would be rich, it would be a great equalizer.

The professor then said, "OK, we will have an experiment in this class on Indian National Congress ideological plan". All grades will be averaged and everyone will receive the same grade so no one will fail and no one will receive something closer to home and more readily understood by all.

After the 1st test, the grades were averaged and everyone got a B.

The students who studied hard were upset and the students who studied little were happy.


As the 2nd test rolled around, the students who studied little had studied even less and the ones who studied hard decided they wanted a free ride too so they studied little. The second test average was a D! Now no one was happy. As the tests proceeded, the scores never increased as bickering, blame and name-calling all resulted in hard feelings and no one would study for the benefit of anyone else.

When the 3rd test rolled around, the average was an F. To their great surprise, ALL FAILED and the professor told them that socialism would also ultimately fail because when the reward is great, the effort to succeed is great, but when government takes all the reward away, no one will try or want to succeed.

Can we explain this equal distribution any simpler than that?

### **There are five morals to this story**

1. You cannot legislate the poor into prosperity by legislating the wealthy out of prosperity.
2. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving.
3. The Government cannot give to anybody anything that the Government does not first take the same from somebody else.
4. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it!
5. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that is the first stage of failure of any nation.



Think  
Logically

## **Consumer commission imposes Rs 35,000 fine on Amazon, retailer (Courtesy: Press Trust of India)**

Observing that Amazon does not have an appropriate grievance redressal mechanism and has “one-sided oppressive” sale terms, a consumer commission here has imposed a fine of Rs 35,000 on the online seller and one of its retailers for deficiencies in services. The commission has also directed Amazon to provide a foolproof and transparent grievance redressal mechanism to customers.

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (East Delhi) was hearing a complaint from a person for the inordinate delay of around a year and five months in refunding the price of a defective laptop. The laptop worth Rs 77,990, ordered through Amazon Seller Services Private Limited, was sold by retailer Appario Retail Private Limited, the complaint said, adding that the delay in getting the refund for the product caused the consumer mental agony and harassment.

“This commission is of the firm view that opposite party 1 (Amazon), who accepts orders from customers, places the orders to the third party and concludes the contract once the goods are delivered, is not a simple intermediary”, the commission, headed by president S. S. Malhotra, said.

The commission, also comprising members Rashmi Bansal and Ravi Kumar, took note of the evidence before it, according to which the refund was initiated “almost after one year and five months after much deliberation by the complainant”.

“It is also established that OP1 does not have an appropriate grievance redressal mechanism and phone numbers of the concerned persons are not provided on its website, which amounts to a deficiency of service on its part.

This is also observed from the terms and conditions (titled ‘Conditions of Use’) of OP1 that it has been using one-sided oppressive terms of contract which amounts to unfair trade practice on its part”, the commission said. As the retailer or second opposite party (OP2) sold a defective product, it was also liable for deficiencies in service, it added.

“OP1 and OP2 are directed to pay compensation to the complainant for its deficient service and unfair trade practice that has caused mental agony and harassment to the complainant to the tune of Rs 35,000”, the commission said in a recent order. It also asked them to pay Rs 10,000 as litigation costs.

Regarding future sale transactions, the commission directed Amazon “to make the provisions for handing over the receipt of the pick-up item to the customers” to provide a “safe and secure pickup” to the customers.

Amazon was also directed “to display on its site the complete detail of the officers dealing with the grievances of the complainants or customers and provide a foolproof transparent grievance redressal mechanism”.

**Lock down may end or may not end by May end as it may extend, but May will end by May end as it may not wait for the lock down to end ~ Swamy Nityananda!**



## **‘Highly Objectional, Illegal’: Mumbai Restaurant Ordered to Pay Rs 25K Compensation Over Mandatory Service Charge**

A consumer commission has directed Mumbai’s popular restaurant, Cream Centre, to pay a compensation of Rs 25,000 to a customer for its practice of imposing a mandatory 5% service charge on its bills. Additionally, the panel ordered the restaurant to refund the Rs 29 service charge that was imposed on the customer.

The South Mumbai District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ruled against the eatery. “It is the bouquet of additional services that completes the experience of customers who choose to dine in at the restaurant. Building this narrative to collect 5% mandatory service charge from customers is highly objectionable as well as illegal and hence cannot be justified at all”, the order stated.

“The restaurant’s act of levying mandatory five percent service charges over and above the food and beverages bills falsely represents that the services are of particular standard, quality, and great as they

provide a range of other service including the ambience of the restaurant, air conditioning, crockery, carpets, furniture, staff including waiters for service. that essentially completes the experience of the customers who choose to dine in at the restaurant”, the order added.

The commission noted that gratuity or tips are separate transactions between the customer and the service staff. “Hotel management has no role in this. It is up to the customer to decide the amount of tip and gratuity”. Further, the consumer panel said that the wording “Service Tax & Service Charge” together in one line creates a belief that this is a statutory levy and the restaurant owner is empowered by statute to collect this, which is incorrect.

Yogesh Patki, a lawyer, filed the complaint before the commission on July 21, 2017, against the restaurant owner, Prince Cuisines Pvt Ltd, according The Times of India report.

## **Rental charge for 3D glasses: Kerala lawyer wins fourth case against theatres**

*M. S. Vidyandanan (Courtesy: The New Indian Express)*

Thiruvananthapuram based lawyer and consumer rights crusader won his fourth case against the rental charge collected by theatres for 3D glasses. The latest case by advocate Ravikrishnan N R was against the Carnival Cinemas functioning in the Artech Mall based at Pattoor. The Thiruvananthapuram District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDRC) directed Carnival Cinemas to pay Rs 35,000 in compensation and Rs 2,500 in costs. The panel also asked the Artech Mall to pay Rs 5,000 compensation and Rs 2,500 as costs for collecting illegal parking fees.

Ravikrishnan watched the movie 'RRR' by paying Rs 180 at Carnival Cinemas in April 2022. The ticket charge was Rs 150 and a receipt given along with it said Rs 30 was "Hire charges for 3D glasses". The glasses were collected back by the theatre at the end of the show.

The panel's order said the collection of rental charges amounted to unfair practice. It cited an earlier order by the State Consumer Disputes Redressal

Commission (SCDRC) on a similar petition filed by Ravikrishnan. **The SCDRC's order stated that the rental charge was a serious violation of consumer rights and that theatres should supply glasses free of cost.**

The district commission stated that the mall was bound to provide parking space to its customers free of cost as per the building rules. The mall had to obtain a license from the city corporation if it wanted to collect parking fees. And it is allowed only when the allotted free parking area becomes inadequate to meet the demand.

Ravikrishnan, 51, has filed over 30 cases in different consumer rights forums in his personal capacity. Of the five cases on 3D glasses, three were disposed in his favor. One theatre settled the case out of court and another is pending. Ravikrishnan filed his first petition in 1994 when he was a law student. It was against the fees collected by the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation for issuing student concession passes. He won the case.

## **Consumer panel orders Goa resort, Airbnb to pay Rs 10,000 to city resident for causing injury to her daughter**

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh has directed a Goa resort and an online homestay service provider Airbnb to pay Rs 10,000 to a city resident for the negligence causing injury to the complainant's six-month old daughter.

In her complaint, Tanya Sharma, a city resident, stated that she had booked a room with Sky Villa Resort at Vagator in Goa for a vacation through Airbnb, with a check-in date on March 2, 2022, and check-out on March 6, 2022. The complainant said that she along with her husband and daughter stayed in the room and when they were ready to check out and had been waiting for Mantu, a caretaker at the resort, to complete the formalities, he came around 1 pm and went to the room where her six-month old daughter was sleeping.

"The caretaker pulled the bedsheets and pillows as a result my daughter fell on the floor and started screaming and crying. Due to the caretaker's negligence, my daughter suffered injuries and went into shock for which I had also taken online consultation from the doctor. I reported the caretaker's act to Airbnb and resort but, instead of acting against him, they declared him as a 'super host'," Sharma alleged. For Airbnb, no one appeared despite notice, hence it was proceeded against ex parte.

Replying to the charges, Sky Villa Resort alleged the complainant's husband Mayank Thakur had booked the property and on March 6, they reminded Thakur of the check-out time as 11 am, but he sought some more time for checking out and they conceded his request free of cost without any additional payment or consideration till 1 pm. "Around 1 pm when Mantu visited the room, even at that time the complainant and her family were not ready to check out and asked Mantu that they would vacate by 1.30pm, as their taxi would come at that time.

Mantu then started cleaning the room, where the complainant was present and when he started tidying up things and tried to remove the bedsheets, the complainant's daughter, who was wrapped by a blanket, fell, for which the caretaker immediately apologized to them", the resort said.

The Commission on verifying the copy of the email dated July 25, 2022, along with documents provided by the complainant, found Airbnb and resort had offered a goodwill, one-time courtesy refund via a coupon worth Rs 4,320.02 to the complainant's husband, but the coupon amount was never transferred/paid to the complainant.

"As it stands proved on record that the complainant's daughter had fallen from the blanket in which she was wrapped while cleaning the room by the

caretaker of the OPs (opposite parties), and that too due to the negligence of the caretaker, the said act clearly amounts to deficiency in service on the part of the OPs”, the Commission said.

The Commission said, “It is safe to hold that the complainant has successfully proved the cause of

action set up in the consumer complaint and the present consumer complaint deserves to succeed. Thus, it ordered the resort and Airbnb to pay Rs 5,000 to the complainant along with interest at 9 per cent per annum from the date of institution of the present consumer complaint, which is June 10, 2022 onwards, along with Rs5,000 as costs of litigation.

## **Myntra fined for not delivering gold, missing credit balance; consumer court says ‘malafide intentions, deficiency in service’**

The Bengaluru Urban consumer disputes redressal commission has ruled against e-commerce giant Myntra in two separate cases, ordering the company to compensate customers for service deficiencies and unfair trade practices.

In the first case, Roopini Nagaraj, an employee of Mercedes-Benz, received a gift coupon worth Rs 52,000 from her employer for shopping on Myntra. However, Roopini faced issues when the remaining balance in her gift coupon mysteriously vanished after she placed an order and attempted to cancel a return order. Despite her complaints, her account was accessed by an unauthorized individual, leading to fraudulent transactions.

“Between July and Aug 2022, Roopini placed an order for four different products, costing her Rs 3,668 and leaving a balance of Rs 48,332 in the gift coupon. However, on Aug 28, 2022, the e-commerce platform called her up to confirm if she had placed a return order for the four products. Denying the same, Roopini followed the customer care executive’s instructions for cancelling the return order showing up against her name in the system. On Sept 3, she opened her Myntra account to find all her credit balance gone. After complaining to the customer care, she found that someone was accessing her account else. The platform responded by deactivating her Myntra account”, the Times of India reported.

The court questioned the integrity of Myntra’s actions, stating that the company provided the gift coupon for their own benefit, only to take it away unjustly. The court deemed this as both a service deficiency and an unfair trade practice.

Questioning Myntra’s integrity, the consumer court said the retailer “simply offered such a gift coupon for their own benefit”. Citing the circumstances of Nagaraj’s case, the court said that “it isn’t only a deficiency of service but also an unfair trade practice”.

In the second case, Komal Santosh Kumar Jain experienced a similar ordeal when attempting to purchase gold coins on Myntra. Despite paying over Rs 63,000 for the purchase, he never received the

gold coins as the order was cancelled by the company. Myntra later informed him that the amount would be credited back to his Myntra account, despite the customer’s demanding that the money be sent back to his bank account.

The consumer court said that Myntra has ‘mala fide intention’ and has no right to cancel the order without customer’s consent.

The court then ordered Myntra to compensate Roopini with a refund of Rs 45,489, along with Rs 8,000 as compensation and Rs 5,000 for litigation costs. Additionally, Myntra must deposit Rs 25,000 into the consumer welfare fund as punitive damages under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Santosh Kumar is entitled to either receive the delivery of two 5-gram gold coins or be reimbursed Rs 63,768 with 10% interest per annum from the initial purchase date. He will also receive Rs 20,000 as compensation and Rs 5,000 for litigation costs.

Myntra has been directed to contribute Rs 20,000 to the consumer welfare fund as well.

A Worldwide survey was conducted by the UN. The only question asked was: “Would you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?”

The survey was a huge failure, In Africa they didn't know what 'food' meant, In India they didn't know what 'honest' meant, In Europe they didn't know what 'shortage' meant, In China they didn't know what 'opinion' meant, In the Middle East they didn't know what 'solution' meant, In South America they didn't know what 'please' meant, And in the USA they didn't know what 'the rest of the world' meant!

😊😊 Very meaningful ..read it again 2148

# Things That Can Affect the Smell of Your Pee

Medically Reviewed by Dan Brennan, MD, Written by Keri Wiginton

**What You Eat or Drink:** Asparagus might be the most common reason for stinky pee. The harmless odor is caused by a breakdown of asparagusic acid. Your genes affect whether you can smell these sulfur byproducts. If you cannot, that is called asparagus anosmia. Your pee may also have a strong smell after you drink coffee, or eat fish, onions, or garlic.

**Dehydration:** Fluids help water down, or dilute, your pee. While there is always waste in your urine, like ammonia, the smell is stronger if you are dehydrated. That does not mean you are unhealthy. But a lack of fluids does raise your chances of getting kidney stones and urinary tract infections. That is why it is important to drink water when you are thirsty. Fruits & vegetables can help hydrate you, too.

**Urinary Tract Infections:** You may go to the bathroom a lot if you have a UTI. While you are in there, you might get a whiff of something that does not smell good. That is because bacteria can build up in your urine and make it stink. Talk to your doctor if it hurts to pee and you have a fever. You may need to take antibiotics to get better.

**Kidney Stones:** These make your pee smell for a few reasons. They can stop or slow urine flow, leading to a buildup of salt and ammonia. They can also make infections more likely. Some stones are made from cystine, a substance with sulfur in it. If cystine is in your urine, it may smell like rotten eggs. Tell your doctor if you have a fever, blood in your pee, or if you are in a lot of pain. You may need to get the stones taken out at a hospital.

**Uncontrolled Diabetes:** Your pee or breath may smell fruity if you do not treat high blood sugar. The sweet smell is from ketonuria, or a buildup of ketones. Those are chemicals your body makes when you burn fat, instead of glucose, for energy. Tell your doctor right away if you vomit, have trouble breathing, or feel confused. You could have a serious condition called diabetic ketoacidosis. They will test your pee for ketones and help you manage diabetes.

**Maple Syrup Urine Disease:** People born with this condition cannot break down certain amino acids. When these amino acids build up, their pee or earwax starts to smell sweet. If your baby has the disease, you may notice this syrupy odor a day or two after they are born. They will need to follow a special diet. Your doctor can help you figure out ways to manage your child's condition.

**Sexually Transmitted Infections:** Some STIs can lead to a smelly discharge in males and females. You may notice the smell as the fluid mixes with your pee. You may not have other symptoms. Or your genitals may itch, and it might burn when you pee.

Bacterial infections like chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics. You will need another kind of medicine for viral infections.

**Vitamin Overload:** Your body gets rid of nutrients you do not need through peeing. Extra vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) can give it a strong odor. Too much vitamin B1 (thiamine) can make your pee smell like fish. B vitamins can also make your pee look a bright greenish-yellow. Talk to a doctor about what vitamin doses are right for you.

**Medication:** Sulfa drugs can give your pee a bit of stench. That includes sulfonamide antibiotics. They are commonly used to treat UTIs and other infections. Medicines for diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis also can affect the way your pee smells. If the stinky scent bothers you, tell your doctor about it, and to make sure nothing else is causing the odor.

**Pregnancy:** Morning sickness may leave you dehydrated. And prenatal vitamins might change the way your pee smells. Pregnancy also raises your chances of urinary tract infections and ketonuria. You could just be super sensitive to scents. That is called hyperosmia. Experts think hormones may change your perception of smells. And that means that even if your pee is the same, it may seem like the odor is weird or more intense.

**Organ Failure:** Liver disease can make your pee and breath smell musty. The odor is caused by the buildup and release of toxins in your urine. If you have kidney failure, you may smell a lot of ammonia when you go to the bathroom.

**Douching:** Let your vagina clean itself. Washing inside of it could upset the balance of good and bad bacteria. That can lead to infections and discharge, which can smell bad when you pee. Health issues linked to douching include yeast infections, bacterial vaginosis, and pelvic inflammatory disease. There is no need to erase your vagina's natural odor. If you notice a new or strange scent, talk to your doctor. They can tell you if it is normal.

**Poop Gets in Your Bladder:** A fistula is an extra opening that forms between two organs. If you get one between your bladder and bowels, poop or gas may come out when you pee. You might get this kind of fistula if you have cancer or an inflammatory condition, like Crohn's disease or diverticulitis. If you are female, it may happen after you give birth or have a certain kind of operation. Surgery can fix fistulas.

**Tyrosinemia:** Some babies are born with a condition called tyrosinemia type 1. It means they do not have the right enzyme to break down the amino acid tyrosine. Too much of this compound can give

body fluids, like urine, a rotten odor. It may smell like cabbage. Tyrosinemia is treated with medicine and a low-tyrosine diet.

**Fish Odor Syndrome or trimethylaminuria:** This genetic condition can give your pee a fishy smell. It happens when your body cannot break down trimethylamine. You end up getting rid of the compound through your pee, sweat, breath, and other fluids. It does not mean you are unhealthy. But your doctor can help you manage the smell. They

may give you antibiotics, special soap, or suggest eating certain foods.

**Holding It for Too Long:** Your urine might smell funky if it hangs out in your bladder for a while. That may also raise your chances of getting a UTI. This may happen more often in children who do not pee when they feel the urge. That is why it is always a good idea to remind kids to take bathroom breaks.

**Courtesy:** WebMD

## Why Your Feet Are Always Cold and What to Do About It

Medically Reviewed by Melinda Ratini, Written by Danny Bonvissuto

**The Weather:** Feel like you are walking around on blocks of ice? It could be the temperature, especially if your hands are cold, too. When your core temperature drops, small blood vessels in your hands and feet tighten up. This moves blood toward your organs to keep them warm. The less circulation in your hands and feet, the colder they get.

**Stress:** When your body goes into fight-or-flight mode, it saves energy just in case you must deal with a threat. The body dumps adrenaline into your bloodstream, which can narrow blood vessels, means less blood gets to your feet, and make them feel cold.

**Poor Circulation:** Every time your heart beats, it sends blood throughout your body. But if you have a heart condition, smoke, or do not move around often, your circulation may be poor. This slows the flow of blood around your body and is one of the most common medical conditions triggering cold feet.

**Type 1 and 2 Diabetes:** When your blood sugar is high often, your arteries narrow. This makes it hard for blood to get to your hands and feet. Diabetes can also lead to diabetic peripheral neuropathy, a condition that damages your nerves. It interrupts messages between your body and brain, so your feet may also feel prickly or numb.

**Anemia:** This treatable condition happens when you do not have enough healthy red blood cells. They carry oxygen to all the tissues in your body. If your anemia is moderate to severe, your feet may feel cold.

**Hypothyroidism:** Your thyroid gland makes hormones and sends them to your bloodstream. When it does not make enough hormones – a condition called hypothyroidism or underactive thyroid – you may gain weight, feel tired, and have cold feet. This is because your metabolism has slowed, which can affect body temperature.

**Raynaud's Syndrome:** Also called Raynaud's phenomenon or disease, this condition causes your body to overreact when you are exposed to cold water

or air. The arteries that supply blood to your feet narrow, so normal amounts of blood cannot get through. Your skin may also look blue or white. For some, stress can trigger Raynaud's.

**Peripheral Neuropathy:** If you have nerve damage from an injury or medical condition, your cold feet could be the result of peripheral neuropathy. It can start in your longest nerves, which go all the way to your toes. Other causes include vitamin deficiencies, infections, toxic exposure and kidney diseases. Diabetes is the main cause of polyneuropathy, wherein many nerves are affected.

**Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD):** This condition is triggered by too much plaque on your artery walls, which slows blood flow. It is especially common in people 50 or older who have smoked or have diabetes. If you notice leg cramps, nail changes, or sores on your feet, ask your doctor about PAD.

**Stock Up on Socks:** Cold feet is a common complaint. If it is not a sign of something more serious, it could be genetic, or run in your family or it is just the way your body works. Bonus points for warming socks in the dryer before you put them on.

**Layer Up:** Does a warm core equal warm foot? See how your body reacts. Wear layers of clothes to keep your body temperature up. If you get too hot, you can take off a layer or two.

**Avoid Nicotine & Large Amounts of Caffeine:** Caffeine and nicotine make the muscles around your blood vessels constrict, or narrow, leaving less space for blood flow. Large amounts of caffeine can affect circulation and lead to cold feet. If you have Raynaud's, caffeine could trigger an episode and can give you cold feet. If you drink a lot of caffeinated beverages, try swapping them out with water. If you smoke, talk to your doctor about healthy ways to quit.

**Move Your Body:** Exercise gets your blood flowing. Take a brisk walk, ride a bike, or do some stretches to boost circulation, including your feet.

# Preventing Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Cylinder Accidents

Dr. Sitaram Dixit, Chairman – Consumer Guidance Society of India (CGSI)

Accidental explosions of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders are a common occurrence in our country, causing serious damage to human lives and property. When considering these accidents on a per million LPG users, the accident, death, and property losses are proportionately high compared to other countries.

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), estimate approximate annual accidents to be around 2000 numbers i.e., one every 5 days, with compensation paid to victims going almost up to ₹22 crores.

The official government stand for all these accidents from the 1960s when Bharat introduced LPG as a clean and convenient cooking fuel has been 'LPG leakage'. However, if one closely looks at it this is far away from truth. Year 2017 figures show the total number of home fires as 7660 killing 7614 persons and if we exclude the 2000 odd LPG cylinder related deaths, we can safely say that 5660 deaths are not due to LPG cylinder blasts. Now considering that these households would also have had LPG cylinders, they did not experience any LPG cylinder explosions.

The Narendra Modi government's initiative of giving LPG cylinders to urban and rural poor households to make their women's cooking lives more comfortable through the *Ujjawala Scheme* may only increase the number of LPG cylinder explosions, especially when the poor households have a single room including the kitchen and probably having a highly inflammable thatched roof overhead.

## The science behind the LPG cylinder explosion.

The cause of almost all explosions is due to the sudden (within a few milliseconds) release of a lot of energy, leading to high power shockwaves causing loud sound and serve damage to the surrounding structure and people in the vicinity. Excessive internal pressure build-up inside a tank (viz., steam boilers, pressure cooker, etc.) may also cause explosion.



When the internal over pressure exceeds the bursting pressure the enveloping tank explodes violently. It is important to note that the explosions caused due to the mechanical force exerted by the internal pressure of the fluid inside, is independent of the nature of the fluid, whether water, steam, air, or even inert gas at any temperature but at sufficiently high pressure.

In case of LPG explosion, it is due to the mechanical failure of the surrounding envelop namely the external tank or the cylinders.



LPG cylinder explosions happen because of only internal pressure build-up and not due to any chemical reaction as external flame or air cannot enter a pressurized cylinder through the connecting tube or even through any leak therein to cause explosion.

LPG cylinder explosion can only occur when the LPG inside the cylinder heats up to a very high pressure super critical stage and within a few microseconds of the first explosion due to over pressure a second explosion may often occur due to a Vapor Cloud Explosion (VCE). A large cloud of the erupted hot LPG vapor mixes with hot ambient air and explodes spontaneously producing shock waves and heat causing massive damage to the surroundings.

Observers and victims of LPG accidents generally say, "The LPG cylinder exploded". However, should we not question, "whether cylinder explosion caused fire" or "the external fire caused the cylinder explosion"?

Is it not obvious that even a moderate external fire exerted for some minutes can heat the heavy 12 kg steel cylinder and its content (including the latent heat to vaporize the LPG inside) increasing the internal pressure making it explode.

The design of small LPG cylinders is as per IS 3196 (2013) of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the minimum test bursting pressure is 25kgf/sq.cm and the actual hydraulic burst test pressures at ambient temperatures is around 120bar. Hence, no provision is available at present for preventing or limiting the inside build-up of any dangerous over-pressure.

A part of full amount of the LPG present in the liquid phase may convert into a supercritical gas phase at temperature  $> 130^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Now when an LPG cylinder bursts, a large quantity of superheated LPG suddenly mixes with the ambient hot air, and a large cloud of this highly inflammable hot gas explodes spontaneously in the presence of any hot surfaces, sparks, or flames.

### Causes of LPG cylinder explosions

Frequent LPG cylinder explosions happen in Bharat because we ignore the two most important standard safety rules that the world follows globally in the storage and use of any liquified gas cylinders (including Propane, LPG, etc.), apart from the preventive measures that LPG companies usually propagate in their marketing brochures.

1. Prohibit storage and use of all liquified gas cylinders indoors.
2. Provide a Pressure Release Valve (PRV) to prevent buildup of any dangerously high internal pressure.

Kitchen fires are common all over the world, due to the presence of highly inflammable stuffs in the kitchen, like oil, ghee, other liquids, solids like dry food grains, wooden cabinets, etc., and with the current habit of keeping the LPG cylinder under the kitchen platform or inside the house premises, in most households the chances of explosion due to overpressure are quite high.

In case of any fire inside the kitchen or even indoors due to any reason including LPG leakage, it only assists in heating up the LPG cylinder causing it to explode like an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)

Presently more than 400 million small LPG cylinders are in circulation with most of them kept and used in kitchens or indoors in Bharat and with nearly 8000 fires annually the potential danger of an LPG cylinder blast causing loss of lives and property will always be on the anvil.

### How to prevent LPG cylinder explosion.

We are already aware that the internal pressure of LPG above  $130^{\circ}\text{C}$  rapidly exceeds the bursting pressure of domestic LPG cylinders.

- The best way to prevent LPG cylinder blasts is to move the cylinders away from the kitchen to some outside place e.g., balconies, etc., replicating the standard safety practice followed globally. Thankfully, newly designed, and constructed apartment buildings in some metro cities of Bharat are putting this into practice.
- Ensuring the use of a suitable over-pressure release valves (PRV) on all the existing and new LPG cylinders as an additional safety measure to prevent buildup of any dangerous internal pressure and subsequent LPG cylinder

explosions. However, it is important to note that the LPG from the PVR is safely, let out or released only into an open space otherwise, the chances of a fire hazard is likely to remain as such.

### Conclusion

Safety experts should without any further delay finalize a suitable PVR design. The concerned authorities should make PVR use mandatory all over the country at the earliest. These two steps are paramount if Bharat wishes to reduce and eliminate frequent LPG cylinder explosions we observe as of now.

A recent innovation is the introduction of a 3-layered High Density Poly Propylene (HDPE) LPG cylinder (currently in a pilot project stage) to prevent LPG

steel cylinder explosions. However, its circulation among the people in the country is very small to make any major impact in the outcomes.

**SEEK SAFETY,  
AIM SAFETY,  
FOLLOW SAFETY,  
ENSURE SAFETY,  
TEACH SAFETY,  
YIELD SAFETY.**





## Sad Demise Goutam Haridas Bhatia

On 22 April 2024  
Vice – Chairman, CGSI



Goutam Bhatia was an electrical engineer from REC, Durgapur. He started his career in sales in GEC. He held various positions in sales and marketing across Crompton Greaves, Hindustan Brown Boveri (HBB) and Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). He moved to Kolkata taking care of factory operations in Kolkata and Chennai. He was responsible in building three transformer factories for ABB in Vadodara, Siemens in Kalwa and Enpay in Vadodara. He was the Chairman of Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers Association (IEEMA). Beyond work, he loved to volunteer, connect with friends and colleagues, cook, travel and play the piano.

Post retirement from his professional commitments, he joined the Consumer Guidance Society of India (CGSI) in 2019, as a member of the Managing Committee he oversaw the Solar Panel Project. He subsequently became a Treasurer in 2020 and its Vice Chairman in March 2024. He leaves behind his wife, his son and family. **Goutam Bhatia's untimely and sudden demise is without doubt a shock to all and CGSI will surely miss him very much.**

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायम् भूत्वा, भविता, वा न भूयः  
अजोनित्यः शाश्वतोयं पुराणो, न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे....(गीता 2-20)  
जातस्य ही ध्रुवो मृत्यु, ध्रुवम् जन्म मृतस्य च,  
तस्माद् अपरिहार्येयं, न त्वम् शोचितुमर्हसि.....(गीता 2-27)  
'Aathma' is neither born nor does it ever die, nor will it ever cease to be. Primeval, unborn, eternal, it does not decay, nor is killed when the body is slain. Death is certain for all who take birth. Birth is just as certain for all who die...(Gita 2.20/2.27)

## RAMANUJAM'S MAGIC SQUARE (Contributed by Shri. V. M. Kamat)

22	12	18	87
88	17	9	25
10	24	89	16
19	86	23	11

1. Sum of numbers of any row is 139.
2. Sum of numbers of any column is 139.
3. Sum of numbers of any diagonal is 139.
4. Sum of corner numbers is 139.
5. Sum of numbers in central square is 139.
6. First row 22 – 12 – 1887, Ramanujan's birth date, total is 139.

## Formula for Ramanujan's

DD	MM	CC	YY
YY + 1	CC – 1	MM – 3	DD + 3
MM – 2	DD + 2	YY + 2	CC – 2
CC + 1	YY - 1	DD + 1	MM – 1

## Magic Square (sum will differ from 139)

यद्यत्संदृश्यते लोके  
सर्वं तत्कर्मसम्भवम्।  
सर्वा कर्मानुसारेण  
जन्तुर्भोगाब्धुनक्ति वै ॥

yadyatsamddasyate loke  
sarvam tatkarmasambhavam।  
sarva karmānusāreṇa  
janturbhogānbhunakti vai ॥

Whatever is seen among men  
(whether pleasure or pain) is  
born of Karma (actions).  
All creatures enjoy or suffer,  
as per their past actions.

resanskrit.com Source: Shiva Samhita 39



# LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE



Jokes are meant for amusement! It employs comedic vehicles like parody, satire, other material referencing, true people, organizations, religions, regions, country, sexuality, etc., making fun of them in ways that are obviously not true. Some jokes might be offensive to some readers as every individual's sense of humor is different. Our intent is not to offend or cause damage to anyone reading or understanding these jokes. If you trust that jokes could offend you, please do not read them! Despite this warning, if on reading you find, the jokes not to your liking, ignore and move on! Please be aware that they are simply just JOKES!

Three people die; a doctor, school teacher, and the head of a large insurance company. When met at the pearly gates by St. Peter he asks the doctor, "what did you do on Earth?" The doctor replied, "I healed the sick and if they could not pay I would do it for free". St. Peter told the Doctor, "You may go in." St. Peter then asked the teacher what she did, she replied, "I taught educationally challenged children". St. Peter then told her "You may go in." St. Peter asked the third man, "What did you do?" The man raised his head and replied, "I ran a large insurance company". "You may go in." said St. Peter. The man happily walks forward when St. Peter adds: "for 3 days".

A man walks down the street when suddenly he hears a tiny voice above him saying: "If you make one more step, a brick will land on your head and kill you". Surprised, the man stops just as a huge brick crash down right in front of him. Stunned, he continues his way, and after a few minutes hears the voice again: "Stop! Do not cross the road, if you do, the next vehicle will run you over! The man freezes again a speeding car misses him. The man sighs a sigh of relief and asks the air: "Who ARE you!?" "I am your guardian angel!" Answers the voice joyfully. "REALLY??" says the man in sudden anger, "Then where were you when I got MARRIED??"

ISRO Dr. Sivan was interviewing professionals for sending to Mars. One could go to Mars but there was a very bleak chance of return to Earth. How much money you wish to get for going to Mars he asked the first applicant, an engineer. "One Crore rupees", he answered, "because I want to donate it to IIT-BHU." Dr. Sivan asked the same question to the next applicant, a doctor. He asked for 2 Crore. "I want to give one Crore to my family", he explained, "and leave one Crore for the advancement of medical research". The last applicant was lawyer Cibal. When asked how much money he wanted, he whispered in the Dr. Sivan's ear, "Three Crore rupees". "Why so much?" asked Dr. Sivan Lawyer Cibal replied, "You convince them, that I am the best candidate. I will give you 1 Crore; I will keep 1 Crore and we will send the engineer to Mars".

After many years of hard work, Joe rewarded himself with a long, luxurious stay at an exclusive Caribbean resort. While relaxing on the beach, he was surprised to see a former high school classmate who he had not seen since they graduated. His old friend had been something of a "burnout" in high school, and this was the last place Joe expected to see him. Joe approached the man, and seized his hand. "Pete, it is Joe. From high school. It is sure been a long time. You look great! You must be doing okay for yourself". "I am", whispered Pete. "I am a partner with a very successful law firm. But do not tell mother. She got the idea that I was a drug dealer back when I was in high school, and she would be terribly disappointed if she figured out how I REALLY make my money".

Teacher asks their class of children to come up with a sentence beginning with "I" After a few children come to the front with predictable statements about having a cat or a certain toy, a child steps up and says "I is-" and is immediately interrupted by the teacher, "I am!" She side-eyes the teacher, frowns and ignores her teacher, starting again "I is-" again, the teacher interrupts her, this time a little more snappily "It is I am! Use the proper word!" The girl turns to look at her this time, eyelids drooped with exasperation. "Fine", she sighs "I AM the ninth letter of the alphabet".

A woman is riding the bus while trying to breastfeed her baby. The baby, however, is not interested. After several tries, the mother is quite angry. "Drink the milk or I'll give it all to the man sitting at the back!" she says. The baby is still playing around. A few minutes later she tries again, "drink the milk or I'll really give it all to the man at the back, and you'll go hungry!" The baby continues rejecting her. She tries again, very angry this time, "I'm definitely going to give it all to the man at the back if you don't behave!" This goes on a few more times. Suddenly she hears a voice from the back of the bus "Lady, will you please make up your mind? I was supposed to get off 5 stops before".

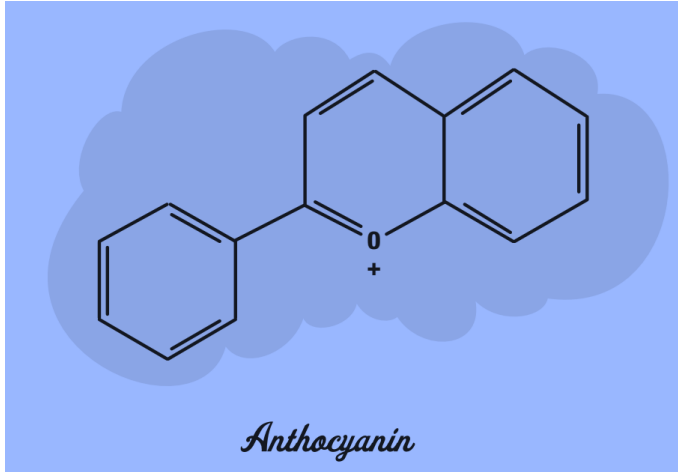
Johnny was making faces at others Ms. Smith stopped to gently reprimand the child. Smiling sweetly, the Sunday school teacher said: "Johnny, when I was a little girl, I was told if that I made ugly faces, it would freeze and I would stay ugly like that". Little Johnny looked up and replied, "Well, Ms. Smith, you can't say you weren't warned".

# Scientific Tit-bits

Dr. Sitaram Dixit, Chairman, CGSI

## How does sunlight make plants turn green?

We already know that sunlight makes plants produce chlorophyll. Apart from chlorophyll and carotenoids it also has anthocyanins.



Chlorophyll absorbs sunlight to give the plant the energy it needs to make food out of water and the carbon dioxide in the air. Chlorophyll is hard for a plant to make and so it only makes in places where it will collect the most sunlight. Most leaves are at the ends of branches and twigs and cast shadows on the rest of the plant, so the trunks of trees and the branches have little or no chlorophyll. The center leaves in cabbage, lettuce, and celery are also lighter in color because the plant does not waste precious chlorophyll on parts that get no sunlight. Bean sprout, is mostly white, because they grow in the dark and do not get enough sunlight. The plant only produces chlorophyll when enough light hits it to make chlorophyll production worthwhile.

## What makes leaves change colors?

The loss of chlorophyll, removes the green pigment allowing the yellow carotenoid pigments to show and the production of anthocyanins, which can be the blues and purples of flowers and fruits or the dark reds of autumn leaves. Plants lose their leaves on purpose. When too much wind or sun damage a leaf or when water and light are hard to get in cold autumn, the plant will drop the leaf, produce a new leaf or go dormant for the winter. When a tree is about to lose a leaf, it stops sending nutrients to it and starts reclaiming some of the useful molecules in the leaf, to store or use elsewhere in the plant.

Chlorophyll fades away as we see the effects of this when a banana ripens. The green banana becomes yellow as it loses chlorophyll and the yellow carotenoid pigments shows through. Anthocyanins produced in some leaves as they prepare to fall, prevent damage from oxygen as the leaf is

starved of nutrients, allowing time for the plant to absorb more useful molecules from the dying leaf. Moreover, when they fall, anthocyanins prevent other plants from growing in the soil under the tree, leaving more resources for the tree in the spring.

## Why are some plants glossy?

Plants growing in dry areas and plants that do not lose their leaves in the fall have to protect themselves from drying out in hot summers and in winters when the water is frozen. There are several tricks the plants can use to protect their leaves from drying out. One trick is to make the leaves into long, thin needles, so there is less surface to dry out. Pine trees use this trick. Another trick is to curl the leaf up, like live oak leaves. This reduces water loss by reducing the wind and sun the leaf gets. Some leaves also have tiny hairs on them to reduce the water loss due to wind. Due Yet another trick is to coat the leaves with a thick coat of protective wax, so the water stays trapped in the leaf. This protective coating of hard wax makes a glossy coat on the leaf, just like waxing a car.

## What is herbicide?

An herbicide is a poison that kills plants or a weed-killer. Many plants produce their own herbicides, to prevent other plants from using up their water, sunlight, or nutrients. The other plants cannot grow underneath plants whose roots produce poisonous chemicals or whose leaves fall-down and leak poisons into the soil. The leaves of bay laurel trees produce natural herbicides that prevent other plants from growing up next to them. The flavor of bay leaves is in part due to these toxic (to plants) molecules. Walnut trees also produce natural herbicides.

Humans also make commercial herbicides to control weeds and to kill almost any plant. Some only kill broad-leafed plants and not affect the grasses used for lawns. Some work like growth hormones when leaves absorb it. Plants with broad leaves absorb so much they grow faster than they can get nutrients, and so they die. Grasses have narrower leaves, do not absorb as much, and only grow a little more than they normally would. Some herbicides use a chemical called glyphosate. Glyphosate prevents the plant enzyme from producing three amino acids that are critical to the plant and most plants need to produce these amino acids, to survive. Glyphosate is a wide-spectrum herbicide killing most plants when we use.

Two people in a marriage to live together day after day is unquestionably the one miracle that the Vatican has overlooked to declare sainthood.

Bill Cosby

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