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No respite for Dalits even after demise

Jesbin Sam Mathew

The upper caste has been dominating for years, resulting in the continuous marginalisation of the Dalit community in Indian society, opined Vijayan K K, former Kerala State secretary of the Dalit Chamber of Indian Commerce, condemning the denial of burial grounds to Dalits in Bidar, Karnataka.

The funeral of a 55-year-old Dalit man was disrupted last week in Murga village in the Kamalanagar taluk of Bidar district by members of upper castes. The Dalits were forced to move the corpse by a group of individuals who claimed that the public crematory was only for upper-caste people. The majority of villages have caste-based monopolies over the public cemeteries that the government has assigned, due to which Dalits are forced to bury the dead on the banks of distant rivers or streams.

Speaking to The Beacon, Vijayan K K said, "A sizable percentage of Dalit women in India experience rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and physical assault." He pointed out that along with these issues, the education sector has emerged as a major obstacle for the Dalit people. The government and upper caste-dominated political parties are attempting to limit the number of seats reserved for the Dalit groups.

Art is profoundly political: Prakash Raj

Megha Mukundan

CAMPUS: When veteran actor Prakash Raj started his social media hashtag #justasking in 2017, little did we know that the questions he raised would be potential enough to ignite a political movement. Now, the actor stands out as an artist and an activist, as he believes art should be profoundly political.

When The Beacon caught up with Raj for a chat, he was more than happy to share his views. "Art cannot be for art's sake when the whole country is burning, and it is inseparable from the artist," he said. He thinks that art is something that documents and heals the atmosphere at the same time, and therefore we are not here for mere entertainment. He was speaking on the sidelines of the film festival titled The Elephant and the Ant: Story



Actor-activist Prakash Raj

Anandhu KH

of a Republic, at St. Joseph's University, on Wednesday. Raj is quite a familiar face to Indian audiences for his exemplary works in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films. He is also an active voice among the public, especially after his friend Gauri Lankesh's assassination, and has contested in

the 2019 general election for the Bengaluru Central constituency.

Regarding Indian movies crossing the line between freedom of expression and offending religious sentiments, the actor thinks the limit is within oneself to decide how to use the given

freedom. Liberty allows one to grow and to empower, but at the same time, it wants them to be fair. The mode of expression is one's own choice according to the National Award-winning actor.

He also opined on the need to speak out about the metoo accusations in the film

industry. "Whether an actor or a politician, a man against woman is wrong, and we should be human enough to resist that," he opined. Silence is the most dangerous attire one can wear and also it strengthens the oppressors. Continuous resistance will bring a change in the country, and it is important to be on the battlefield all along.

Expressing his opinion on raging communalism in India, he said that every religion would turn evil if given the chance and power. "As Hindutva is dominant in the country, it is more evident, but whether it be Christian or Islam, they all do the same thing, and no religion can claim it is clean," he asserted. He added that religion is personal and addressing it should not be for any political show or benefit.

ASHA is an 'asha' for the rural health of India

Sowmya A.

While infant mortality in developing countries at an institutional health facility is on gradual decline, the deaths happening due to the shunning of institutional facilities during pregnancy in India often goes unnoticed.

Among others, poverty is the primary reason many refuse the facilities of healthcare institutions. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), a community of health workers appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as a part of India's National Rural

Health Mission is educating and helping pregnant women to deliver safely by acting as a link between them and the health centres.

M Muniyamma, an ASHA worker, said that lack of health education and poverty is the main reason for pregnant women not visiting hospitals. "Believing that going to the hospital is a superstitious and personal thing, many women refuse to visit hospitals for check-ups and other things," she opined. As most women in villages gave birth all these years to 10 to 20 babies without any medical help, they believe seeking assis-

tance from a hospital is unnecessary.

With a Primary Health Care Centre for every three to four villages, ASHA workers take pregnant women to these centres for routine check-ups. Medicines and injections are also available with them.

POSHAN Abhiyaan, a scheme under the Grama Nir-malya Arogya Samiti (GNAS), conducts a programme 'Postica Arogya Samiti' which aims at disseminating knowledge about a healthy diet for pregnant women. Through this programme, the ASHA workers educate women about what type

of food to intake during pregnancy like sprouts, milk, eggs, and green leafy vegetables every third week of Saturday in Anganwadis. Pregnant women are also educated about the importance of hygiene through this programme.

Through SNEHA CLINIC, a Karnataka state programme, we educate pregnant women about the importance of going to the hospital and also what to consume during pregnancy, she told The Beacon. They often take a survey and inform people about the type of food that is available in their region and is best for maintaining good health.

'Golden moment for India's democracy'

Anuja Jose

CAMPUS: Under the current dispensation, the farmers' scoring a victory through protests was a golden moment for India's democracy, opined Amandeep Sandhu, writer and journalist, at a panel discussion on agricultural laws and policies.

The panel discussion is part of the three-day film festival 'The Elephant and the Ant: Story of a Republic' held at St. Joseph's University from Oct 19, organised by Bangalore Film Society (BFI) in collaboration with Pedestrian Pictures, Rushes Film Club - St. Joseph's University and Gamana Women's Collective.

Tracing the current farmers' protest back to Punjab's farm agitation legacy he observed that the protest was successful because of the years of struggle the state went through. He also compared this success with the protests in Bengaluru. "Lift your narrative to a level where you dominate and others fall short," he stated. He felt that the Hindutva bandwagon didn't know how to deal with the protests like Hijab ban protest that sprung up soon after the farmers' protest. "It was a true victory," he said.

Gold Tea served with noble intention

Ashish Bhandarkar

BENGALURU: One of the fuels that keep Bangalore going is the 5 ounces of tea and coffee served in every corner of the city. Ever thought of what happens to the plastic cups it's served in? A youth has been toiling to spread awareness about climate change among the Josephites by offering biscuit cups as a solution.

Gold tea is a startup by Akash Show, a 23-year-old goldsmith from Jayram Chak village in West Bengal. Serving the beverage in biscuit cups might not



Gold Tea stall Special Arrangement

be a unique concept, but Show has made a symbolic attempt to reduce plastic

usage in the city. Talking to the Beacon, Akash said, "Constant floods back home made me realise the role of plastic in climate change. So, I decided to stop using any material contributing to it."

Saddened by the abundance of discarded garbage on the streets and the ignorance of people, he decided to make a living along with an effort to educate the masses. He wishes to open a zero-waste cafe with his savings and start an NGO to reinstate the city's glory of being the garden city.

Get-A-Whey from guilt!

Srijit Ray

BENGALURU: Do you think ice creams are unhealthy? Well, not anymore! Get-A-Whey, India's first-ever healthy ice cream is based on whey protein.

The company was founded by Jimmy Shah and her son, Jash Shah who pitched the idea in Shark Tank India, impressing the investors. Aman Gupta, Ashneer Grover and Vineeta Singh teamed up to invest substantially in their start-up which propelled their business forward.

Whey is the leftover liquid after milk is curdled and strained. It contains essential

amino acids and also helps in increasing strength and gaining muscle. This ice cream has four times the protein compared to regular ones, is sugar-free and very low on calories. They also have keto-friendly variants and have recently launched diabetic-friendly kulfis.

A food festival in Bangalore displayed this unique nutrient-rich dessert which satisfied the palette of the visitors. Riddhi Chhabriya, the owner of the stall, said, "It is so good, you will forget that it's healthy...and our speciality is the Blueberry and Ice cream sandwich."