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MNS and NCP's 26/11 boo-boo

Hoardings put up by the two parties for Mumbai's slain heroes are replete with grammatical errors and incorrect spellings, not to mention a wrong photograph

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Had Major Sandip Unnikrishnan's father K Unnikrishnan, who walked out after he noticed his 26/11 hero son's name misspelt on a war memorial, seen hoardings put up by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and Nationalist Congress Party, he would have felt slighted all over again.

Not only did the parties misspell his son's name, they also displayed the photo of a living NSG personnel instead of NSG's Gajendra Singh.



In the hoardings of NCP (left) and MNS, a commando who was part of the NSG team at Taj Palace and Towers during 26/11 is portrayed as another commando Gajendra Singh. Singh (inset) died during the Nariman House operations *Pic courtesy Mumbai Samachar*

The hoardings, put up at Malad by MNS and NCP are almost identical – all grammatical errors in Marathi, as well as the photo goof-up, are present in both parties' hoardings.

In utter disregard to the martyrs, the hoardings refer to Anti-Terrorism Squad chief Hemant Karkare as ATS Commissioner, constable Arun Chitte as Arun Chite, Assistant Police Inspector Bapusaheb Durugade is mentioned as Bapu Saheb and Unnikrishnan's name is misspelt in Marathi.

While NCP could be excused for the grammatical errors, MNS cannot, for their president Raj Thackeray keeps talking about upholding and preserving the Marathi language. Pathak (squad) has been written as pathake, handani (extortion), nirikhsak (inspector) have been written in incorrect Marathi.

The worst insult has been accorded to Gajendra Singh. The hoardings show a photo of an NSG commando talking on his cellphone, while there is no photo of Singh who laid down his life at Nariman House.

When Mumbai Mirror pointed out the errors and the photo goof-up to MNS spokesperson Shirish Parkar, he was not at all apologetic. He, in fact, counter-questioned this reporter, wanting to know if she was Maharashtrian.

"People pronounce names wrongly, what's the big deal? Ravi Shastri pronounces Sachin Tendulkar's name with a British accent. These errors are minor, people should consider the feelings behind the hoarding," he said. He had no explanation for how the wrong photo of Singh appeared on their hoardings.

NCP corporator Ajit Raorane, in whose ward the NCP hoarding is put up, was not available for comment. His leader in the BMC, Niyaz Wanu, however, was straightforward in accepting that the errors show utter irresponsibility. "Grammatical errors can be excused, but displaying a living person's photo instead of a martyr cannot be forgiven. I don't know who has done it, whether the party workers did it, or it was given on contract. But it shows that the person is not serious about the issue," said Wanu.

Ex-NSG chief J K Dutt, who led operations during the 26/11 attacks, also expressed resentment. He said, "I haven't seen the hoardings, but solidarity expressed in such a manner is undesirable. If political parties wished to express solidarity towards martyrs and victims of 26/11, they should have done it with due care. Such errors may be considered as insults to the martyrs by many."

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