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WEAPONISING HISTORY

**THE VIOLENCE IN MAHARASHTRA
OVER AURANGZEB'S LEGACY IS ONLY
THE LATEST BATTLE IN THE HINDUTVA
CAMPAIGN TO REDRESS PERCEIVED
HISTORICAL WRONGS**

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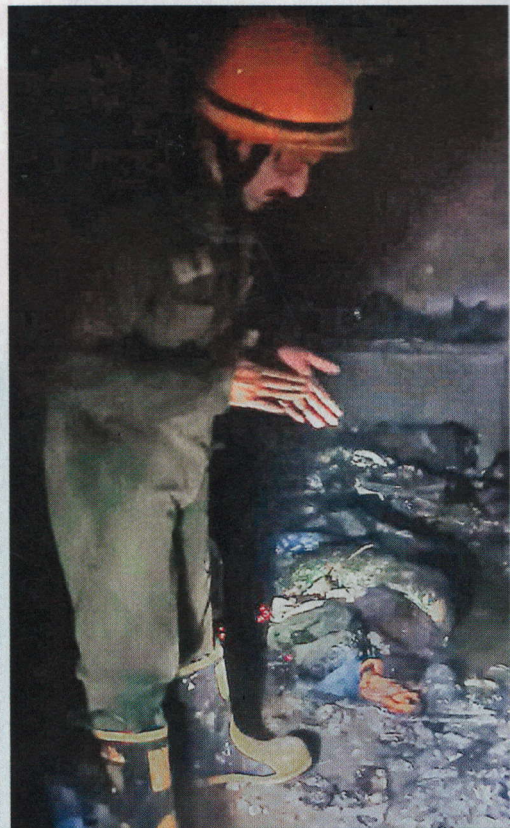


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UPFRONT



SMOKE AND SCANDAL The entrance of the storeroom (left), where cash (right) was allegedly discovered during a firefighting operation at Justice Varma's residence in Delhi, March 14

CASH DISCOVERY ROW

A JUDICIAL FIRESTORM

By Kaushik Deka

A late-night fire at the residence of a senior Delhi High Court judge has sparked an intense controversy around the judiciary and its complex appointments system. The incident, which unfolded on March 14 around 11.30 pm, saw a blaze erupt in an outhouse at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma. At the time, Justice Varma and his wife were in Bhopal, leaving only his daughter and elderly mother at home. When first responders—firefighters

and police—arrived at the scene, they reportedly discovered stacks of cash in the storeroom, some of which had been charred by the flames. The revelation has raised troubling questions about corruption and accountability within one of the nation's most venerated institutions.

Videos and photographs of the scene, later released by the Supreme Court in an unprecedented move toward transparency, show what appear to be bundles of currency notes

amid the fire debris. The discovery of a substantial cache of cash has thrust the judiciary into an uncomfortable spotlight, challenging its self-regulatory mechanisms and raising fundamental questions about how justice is administered for judges themselves.

On March 23, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna constituted a three-member committee comprising the Chief Justices of the Punjab and Haryana and Himachal Pradesh high courts, along with a judge from the