

Faking news

 indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/faking-news-unesco-new-2000-note-radioactive-ink-modi-fake-whatsapp-messages-44

12/28/2016

By: [Editorial](#) | Published: December 28, 2016 12:15 am

It's fake — but fun. That explains the wild success of “fake news” stories in India through 2016. Some “fake” reports, circulated on social media and mobile messaging apps, did better than real news from newspapers and TV channels. Some stories were palpably untrue — but they came so beautifully wrapped in ribbons that many purveyors willingly suspended disbelief.

That was apparent in the success of India's most loved “fake news”, revolving around made-in-India articles declared “best in the world”.

Interestingly, UNESCO played a starring role in apparently placing its stamp of elegant approval on these articles. One fake report claimed UNESCO had announced Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) was the “best PM in the world”. Another colourful story claimed UNESCO found India's national anthem “the world's best”. Another feku whisper stated UNESCO so loved India's new 2000-rupee note, it had passionately declared it the “best currency in the world”.

But not all fake news was feel-good — some stories worked when they made people feel kinda bad. Take the news of the new 2000-rupee note containing upon it “radioactive ink”. Why? To trace hoarders, of course. But don't worry, the story reassured. The radioactive ink — an isotope of phosphorus (P32) with 15 protons and 17 neutrons, to be precise — wasn't harmful to you and me. It was radioactive, but only for the non-tax-paying bad guys who were undoubtedly feeling very, very bad at this. As they would've felt at news of there being a “GPS chip” embedded in the new 2000-rupee note, giving satellites location coordinates and currency numbers, so that black-hearted black money types could be caught red-handed — courtesy the radioactive ink. If you think these stories were namkeen enough, hang on.

When fake news circulated of a salt crisis, many bought it and crowded shops to buy sacks of salt — instead of taking the news with a pinch of the same.

From Around The Web

[Recommended by](#)