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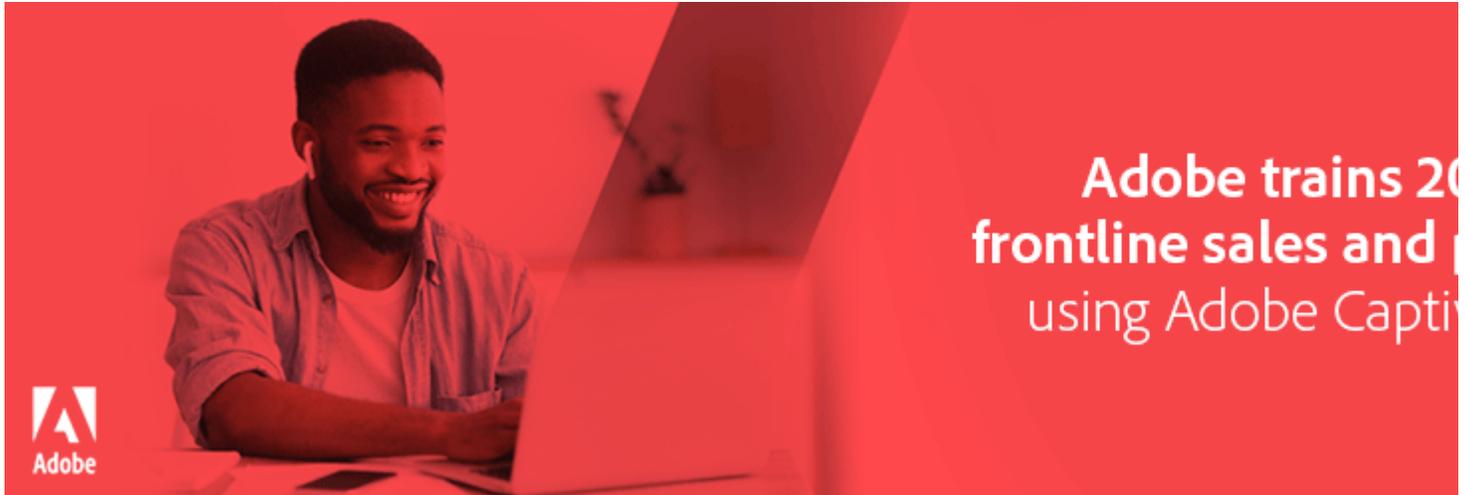


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Blocked by Centre for 'Naxal & anti-national propaganda' in 2018, website visible again

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Written by Chandan Haygunde | Pune |

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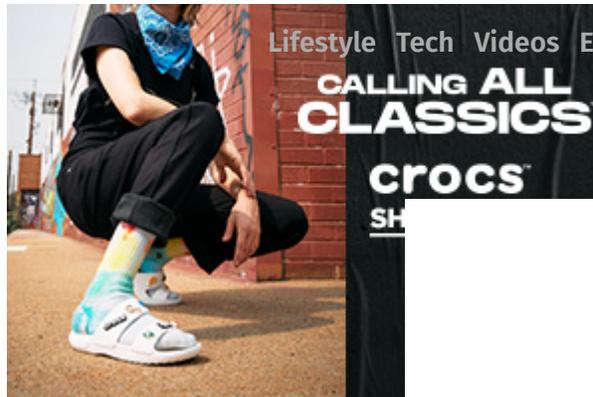


Several documents released by the CPI-Maoist in 2019 have also been uploaded on the website. (Representational)

A website blocked by the Indian government in 2018 for allegedly posting content for 'Naxal and anti-national propaganda', is now visible and active again. The website was banned following a recommendation by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS).

The website, bannedthought.net, which offers a large number of 'documents and information', mainly on extremist communist movements across different countries, has not been visible for online users in India after it was blocked around November-December 2018.

But the website is visible again, and it claims to have documents of the banned [Communist Party of India](#) (CPI – Maoist). The latest CPI-Maoist document on the website is a 'Statement on International Women's Day' (March 8), issued by the 'Telangana State Committee of the CPI-Maoist'. The statement is in Telugu.



Several documents released by the CPI-Maoist in 2019 have also been uploaded on the website. All the information that was available on the website before it was blocked in 2018 can also be accessed now. This includes books, documents, letters, press releases and other literature published by the CPI-Maoist.

On June 29, Nagpur-based activist Arvind Sovani of 'Bhumkal Anti-Naxal Organisation' raised the issue in emails to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, as well as other government departments, requesting them to block the "Naxal website", claiming that it had the potential to indoctrinate youths towards Maoist ideology.

In his email, Sovani stated, "The latest issue (February 2020) of Maoist mouthpiece – People's March is now available on the website. An important book 'Political and Organisational Review', of the MCCI, of the CPI(ML), is now seen to be uploaded.. this website carries an encyclopedic range of material pertaining to the banned CPI-Maoist party of India as well as many other Maoist parties functioning in other countries. This website has the potential to indoctrinate youngsters in Maoist ideology."

Sovani also claimed that the website was a channel of communication for the underground organisation. "...The website comes handy as a tool of communication for urban cadre, as well as the urban-underground cadre," he mentioned.

When contacted, Maharashtra ATS chief Deven Bharati said, "We had got the website banned... The website is now visible through some browsers and it must be



Meanwhile, even though the website is now visible in India, it prominently proclaims on its home page: “BannedThought.net is itself now banned in India and some other countries!”

The website has also posted an email it received from the Cyber Laws & e-Security Group, ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India on November 11, 2019. The email stated that certain URLs of the website contained objectionable content. The email termed the “nature of posts” in these URLs as “Naxal and anti-national propaganda.”

The e-mail also informed the website that as per provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000, “a meeting of the committee for examination of URLs for blocking is scheduled on November 14, 2018... you are requested to depute your representative to participate in the meeting to present your case,”

The website goes on to state “...It is not only impractical for time and financial reasons, it would also obviously be a total waste of time. (Or possibly even lead to our representative being arrested and imprisoned as has recently been happening even to people’s lawyers in India!).... This extremely basic democratic right is opposed by the current ruling class in India. So, there is no point for us to say anything further at this meeting or elsewhere to this despicable anti-democratic ruling class bent on the suppression of all ideas that they disagree with.”



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