

4th NATIONAL VIRTUAL MOOT COURT
COMPETITION, 2025

MOOT PREPOSITION

1. The State of Aryavarta is a federal democratic republic with a well-established legal and judicial system. The judiciary comprises subordinate courts, High Courts, and the Supreme Court, with the latter serving as the final appellate authority.
2. Mr. Rohan Malhotra, a 32-year-old software engineer, resides in the city of Pratapgarh, Aryavarta. He has no prior criminal record and is known for his professional expertise in software development, with associations in both corporate and freelance domains.
3. Ms. Simran Mehta, a 28-year-old investigative journalist, was found dead in her apartment on the evening of January 15, 2024, under suspicious circumstances. Ms. Mehta was known for her fearless journalism, having exposed multiple corporate scandals and government corruption cases in the past.

4. The post-mortem report indicated that Ms. Mehta died due to suffocation and internal injuries, suggesting a possible homicide. There were signs of struggle, and forensic examination confirmed that the injuries were inflicted within a short timeframe before her estimated time of death.
5. The CCTV footage from Ms. Mehta's apartment complex showed Mr. Malhotra entering the premises at 8:00 PM and leaving at 9:30 PM on the same day. Security logs confirmed his presence during that period, and the receptionist at the entrance testified to seeing him enter the building.
6. The police arrested Mr. Malhotra based on circumstantial evidence, which included fingerprints on a glass of water found near the victim's body, as well as call records indicating frequent communication between them in the days leading up to her death. Moreover, some of Ms. Mehta's handwritten notes, recovered from her apartment, mentioned Mr. Malhotra's name in connection with her ongoing investigation.
7. During interrogation, Mr. Malhotra admitted that he had visited Ms. Mehta's apartment for a personal discussion but

insisted that he left before anything unusual occurred. He denied any involvement in her death and claimed to have been on amicable terms with Ms. Mehta.

8. The prosecution alleged that Ms. Mehta was working on an investigative story exposing corruption involving a powerful corporate entity, identified as Zenith Corporation, a conglomerate with substantial political influence. It was argued that Mr. Malhotra, having close ties with key officials of Zenith Corporation, was used as an intermediary to silence her before she could publish the exposé.

9. The defense contended that there was no direct evidence linking Mr. Malhotra to the crime scene beyond circumstantial proof. It further argued that the police failed to explore alternative suspects, including other individuals who might have had stronger motives to harm Ms. Mehta. The defense also pointed out procedural lapses in the investigation, including the lack of forensic evidence directly tying Mr. Malhotra to the act of homicide.

10. The Trial Court, relying on the circumstantial evidence and the prosecution's theory of motive, convicted Mr.

Malhotra under Section 101 (Murder) and Section 62 (Criminal Conspiracy) of the Aryavarta Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

11. That on appeal, the High Court of Aryavarta overturned the conviction, citing the lack of direct evidence, inconsistencies in the prosecution's narrative, and the failure to establish motive conclusively. The court found that the evidence against Mr. Malhotra was largely inferential and did not meet the threshold of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, leading to his acquittal.

12. The State of Aryavarta, dissatisfied with the High Court's decision, has now filed a Special Leave Petition before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Aryavarta, challenging the acquittal. The State argues that the High Court erred in discounting the weight of circumstantial evidence and overlooked key forensic findings. The Supreme Court is now set to hear the matter to determine whether the acquittal should be upheld or if the case warrants a retrial or reinstatement of the conviction.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1.** Whether the High Court erred in overturning the conviction despite circumstantial evidence pointing toward the guilt of Mr. Malhotra.
- 2.** Whether circumstantial evidence alone can form the basis of conviction in cases involving serious crimes like murder.
- 3.** Whether the investigation was conducted in a fair and impartial manner, ensuring that all potential suspects were adequately considered.
- 4.** Whether the role of Zenith Corporation and its alleged influence on the case warrants further scrutiny.

The matter is now before the Supreme Court of Aryavarta for final adjudication.

Argue the case on the basis of the given facts on behalf of the Prosecution and the Défense.

Note: - Laws of Republic of Aryavarta are Pari-Materia to Laws of Republic of India.