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Free speech under threat

Pratham Basu

Criticising the government's measure against journalists in the capital, Mohan Rao, a retired JNU professor said that the suppression of free speech, akin to methods used in Kashmir, extends across the nation today. People need to stand up against the government's "black laws" and express public dissent, he stressed. He was deliberating at the second instalment of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) dialogues on the consequences of the seizure of 46 NewsClick employees' devices and the reopening of the 13-year-old case against Arundhati Roy. NewsClick and Arundhati Roy are among the brave few who dare to raise their voices, he said. Mihir Desai, a senior human rights lawyer at the Bombay High Court, pointed out the threat to Arundhati Roy referring to the FIR filed against her as she objected to raids on NewsClick. "These tactics are being used today to suppress voices in civil society, affecting human rights lawyers, Dalit activists, academicians, and students alike," he said. The application of the UAPA against NewsClick journalists was a harrowing testament to the inadequate protection of journalists, said Ashutosh Gupta, a former IBN7 Editor.

BBMP tepid in managing illegal banners

Anu Priya

BENGALURU: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is allegedly in favour of advertisements which has led to the mushrooming of hoardings and illegal flexes.

The Karnataka High Court criticized the BBMP for its poor handling of unauthorized hoardings and flex banners in the city, on Wednesday. The court stated that the BBMP officers were colluding with advertisers and that the illegal advertisements were leading to a loss of revenue and the "uglification" of the city.

"I believe that BBMP is in favour of advertisements and maybe that is the reason for all the illegal hoardings, advertisement boards and flexes which have caused a lot of trouble to the public. Even after raising the issue and bringing it to the light



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of the public they were least bothered to replace it", said a politician and activist from Mahadevapura.

During the hearing, the HC observed that the BBMP had become enemy number one of the city. The court said that the BBMP had failed to remove the illegal hoardings. It is instead claiming a lack of funds for providing facilities to the people.

Through excessive advertising of the product or brand the common consumers are actually getting cheated. It is the mafia of the advertising agencies, where the buying and owning of a product has become a business. The advertising agencies search for prominent places with a strategic vantage, which benefits both the owners of the building and the spots

which include buildings, circles, roads, and highways, said Dr. Venkatesh ex-parliament member of Lok Sabha.

There is flow of money and when money is present the situation will inevitably get involved with politics. And day by day the boards and flexes are increasing which means that there is an increase in corruption. As a

result of corruption there is inefficient implementation of rules and regulations. And the punishments for it should be as per the laws and acts imposed by the HC, said Dr. Venkatesh talking to the beacon. The HC ordered the civic body to conduct a survey across the city to find out how many permissions were given for hoardings, how much revenue was collected, and what were the actions taken against illegal flexes. According to the BBMP, notices have so far been sent to 242 officers for delays or lapses in taking action against unauthorised advertisements and hoardings. They had also issued instructions to lodge First Information Reports (FIRs) wherever necessary. The court has ordered the BBMP to submit a report before November 28.

Balancing rights: Court's abortion verdict

Hemalatha Y N

On October 16, the Supreme Court rejected the 26-week pregnant woman's plea for abortion. The plea mentioned the financial and family problems the woman is going through. She is a mother of two children and is currently under the care of her mother-in-law.

Advocate Kiran Kumar said that this decision by the Supreme Court is complex. It's important to consider the rights of both the unborn child and the woman. Given the advanced stage of the pregnancy, the woman's autonomy should



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be a priority, particularly if her mental health or ability to care for her existing children is at risk. To find a balance, we must carefully assess the woman's physical and mental well-being and financial situation. However, since the woman is already 26 weeks pregnant, there are time limits to consider.

"The Supreme Court had (earlier) requested the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) medical institute to evaluate the woman's mental and physical condition to help her make a safe decision, and based on the medical board's report which was sent yesterday, the Supreme

Court rejected the women's decision on the termination of the baby.

Speaking to The Beacon Dr. Rahul Chakravarthy explained that allowing or disallowing an abortion at 26 weeks of pregnancy comes with risks and consequences. According to the MTP Act, termination is generally allowed for up to 24 weeks.

Allowing the abortion may pose a risk to the survival of the unborn child, as their chances of survival are high at this stage. However, if the mother's health or other complications are considered, it may be safer to proceed with termination.

Learn your voting rights

Sinchan Saha

Voting is a fundamental right, and everyone should be educated about it, opined Ameen E Mudassar from the CIGMA Foundation. Hosted by Fathima Saba S, the Lifeline Foundation organised an online Zoom session on Sunday, October 15. This session enlightened first-time voters on how to apply for a voter ID. Mudassar highlighted that weaker sections of India have often struggled to understand their basic rights as citizens, including voting. "The very purpose of having this training is to encourage the volunteers and NGOs to give their free time, help the people who struggle to get their voter ID cards, and help people understand the importance of their votes," he said. The session was in-depth, with the participation of over 40 people, and I look forward to more such sessions, said Fathima. Moderated by Ameen E Mudassar, the training was conducted by Shaista Syed, one of the fourteen CSC certificate holders in India.

Media plays a different game

Shoaib Shakeel

BENGALURU : The National Media Cricket Club team emerged as victors of the Inter-Media Tennis Ball Cricket tournament held at St. Joseph's University, over the weekend.

The two-day tournament was hosted by the National Media Cricket Club. This was the fourth edition of the tournament held after a year's gap in its proceedings. Ten teams representing reputed media organisations participated in the tournament this year. Conversing with The Beacon, Sagay Raj, deputy

editor of India Today, said that journalists are always on the run because of the nature of their work. Such events allow journalists to interact with others from various media organisations, becoming a medium for a fraternity gathering.

"There is a tough competition between us when it comes to TRP and circulations, but in these kinds of things, we meet, we greet and get to know each other," Raj added. "Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. They have a tough job because they

have to bring information to the people and therefore, they get to empower the people with knowledge, to be able to do that, they have to be fit physically and mentally," said Dr Sreekanth Shetty, Senior Consultant & Head Interventional Cardiology Sakra World Hospital, present on representing the Sakra World Hospital.

Ramalinga Reddy, Minister of Transport, Government of Karnataka, and Fr Victor Lobo, Vice Chancellor of St Joseph's University were present on the occasion.

Hopes high for Olympics bid

Dattatraya Dutta

India's bid to host Olympics 2036 was announced by PM Narendra Modi while addressing the gathering at the inauguration of the 141st International Olympic Committee (IOC) session in Mumbai last Sunday. The PM emphasised India's efficacy in hosting global sporting events, referring to recent events in the country, such as the Chess Olympiad, which witnessed the participation of 186 countries, the Football Under-17 Women's World Cup, the Hockey World Cup, the Women's World

Boxing Championship, the Shooting World Cup, and the ongoing Cricket World Cup. He affirmed that such global events are an opportunity for India to welcome the world and demonstrate its adeptness in hosting global events owing to its fast-growing economy and well-developed infrastructure. India is eager to host the Olympics in the country, he said. "India will leave no stone unturned in the preparation for the successful organisation of the Olympics in 2036; this is the dream of 140 crore Indians," the PM added.