



CPI (M) leader Brinda Karat slams RSS says, "principles of India's

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Afternoon

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Maratha reservation: Activist Manoj Jarange gives ultimatum to state govt, says, "Will launch fast untill death protest"



Activist Manoj Jarange on Sunday said he would launch fast unto death protest from October 25 if the Maharashtra government fails to grant quota to the Maratha community by Tuesday. Addressing a press conference at Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, Jarange said the Maratha community would not let political leaders, including MPs and MLAs, enter villages across the state until the reservation demand is met.

Jarange had observed a hunger strike in this village in September this year demanding that Marathas be granted reservation in government jobs and education under the OBC category. He had with-

drawn the protest giving an ultimatum of 40 days till October 24 to the government for the grant of quota. "If the Maharashtra government fails to take a decision on awarding reservation to the Maratha community by October 24, I will sit on fast-unto-death agitation. Locals and people from other villages will also launch a similar protest," Jarange said.

He said all villages would join the indefinite hunger strike in the coming days and appealed to Marathas to take out a candle march to mark their support for the quota demand. "It is like a war being fought peacefully. I will declare the new directions on October 28. The government

can't afford the direction which I will show to the people," he added. Jarange said he would abstain from taking water and medical assistance during the fast.

He said a chain hunger strike will be launched on October 25 which will manifest into a full-fledged hunger strike from October 28. "In every tehsil and village in the state, the Maratha community will organise candle marches, emphasising their commitment to non-violent demonstrations. 5 crore Marathas will participate in the protest." Jarange added.

He also appealed to the members of the Maratha community not to resort to

extreme acts like committing suicide. "Peaceful protests would pave the way for our rightful demands," he added. The activist accused the state government of trying to fan anti-reservation sentiments within the Maratha community. He also slammed Union minister Narayan Rane and Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam without taking their names for their purportedly anti-reservation statements. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis had said the government was committed to giving reservation to Marathas while ensuring that quotas for other communities are not disturbed. PTI

Clean comedy vs Stand up comedy

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

We all must have seen thousands of comedy shows and series on television. Satire and sarcasm are tools through which one can criticise institutions, government authorities or entities in a funny way. TV shows like 'Flop Show' by Jaspal Bhatti that started in 1989 used the same tools to criticise those then in power. The new age stand-up comics take inspiration from all the senior artistes like Bhatti. At this point, it is important to make it clear that it is unnecessary to do clean content if you are a stand-up comic, in my view. As a stand-up comic, your job should only be making the audience laugh and think. Nothing matters after that.

From the Jaspal Bhatti show to the Kapil Sharma comedy show, Sarabhai vs Sarabhai- each episode is funny with best jokes and acting, Bhabhiji Ghar par hai, Tarak Mehta Ka Oolta Chasmah. These comedy shows are for pure laughter. You can sit with your entire family and watch them. The great Indian laughter challenge has brought the stand up comedy culture to India. The show was based on a format where stand-up comedians perform and entertain judges and the studio audience with their comedy skills.

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Editoritis

Clean comedy vs Stand up comedy

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One fine day AIB (All India Bakchod) was started in 2015 by a bunch of comedians, and from this moment comedy turned into travesty. In a way these shows were almost soft porn, the language, slangs and discussion about women's body and men's organs.

It should be the conscience of the audience that should decide whether to laugh or not to laugh at a dirty joke.

Before blaming the artist for doing his job we should ask ourselves if we can take a joke as a joke or not. And what should be the joke in a real sense.

In the first season, Sunil Pal was the winner, Ahsaan Qureshi was runner up and Raju Srivastava was second runner up. Next season was won by Kapil Sharma and the first runner up was Chandan Prabhakar. This show has given us many other talented comedians like Siraj Khan, Sudesh Lehari, Rajiv Thakur, Bharti Singh, Navin Prabhakar, Jassi Kochar, Khayaali, Dipoo Srivastava, Ahsaan Qureshi. These people appeared in various comedy shows and entertained us for years.

One fine day AIB (All India Bakchod) was started in 2015 by a bunch of comedians, and from this moment comedy turned into travesty. In a way these shows were almost soft porn, the language, slangs and discussion about women's body and men's organs. And many thought this was freedom of expression and they started enjoying this show. It ended after the epic AIB roast but what it did begin, in the process, is the reintroduction of satire and sarcasm in its raw state without any censorship.

It should be the conscience of the audience that should decide whether to laugh or not to laugh at a dirty joke. This will inspire the comic to make changes in his content. Before blaming the artist for doing his job we should ask ourselves if we can take a joke as a joke or not. And what should be the joke in a real sense. There are also regional standup comedians who are quite popular in their niche audience. These are akin to different 'gharanas' of comedy like Gujarati, Bengali or Chennai- and Bengaluru-based comics.

Some great Bengali comedians like Sourav Ghosh, Anirban Dasgupta, Dipangshu Acharya. Language is just a medium that does not restrict anyone and there have been many regional activists whose voices were heard in the Parliament. But it's still a long way to go for the Indian stand-up comedy scene. In the recent past, you will see many stand-up performers in studios with an audience of 50 to 100. These artists make fun of each and everything having no filter on their language and expressions. Most of them use outrageous and obnoxious language. Some even make fun of religious beliefs.

In recent times comedian Munawar Faruqui has been hitting the headlines. Faruqui is a young and upcoming, moderately successful Indian comedian. He has been banned by the police

and administration of Madhya Pradesh on grave charges of hate crime. This comedian has a history of making jokes on Hindu gods. Ironically we never heard a joke about the Prophet of Allah. He compared the making of Ram Mandir with the making of Bombs.

Here lies the problem. How do we decide what is more offensive when there are different groups of people getting offended? For some, drawing a cartoon is the ultimate level of getting offended and for some it can be using some slangs for God and for some even mentioning names would be offending.

Has democracy and appeasement of the minorities been of any use for the majority? Spitting filth against Hinduism in the name of freedom of speech is not secularism. Do crack jokes but crack jokes on the Prophet also and if you do not have the guts to crack jokes on the Prophet then do not crack jokes on Hindu gods also.

He is a Muslim, he knew that dragging Hindus in his acts will reiterate to the masses in not a good way which finally happened. I am a Hindu but I never mock any Gods, I am sure I can do a good comedy or be a good writer without putting down any God or religion. Munawwar is not only the comedian but he is an activist for a case which has been solved by the Supreme court, which means he has political inclinations which is fine as everyone in India has a right to have an opinion. But that does not give you permission to provoke religious sentiments. In the recent past he was frequently arrested and his shows were banned. Some think-tank believes that the arrest is to create anger in Congress men against BJP. This is election time and Munnvar like jokers became tools in political hands.

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Voices



Women in leadership roles



- Vijay Garg

Religiously-spiritually, Navratri is a festival of bowing before the dignity, pride and power of womanhood. In the Indian society where mother power is worshiped, women have always been considered the embodiment of Shakti. In our country, the pace of change in the mental and life circumstances of women may be slow, but the change is happening in a positive direction only.

In fact, the policy of women empowerment is included in the Constitution of India itself. Article 14 ensures the right to equality for women it is pleasant that the increasing figures of empowered women at the community level also confirms the increasing power and acceptance of half the population. The total population of women in our country is approximately 66.3 crores. Of these, about 45 crore women are between 15 and 64 years of age.

Among them, there are girls who play a major role in the country's labor force and also daughters who stand first in examinations. There are girls who have won medals in national and international sports competitions and also daughters who are fighting on the military front. definitely Development plans and policies that emphasize the leadership role of women are also strengthening the foundation of this change. In the year 1951, the literacy rate of women of the country was

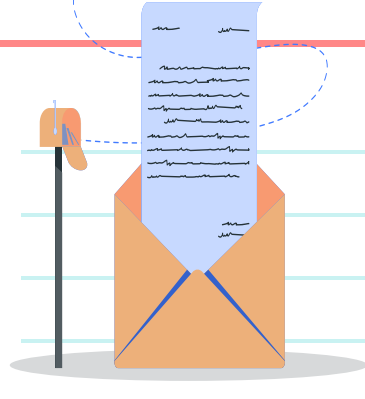
around nine percent.

Data from the National Statistical Office shows that the literacy rate of women in the year 2021 was 70.30 percent. In recent years, the number of daughters taking degrees in the fields of technology and science has also increased rapidly. The number of girls studying till high school and beyond is increasing rapidly. Science in India today, The enrollment rate of girls in technology, engineering and mathematics is 43 percent.

This figure is more than developed countries like America, Britain and Germany. In other countries of the world, only five percent of pilots are women, whereas here more than 15 percent of pilots are women. This participation of girls in the field of civil aviation, despite the costly training and conditions like being away from home from time to time for work responsibilities, is indicative of a major change.

Actually, strength is the aspect related to self-power. With this power of mind but very resource can be progressed despite the lack of every facility. Indian women are becoming strong by mobilizing this spiritual energy. They are reaching their goals, due to which their involvement in society and family has also increased.

Letters to the Editor



Making sprinklers mandatory on construction sites will create water shortage!

Most of the buildings under construction in the city are skyscrapers & not sure how sprinklers, barriers & anti-smog guns which is being made mandatory by BMC will check air pollution in the city. Mumbai will face massive water shortage this year due to insufficient rains & sprinklers on construction sites will only add to the woes.

The city has been turned into concrete jungle over the years & high time we have a policy in place where no new construction is allowed & some restrictions put on new entrants as Mumbai is overcrowded by any yardsticks one may measure. Outskirts of the city needs to be developed so that there is less pressure on the city!

S.N.Kabra

Ban on Export of Sugar

The central government has imposed an indefinite ban on export of sugar to curb price rise as poor monsoon is likely to hit sugarcane output in two major producing states Maharashtra and Karnataka, Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday. Sugar prices have hit a 12-year high in the international markets. However, the prices in India remain largely stable. Apart from sugar the government has also put curbs on exports of rice and wheat. The export of broken rice was prohibited and an export duty of 20 per cent was imposed on non-basmati white rice on September 9, 2022. Subsequently, export of non-basmati white rice was also prohibited on July 20, 2023. That's an admirable step, first priority must be our nation and public in all aspects.

Tauqueer Rahmani

Close to risk?

Due to the decrease in production during the austerity and Corona period and the increase in inflation, people took large loans to meet their needs. As a result, the amount of unsecured loans has increased to 23%. According to a report by global brokerage firm UBS, banks have issued large amounts of unsecured loans to increase business. According to UBS, the "credit cost" of Indian banks has gone to historic

levels. Most of these unsecured loans are accumulated in bad accounts. Government banks are in a high risk state. Similarly, the loans of Non-Financial Institutions (NBS) are also at the door of risk and private banks to some extent and Government and Non-Financial Institutions are running very close to this risk. It is not possible to say when the superstructure of any bank or NBS will collapse in the coming time?

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Health and Food

A few years ago, medical facilities were less, yet people remained healthy because their food was good and of quality. But today, with the increasing trend of foods in the market apart from that, modern convenience foods or fast food, i.e. packaged foods, taste has become our priority rather than quality. Clean and safe food is the first step towards better health. There is no doubt that food quality is a measure of the health of a community. But even today malnutrition remains a major problem. It is said here that "as the food, so the mind." If the habit of eating well has been maintained since childhood, the need for a doctor will be reduced. Today we need good and nutritious food.

N Mateeni

Caste Census

The wave of Caste Census began from Bihar and now traveled to Andhra Pradesh. Nevertheless, the state government has decided to conduct a caste census from 15 November that is aimed at highlighting the numerical strength of 143 communities that fall under the backward class (BC) category. Earlier, the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government had passed a resolution, demanding a nationwide caste census, and forwarded it to the Centre. The announcement may be a reality check, but it is also seen as the ruling party's way to address the changing caste matrix after Pavan Kalyan's Jana Sena and Chandrababu Naidu's TDP allied, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The census methodology will kick off with round-table meetings, involving representatives of all caste groups in Vijayawada, Tirupati, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam and Kurnool, to enable them to share their suggestions or objections.

G Champa

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

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No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

Fake call centre racket caught at Navi Mumbai, FIR against 23 persons

Police have busted a bogus call centre operating from a mall in Vashi area of Navi Mumbai township and registered an FIR against 23 people in this connection, including its owner and manager, an official said on Sunday.

The accused posed as representatives of US companies and sold medicines like Viagra and Cialis to people there. They obtained details of credit/debit cards of the people and cheated them, the official from Vashi police station said. Several gadgets, besides hard discs and electrical accessories worth Rs 3.97 lakh were recovered following a raid at the call centre on Saturday, he said.

The accused made outbound



calls using VCdial/Nextiva software. They made the calls through gateway bypass and VOIP, the official

said, adding the accused were caught red-handed while indulging in such acts. The call center owner

allegedly purchased the data of people in the US from a person based at Malad in neighbouring

Mumbai and the employees used pseudo names to call up those people to sell the drugs. The drugs sale proceeds were credited into the account of an Indian company at a bank branch in Kharghar area, the official said.

An FIR was registered against 23 people under Indian Penal Code sections 419 (cheating by personation), 420 (cheating) and 34 (common intention) as well as provisions of the Information Technology Act and the Indian Telegraph Act, the official said. On Saturday, the Navi Mumbai police also busted a similar bogus call centre operating from a mall in Nerul area and registered a case against 13 persons in that connection. PTI

Western Railway: Train's coaches get separated at Marine Lines



A Borivali-bound slow train departed from Churchgate station and uncoupled at Marine Lines

around 11.02 am, the Western Railway's chief public relations officer Sumit Thakur said. Three coaches from the rear end got

separated from the rest of the train, he said. As per a statement from the Western Railway, the train had departed from Churchgate at 10.57 am for Borivali.

The passengers were de-boarded and the train was taken to a car shed, it said. Following the incident, slow trains bound for Dahanu were diverted and operated on the fast track, it was stated. A railway motorman told PTI that the incident might have occurred due to some problem with the coupler that connects coaches. PTI

Navi Mumbai police held four Bangladeshi nationals for illegal stay

The Navi Mumbai police have arrested four Bangladeshi nationals, working as masons and construction workers, for living in the country without valid documents, an official said on Sunday. The police's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) arrested the men during a raid at Khairane village around 7 am on Saturday, assistant police inspector Sarika Zarzune said. The men, Kamal Riyaz Choudhari



(41), Kamrun Kamal Choudhari (19), Sohel Afrar Khan (24) and Alamgir Oli Kiryara Sheikh (38), did not possess any valid documents to reside in the country, she said. An offence under relevant

sections of the Indian Penal Code, Passport (Entry into India) Rules 1950 and The Foreigners Act of 1946 has been registered against the arrested accused, the official said. PTI

Police seized banned gutka and tobacco products worth Rs 7.39 lakh, 1 arrested at Airoli



Police seized banned gutka and tobacco products worth Rs 7.39 lakh from an apartment in Airoli area of Navi Mumbai township on Sunday, an official said. One person was arrested after the police conducted a raid in the apartment at around 1 am, the official from Rabale police station said.

Following the raid, the police seized the stock of different brands of gutka and tobacco products, he said, adding a case was registered against the accused under provisions of the

Indian Penal Code and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. The police were trying to find out from where the stock was sourced. The sale and consumption of gutka, scented and flavoured tobacco has been banned in Maharashtra since 2012. PTI

ST bus rammed into a crane kills one person at Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway

One person was killed when a Gujarat state transport bus rammed into a crane on Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district on Sunday, police said. The incident took place at around 3 am when the crane which had hit a road divider on the highway was being reversed, an official from Palghar police

station said. At that time, the bus, belonging to the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation and carrying 35 passengers, rammed into the crane from behind at Dapchari check post on Maharashtra-Gujarat border, he said. The cleaner of the crane was killed in the accident. The body was sent to a government hospital for postmortem, the police added. PTI

Nation

CPI (M) leader Brinda Karat slams RSS says, "principles of India's "mixed culture" are being attacked by those who are a part of RSS"

Communist Party of India (Marxist) Senior leader and Politbureau member Brinda Karat on Sunday slammed the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat's remark that "In this country, there is a religion and culture that respects all sects and faiths. That religion is Hinduism," and said that RSS means 'Rashtriya Sarvasamiti'.

Speaking to ANI, Brinda Karat said that RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat himself is flouting the principle set by himself. She alleged that the values and principles of India's "mixed culture" are being attacked by those who are from the RSS.

"Every day, the leaders of the RSS and their family, whose name is Sangh Parivar, abuse



people and other religions. They give hate speeches and incite people every day. Mohan Bhagwat should answer, if RSS believes in values and principles, why he and others from the organisation attack people belonging to other religions," Karat said while speaking to ANI.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief Mohan Bhagwat drew a comparison between Hinduism in India with the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas and said, "Hinduism respects all sects, and India has never seen a conflict like the one in Israel," he said. Bhag-

wat was speaking at a school programme in Maharashtra's Nagpur on Saturday, which was organised to mark the 350 years since Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation. "In this country, there is a culture that respects all sects and faiths. That religion is Hindu-

ism," Bhagwat said, adding that India is a country of Hindus and "that does not mean we reject all other religions."

The RSS Chief went on to say that the Hindus have protected every religion, a society where followers of many religions can live and practice freely. India's massive population is diverse as well as devout. Not only do most of the world's Hindus, Jains and Sikhs live in India, but it also is home to one of the world's largest Muslim populations and to millions of Christians and Buddhists. "Once you say Hindu, it is not needed to be told that Muslims too were protected. Only Hindus do this. Only India does this. Others have not done this," said the RSS Chief. ANI

Sikkim Floods: Indian Army, BRO, Civil administrations and local continue efforts to reconnect with northern area



After the flash flood caused large-scale destruction in Sikkim, troops of the Indian Army, along with BRO (Border Road Organisation) and the assistance of civil administration and locals, are undertaking operations on a massive scale to reconnect North Sikkim. According to a press release from Defence, while BRO is trying to reconnect the main route

Mangan-Tung-Chungthang, the Indian Army along with BRO and the assistance of locals and civil administration, is making efforts to open up the alternate route Mangan-Sanklang-Theng - Chungthang. This requires construction of two bailey bridges over the Teesta River at Mangan-Sanklang Crossing. Working round the clock, the first bridge was completed on October 22 at 11 a.m.

Areas of North Sikkim ahead of Mangan have remained cut off since October 4. As an immediate response, foot bridges and zip lines were constructed at Chungthang and Sanklang-Mangan Crossing. These have enabled the movement of people on foot and provision of relief material through the zip lines established. As an immediate relief to restore connectivity up to Chungthang via the alternate route Mangan- Sanklang-Theng - Chungthang, troops of Trishakti Corps are undertaking construction of a bailey bridge at Mangan-Sanklang Crossing, 200 metres upstream of where a bamboo bridge and Zip line was constructed earlier, the press release stated. However, the width of the river has increased to 600 feet, with water running along two channels with a 160 feet island in between. The decision was therefore taken to construct two separate bridges. Working on a war footing, the Army finished construction of the 150 feet long first bridge on October 22. ANI

Delhi: Air quality moves to a 'very poor' category with the Air Quality Index at 302

The overall air quality in the National Capital has deteriorated to the 'very poor' category, with the Air Quality Index at 302 on Sunday afternoon, as per data from SAFAR-India. In the morning, the overall air quality was recorded in the 'poor category' with an AQI of 266 against 173 recorded on Saturday.

According to the latest data from the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the air quality around Delhi University was recorded at 330 (very poor) at noon, while IGI Terminal T3 in New Delhi was at 313 against

276 in the morning hours. According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research, the air quality in Kartavya Path at India Gate was recorded at 266 on Sunday morning. Meanwhile, Noida recorded an AQI of 290 (poor) and Gurugram 152 (moderate). Anand Vihar breached the very poor category in New Delhi with an AQI of 345, IT0 with an AQI of 309, New Moti Bagh with an AQI of 360, Dwarkar Sector-8 recorded an AQI of 313. The air quality in the national capital on Friday morning was recorded in the 'moderate' category with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 149. ANI

Punjab: Amritsar police busted smuggling gang, 3 arrested

An interstate arms syndicate gang was busted by the Amritsar police with the arrest of three people, an official statement said on Sunday. According to the official statement, 11 Pistols, 15 live cartridges and Rs two lakh were recovered from their possession.

The arrested accused were

smuggling arms from Madhya Pradesh and supplying them to Punjab, the statement added. Meanwhile, an FIR has been registered under the Arms and Money Laundering Act. The police are putting further efforts into unearthing the whole network of the smuggling racket. Further details are awaited. ANI

World

Israel- Hamas war: Four deceased person's bodies were brought back to Kathmandu

Bodies of four students from Nepal killed in a Hamas attack in Israel have been brought back to Kathmandu on Sunday and are scheduled to be handed over to the family. Nepal's Foreign Minister as well as the Israeli Ambassador to Nepal reached the airport along with other government officials. Speaking to ANI, Israel's Ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder said that they have 1400 bodies in Israel and they are identifying them. He spoke about Bipin Joshi, a student from Nepal, who has gone missing since Hamas launched its attack on Israel.

"We have 1400 bodies in Israel. We are in the middle of identifying the bodies. Not all of them were identified, not all of



the bodies of Nepalis were identified. Unfortunately, today four bodies arrived and the fifth one will arrive in a day or two, we still have five bodies to identify and we will take care and this is our responsibility, they are our family. Let me remind and not forget Mr (Bipin) Joshi. Mr Joshi was seen at the event and was taken by Hamas."

He further said, "We don't

know where he is, we are searching for him, we are calling the International community, we are calling the terrorists to release the citizens, to release the hostages. He was not involved; he was not part of this escalation." He made the remarks after taking part in the tribute ceremony held at Kathmandu airport. The bodies of Narayan Prasad Neupane, Lokendra Singh Dhama, Dipesh

Raj Bista and Ashish Chaudhary were flown to Kathmandu on Sunday. The Israeli Ambassador is scheduled to fly to Dhangadhi, the provincial headquarter of Far-Western Nepal to console the family as well as hand over the body to the relatives.

Speaking to ANI, Hanan Goder expressed commitment to the protection of the people of Israel from further attacks of

Hamas. He said that Hamas murdered civilians, including babies, tortured people and caused a terrible wheel of violence. He said, "We just have concluded the ceremony of receiving the bodies of the murdered Nepali students flown back from Israel. These brave students were murdered two weeks ago by terrorists of Hamas. Those terrorists invaded Israel, invaded our village and murdered these students. These students were not involved, the Hamas murdered civilians, babies, tortured people and created terrible wheel of violence. Israel know how to protect itself. Israel will know how to prevent escalation and we know current situation of Hamas in Gaza will not continue." ANI

Gilgit Baltistan: Resident protested against local administration, blamed the security forces for misusing the Anti-Terrorism Act against the activists and residents



Residents launched a protest against the local administration in the Skardu district of Gilgit Baltistan over the arrest of Shabbir Mayyar, a prominent activist who was demanding the opening of Skardu-Kargil Road. The occupied region has long been grappling with severe crises such as high inflation and shortage of commodities, and people have been demanding the resumption of trade with India.

The protesters blamed the

security forces for misusing the Anti-Terrorism Act against the activists and the residents. The protesters said they believed that the Islamabad-backed local administration in Gilgit Baltistan is against their reasonable demand for the opening of the Skardu-Kargil road and have been arresting those who speak up in their favour.

A local leader from the Awami Action Committee addressed a public gathering, demanding the immediate re-

lease of Shabbir Mayyar. "He (Shabbir Mayyar) is the voice of Gilgit-Baltistan. He should be released immediately. The only crime Shabbir Mayyar committed was that he raised a slogan, 'Aar par Jod do, Kargil border khol do' (Remove barricades from the Kargil border and let the people commute). Whoever speaks of the Kargil border is threatened and punished by them," he said.

The arrest of Shabbir Mayyar and many other activists has triggered widespread unrest among locals. Another local activist said, "Our community is not afraid of anyone. Rather than listening to the public, they (the administration) are arresting the poor. They think that by arresting poor people, they can scare us. No, we aren't afraid. We are here to prove them wrong. Through this platform, I announce that we are all with Shabbir Mayyar. Unless they are released, we will stand by them." ANI

Maldives: Tragic incident at Haa Dhaal Makunudhoo island leaves two dead, Indian High Commission 'deeply saddened'



The Indian High Commission in Maldives expressed sorrow on Sunday over the death of two Indian nationals in a tragic incident on Haa Dhaal Makunudhoo island in Maldives. Following the incident, the Indian High Commission is in touch with Maldivian authorities and the families of the victims. Taking to X, the Indian High Commission in Maldives stated, "We are deeply saddened by the tragic incident on Haa Dhaal Makunudhoo island in which two Indian nationals have lost their lives. High Commission is in close contact with Maldivian authorities as well as the families of the victims."

Two people were killed in a gas cylinder explosion in Haa Dhaal atoll Makunudhoo, Mal-

dives-based The Edition reported citing police. The report did not reveal the identities of individuals who lost their lives. However, police confirmed that two foreign nationals died in the incident.

According to the police, the incident took place when a gas cylinder located near the fish market exploded, The Edition reported. The victims were identified as two foreign men and both were employed by a company engaged in land reclamation work for Makunudhoo Airport. Pictures circulating on social media showed some of the portion of the ceiling collapsed in a nearby building, according to The Edition report. Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) along with the police is carrying out the investigation into the incident. ANI

Expression

The Pen's Profound Impact



Aubaid Ahmad Akhoo

Columnist

The age-old adage that "the pen is mightier than the sword" holds a profound truth in its simplicity. It suggests that the power of the written word and the ideas it conveys can have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on individuals, societies, and generations. In this short article, I aim to explore the concept that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword, as it has the potential to penetrate the psyche, shape mentalities, and influence the destiny of societies and generations.

The Sword and Its Limited

Reach: The sword, a symbol of physical force and violence, is undoubtedly destructive. It can inflict immediate harm, causing physical wounds and sometimes leading to death. However, its power is confined to the physical realm, often leaving psychological and ideological wounds untouched.

The Pen as a Mind-Altering

Weapon: In contrast, the pen, representing the written and spoken word, possesses the unique ability to penetrate the psyche. Through the dissemination of ideas, knowledge, and perspectives, it can influence, shape, and mold the way individuals think, perceive, and understand the world. The power of the pen lies in its capacity to challenge preconceived notions, provoke thought, and spark intellectual growth.

Shaping Mentalities: When wielded skillfully, the pen can shape mentalities, not in a harmful way, but in a transformative one. It encourages critical thinking, self-reflection, and the exploration of new concepts. The written word can challenge dogmas, break down mental barriers, and ultimately lead to the growth of individuals' intellectual and emotional capacities.

Consider, for example, the influence of historical documents like the Declaration of Independence or literary works such as George Orwell's "1984." These texts have significantly shaped the course of history and have prompted

generations to reevaluate their understanding of freedom and totalitarianism.

The Pen and Its Impact on Society:

The power of the pen extends beyond the individual. It has the capacity to shape societies by influencing collective thoughts, behaviors, and values. Through literature, journalism, speeches, and art, the pen has played a pivotal role in social and political movements. It has ignited revolutions, advocated for human rights, and exposed societal injustices.

Think about the role of journalism and the power of investigative reporting. Journalists have often exposed corruption, inequality, and social injustices, driving societies to address these issues. The pen has also played a significant role in advocating for civil rights, women's suffrage, and LGBTQ+ rights, contributing to more inclusive and equitable societies.

Generational Influence: The pen's influence is not confined to a single generation. It can transcend time, shaping the beliefs and values of generations to come. Literary classics, philosophical treatises, and historical documents continue to shape the minds of individuals long after their authors have passed away. These texts serve as a bridge between

the past, present, and future, ensuring that the pen's influence endures.

Consider the enduring influence of ancient philosophical texts like Plato's "The Republic" or religious scriptures like the Bible or the Quran. These texts continue to guide and shape the moral and ethical foundations of societies worldwide.

Challenges of the Pen: While the pen's power to shape mentalities and influence society is undeniable, it is not without challenges. With great power comes great responsibility. The misuse of the pen can lead to misinformation, propaganda, and the manipulation of minds. It is imperative that writers, journalists, and educators wield this power ethically, with a commitment to truth and integrity.

Bottom Line: In a world where ideas and information are more accessible than ever, the pen's impact is more pronounced than at any point in history. Its ability to penetrate the psyche, shape mentalities, and influence societies and generations is a testament to the enduring power of knowledge and ideas. As individuals, we must be discerning readers and critical thinkers, and as creators of content, we must wield the pen with a profound awareness of its potential to shape the world. The pen is not just mightier than the sword; it is, indeed,

a force that can shape the essence of humanity itself. Influential writers throughout history have shaped the way we think, perceive the world, and understand human nature. Their works have not only endured the test of time but have also left an indelible mark on literature, culture, and society. William Shakespeare, Leo Tolstoy, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, George Orwell, Chinua Achebe, Maya Angelou, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Harper Lee. In India Rabindranath Tagore, R.K Narayan, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, A.P. J Abdul Kalam, Alama Iqbal, Munshi Premchand, Ismat Chughtai, Sadat Hassan Mantoo, Mirza Ghalib, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Krishen Chander, Javed Akhter, Nida Fazil, Qurratulain Hyder.

These writers have not only produced exceptional literary works but have also had a profound influence on social, cultural, and political conversations. Their writing continues to resonate with readers, providing insights into the human experience that transcend time and place. Whether through the beauty of language or the power of their ideas, influential writers have left an enduring legacy. Their works continue to be celebrated and cherished by readers and scholars alike.



Entertainment



Actor Emily Blunt issues apology for the 2012 video as she was criticized for calling waitress 'enormous'

Actor Emily Blunt is under fire for a resurfaced interview in which she referred to a Chili's waitress as "enormous", according to Page Six. The actress, 40, was a guest on the UK's 'The Jonathan Ross Show' in September 2012 when she decided to share a story about how she dined at one of the chain restaurant's locations in Louisiana while filming the film 'Looper'.

The 'Devil Wears Prada' actor claimed that after the woman verified her identity, the woman exclaimed, "What are y'all doing here?!" with enthusiasm. The 2012 interview clip has reappeared on the internet, and many Twitter (now X) users are upset with Emily Blunt.

She's been labelled "fatphobic," which means she made fun of or disrespected someone because of their size. "Emily Blunt being blatantly fatphobic wasn't on my 2023 bingo card but here we are," one critic posted alongside a clip of the moment. "Scratch her off my crush list.???", "JFC Emily, we were rooting for you too. Smh," "Why would she described [sic] her like that? That was so unnecessary" and "its so easy to tell when people honestly believe waitstaff are below them/lesser members of society" were just some of the remarks that followed.

The 'Oppenheimer' star has since released a statement, telling Page Six her "jaw was on the floor" when she watched a video of her appearance. "I'm appalled that I would say something so insensitive, hurtful and unrelated to whatever story I was trying to tell on a talk show," Blunt lamented, reported Page Six. **ANI**

'Tiger 3' franchise is all set to release its song 'Leke Prabhu Ka Naam' starring Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif



Actor Salman Khan has expressed his excitement on the release of the song 'Leke Prabhu Ka Naam' from his most-anticipated movie 'Tiger 3'. He said that it is among his favourite dance tracks and he hopes that people will love watching him and Katrina Kaif in this chartbuster. The song will be out tomorrow and there is a lot of buzz since the makers dropped the teaser of the song.

Salman said, "Katrina and I have some great songs together and I understand that the expectation from people every time we do a song together will be sky-high! I'm very confident that 'Leke Prabhu Ka Naam' will make people happy." He added, "It is a dance track that I personally love. It is probably one of the best dance tracks of my career! Katrina and I have been fortunate to have chartbusters that have entertained people across the world. I hope 'Leke Prabhu Ka Naam' does this too and becomes a global hit!"

Earlier, Katrina shared her experience on shooting for the track with Salman, Katrina said, "Dancing with Salman is always amazing and I take away so many wonderful memories of shooting for Leke Prabhu Ka Naam. Just as Swag Se Swagat was received with so much love, we hope Leke Prabhu Ka Naam will raise the bar even higher." On Friday, the makers of 'Tiger 3' dropped a teaser of the film's song 'Leke Prabhu Ka Naam'. **ANI**

Actor Priyanka Chopra pens a sweet birthday wish for cousin Parineeti says, "Hope you're surrounded by so much love"

Priyanka Chopra and her cousin Parineeti Chopra are quite close, and they frequently post peeks of their bond on social media. As Parineeti celebrates her birthday today, Priyanka shared a heartfelt greeting for her. She took to her Instagram stories and posted a lovely photo with Parineeti. She wrote in the caption, "Happiest birthday Tisha. Hope you're surrounded by so much love and joy today and always".

In the picture, while Priyanka can be seen wearing a yellow crop top and skirt, Parineeti opted for a white-coloured short dress. Priyanka never misses out on any opportunity to express her love for Parineeti. While she couldn't be with her bestie, cousin Parineeti Chopra, at her wedding with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Raghav Chadha, actor and global icon Priyanka Chopra showered her blessings on the newlyweds and penned an adorable note for them as well. **ANI**



Actor Rashmika Mandanna is all set to work for the new project 'The Girlfriend'

Actor Rashmika Mandanna is set to headline "The Girlfriend", a film presented by veteran producer Allu Aravind of Geetha Arts, the makers announced on Sunday. The upcoming movie is written and directed by Rahul Ravindran, known for films such as "Chi La Sow" and "Manmadhudu 2". Geetha Arts shared the film announcement along with its first look on its official X page. "The world is full of great love stories. But there are those few love stories that haven't been heard or seen before. And 'The Girlfriend' is one such. #RM24 @GeethaArts Production No.51 is #TheGirlfriend," the banner said in the post. "The Girlfriend" is also produced by Mass Movie Makers and Dheeraj Mogillineni Entertainment. Mandanna's upcoming projects include "Animal" and "Pushpa: The Rule". **PTI**