

#HUMANS

Do Gaz Zameen

The Kalbeliya community's struggle for the Right to Bury Their Dead



For generations, the Kalbeliya community has lived on the margins, socially, economically, and now even in death. In Barmer district of Rajasthan, a deeply troubling reality has emerged: the community has no designated land to bury their dead.

For the Kalbeliyas, burial is not a choice but a belief and a religious obligation. They believe that if proper burial rites are not performed, the departed soul cannot find peace and may turn into a restless spirit. Yet, despite this belief being central to their way of life, they have been denied the most basic space to perform it.

Burying the Dead at Home

With no cemetery land allotted, many families are left with unimaginable decisions. Some are forced to bury their dead within or near their homes. Others quietly use nearby open land, often risking eviction or legal action. This situation has given rise to fear, stigma, and superstition, both within and outside the community.

People whisper about ghosts, impurity, and misfortune, but few pause to ask why an entire community has been pushed into such conditions in the first place.

Forest Land and Forced Silence

For years, Kalbeliya families in Barmer have been using forest department land out of sheer necessity. These burials were never officially permitted, leaving families in constant anxiety, never knowing when the resting place of their loved ones might be disturbed. Most members of the community live in temporary camps, without land ownership or legal recognition. Death, which should bring collective mourning and dignity, instead becomes another moment of uncertainty and fear.

The Protest of October 2025

In October 2025, patience ran out. Members of the Kalbeliya community came together in protest, demanding a basic human right, the right to bury their dead with dignity. Their demand was simple: legally allotted land for burial. The protest drew attention, and the administration responded. The Barmer district authorities announced that land had been allotted for burial purposes. For a brief moment, hope flickered. But it soon became clear that the



solution existed only on paper. **Land That Exists Only in Files**

Despite official announcements, the land was never physically handed over to the community. No boundaries were marked. No access was provided. No documentation reached the people who needed it the most.

The Kalbeliyas continue to bury their dead near their camps or in nearby unused areas, knowing well that even these spaces are temporary and unsafe.

Official Assurance, Uncertain Future

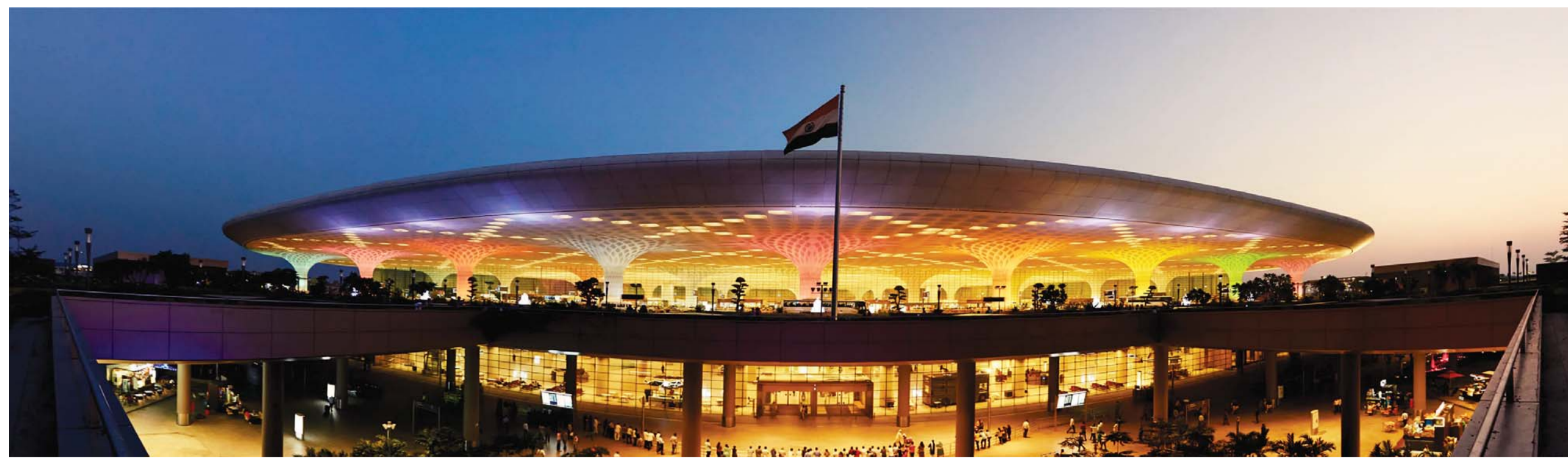
Avinash Gehlot, Minister of Social Justice, acknowledged the issue and assured that steps would be taken in the future. Statements were made: "In times to come, we will do something."

But for a community that faces death regularly without dignity, the future feels painfully distant.

More Than Land, It is About Dignity

This is not merely a land dispute. It is a question of constitutional equality, religious freedom, and human dignity. The right to life must include the right to a dignified death, and for the Kalbeliya community, that begins with a place to bury their dead.

Until words turn into action, files into fields, and promises into possession, the Kalbeliyas of Barmer remain caught between belief and bureaucracy, living, and dying, without a place to rest.



Will Blinkit entry bring down airport retail prices?

Yet, it would be premature to declare the end of high airport prices. Airport operators have little incentive to allow a full-scale erosion of retail margins, given that non-aero revenues are critical to their financial model. Any integration of quick commerce platforms will therefore be calibrated, encouraged enough to enhance passenger experience, but contained enough to protect existing revenue streams.



Sukumar Sah
The author is a senior veteran journalist

Airports have long been India's most visible marketplaces of inflated pricing. A cup of coffee costs as much as a full meal outside. A sandwich equally predictable: travellers pay a premium not just for convenience, but for lack of choice. That model is now facing a quiet but potentially significant disruption.

Blinkit's entry into Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, delivering directly to passengers even after they clear security, marks a structural shift in how airport consumption

may evolve. For the first time, a digital platform is attempting to insert itself between airport retailers and travellers inside the most controlled commercial space in the country.

At first glance, the promise seems obvious: lower prices, greater variety and doorstep delivery to the boarding gate. But the deeper question is whether this innovation can actually dismantle the entrenched economics of airport retail, or merely repackage it.

To understand the limits of disruption, one must first understand the structure of airport commerce. Retailers at major Indian airports operate under concession agreements that often involve sharing 30 to 50 per cent of their revenue with the airport operator. Add to this the cost of logistics, staffing, and compliance with stringent security protocols, and the pricing distortion becomes almost inevitable. In effect, airports are not just transit hubs; they are high-yield retail ecosystems designed to maximise non-aeronautical



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revenue. Blinkit, for all its technological edge, cannot escape this framework. Operating inside the terminal means that it too must align with airport regulations, pay access fees, and integrate with controlled logistics systems. The familiar image of a delivery rider weaving through city traffic is replaced by an airport-approved, in-terminal fulfilment model. The cost structure changes, but it does not disappear.

This is why expectations of dramatically lower prices may prove misplaced. What Blinkit can do, however, is introduce something that airport retail has historically lacked: price visibility. When a passenger can compare the cost of a snack on an app with what is being charged at a

kiosk a few metres away, the psychology of consumption changes. Even if the difference is modest, the awareness itself creates pressure.

In the short term, this could lead to marginal corrections. Airport retailers may soften their pricing at the edges, introduce bundled offers, or expand product ranges to stay competitive. Blinkit, for its part, may absorb some costs to build volume and user habit. The result is not a price war, but a subtle recalibration.

Over the medium term, the more profound shift may lie in how consumption is organised within airports. The traditional model is spatial: you walk past stores, browse, and buy. Blinkit introduces a platform model: you sit, scroll, and order. The point of sale moves from

the storefront to the smartphone. This has implications beyond pricing. It alters inventory management, reduces dependence on high-footfall locations, and potentially lowers wastage through centralised stocking. Retail becomes less about display and more about fulfilment. In that sense, Blinkit is not just competing with airport shops; it is redefining the logic of how those shops function.

Yet, it would be premature to declare the end of high airport prices. Airport operators have little incentive to allow a full-scale erosion of retail margins, given that non-aero revenues are critical to their financial model. Any integration of quick commerce platforms will therefore be calibrated, encouraged enough to enhance passenger experience, but contained enough to protect existing revenue streams.

The likely outcome is coexistence, not disruption. Blinkit will emerge as an additional layer of convenience, particularly for price-sensitive or time-pressed travellers.

Traditional retailers will adapt, but not retreat. And airports will continue to orchestrate the ecosystem to their advantage.

In that sense, the real story is not about cheaper sandwiches. It is about a shift in control. For decades, airport retail has been defined by landlords and concessionaires. With the arrival of digital platforms, a new intermediary enters the equation, one that owns the customer interface, the data, and increasingly, the purchasing decision. If this model scales across major airports, the balance of power could gradually tilt away from physical storefronts towards digital aggregators.

Prices may not fall dramatically. But transparency will rise, choice will expand, and the experience of consumption will change. And in the controlled chaos of modern airports, that may be disruption enough.

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Napoleon Crowned King of Italy

On May 26, 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned King of Italy in a grand ceremony at Milan's Cathedral, marking a major expansion of his power across Europe. Already Emperor of France, Napoleon placed the Iron Crown of Lombardy on his own head, symbolising authority and ambition. The coronation strengthened French control over northern Italy and reshaped the political landscape of the region. This moment reflected Napoleon's growing dominance during the Napoleonic Wars and his vision of building a vast European empire under his leadership.



#GERARD VAN HONTHORST

Christ and Caiaphas

A source of light in a very dark place. A way forward in hard times. And maybe, even the light of god, when you would need it the most



Anjali Sharma
Senior Journalist & Writer, Enthusiast

In a meeting between Christ and Caiaphas, life and death hangs on the edge of the string. And somehow, Gerard van

Honthorst shows us the gravity of an entire moment with a candle. But how? Well, to understand the genius that is Christ before the High Priest, we first need to understand what is going on. It is a trial of sorts. Jesus has been arrested and has been taken to the home of the high priest of Israel for questioning. "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" A crucial question designed to provoke a response that could be used to condemn Christ of blasphemy. A capital offence and one punishable by death. "I am," he responds. And in doing so guarantees his own execution.

And it is right there that Honthorst plays his first move. It is an odd thing to consider that the man, who holds all the power as it concerns life and death, is the one to seem unstable. He is not quite falling out of his seat, but the slight tilt forward, especially in comparison to what feels like a composed version of Jesus, is jarring when viewing the two figures together.

And speaking of Jesus, for a man who has willingly sentenced himself to his own gruesome death, he seems unbelievably calm. His posture. His face. His submissive hands. It is an unexpected response for such a

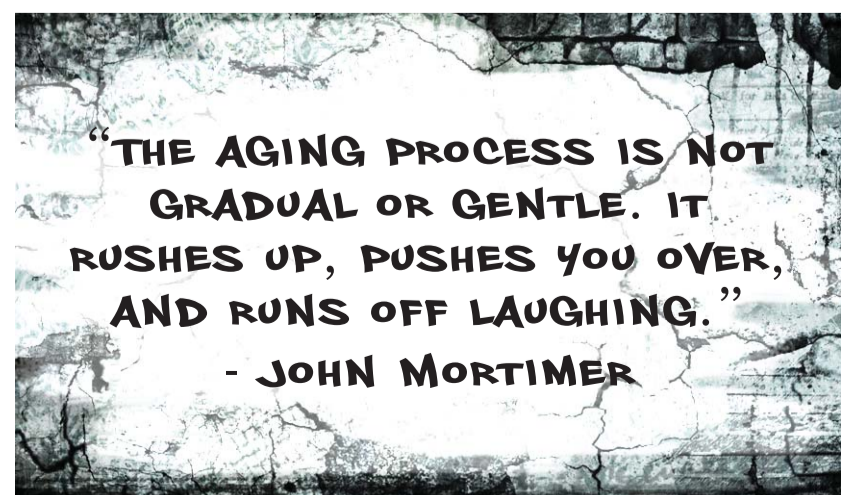
dire outcome. So what does it have to do with the candle? Everything, actually. Because where the composure of our figures was Honthorst's opening jab, the candle is the necessary ingredient for a swift knockout. Now, the obvious effect of singular candle in a dark room is the light but how Honthorst lights these characters is simply genius. It is no longer an effect of atmosphere, but in the hands of the master painter, an effect of dialogue.

Have a closer look and see. Caiaphas, who is closest to the candle, is made up of the hard lines between light and dark, suggesting a man who is deeply at conflict. Contrast this with Jesus, who is much further away, and we see a soft transition between the light and shadows. This is the man who is at peace.

Take a step back to see the painting as a whole, and the candle again serves another purpose. It drives a hard line between the two men. In fact, if you remove it entirely, you might even agree that the conversation feels less intense, but with a wedge in between them, we know that they will never come to reasonable terms. The decision for an action of maximum consequences becomes inevitable.

And if none of that at all has impressed you, in what might be the most powerful display of masterful painting, Honthorst does the unimaginable. By dimming the brightness on the entire painting, what we see is a candle in full effect. Almost as if it were a real thing. A source of light in a very dark place. A way forward in hard times. And maybe, even the light of god, when you would need it the most.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman