

HUMOUR TIMES

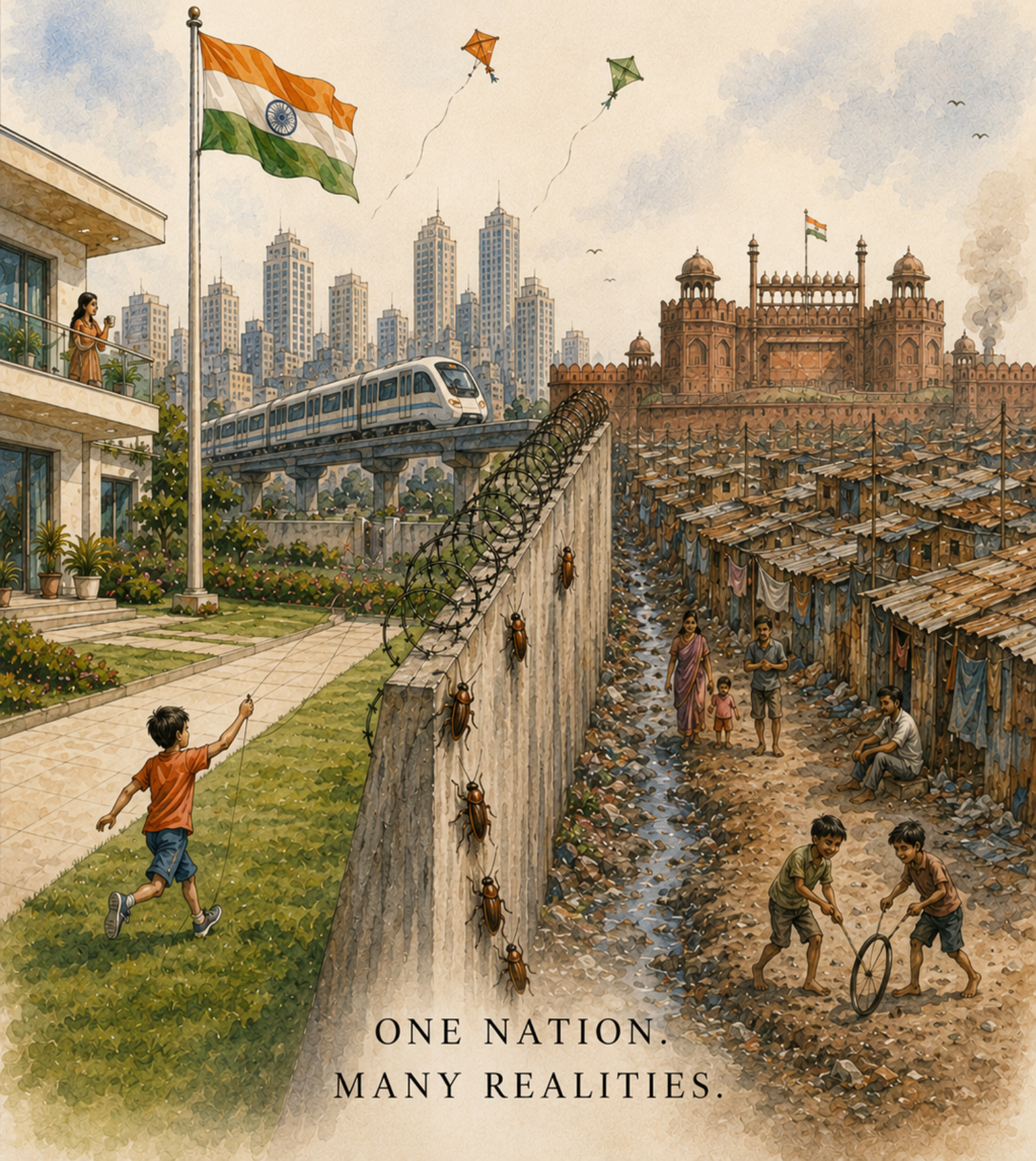
JEST FOR FUN!

Vol.8, Issue 8

KARBIL/2018/77414

10th August 2026

INDIA'S ONLY BILINGUAL HUMOUR AND SATIRE MAGAZINE



ONE NATION.
MANY REALITIES.



FROM THE LEMON SQUEEZER'S DESK

Dear Readers,

If you ever thought truth was funnier than fiction, July 2026 just sent a bill for it.

Our Narad Muni, sage of good humour, has quit his job, as Netas took over, and honestly, they are better at it.

India kicked off the month by proving cockroaches have better PR than politicians. A judicial pontiff compared jobless youth to cockroaches. Big mistake. Never insult a generation with unlimited data and unlimited sarcasm. Within days, Cockroaches crawled corridors in New Delhi.

People marched with gay pride. Tear gas got turned into a product review. Police barricades became photo backdrops. The minister quit. Lesson learned: never mess with an insect that has Wi-Fi. Experts said humour industry saw a golden period.

In the parliament, humour and comedy set new records, reflecting India's confidence from nonchalance.

Meanwhile, Khajuraho Airport became India's top-rated airport, despite having almost no flights. Turns out the secret to great service is simple: remove the customers. No lines. No lost bags. No crying kids. No "your flight is delayed by six hours" announcements. What an idea, sir ji.

In Uttar Pradesh, newlyweds got mattresses printed with political symbols. Apparently even your honeymoon bed needs a vote of confidence now. Couples weren't sure if they'd received bedding or a TMC campaign poster with extra padding.

Not to be outdone, Gujarat offered a seven-foot crocodile chilling in someone's bathroom.

Forget smart homes. India now does surprise wildlife visits. Imagine walking in half-asleep and meeting a dinosaur's cousin.

Kerala turned a wedding into a math puzzle. Twin brothers married twin sisters, with twin priests running the ceremony. Guests spent the night whispering, "Wait, whose husband is that?" The photographer deserved a medal.

The rest of the world wasn't going to be outdone either.

An American hiker accidentally stabbed himself with his own trekking pole, then casually walked ten miles for help. Friends now call him "Bob the Human Kebab." That's either bravery or the strongest painkillers on Earth.

Another American climbed into a portable toilet chasing a bottle of Mountain Dew and got stuck for eight hours. Some people chase dreams.

Others chase soda. Both make history.

Colorado gave us a fully naked man surfing on top of a moving train. Experts can't decide if it was art, a midlife crisis, or someone who took "dress for success" the wrong way.

And in Moscow, two robots got married. Their vows were written by AI. Divorce lawyers are already updating their software.

Lessons from July:

Don't insult young people with Wi-Fi.

Don't trust an empty airport's five-star rating.

Check the bathroom before you check your teeth.

Never enter a portable toilet for a soda.

And if two robots invite you to their wedding, bring a charger, not flowers.

Politicians keep promising to make history. July just made comedy instead.

We at the Humour Times are a little nervous. If reality keeps writing material this good, satirists might be out of a job.

*Yours in Jest,
Brij Khandelwal*

AM I THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH?

(ACCORDING TO MY WIFE)

BRIJ KHANDELWAL

Scientists have spent centuries hunting the force that governs the universe. Marx nominated money. Freud nominated sex. Einstein bent space and time. All of them, it turns out, were looking in the wrong house. **One wife has isolated the variable behind inflation, monsoons, cockroaches and missing lids.** It is her husband, and he is available for consultation by the United Nations.

Scientists have spent centuries searching for the force that controls the universe.

Karl Marx said it was money. Freud insisted it was sex. Galileo moved the Sun to the centre. Einstein curved space and time.

Economists blame inflation. Politicians blame the Opposition.

My wife blames me.

"The centre of the universe," she says, "is you."

Not because I am a billionaire. Not because I discovered gravity. Certainly not because I resemble Ganesh Lincoln.

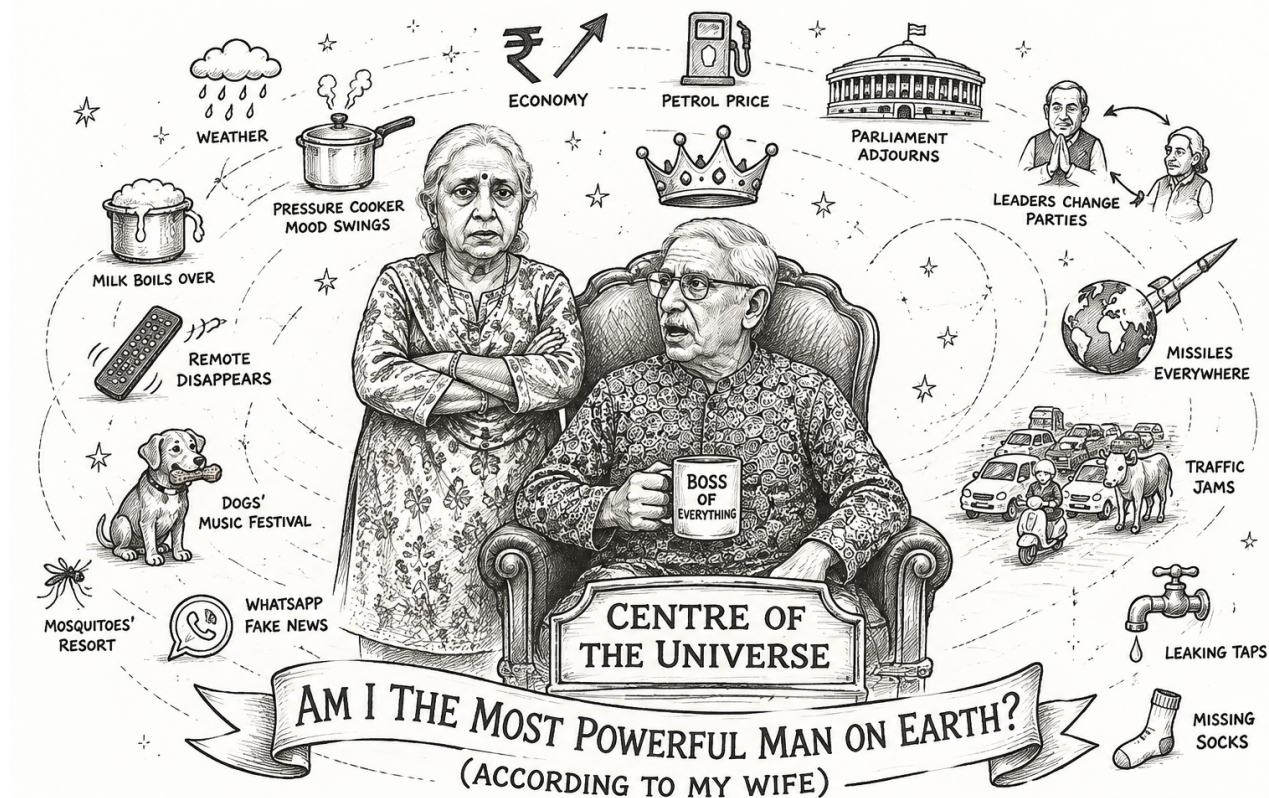
No. According to her, I am the original manufacturer of every problem known to civilisation.

Gen Z has lost its way because of me.

Neighbourhood dogs conduct all-night music festivals because I once fed them biscuits. Cockroaches have captured the kitchen because they know I am "soft on illegal immigrants."

Mosquitoes treat our bedroom as an all-inclusive resort because I forgot to close one window.

I ask, rather timidly, "How exactly am I responsible?" She looks at me with the pity



normally reserved for people
who still think politicians read
election manifestos.

"You'll never understand."
Case closed.

If the milk boils over, I
distracted it.
If the pressure cooker hoots like
Vande Bharat train, I must have
upset its mood.
If the mixer refuses to start, I
have damaged its confidence.

The TV remote disappears, and
I become the prime suspect.
Hours later it emerges from the
refrigerator, resting comfortably
beside yesterday's leftover dal.
No apology follows. The
investigation simply moves on.

The weather also reports to me.

If it rains on our holiday, I
planned the trip. If it doesn't
rain, I have offended the
monsoon. If Agra touches forty-
six degrees, I should have
planted more trees.

If Mysuru floods, I probably
washed the dog.

The economy is another
department under my invisible
ministry. Petrol becomes
expensive.

Tomatoes start behaving like
imported jewellery.

Cooking oil climbs another hill.

The rupee sneezes.
She looks at me as though I
personally chaired the meeting
at the Reserve Bank.

Politics is equally exhausting.

If Parliament adjourns, I must
have switched on the television.

If a leader changes parties for
the fourth time in a month, I
apparently inspired him by
changing news channels too
often.

If somebody promises "achhe
din" or "better days," she asks
why I believed it.

International affairs refuse to
spare me.

If America imposes tariffs, I
should have sent them better
advice.

If China builds another bridge,
I clearly failed to stop them.

If somebody launches a missile
anywhere on Earth, she
wonders why I was busy reading
the newspaper instead of
preventing it.

Even the neighbourhood
WhatsApp group falls under my
jurisdiction.

Somebody forwards fake news
about plastic rice, glowing
bananas or aliens buying plots in
Noida.
She sighs.

"People have too much free
time."

Then she looks at me.
"And you encourage them."

The day I leave home five
minutes late, every traffic signal
turns red, every scooter chooses
my lane, every cow organises a
roadside convention, and every
auto-rickshaw driver suddenly
develops Formula One
ambitions.

Scientists continue searching for
dark matter. They should
interview my wife.

She has already identified the
invisible force behind inflation,
pollution, potholes, climate
change, missing socks, leaking
taps, noisy neighbours, barking
dogs, slow Wi-Fi and the
mysterious disappearance of
every caps and lids.

The answer is astonishingly
simple.

Me.

Sometimes I think of informing
the United Nations about my
extraordinary powers. Why
waste billions on climate
summits, peace talks and
economic conferences when one
middle-class husband apparently
controls geopolitics, municipal
drainage, household appliances,
weather systems and canine
psychology?

Sadly, I cannot reveal my
identity.

Because tomorrow morning, if
the tea is cold, the toast burns,
or the newspaper arrives late,
there will be another emergency
cabinet meeting at home.

The verdict has already been
written.

Guilty.

After all, when your wife
believes you run the universe,
arguing is not an act of courage.

It is merely the opening
ceremony of the Third World
War, fought entirely inside a
cosy home.

SAALA

DELULU

BEHEN@#%!

F***

RIZZ

DAMN!

NPC...

BLOODY

LANGUAGE
IS COOKED.
LET IT COOK.

- GEN Z

WTF!

CHAL NA
BEHEN*CH%@!

MADARCHOD

BC!

CHUTIYA

KYA MAAR
RAHA HAI?

#%&!

FOMO

CLOCK IT

IDGAF

THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

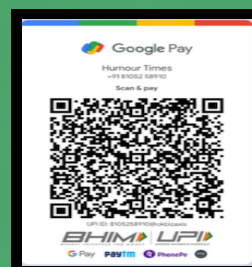
WHY FOUL LANGUAGE MATTERS

By Mukta K Gupta

LOVE OUR SATIRE?
SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
MONTHLY HUMOUR. ZERO FILTER.
DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX.

HUMOUR TIMES

India's only bilingual satire & humour magazine

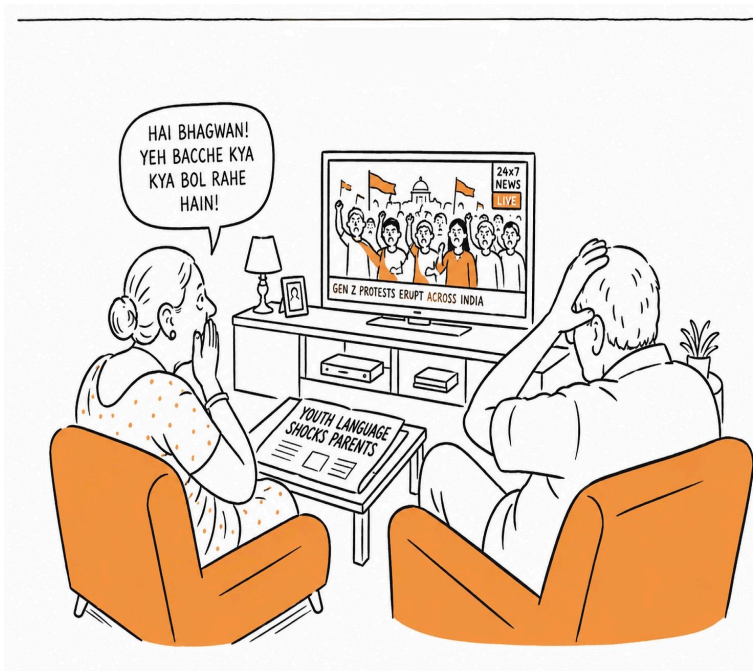


Annual
Subscription
Rs 1200/-

THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

WHY FOUL LANGUAGE MATTERS

BY MUKTA K GUPTA



There is something wonderfully predictable about adults discovering that young people swear.

Every generation eventually reaches the same alarming conclusion:

The children have ruined language.

And every generation is, of course, completely wrong.

The latest suspects are Gen Z.

The Gen Z vocabulary, we are told, is aggressive, vulgar, lazy and occasionally incomprehensible. They swear in conversations, captions, comments, stand-up routines, gaming streams and political protests. They say things our parents would have considered unprintable. They also casually use words like *delulu*, *rizz*, *FOMO*, *clock it* and *NPC*, forcing the rest of us to occasionally consult Google before participating in a conversation with a nineteen-year-old.

But perhaps we are looking at the wrong thing. The interesting question isn't why young people swear.

It is why certain words become swear words in the first place.

Because foul language is not fixed. It is a moving target.

And the history of civilisation can, surprisingly, be traced through the things we once considered too offensive to say at the dinner table.

The words change. The outrage doesn't.

Take the word "**bloody**."

Today, it sounds almost quaint. A mildly British expression one might associate with an irritated gentleman waiting for his train.

But there was a time when *bloody* was genuinely shocking.

When George Bernard Shaw used it in *Pygmalion* in 1914, it caused a scandal. The word was considered so vulgar that its appearance on stage became a cultural event.

Today, *bloody* is practically something your grandmother might say after discovering that the Wi-Fi has stopped working.

Language had moved on.

So had the taboo.

Then there is “**damn.**”

Once a serious religious expression invoking eternal damnation, it gradually became an ordinary expression of irritation. When Rhett Butler told Scarlett O'Hara, “*Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn*” in *Gone with the Wind*, the line was considered provocative enough to attract censorship attention.

Today?

A teenager can probably say considerably stronger things before breakfast.

This is the strange thing about profanity.

Words don't become less offensive because dictionaries change. They become less offensive because society changes.

The taboo simply migrates.

Shakespeare was no saint either

We like to imagine that profanity is a modern invention of teenagers with smartphones.

Shakespeare would have found this adorable. His characters called people *whoresons, knaves, cankers, toads, dunghills* and assorted combinations of things that would probably get a modern person muted on social media. What Shakespeare understood was something we sometimes forget:

An insult is not merely a bad word. It is a creative act.

The Bard could construct an insult like a five-course meal.

The internet often serves you a packet of instant noodles.

And that brings us neatly to India.

From the gali to YouTube

Indian languages have always had extraordinarily rich traditions of abuse.

Every Indian family knows this.

We may pretend otherwise in polite company, but there lies an entire parallel dictionary of swear words.

Some attack your intelligence.

Some attack your ancestors.

Some question your parentage.

Some drag an entire genealogy into a disagreement that began because someone borrowed a charger and didn't return it.

The remarkable thing is that the literal meaning of a swear word and its social meaning are often completely different.

Among close friends, a word that would be deeply offensive coming from a stranger can become a term of affection.

The same word can mean *I hate you, I love you, you idiot*, or simply *listen to this unbelievable thing that just happened*, depending on who says it, how they say it and who is listening.

Context is doing most of the work.

And then the internet arrived and took this private linguistic ecosystem and put a ring light around it.

Enter CarryMinati

CarryMinati built a huge audience around roasting, gaming and an intentionally abrasive style of humour. The profanity wasn't an accidental by-product of the content. It became part of the persona.

For millions of young viewers, this wasn't necessarily perceived as “bad language” in the way

an older generation might understand it.

It was a genre.

Just as the language of a Shakespearean stage belonged to Shakespearean theatre, the language of a roast video belongs to the roast.

Take it out of that context and it can sound shocking.

Put it back into the context and it becomes a performance convention.

Comedians such as Samay Raina have helped create an internet-native comedy ecosystem in which stand-up, gaming, livestreaming, audience interaction and deliberately unfiltered conversation overlap.

Samay's rise is particularly interesting because his content demonstrates that profanity isn't necessarily the *point* of contemporary comedy.

Sometimes it is simply part of the linguistic texture.

The joke may be about cricket, dating, parents, politics, chess, death, awkward social behaviour or absolutely nothing that could survive a dinner with one's grandparents.

The swear word is often functioning like seasoning.

And then there is the audience. A traditional comedian performed to a room. An internet comedian performs to a room that is simultaneously a comment section, a Discord server, a meme page and a WhatsApp group.

The audience talks back. They clip the joke. Remix it. Turn it into a meme. Repeat it. Soon the language of the comedian becomes the language of the community.

That is a significant change.

But the profanity serves a function. It creates **intimacy**.

Instagram made everyone a broadcaster

Previously, a teenager could say something outrageous to six friends in the school canteen and the incident would die by lunchtime.

Today, the same teenager can say it on a reel, add music, subtitles and a jump cut, and potentially reach 200,000 strangers before dinner.

Social media has not invented bad language.

It has **removed the walls around it**.

Previous generations swore too. They simply had better privacy. Our parents swore in kitchens. College students swore in canteens. Friends swore on cricket grounds.

Office colleagues swore in corridors after particularly unfortunate meetings.

We just didn't have smartphones recording the entire thing.

Gen Z does.

And Instagram has turned ordinary conversation into performance.

The distinction between **private speech and public speech has collapsed**.

That is perhaps the real linguistic revolution.

The protest language is changing too

The same irreverence has now entered political expression.

The recent Gen Z protest culture has been striking not merely because of what young people are saying, but because of how they are saying it.

Memes, slang, sarcasm, internet references, visual jokes and deliberately irreverent language sit alongside traditional slogans.

The old political vocabulary was solemn.

The new one is often sarcastic.

The old protester carried a placard.

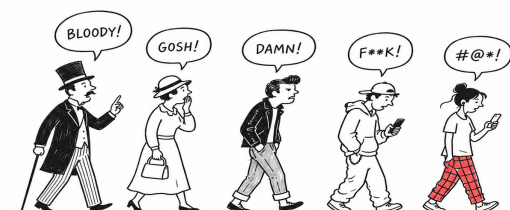
The new protester may carry a placard, livestream it, turn it into a meme and watch

someone remix it before reaching home.

Even Parliament has begun borrowing Gen Z vocabulary, with terms such as *delulu*, *FOMO* and *clock it* entering political debate.

There is something deliciously ironic about this.

The generation accused of destroying language has apparently succeeded in getting Parliament to update its vocabulary.



But does everything deserve a free pass?

Absolutely not.

This is where the conversation needs some nuance.

Not all profanity is equal.

There is a difference between saying “*this bloody thing isn’t working*” and using a slur against an entire community.

There is a difference between friends using an expletive as punctuation and using language deliberately

designed to degrade another human being.

There is a difference between **vulgarity and cruelty.**

And perhaps we have become too obsessed with the former while occasionally overlooking the latter.

A society can survive people saying “fuck” in a sentence.

What is far more dangerous is a society becoming comfortable with language that tells another group of people that they are inferior, disgusting or undeserving of dignity.

The problem isn’t that some words are dirty.

The problem is what we use language to do to other people.

Perhaps the real skill is knowing when not to swear

There is another reason not to celebrate profanity too enthusiastically.

If every sentence contains an expletive, eventually the expletive stops doing its job.

Swearing is powerful partly because it violates a rule.

Break the rule often enough and it stops being a violation.

It becomes punctuation.

It is knowing **when a swear word adds meaning and when it is merely filling silence.**

Because language is not deteriorating.

It is doing what it has always done.

It is changing.

It absorbs the street, the classroom, the cinema, YouTube, gaming, stand-up, politics, music and memes. It borrows from other languages. It shortens things. It invents things. It kills old words and resurrects forgotten ones.

And every generation complains about it.

Our parents thought certain words should never be spoken in front of elders.

We thought texting had destroyed grammar.

Gen Z has apparently destroyed civilisation with four-letter words.

Give it twenty years.

Those same teenagers will be sitting at a family dinner, horrified by the vocabulary of their own children.

“*What kind of language is this?*” they will ask.

PUNJABI

AA

GAYE

OYE!

How a Coldplay Concert Became a Punjabi Family Function

By Rajinder Singh

The recent Coldplay concert was meant to be an evening of music, lights, emotions, and international spectacle. Thousands gathered to hear Chris Martin serenade the crowd with timeless hits while dazzling visuals lit up the night sky.

What nobody anticipated, however, was that the event would unexpectedly transform into a contest between Punjabis and the rest of the audience.

The first signs appeared even before the concert began. While most concertgoers quietly scanned their tickets and searched for their designated seats, the Punjabi contingent arrived with the unmistakable energy of a baraat that had accidentally taken a wrong turn into a music festival.

The moment Chris Martin stepped onto the stage and greeted the audience with a warm "Hello, India," a voice from somewhere in the stadium responded with the now-famous battle cry:

"Punjabi aa gaye oye!"

The declaration echoed through the venue with such authority that it felt less like a statement and more like a public service announcement.

As the concert progressed, the contrast became increasingly entertaining. While much of the audience swayed gently to the music, many Punjabis appeared convinced that every song contained an undiscovered bhangra beat. One enthusiastic shoulder

bounce quickly became three, then ten, and before long entire sections seemed ready for a wedding dance floor rather than an international rock concert.

The cultural divide became particularly evident during the emotional numbers. When Chris Martin sat down at the piano and began singing the heartfelt lyrics of "Fix You," a hush descended upon the crowd. Thousands listened in silence, visibly moved by the performance.

Then, cutting through the emotional atmosphere, came the unmistakable voice of a Punjabi uncle:

"Bilkul sahi kehnda!"

The crowd erupted in laughter. The uncle had not merely listened to the song; he had reviewed and endorsed it. Things escalated further when the giant screens began showing audience members. While most people smiled awkwardly and waved, Punjabi families instantly switched into full wedding-photography mode. Dupattas were adjusted, sunglasses straightened, children lifted into view, and poses struck with military precision. Several families managed to transform a three-second camera appearance into what looked remarkably like a pre-wedding shoot.

Meanwhile, another uniquely Punjabi phenomenon unfolded: long-distance family communication. Throughout the evening, random shouts of "Manpreet!" or "Happy!"

could be heard echoing across the stadium. Astonishingly, the intended recipients often replied from several hundred metres away. It was as though a sophisticated telecommunications network had been established without the assistance of mobile phones.

Then came the matter of food.

Most attendees patiently queued for snacks and beverages. Punjabis, however, demonstrated once again that preparation is everything. At various points, mysterious foil packets emerged from bags and pockets. Soon the aroma of homemade parathas drifted through the venue, causing nearby concertgoers to question both their life choices and the price of stadium food.

By the end of the night, even Chris Martin seemed to have accepted the situation. Every pause between songs risked attracting a new request, a greeting, or a detailed inquiry regarding his future travel plans to Punjab.

As the concert concluded, the rest of the audience began making their way toward the exits. The Punjabis, however, entered what experts might call the Goodbye Phase. This involved repeatedly announcing their intention to leave while remaining exactly where they were.

"Chal chaliye."

Nobody moved.

Five minutes later:

"Hun pakka chaliye."

Still nobody moved.

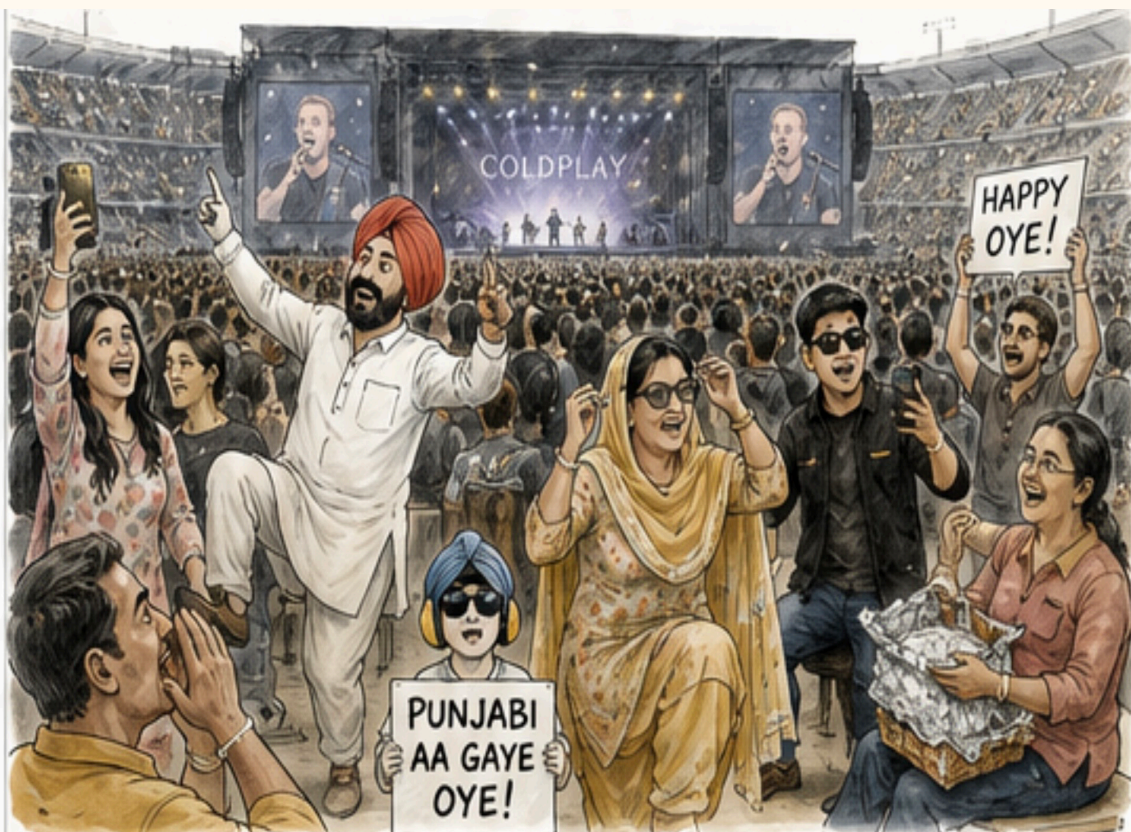
Another ten minutes passed as discussions shifted from traffic conditions to real estate prices, gym memberships, and someone's nephew who had recently settled in Canada.

By the time everyone finally dispersed, Coldplay had delivered a memorable performance, the audience had enjoyed a spectacular evening, and the Punjabis had somehow managed to turn a global music event into a family reunion, networking session, community gathering, and wedding reception all at once.

The concert may have belonged to Coldplay.

But for one unforgettable evening, the stadium belonged to the people proudly announcing:

"Punjabi aa gaye oye!"



THE GREAT PT ACCORD



XI-B STRIKES BACK

By Syeda Fathima Ahmed

The air in Class XI-B didn't just feel warm; it felt like a liquid curry simmering at a steady 38°C. Outside, the sun was personally roasting the school gates. Inside, forty teenagers were operating on three percent battery, sustained entirely by a single, sacred

promise written on the Friday timetable:

PERIOD 7: PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Forty pairs of eyes darted continuously between the wall clock—tick, tick, bloody tick—and the window overlooking the sports field. The rusty bleachers were calling. The battered

badminton rackets were singing. Somewhere in the sports room, a leather cricket ball was waiting to be launched straight into the Principal's office window. "Three minutes left," whisper-screamed Anil, clutching his chest. "If I have to stare at another trigonometric identity, my

brain will physically leak out of my ears."

"Hold strong," Rohan replied from row two, wiping sweat off his forehead with the edge of his sleeve. "Ten more seconds and we are free. I've already claimed the good bat. The one without the crack." Then, the door handle turned. The temperature in the room dropped ten degrees, defying all known laws of thermodynamics.

He didn't just walk in. Mr. Verma of the Mathematics Department glided through the doorway, wrapped in the ominous, soul-crushing aura of a monsoon storm cloud. Tucked under his arm like a grim reaper's scythe was Class XI Calculus: Volume II—a book so thick it could legally be used as a lethal weapon.

A collective, soul-shattering gasp echoed through the room.

"No," Anil whimpered. "No, no, no. God, please, no."

Mr. Verma reached the podium, adjusted his wire-rimmed glasses, and dropped the dark blue textbook onto the wooden table with a thud that rattled everyone's ribcage. He slowly scanned the room, his eyes lingering on forty horrified faces.

"Your PE teacher, Sharma Ji," Mr. Verma began, his voice flat enough to level a mountain, "has a sudden, severe throat infection."

"Wait, what?!" Rohan blurted out before he could stop himself.

Mr. Verma's glare snapped toward him like a laser beam.

"Did I give you permission to talk, Rohan?"

"Sir, respectfully," Rohan



stammered, pointing frantically out the window, "I saw Sharma Ji ten minutes ago in the staff room! He was completely fine! He was literally laughing in HD and inhaling his third hot samosa with extra green chutney!" "Ah," Mr. Verma said smoothly, uncapping a fresh piece of chalk with a terrifying click. "The chutney was spicy. It inflamed his larynx. A tragedy. Open page 204, Exercise 7.2. Integration by parts."

"Sir, that's not a throat infection, that's just spice!" Anil yelled in agony. "You can't do this to us! It's Friday! The sun is shining! The cricket ball needs us!"

"The cricket ball does not have a board exam in March, Anil. You do," Mr. Verma replied, turning to the

blackboard. "Now, silence.

Question 1..."

The chalk hit the board with an agonizing squeak-squeak-squeak.

"This is an invasion," Anil whispered aggressively, ducking behind his tall wooden desk. "This is a hostile takeover. A military coup."

"We can't fight Calculus, man," Deepak, the class monitor, sighed softly. "It's over. We're going to die in this room. Tell my mother I loved her..."

"Shut up, Deepak!" Anil hissed, pulling a pristine sheet of foolscap paper from the back of his notebook.

"Desperate times require unprecedented diplomacy. Pass me the blue Reynolds pen. Not the gel one, the ballpoint. We need this to look legal."

"What are you doing?" Rohan whispered, leaning over.

"We are writing a peace treaty," Anil declared, eyes burning with sudden, unhinged literary passion.

"No... an ultimatum. A document so absurdly formal, so unassailable, that even the Sovereign of Derivatives himself will have no legal ground to stand on."

"Make it sound like Shakespeare," Rohan urged. "Teachers hate Shakespeare because they can't tell if you're insulting them or complimenting them."

"Say no more," Anil grunted, his pen flying across the

paper in furious, swooping cursive.

The Document

TO THE MOST ESTEEMED SOVEREIGN OF DERIVATIVES AND LORD OF LOGARITHMS, MR. VERMA,

Hark! Know ye, O Master of Integration, that the souls of Class XI-B do languish under the cruel sun of continuous limits. Whereas our beloved Master of Athletics, Sharma Ji, doth suffer a sudden—and most curious—affliction of the throat, we hold it self-evident that the mind cannot integrate when the spirit hath been promised the badminton court.

We, the Undersigned Forty, do hereby petition for our rightful retreat unto the sports field, lest our brains evaporate into the 38-degree ether.

"Pass it back! Quick!" Anil whispered, sliding the paper to row two.

"Sign it! Sign it fast!" Rohan commanded, scribbling his name with a wild flourish.

"What if he suspends us?!"

Pooja in row three squeaked, staring at the paper like it was a live grenade.

"He can't suspend forty people, Pooja, that's a mass movement!" Rohan snapped.

"Just write your name!"

The paper moved like a secret dossier through an underground network. Under desks, behind backpacks, tossed across the aisle when Mr. Verma turned to draw an intricate x-y axis. Forty hands

seized the blue pen. Forty signatures—ranging from neat cursive to wild, frantic scribbles that looked like medical prescriptions—were affixed to the parchment. By the time the paper reached Deepak at the front desk, the clock read 2:10 PM. Ten minutes remaining. Deepak looked at the paper. He looked at Mr. Verma. He broke into a cold sweat. "Anil... I can't do this. He'll



eat me alive."

"Deepak," Anil said, clutching his shoulder dramatically. "You are the Class Monitor. You were born for this moment. For the bleachers. For Sharma Ji's fake infection. DO IT."

Deepak swallowed hard, stood up, and knocked on his wooden desk.

TAP. TAP.

The chalk stopped mid-formula. The room went so quiet you could hear the ceiling fan groaning on its highest setting, wobbling precariously as if contemplating suicide. Mr. Verma turned around slowly. "Yes, Deepak? Is there a flaw in my integration?"

"No, sir," Deepak said, his voice trembling slightly before stabilizing. "There is no flaw in your math. But... a treaty has been drafted." Mr. Verma blinked once. "A what?"

Deepak marched down the center aisle like a medieval knight bearing a scroll, walked straight up to the teacher's desk, and placed The Great PT Accord directly on top of Volume II.

Rohan covered his face.

Pooja started praying under her breath. Anil sat up straight, trying to look like a dignified freedom fighter.

Mr. Verma stared at the paper. He picked it up using only his thumb and index finger, holding it as if it might explode. He adjusted his glasses, cleared his throat, and began to read silently. Ten seconds passed. Nothing. Twenty seconds. Mr. Verma's left eyebrow twitched slightly at "Sovereign of Derivatives." Thirty seconds. A faint, barely perceptible twitch occurred on his right cheek at

"spontaneous combustion of row four."

Finally, Mr. Verma set the paper back down. He picked up his wooden duster, carefully wiped the blackboard completely clean, and capped his chalk with a decisive click.

He looked up, scanning forty frozen, terrified, hopeful faces.

"Your Shakespearean prose," Mr. Verma said, his tone entirely dry and completely unreadable, "is marginally better than your last unit test scores."

"Is that... a yes, sir?" Anil whispered, leaning forward. Mr. Verma checked his watch, then looked out the dusty window toward the empty sports field where the heat waves were shimmering off the ground.

"Exercise 7.2," Mr. Verma announced smoothly, folding The Great PT Accord into a neat square and putting it in his shirt pocket, "is postponed until Monday morning, 1st Period."

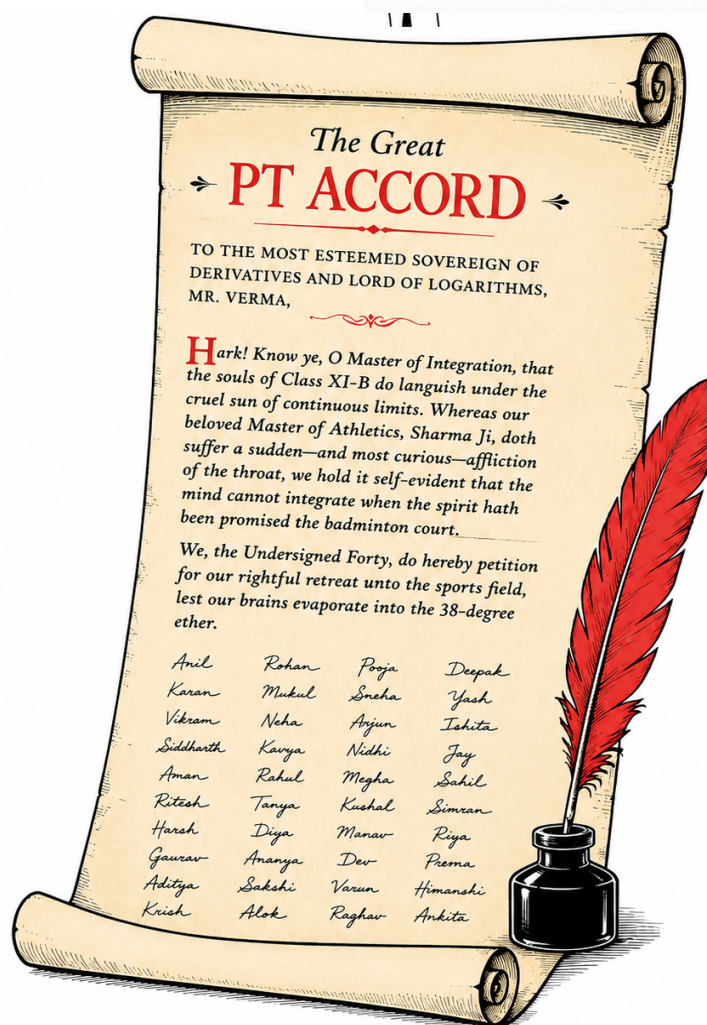
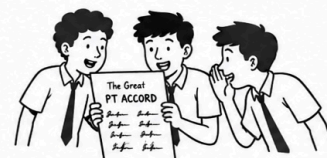
He picked up his heavy textbook and walked toward the exit. Just as he reached the doorway, he paused and looked back over his shoulder.

"And for the record... Sharma Ji is currently eating a fourth samosa. If you hurry, you might be able to steal his chutney.

Dismissed."

The moment the door closed, Class XI-B erupted into a deafening, chaotic

roar of absolute victory. Forty kids trampled over chairs and backpacks, charging out the door toward the rusty bleachers like liberated warriors, leaving behind a completely empty, sunlit classroom.



The Tiffin Anxiety

By Mukta K Gupta

My mother packed my school lunch for eleven years and I doubt she spent more than four minutes on it on any given morning. Paratha, achaar, foil. The foil was reused until it had gone translucent and soft, creased into a permanent relief map of every lunch that had come before it. If it tore, she folded it over. If it tore twice, she wrapped the whole thing in the previous day's newspaper and secured it with a rubber band, and that rubber band was, in its own way, the last honest thing about Indian lunch.

The dabba was steel, and it smelled of everything it had ever contained. You could pack lemon rice into it on a Tuesday and it would still taste faintly of Sunday's aloo gobi. Nobody thought this was a problem. Nobody thought it was anything. It was simply what lunch tasted like.

By the time the bell went, the paratha had surrendered. It had gone cold and pliable and slightly damp, and the achaar oil had made its escape sometime around second period, leaving orange fingerprints on the foil, the school bag,

I want to be careful here, because nostalgia is a cheap drug and I have been known to use. My mother was not a better parent than the mothers of today. She simply had fewer people watching her.



Consider the modern tiffin box, with six leak-proof compartments, each with its own silicone gasket. One for blueberries, flown in from somewhere with a functioning cold chain. One for hummus. One for cucumber cut into stars, because there exists a cutter for this, and once you know it exists you cannot un-know it. One for bell peppers in three colours, a vegetable that no child in the history of the subcontinent has ever asked for by

name. And one small unexplained compartment that appears to serve no purpose except to sit there, empty.

and the inside back cover of the Hindi textbook. We ate it. We ate all of it. Then we went and played in the sun for forty minutes and came back sweating and nobody filmed any part of this.

I have never been able to establish what is a silicone cupcake liner doing. Pinterest, I assume.

The sandwich has also stopped being a sandwich. It is now cut into a dinosaur, or a rabbit. White bread has become slightly disreputable. Brown is acceptable. Multigrain suggests a certain seriousness of purpose. Sourdough means the mother has a hobby. And the entire class has gone nut-free because one child in Section B once sneezed near a *badam*.

None of this, though, is the part that finished me off.

The part that finished me off is that the lunch is now filmed.

Teachers are making reels of the children's tiffin boxes. They open them one by one, panning slowly across the compartments, lingering on the fruit skewers, cutting to the little sandwich rabbit. **"Look what our little ones brought today!"**

Try to imagine explaining this to my mother. "Ma'am, tomorrow we'll be filming the children's tiffins." She would have looked at the teacher. Then at the paratha, which even at that hour would have been giving

up. Then back at the teacher. "Filming the lunch?" And there is no sentence in any language that could have followed which would have satisfied her.

What the reel does, of course, is turn a private act into a submitted one. You are no longer packing lunch for your child, who cannot tell a bento box from a bus ticket and will trade the whole thing for two bites of somebody's Maggi. You are packing it for the teacher's phone, for the class Instagram, for the WhatsApp group, and finally for a stranger nine hundred kilometres away who now knows that little Aarav had beetroot paratha on Wednesday.

And the WhatsApp group is where the real work happens. Somebody posts a photograph. Somebody else writes "just a gentle reminder that we are trying to keep the class sugar-free".

So this is what it comes to. The child wants pasta. The school wants millets. The nutritionist wants protein. The grandmother wants ghee, visibly, in quantity. Instagram wants colour. The allergy policy wants most of it removed. The teacher wants a reel. Nobody is packing lunch any more. They are negotiating a settlement between

seven parties, at dawn, alone, in a kitchen, while the child asks where his socks are.

Some things have survived, and I take an unreasonable amount of comfort in them. Children still trade food the moment the teacher turns around, and the exchange rate has not moved: one forkful of Maggi still buys a friendship that lasts until Class VIII. Somebody still comes home with the wrong spoon. Somebody's tiffin is still under a desk from Thursday and will be discovered on Monday by a person who did not deserve this.

And hopefully, in some school in some town where the WhatsApp group is only used for holiday announcements, there is still a steel dabba with a soft paratha in it and achaar oil making its slow and patient escape into the corners.

Long may it leak.

Disclaimer: Humour Times does not subscribe to the views of the writers and cartoonists. We take no responsibility for the views expressed and any resemblance to the views expressed is coincidental.

The Great Democratic Safari

Parliament Opens Its Doors — Finally, to a Better Class of Candidate

By Brij Khandelwal



The cockroaches have had their glorious moment in the sun. Their marches, slogans and television appearances have made every other creature deeply jealous.

The donkeys have lodged a formal protest. "We've been carrying this nation for centuries," they bray. "Yet a few six-legged upstarts become celebrities overnight?"

The lizards are no less offended. "We have mastered the ancient art of sticking to every wall of power," their spokesman hissed. "If that isn't political experience, what is?"

Soon monkeys, mosquitoes, vultures, termites, hyenas and even street dogs announced their own conventions.

Kurruptistan was suddenly buzzing with political wildlife.

Every species demanded reservations, media time, security cover and official recognition as a "historic victim of selective publicity."

Seeing this magnificent chaos, Supreme Ruler Guddan Pyare arrived in a bulletproof golden chariot, waving majestically to cheering cockroaches and confused television anchors.

He raised both hands. "My beloved creatures of Kurruptistan," he thundered. "For too long politics has remained a monopoly of humans. This injustice ends today."

Thunderous applause. A few donkeys fainted with emotion.

"Every species shall enjoy equal constitutional rights. Form your own political parties. Contest elections. Win seats. Bark, bray, hiss, buzz or croak in Parliament

with complete freedom. Democracy must sound like a jungle orchestra."

The crowd erupted.

"The Donkey Development Front!"

"The National Cockroach Congress!"

"The United Lizard League!"

"The Mosquito Front for Inclusive Bloodsucking!"

The grand coalition of canine, feline, bovine and simians, will forge ahead under the leadership of youth leader Pappoo ji whose rich experience of losing polls will come handy, said Guy MonKon.

Emperor Guddan Pyare smiled proudly.

"No candidate shall be disqualified merely for changing colours, shedding

skin, carrying excessive baggage or surviving nuclear disasters. In fact, these shall be recognised as leadership qualities."

Wild applause.

"The Parliament building shall now include branches for monkeys, ponds for frogs, compost chambers for earthworms, deluxe garbage gutters for cockroaches and climate-controlled slimy walls for lizards. Every species deserves a comfortable workplace."

Television channels declared it a historic reform before anyone had read the proposal.

Election strategists like PK immediately rushed to recruit donkeys for logistics, vultures for ethics committees, termites for infrastructure, mosquitoes for fundraising and hyenas as official spokespersons.

Political analysts including Bhayanak, called it "the greatest expansion of democracy." Ordinary citizens simply wondered whether they still qualified as a protected species.

Meanwhile, the cockroaches looked nervous. Their exclusive limelight was fading. In Kurrupistan, fame has a shorter lifespan than an election promise.

Public commentator Prof Sam Nobuddy observed, "The next election promises to be truly inclusive. For the first time, the voters may actually struggle to distinguish between the candidates and the mascots."

प्यारे अंकल जी, आपके व्हाट्सऐप यूनिवर्स का विलेन Gen Z नहीं है!

अगर कल कोई एलियन धरती पर उतर आए, तो यकीन

मानिए, टीवी पर बैठे अर्नब अंकल उसकी भी वजह इंस्टाग्राम रील्स को ही ठहरा देंगे। उधर नीले बालों वाला कोई उन्नीस साल का लड़का या लड़की इंसानियत के पतन का मुजरिम घोषित कर दिया जाएगा।

व्हाट्सऐप यूनिवर्सिटी के मुताबिक आज की नौजवान नस्ल दोपहर में उठती है, पंद्रह सेकंड नाचती है, बबल टी पीती है, सबको "ब्रो" बुलाती है और नाश्ता करने से पहले ही इन्फ्लुएंसर बनने का ख्वाब देखती है।

सचमुच?

जरा टीवी स्टूडियो से बाहर भी निकलकर देखिए। जहाँ एसी स्टूडियो में बैठे बहसबाज़ "सभ्यता के पतन" पर चीख रहे हैं, वहीं असली हिंदुस्तान अपने काम में मशगूल है।

कहीं एक लड़का भैंसों को चारा डाल रहा है। कहीं एक लड़की नर्सिंग कॉलेज भाग रही है। कोई ट्रैफिक से जूझता ऑटो चला रहा है। कोई UPSC, NEET या JEE की हजारवीं मॉक टेस्ट दे रहा है। अगर मेहनत से कैलोरी जलती, तो हमारे कोचिंग सेंटर ओलंपिक में गोल्ड मेडल जीत लाते।

फिर एक रील वायरल होती है और पूरा मुल्क फ़ैसला सुना देता है: "बस, यही है आज की नौजवान पीढ़ी!"

यह तो वैसा ही हुआ जैसे ताजमहल के पास एक बंदर किसी सैलानी का चश्मा छीन ले और आप एलान कर दें कि पूरा जानवर समाज अब फैशन ब्लॉगर बन गया है।

जरा ठहरिए। भारत कोई इंस्टाग्राम फ़िल्टर नहीं है।

बेंगलुरु का सॉफ्टवेयर इंजीनियर, आगरा के किसान का बेटा, ओडिशा का आदिवासी छात्र और लद्दाख का चरवाहा: सब कागज़ पर Gen Z हैं। लेकिन इनके बीच समानता सिर्फ़ जन्मतिथि की है। बाकी सब उतना ही अलग है जितना समोसा और सुशी।

हर पीढ़ी को लगता है कि अगली पीढ़ी बर्बाद है। सुकरात ने एथेंस के युवाओं को कोसा था। दादा-दादी ने टीवी को दोष दिया। माता-पिता ने मोबाइल को। अब अंकल लोग उसी मोबाइल पर छह घंटे "गुड मॉर्निंग" वाले फूल और हल्दी से हर बीमारी ठीक करने वाले नुस्खे फ़ॉरवर्ड करते हुए रील्स को कोसते हैं।

वाह जनाब! इसे कहते हैं: "उल्टा चोर कोतवाल को डाँटे।"

अगली बार कोई बोले कि Gen Z का ध्यान टिकता नहीं, तो बस इतना पूछ लीजिए: "पिछले वीकेंड आपने उस वेब सीरीज़ के कितने सीज़न एक ही बैठकी में देख डाले थे?"

फिर जो ख़ामोशी छाएगी, उसका लुत्फ़ उठाइए।

फ़ैसला सुन लीजिए

अब लगता है देश की सबसे बड़ी परेशानियाँ बेरोजगारी, महंगाई, प्रदूषण या टूटी सड़कें नहीं रहीं।



असली राष्ट्रीय संकट यह है कि किसी किशोर ने पंद्रह सेकंड का डांस वीडियो बना दिया।

चलो, संसद बंद कर दो। नीति आयोग की छुट्टी कर दो। सर्वदलीय बैठक बुलाओ। Gen Z फिर हमला कर चुका है: हथियार सिर्फ एक रिंग लाइट और थोड़े संदिग्ध डांस स्टेप्स।

प्राइम टाइम बहस देखिए, तो लगेगा कि पच्चीस साल से कम उम्र का हर भारतीय दिनभर लिप-सिंक करता है, ठंडी कॉफी पीता है और "ब्रो" शब्द की नई-नई स्पेलिंग खोजता रहता है।

इस हिसाब से तो किसी नौजवान ने कभी किताब नहीं खोली, खेत में काम नहीं किया, लोकल ट्रेन नहीं पकड़ी और ईमानदारी से एक रुपया भी नहीं कमाया।

मगर एक छोटी-सी दिक्कत है। ऐसा भारत सिर्फ टीवी स्टूडियो में बसता है।

एक वायरल वीडियो आया और पूरी पीढ़ी अपराधी घोषित हो गई।

वाह रे इंसाफ़!

फिर तो एक भ्रष्ट नेता का मतलब सारे नेता भ्रष्ट। एक बेईमान पत्रकार का मतलब सारे न्यूज़रूम बंद करके मिठाई की दुकान खोल दी जाए।

और एक गड्ढा देखकर कह दीजिए कि भारत चुपचाप ग्रैंड कैन्यन बन चुका है।

अजीब बात है, यह तराजू सिर्फ युवाओं के लिए ही क्यों निकलता है?

हकीकत यह है कि सच्चाई बेहद सादा होती है, और सादगी कभी ट्रेंड नहीं करती। बुरी खबर बिकती है। रुढ़ियाँ उससे भी ज्यादा बिकती हैं; वो भी होम डिलीवरी के साथ।

इसलिए Gen Z को रोज़-रोज़ नसीहतें देना बंद कीजिए।

वे फ़रिश्ते नहीं हैं। लेकिन क्या बेबी बूमर्स, Gen X या मिलेनियल्स फ़रिश्ते थे?

हर पीढ़ी अपनी-अपनी सनक लेकर आती है।

फ़र्क सिर्फ इतना है कि पुरानी पीढ़ियाँ अपनी गलतियाँ बिना वाई-फ़ाई के करती थीं। और कोई शर्मनाक हरकत करने से पहले उन्हें लैंडलाइन खाली होने का इंतज़ार करना पड़ता था।

इसलिए अगली बार कोई फ़रमाए, "Gen Z इस देश को बर्बाद कर रही है," तो बस मुस्कुरा दीजिए।

और प्यार से पूछिए:

"अंकल जी, वाई-फ़ाई का पासवर्ड आखिर सेट किसने किया था?"

- By Mahi H Gupta

