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EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

D.Y. CHANDRACHUD
FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Our diversity is most at risk today

BY KANU SARDA

Way from the courtroom, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud's life has an almost meditative rhythm. He wakes up at 4 am, beginning his day with yoga and meditation before settling into writing or preparing for lectures or for travels. After retirement, Chandrachud shifted to his new residence at Teen Murti Marg. The house carries the imprint of his Maharashtrian roots, with subtle traditional motifs and rituals woven into daily life while also radiating a spiritual calm.

His wife, Kalpana Das, has carefully designed the spaces to ensure comfort and accessibility for their two differently abled daughters, Mahi and Priyanka. The household is also full of life, thanks to the 11 adopted cats who wander freely through its rooms and gardens. A believer in mindful living, Chandrachud follows a simple and balanced diet—light, home-cooked meals, wholesome snacks and the occasional home-made sweet that sustains his long hours of reading and writing. His favourite

space is a glass-walled study that his wife designed for him—an office bathed in natural light where he can work while surrounded by greenery.

We are at his house to talk about his debut book, *Why The Constitution Matters: Selected Speeches*. It is less a legal treatise and more a meditation on how law is lived as much as it is learned. He portrays the Constitution not merely as a code of rules, but as a relationship between citizens and the state—one that speaks with honesty, demands responsibility, calls for optimism and survives on the hope that every individual life matters. For him, the Constitution is also about sounds and silences, words that can be interpreted, but also the quiet spaces that defy expression and remain in a state of constant unsettlement. "Societal change," he reminds, "requires more than a judgment."

In an exclusive and candid interview, he discusses bail jurisprudence, the dilemmas of the collegium, the importance of respecting dissent, the need for more women judges, and why judges must ultimately

be remembered not for the courtesies they extend, but for the judgments they deliver.

Q/ What inspired you to write *the Constitution Matters* now, after stepping down as CJI?

A/ When you are a judge, your primary task is to resolve disputes that come before you. Even when I spoke outside the courtroom during lectures or speeches, my words were always tied to that judicial role. A judgment speaks to the facts of a case and addresses the parties involved. Writing, however, allows you to speak from the heart, to a much wider audience, about questions that go beyond individual disputes. Many of my speeches over the years had already touched on these themes, and I felt it was time to weave them together into a larger canvas on the Constitution, society and my vision of a humane and just future.

Q/ Is the Constitution more of a legal text or a moral compass for democracy?



SANJAY AHLAWAT