

READING-1

As Aarushi's parents are set free (छोड़ देना), there are troubling questions about the probe and trial

The Allahabad High Court verdict acquitting (acquit (verb) – discharge, release, declare

innocent, अपराध से मुक्त करना) Rajesh Talwar and Nupur

Talwar of the charge of murdering their 14-year-old daughter Aarushi and domestic worker Hemraj in May 2008 is not merely an indictment ((noun) – अपराध या

कलंक लगाना) charge, accusation, allegation/citation

of the Central Bureau of Investigation Special Court that sentenced them to life in 2013; it exposes the shoddy ((adjective) – poor-quality/inferior,

careless, improper, तुच्छ वस्तु) investigation by the

Noida police in the first few days after the double murder, and hints at the lack of probity ((noun) –

ईमानदारी) integrity, honesty/decency, truthfulness)

even in the way the CBI handled the case. The Bench terms some witnesses as "planted" (स्थापित किया हुआ

"inserted" witness; the categorization of a witness where the witness gets some benefit from the litigation), and concludes that circumstances indicating that someone else could have committed the crime had been ignored. At one point it even observes that there was

"clinching ((adjective) – कड़ी decisive/conclusive, final, key) evidence" about the presence of outsiders in the Talwar residence on the fateful night. It is in keeping with the see-saw ((adjective) उतार चढ़ाव – a

condition/situation which is changing rapidly & repeatedly) nature of the investigation that the trial court's findings — that the dentist couple committed the crime, that they shifted Hemraj's body to the terrace,

dressed up ((phrasal verb) – दर्शाना present, portray, depict) the crime scene and hid the weapons — now lie ((verb) – be, remain, or be kept in a state) in

tatters ((phrase) – उजड़ा हुआ destroyed; ruined; in disorder). The Talwar trial is illustrative ((adjective) उदाहरण रूप – explanatory, as an example,

elucidatory) of the vast gulf ((noun) – अंतर separation, difference, contrast/gap) between public

perception ((noun) – समझना understanding, realization/awareness),

now lamentably ((adverb) – बुरी तरह से badly, terribly, awfully.) exemplified ((verb) – उदाहरण देना typify,

epitomise, demonstrate/symbolize) in speculative ((adjective) – काल्पनिक theoretical,

hypothetical, based on guesswork) media coverage and social media frenzy ((noun) सनक, पागलपन hysteria,

madness, mania/wild behavior), and courts of law that go by evidence and reason. However, the facts and circumstances were such that anyone would have been

torn ((verb) – torment, torture, harrow/afflict)

between blaming the parents and sympathising with them. It did not help their case that the murders took place in their home. The claim that they were fast asleep ((noun) – in a state sleep.) while Aarushi was being killed in the very next room and the body of Hemraj was being moved to the terrace did stretch credulity ((noun) – विश्वासशीलता

naivety, innocence, simpleness).

In the end, they have got the benefit of doubts (the state of accepting something/someone as honest or deserving of trust even though there are doubts) that surfaced during the probe and the trial. Usually, in a case based on circumstantial evidence the court looks for a

cogent ((adjective) – प्रभावशाली valid, effective;

logical/clear) narrative pointing to guilt, and will not treat suspicion ((noun) – doubt, trace/hint, scepticism.) as proof. Few would dispute the fact that the investigation was botched up ((verb) – mismanage, mishandle, do

(a task) badly or carelessly). The crime scene was unprotected. Hemraj's body was not found for a whole day. Three associates of Hemraj were suspects, but there was not much evidence to proceed. A DNA report

implicating ((verb) – की ओर इशारा करना indicate, imply/hint, indicate) one of them, Krishna, was dismissed as a typographical error ((adjective) – typo, misprint; it is a mistake made in the typing process (such as a spelling mistake) of printed material).

To be fair to the CBI, it did want to close the case for want of evidence, but was forced by the court to pursue ((verb) – पाने की कोशिश करना continue to

investigate, scrutinize, analyse (an idea or argument).) the prosecution. At the end of the appellate ((adjective) – (अपील-संबंधी of a court) dealing with cases on appeal to review the decision of a lower court.) stage, it is difficult to say whether the case should never have gone to trial or that it was desirable that the entire evidence underwent scrutiny at two levels.

Acquittal in a murder case is an injustice of sorts ((phrase) – similar to/in a way, somewhat unusual).

It either means the state has failed to bring home ((phrase) – रोशनी डालना focus attention to; underline, highlight) the guilt of the accused or that it prosecuted the wrong people. Those exonerated ((verb) – दोषमुक्त release, discharge, relieve/free) will

naturally feel vindicated ((verb) – साबित कर देना justify, confirm, support), but the perception of justice having been done is limited to the accused and their well-wishers.

It is difficult to ignore the fact that the culprits who murdered Aarushi are yet to be nailed ((verb) – गिरफ्तारी catch/capture, apprehend, arrest

(someone, especially a suspected criminal) and duly held to account ((phrase) – to require a person to explain or to accept responsibility for his or her actions; to blame or punish someone for what has occurred.)

hold (someone) to account (phrase)