

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ALOK ARADHE, HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**My esteemed Colleagues on the Bench,**

**Mr. Anil Singh,  
Additional Solicitor General of India,**

**Dr. Birendra Saraf,  
Advocate General for the State of Maharashtra,**

**Mr. Vitthal B. Konde-Deshmukh,  
Chairman, Bar Council of Maharashtra & Goa,**

**Mr. Nitin Thakker,  
President, Bombay Bar Association,**

**Mr. Prashant Relekar,  
President, Advocates' Association of Western India,**

**Mrs. Ferzana Behramkamdin,  
President, Bombay Incorporated Law Society,**

**Learned Senior Advocates and Members of the Bar,**

**Bereaved Members of Singhvi family,**

**Members of the Registry and staff,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We have assembled to pay tribute to late Mr. Sanjay Singhvi, a distinguished Senior Advocate of this Court, who left for heavenly abode, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2025.

Late Mr. Singhvi was born on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1958 in Mumbai, to late Mr. K. K. Singhvi and Mrs. Pushpa Singhvi, both of whom were advocates and highly regarded in the legal profession. Late Mr. Sanjay Singhvi was brought up in an environment where the law is not merely a profession but a calling, a means to serve society and uphold the principles of justice.

Late Mr. Singhvi, even during his formative years in St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, took up the cause of canteen workers, ensuring fair wages and dignified working conditions for factory workers. After completing his graduation in Science, he briefly served as a Reporter for a weekly news magazine, namely, "Blitz", a role that further enhanced his understanding of societal issues and deepened his resolve to use law, as a tool for change.

Late Mr. Singhvi obtained Bachelor's degree in Law from Government Law College, Mumbai in the year 1981 and joined the legal profession under the mentorship of his father. His commitment to the cause of underprivileged, particularly, the unorganized sector of workers, was unwavering. In recognition of his merit, late Mr. Singhvi was designated as a Senior Advocate by this Court, in the year 2014.

Beyond legal field, late Mr. Singhvi was a man of profound intellect and diverse interests. His love for history and literature, his mastery of Urdu poetry, and deep knowledge of architecture, enriched his perspectives. He was an admirer of poets, Mr. Sahir Ludhianvi and Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz. His knowledge of monuments in and around Delhi, was remarkable. His passion for boxing, cycling, mountaineering, and rock climbing reflected his strong and determined spirit.

His absence leaves a void that would be felt by all of us. He is survived by his wife, Advocate Jane Cox, and his younger brother, Mr. Nitin Singhvi.

On behalf of all my colleagues on the Bench, as well as my own behalf, I extend heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family. May the God give them the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss. May the departed soul rest in peace.

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**SPEECH OF MR. ANIL C. SINGH, ADDITIONAL SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**Members of the Registry and staff,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We gather today with heavy hearts to mourn and honour the life of Senior Advocate Sanjay Singhvi, who left us on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2025 at a very early age of 66, after a long and distinguished career dedicated to justice, workers' rights, fight against caste atrocities, struggle of slum dwellers, cause of communal harmony and unwavering compassion.

Champion of labour justice from student days at St. Xavier's College where he led the struggle for fair wages to canteen workers, to his tenure at the Bombay High Court, Mr. Singhvi

fought for the rights of under-privileged. When the Emergency was imposed in June 1975, student activities was curbed and Sanjay was involved in the pre-democracy initiatives outside the college. Even when emergency was lifted in March, 1977, the management of St. Xavier's College refused to withdraw its oppressive emergency-era rules and soon a group called 'Xaverian Union' was born. It culminated into 10 days' hunger strike by Sanjay who camped in the driveway of the college.

Sanjay's father, the late Sr. Advocate K. K. Singhvi was the Standing Counsel for the Bombay Municipal Corporation when the Olga Tellis pavement-dwellers case was filed in Bombay High Court. Since Sanjay was fighting for the affected slum and pavement-dwellers, he pleaded with his father to refuse to appear in this matter. Sr. Adv. K. K. Singhvi refused. Promptly, Sanjay moved out of his parental home to live in hut in a Dalit slum in Wadala.

In 1987, Sanjay's trade union work in the Wagle Estate area of Thane and in the Bhiwandi power-loom sector drew the ire of the local police, one of whom brutally beat, roped and paraded him. This caused an uproar in the public as well as at the Bar. Both the AAWI and BBA passed resolutions condemning the assault and declared a one-day strike.

He was a rare breed among labour lawyers – refusing to represent management on ideological grounds. Known for nurturing young legal talent, he created a collaborative environment in his chambers-debating politics, philosophy, and life, over shared meals.

I had pleasure of working in several matters as opponent of Mr. Singhvi. Mr. Singhvi was always fair to Court and opposite side. He made a point to ensure that his vast knowledge of the subject in all facets including those against him was placed by him before the Court. He conducted himself with utmost humility and dignity.

His victory in limiting factory working hours and landmark wins in contract-labour cases (including reclaiming casual workers as permanent employees of Hindustan Lever and Mumbai's Street Cleaners) remain enduring testaments to his advocacy.

In the matter of Gujrat Mazdoor Sabha, Sanjay successfully challenged a Gujarat Government notification directly in the Supreme Court under Article 32, that diluted workers' rights under the Factories Act during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Bombay Dyeing matter, he got an order directing Bombay Dyeing to immediately hand over 32,000 sq.mtrs. premises for workers' housing, in redevelopment projects.

He had an abiding interest in history and literature and had taught himself Urdu. Sanjay was a dedicated cyclist. He would often cycle early morning. He was also an active mountaineer since his college days. He was also fond of variety of food and music.

Senior Advocate Sanjay Singhvi's passing is a powerful call for reflection - a reminder of what it means to lead a life of meaning, grounded in courage, compassion, and unyielding purpose. We honour his memory by rededicating ourselves to the causes he championed.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Advocate Jane Cox, his brother Nitin and colleagues who stood with him. His extraordinary contributions - in the courtroom, on the streets, and within revolutionary circles - were felt deeply by many.

May his soul attain eternal peace, and may his work continues to inspire those committed to the cause of justice and intellectual inquiry.

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**SPEECH OF DR. BIRENDRA SARAF, ADVOCATE GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**Bereaved Members of Singhvi family,**

**Members of the Registry and staff,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Very occasionally, in the legal profession comes a lawyer who practices law not just as a profession but as a lifelong commitment and purpose – one which evolves into a crusade for securing justice for the oppressed, the marginalized and the weak. Today, we assemble to pay tribute to one such person – a dear friend and colleague of ours – Mr. Sanjay Singhvi.

Born to the legendry Senior Advocate K. K. Singhvi and Mrs. Pushpa Singhvi, both of whom had communist ideologies, Sanjay while adopting their ideology, never got over-shadowed by them. Instead, he created an independent identity for himself by

dedicating his entire life to a range of causes including student movements, fight against caste atrocity, espousing slum dwellers' cause and fighting for the rights of workers and labourers to ensure that they got justice.

From his college days, he was very vocal and agitated against anything which he found was unfair or illegal. Right from student days, he took part in protests and public campaigns – whether it was protesting against curbs imposed on student activities during Emergency or non-withdrawal by the college of rules imposed during Emergency era, after the Emergency came to an end and many other such causes. Once when as a result of protests, certain students were denied re-admission in the college, Sanjay who was by then out of the college and studying law actively participated in the legal action against the same. The Principal of the College was called to Court. Finally, the students were readmitted. There were various other causes he took up during his student days, including questioning a fee hike of Bombay University which was later cancelled. While a canteen of every college is a fun centre, Sanjay saw injustice there too. He took up the cause of the fair wages and the working conditions for the college canteen workers.

In a world where legal career is often driven by the pursuit of wealth and power, Sanjay made a conscious unwavering choice of never appearing for the management. His advocacy was a moral stand and a lived philosophy. For his entire life thereafter, he committed himself to the cause of the voiceless, the marginalized and the oppressed. How many persons would leave home if their father appears in a matter against slum or pavement dwellers? As the ASG pointed out, he left his home as a matter of principle and stayed in a hut in a slum when his father declined to return the brief of the Municipal Corporation in the Olga Tellis case. His life, as is well known to everyone, was dedicated to the cause of

labourers and workers and he also actively participated in trade union activities. He worked with tribal communities and later with the Akhil Maharashtra Kamgar Union & the Contract Labour Kamgar Union organizing resistance against contract labour practice.

Through the decades, Sanjay stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the workers in their struggle for fairness and justice. In countless Industrial Tribunals, Labour Courts and before the Constitutional Courts – both the High Court and Supreme Court, his arguments carried not just legal weightage but also moral authority. In choosing never to represent the management, he gave up many opportunities which might have made him materially richer, but he gained something rarer – a place in the hearts of thousands of workers. Very dear to him was the cause of unorganized workers and contract labourers. His relentless efforts got thousands of contract labourers their right and permanent employment with all benefits. Whether it was fighting for the Safai Kamgars' right of permanent employment in a Municipal Corporation, an assertion of rights of workers in a Company in liquidation, in the Swadeshi Mills case, to asserting the right of Trade Unions in Court, the range of matters which he fought for the workers was never ending. These workers today remember him with eternal gratitude.

In the midst of all this, he was an extremely jovial person, always sharing a joke and a laugh with his colleagues. An avid biker and cyclist, he continued cycling even after being diagnosed with cancer. In college, he was fond of mountaineering and trekking and he once carried one of his friends who got a life-threatening infection at a high altitude camp, on his back all the way down.

He was an atheist, but for those who believed in God, he carried out the work of God. He was a fighter and he fought cancer bravely. His spirit knew no fatigue, no surrender. Whenever he got

some physical respite in the midst of his treatment, you would find him in Court ready to argue a matter. But we ultimately lost him and his loss is mourned not just by the legal fraternity but by a large segment of society.

My Lords, Sanjay Singhvi was:

- the voice of the voiceless;
- the strength of the weak;
- the courage and reassurance of the marginalized and oppressed; and
- the hope in hearts grown weary.

In his passing, the legal profession lost a committed lawyer, the Bar lost a friend and the society a compassionate and empathetic human being.

On behalf of the State of Maharashtra and the entire body of lawyers, I express our heartfelt condolences to our friends and colleagues Jane Cox & Tanu Mehta, Sanjay's brother Nitin and the entire family.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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**SPEECH OF MR. VITTHAL B. KONDE-DESHMUKH, CHAIRMAN, BAR COUNCIL OF MAHARASHTRA & GOA, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**Members of the Registry and staff,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I endorse the sentiments expressed by Hon'ble the Chief Justice and earlier speakers.

We have assembled here this morning to honour the memory of Shri Sanjay Singhvi, Senior Advocate and Member of Bombay Bar Association, who left for his heavenly abode on Wednesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2025 at the age of 66 in the Bombay Hospital, Mumbai. Shri Sanjay Singhvi was born on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1958 in Mumbai to well-known and progressive lawyer parents, late K. K. Singhvi and Smt. Pushpa Singhvi. Shri Sanjay Singhvi was educated from St. Xavier's School and then St. Xavier's College from where he graduated in

B.Sc. In 1978. In the year 1982, he completed his LL.B. Degree from Government Law College. Mr. Singhvi was also student leader in the Bombay University. He was prominent political activist and associate of People's Movement; apart from Senior Advocate in the Bombay High Court, a critical participation in the struggles of Indian workers and committed Communist. Shri Sanjay Singhvi as an advocate in the Bombay High Court, appeared for the workers. Shri Sanjay Singhvi's father late K. K. Singhvi was a Standing Counsel for Mumbai Municipal Corporation. When the Olga Tellis Pavement Dwellers' case was filed in the Bombay High Court since Sanjay was fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with affected slum and pavement dwellers, he pleaded with his father to refuse to appear in this matter. Senior advocate K. K. Singhvi refused promptly.

In this hour of grief, I share my heartfelt condolences with Shri Sanjay Singhvi's family on behalf of Bar Council of Maharashtra & Goa.

I sincerely convey my deep condolences to his partner, Jane Cox and brother Nitin and his entire family. The memories of Shri Sanjay Singhvi shall show us a path for better civilized society.

May his soul rest in peace.

OM Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

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**SPEECH OF MR. NITIN THAKKER, PRESIDENT, BOMBAY BAR ASSOCIATION, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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Ladies and Gentlemen.

*"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."*

*-- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*Sanjay lived his life on this principle.*

***On Behalf of Bombay Bar Association, I fully associate myself with the sentiments expressed by my Lord the Chief Justice and my previous speakers.***

On speaking about his life, we find not only grief but gratitude—for the ideals he upheld, the battles he fought, and the countless lives he touched.

Sanjay inherited a rare sensitivity to human suffering and social inequality from his mother. Like her, he also explored the stage with conviction, acting in plays in the 1980s with Aavhan Natya Manch. This duality—between legal rigour and social activism, between logic and empathy—defined Sanjay's life and work.

His academic journey, too, was distinctive. Unlike his parents who studied humanities, Sanjay pursued a B.Sc. in Mathematics from St. Xavier's College. Maths was, as he often said, his first love. It honed in him a sharpness—precision, logic, clarity—that later became his signature in court. Whether analysing contract labour systems or dissecting corporate fraud, his mathematical mind made him a formidable advocate.

But Sanjay's fight for justice began long before he entered the legal profession. During the Emergency, while still in college, he mobilised pro-democracy efforts. Post-Emergency, when St. Xavier's imposed restrictive rules, Sanjay led the Xaverian Union in protest, including a 10-day hunger strike that captured public imagination and ultimately forced the college to relent. As a student leader at Bombay University, he co-founded the SAFAC in 1978 to oppose fee hikes, and he succeeded.

Perhaps the most powerful symbol of his commitment came when he moved into a Dalit basti in Wadala—in protest against his father's role in the **Olga Tellis** case. His gesture of solidarity

remains deeply cherished by that community to this day. His dedication to the marginalised was not mere advocacy—it was immersion, identity, and principle.

Senior Advocate Sanjay Singhvi carved an indelible place in the annals of labour jurisprudence. He never hesitated to challenge entrenched structures of exploitation. *In Hindustan Unilever v. Laghu Udyog Kamgar Union*, he dismantled a sham contractual system of over 30 years, elevating casual workers to permanent employees and transforming their lives and livelihoods. *In Municipal Corporation v. Kachara Vahatuk Shramik Sangh*, he defended the Industrial Tribunal Award regularising 2700 safai karamcharis, and the Supreme Court stood with him. In the *Gujarat Mazdoor Sabha* case during the pandemic, his arguments led to the quashing of a regressive State notification that sought to dilute labour rights in the name of economic exigency.

Yet, Sanjay was not just a brilliant advocate—he was an extraordinary mentor and teacher. His chambers had vibrant ecosystems, where lunch hours transformed into animated debates on science, law, history, and politics. He taught with exceptional patience, whether it was a complex constitutional point, a gadget working, or even a cooking recipe. Even the most hesitant junior walked out of his chambers with confidence and clarity. He believed in empowering others, not instructing them.

He had the most wicked sense of humour. Nothing was sacrosanct in his life. Everything was up for a joke and a wisecrack. For example, once, he convinced a serious environmentalist that the best way to save tigers was to eat them. If humans started eating tiger meat, then automatically, there would be tiger breeding centres, and thus, tigers would be saved. The poor environmental activist didn't know what had hit him.

Despite his seniority, Sanjay remained astonishingly grounded. He rode a *Hero Honda motorcycle* to courts across Mumbai, disliking the delay of a car. His father, concerned for his back and image, finally gifted him his first car when Sanjay was in his late forties. Later, he took to cycling passionately—often pedaling from Mahim to Nariman Point and back, even after his cancer diagnosis. His last holiday was a cycling tour in Kent, UK. He also scaled Himalayan peaks, once carrying an injured friend on his back down the slopes—an act that may well have saved a limb.

A man of intellect and broad tastes, *Sanjay taught himself Urdu to read Faiz and Sahir* in the original.

Let me end with the Urdu couplet that perhaps best captures his spirit:

***"Kinare se hi tufaan ka tamasha dekhne waale,  
Kinare se kabhi andaaza-e-tufaan nahi hota."***

"Those who merely watch the storm from the shore... can never truly grasp its power."

Sanjay did not stand at the shore—he entered the storm, fought with it, and helped reshape the tides of justice. For that, we remember him today not with mere sorrow but with deep, enduring respect.

I along with all members of BBA convey our deepest condolences to Jane and other members of his family.

May his Soul Rest In eternal Peace.

Om Shanti.

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**SPEECH OF MR. PRASHANT RELEKAR, PRESIDENT, ADVOCATES' ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN INDIA, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**Bereaved Members of Singhvi family,**

**Members of the Registry and staff,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Today, we gather in solemn remembrance and tribute to a remarkable Senior Advocate, a dedicated justice warrior, and a guiding light of our legal community-Senior Advocate Sanjay Singhvi-who passed away recently after a brave battle with cancer.

Sanjay Singhvi was, in the truest sense, an energetic foe of injustice. From his early days as a student, he upheld the rights of the underprivileged-with hunger strikes at St. Xavier's College against oppressive rules and leading protests for fair wages for canteen workers-laying the foundation for a life committed to equality and rights. His generous commitment continued right to

the end, grounded in a vision of equal justice.

Born on May 15, 1958, into a family of principled lawyers, his journey began at St. Xavier's and Government Law College, where he sharpened not just his intellect but his understanding for society's marginalized.

His strategic brilliance was evident in the Gujarat Mazdoor Sabha case, which led the Supreme Court to quash pandemic-era exemptions that undermined workers' rights.

But beyond his courtroom, what captured everyone's heart was the man himself-humble, generous in spirit, treating every junior and intern as an equal, breaking bread with them, and giving them confidence.

Sanjay Singhvi was also a man of culture-a lover of literature, Urdu poetry, architecture. His vibrant curiosity extended well beyond his practice.

His passing on April 23 leaves a void in our fraternity and in the wider movement for justice.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends. May you all find strength in his memory; we all honor his work by continuing the fight for labour justice and equality with the same integrity he modelled.

On behalf of the Advocates Association of Western India, I offer our heartfelt tribute to Sanjay Singhvi-his unwavering spirit, his enduring legacy.

May his departed soul rest in peace.

Thank you.

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**SPEECH OF MRS. FERZANA BEHRAMKAMDIN, PRESIDENT, BOMBAY INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY, AT THE FULL COURT REFERENCE, IN MEMORY OF LATE MR. SANJAY SINGHVI, SENIOR ADVOCATE, ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025, AT 10.45 A.M., IN CENTRAL COURT HALL, MAIN BUILDING, BOMBAY HIGH COURT, MUMBAI.**

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**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We have gathered here today to pay tribute to Mr. Singhvi, a last of a generation of lawyers who never for a moment faltered for the cause of ensuring justice to the labour.

From various odes written about him, his dedication to justice for workers becomes apparent.

His activism goes back to his college days at St. Xavier College when he along with his friends organized the canteen workers in the college to demand fair wages. As a result, one of their friends was rusticated from college but the boys, filed a suit in

the city civil court and had the student reinstated.

When the emergency was imposed in 1975, Mr. Singhvi was involved in pro-democracy initiatives outside the College. Even after emergency was lifted in March 1977, the management of the college refused to withdraw the oppressive emergency era rules. Mr. Singhvi along with his friend held a 10 days' hunger strike in the driveway of the college till the offending rules were withdrawn.

As my co-speakers before me have said Mr. Singhvi argued various cases which established the rights of workers and gave them justice, he famously argued against the validity of the law which extended working hours for factory workers beyond twelve hours a day and won the fundamental issue of limited hours for the working class. He did not represent the management-ideological reasons and made life extremely difficult for employers.

Whilst organizing a demonstration he was beaten up by the police but his commitment to the cause never changed. This caused an uproar in the bar and both BBA and AAWI passed resolutions condemning the same.

He was not only a lawyer but also trade unionist, he was the founder and chief organizer of Trade Union Centre of India, an organization which has grown with roots across India.

Mr. Singhvi in addition to his commitment to fight for injustice to the labour, also made an astonishing range of commitments – students' activism, the fight against caste atrocities, the struggle of slum dwellers and the cause of communal harmony.

He was an avid cyclist, an active mountaineer, had an avid interest in history and literature and had taught himself Urdu in order to directly engage with his favourite poets, Sahir and Faiz.

In his passing, the labour movement has lost a humanist, a

brilliant labour lawyer and a valiant warrior fighting against injustice to the downtrodden.

On behalf of Bombay Incorporated Law Society and myself, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Jane Cox and the other members of Mr. Singhvi's family and pray that his soul rest in eternal peace.

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