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CHINA: Reverses its policy, offers rewards to parents, gives 500 dollars for raising a child

The Asian Tribune

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What has forced China to change its long standing policy on birth control, and has gone to the extent of rewarding parents?

As early in 1970s, China felt that its rising population could be an obstacle in its future growth.

But this policy continued and today, it has brought China to a stage that marriages are fewer, kids are less and the population is like to shrink, fast.

It has lost its place as the most populous country to India, and less than 10 million children were born in a year.

If trends continue, there will be infrastructure but lack of youth and the ration of elderly in its population would be too high.

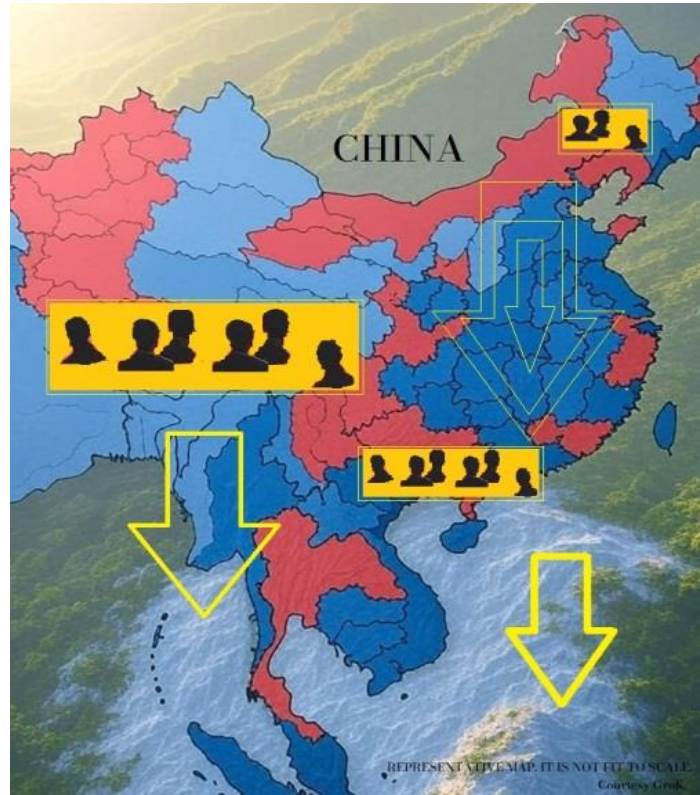
Beijing has woken up, finally, but is it the right moment?

The families are offered 3600

Yuan i.e. 500 dollars or nearly 45,000 Rs per year for each family. The aim is to control the damage to its demography. The Total Fertility Ratio (TFR) had fallen to almost 1, though it should be at least 2.1 to have a steadily growing populace.

If no benefits are offered and the number of children born remains low, there are fears that the working population would be less and it will be an 'overage society' where more than 27% population would comprise elderly citizens who would need health care, pension, social support and other services while fewer youth would make it hard to maintain the balance. Clearly, China has realised that it needed to act earlier. But do all nations accept mistakes & reverse their policies. It's a lesson to be learnt.

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Mob harasses army veteran's family in Pune over documents

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In a shocking incident, a family of former army man was harassed by a mob in Pune in Maharashtra.

Describing the trauma, family members said that they were accused of being Bangladeshis and were asked to show the documents to prove the citizenship.

This incident occurred in Chandan Nagar in Pune. A right-wing group, took police along & entered home of the family of Hakimuddin, a Kargil war veteran, whose family members have served the Army for generations.

This latest incident has come

just in wake of many such incidents that occurred in other states.

In fact, in Delhi, there have been complaints that Bengali speaking populace is being heckled and harassed, even asked to produce the documents.

In states as far as Odisha and regions in South India too, there have been reports and the alleged incidents of harassment with the Bangla speakers.

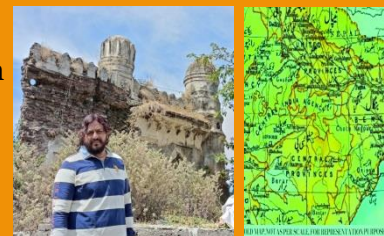
The family has been living in Pune for decades. A case has been registered against 7 persons. Two other members of the family had fought in 1965 and 1971 wars too.

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Manipulating Minds: Is media weaponized to spread propaganda, peddle hate, cause disharmony & divide the society?

The newspapers first lose their editorial independence. Then, the staff realises that reports about corruption and malpractices are no longer allowed to be published.

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For ages, media was considered the true and ultimate expression of the citizens' concerns.

But, it lost its way somewhere in the middle and steadily became a mouthpiece of the powerful people and the business barons or the politicians.

A class that runs the State, understood the importance of modulating minds through control over media.

Thus emerged a new model where advertisements or revenue was used to keep the newspapers under the check. The media houses that didn't agree and refused to follow the directives, were targeted in different ways.

This has happened in different parts of the world. In countries with limited democracy, the newspapers are considered an arm of the government, as they push the positive stories, praise the government and openly promote a narrative that supports the ruling party. However, when it comes to people's issues, they remain silent, due to obvious reasons.

As free media is considered, one of the most powerful tool and is seen as a voice of the citizens, the fight to control the media has taken place in different countries.

But, there is another fight, the next level battle is to turn media into a propaganda force for the regimes.

That it should create an opinion that is favourable towards the powerful people who sit on the chair and don't write the critical stories.



Grok

This grand plan has been executed in countries across the world. Take for example, in one case, it started with targeting media houses that were more anti-establishment and over the years, most of them understood the message and began to toe the government line.

The media houses that include TV channels, newspapers and other forms of publications including magazines and online portals, sensed that they could be

raided or shut, and hence, they decided to go with the wind. Otherwise, they were punished and were made to shut the shop. In certain countries, monarchs or the despots didn't allow the newspapers to have editorial independence.

Once editorial goes, the next step is to appoint own puppets at the top positions in the media industry.

The staff has no option but to kowtow as fear of job loss turns man into 'compromised

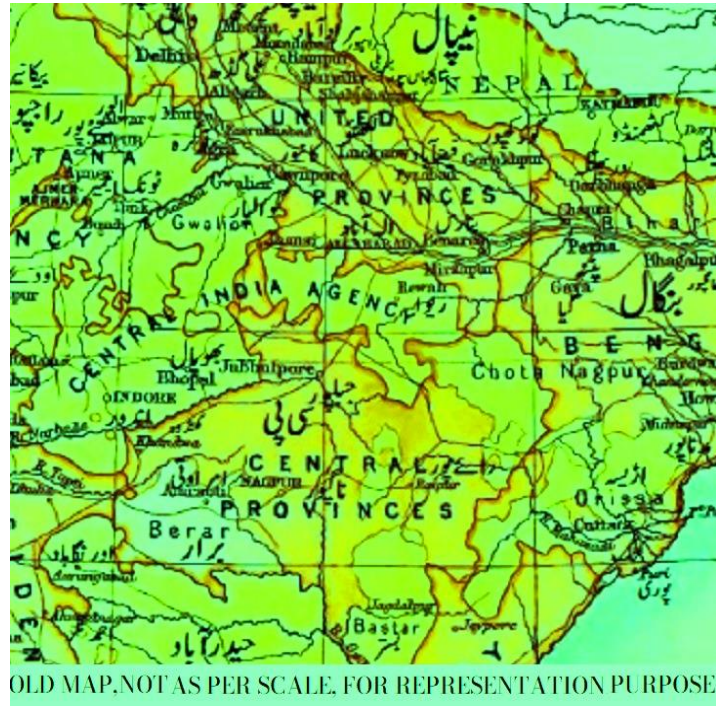
individual'. Soon it goes to the next level. The paper turns pro-regime and gets biased to such an extent that its staff becomes more loyal than the king.

It not only stops keeping an eye on failure of the ministers or the bureaucracy, avoids doing stories on crime or corruption, and tries to plant stories that are factually incorrect or twisted to present a false but flowery picture of a situation. Then, comes the final level—demonizing critics. That's weaponizing the media.

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Mapping monuments: Documenting the rare, forgotten pieces of heritage in Central India

Though a medico, he has been passionate about archaeology, history and heritage. Travelling across the region, he has been visiting places of heritage that were forgotten and he has documented innumerable tombs, crumbling palaces, ancient monuments and structures that were neglected over a long period.



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NEW DELHI: For years, a man has been patiently documenting the rare aspects of heritage and the monuments in Central India—a large region that includes the former state of CP and Berar, apart from regions like Khandesh and parts of MP. The structures that were built centuries ago, much before the Mughals came—in Sultanate era and during the reign of other dynasties, that don't even get attention, are being located and traced, the information brought to public.

Raziuddin Siddiqui has made it a mission and he has been criss-crossing the vast region—Vidarbha and around, the many historic towns in this region like

Ellichpur, Balapur, Malkapur, Daryapur, Karanja Lad & major monuments—centuries' old tombs, the crumbling palaces, forts and shrines that are spread in Akola, Buldhana, Amravati, Washim and adjoining districts. Siddiqui's passion has brought umpteen major monuments back in public eye and there is a renewed interest.

Though a medico, his heart is in history, heritage, archaeology. He traverses the region and makes short documentaries and provides evidences from books along with works of authors in medieval era, the British rule and the twentieth century researchers.

Facts and names of books are on the tip of his tongue. From the once famous town of Shahpur, which has a rich history, to that

of Ellichpur and the former Kingdom of Berar, he easily answers all queries—either Gond kingdom at Deogarh, the reign of Bakht Buland Shah, the Tribal Muslim dynasty, Maratha rulers, Chandrapur and little known places in MP & North. “I felt media in this region focused less on heritage and hence I thought I should visit the places, document and bring the facts to fore”, says Siddiqui. Though his ancestors belonged to Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Siddiqui has been in Nagpur since his childhood. “In 1857, Nagpur too participated in the freedom struggle and there was rebellion against the British rule”, he tells.

From the incidents in the past like how Nawab Kadar Ali Khan

and his associates were hanged by East India Company, to the historical incidents and cruelty of British forces, he keeps on telling stories after stories, with names of authors and relevant documents.

“It was on my children's suggestion that I uploaded videos on internet and then the I got substantial following on the web”.

Siddiqui's channel Khoj India has tens of thousands of followers on YouTube and more importantly, the information is helping create awareness in the region and the media is also getting interested in the historical value as well as tourism potential of the monuments that dot this huge but neglected region.

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Media turns into monster: Creates a wedge in society, uses propaganda to demonize a group

When one group is seen as 'other', anger is built against it, systematically, in the entire society. The newspapers and the TV channels, so often show the members of the particular community in poor light and use harsh words to describe them.

The Asian Tribune
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Across the world, media has been misused though the extent varies. In several countries, media was compromised or editors deliberately chose the path of fascism.

They started driving a wedge among different groups in the society, created a common enemy, targeted a race or a religion, a particular section or people from a region, then there is a strong propaganda campaign. When one group is termed as 'enemy' or opponent, the anger is built up, mostly, among the unemployed youth who want to feel that they are active in politics. Enjoying the feeling of power, absolute control &

dominance over another section in the same society, just because of mere association with a hardline party group or a movement, the power balance is shifted in the society.

But the highest propaganda level is achieved when media men themselves become a party and tend to cover reports on the basis of 'Us' Vs. 'Them', dehumanizing a group or a section that has been less represented in the newsrooms of TV studios as well as the mass circulated dailies that have no diversity record about their own institutions.

Even worse is the aspect that has gained attention, recently. 'Planted news' is a major phenomenon and false info is aired to pit groups against each other.



INVENTING NEW TERMS TO DEMONIZE MINORITIES

The major issue is selective use of language for people depending on their background, faith or ethnicity.

On one hand, a person who is accused of a crime, but not even faced a trial or held guilty, is termed as criminal, but on the other hand, even a convicted person is addressed using simple and soft terms.

This basic process of discrimination begins from the moment an incident is reported.

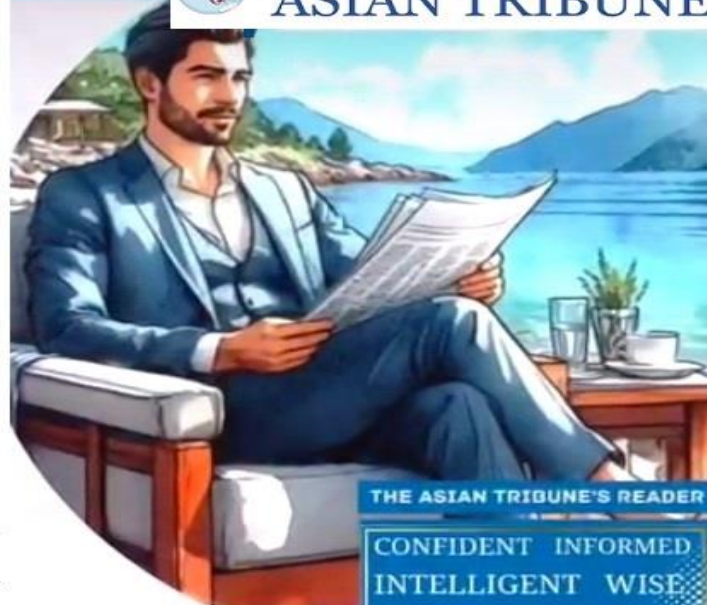
Depending on person's name and background, media use terms as different as 'radical', 'extremist', a terror suspect or even

more, while a man who is associated with a known group and is yet termed as a mere 'suspect'.

This power of media persons to label people differently and create a sensation, using different terms for different persons, without adhering to a code of ethics for journalism, which creates a major problem.

Use of words like 'Love Jihad' even though no such term is officially used by the Centre, state government or police, is another issue, as it criminalizes under-trial before judgment.

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