

Geoffrey Rush wins defamation case in Australia



Academy Award-winner Geoffrey Rush won a defamation case yesterday against an Australian newspaper over reports that he behaved in an inappropriate sexual way to an actress. A front-page story in 2017 claimed that the Sydney Theatre Company received a complaint that Rush had inappropriately touched a female co-star during a staging of "King Lear". A judge in Sydney ruled yesterday that the Daily Telegraph had produced a "recklessly irresponsible piece of sensationalist journalism" and awarded Rush Aus\$850,000 (US\$608,000) in damages.

"There are no winners in this case, it has been extremely distressing for anyone involved," Rush said in brief remarks outside the court, calling the months-long legal case a "harrowing time". Justice Michael Wigney said that reasonable readers would assume from the reporting that Rush was a "pervert" from a series of reports that he ruled were mostly uncorroborated. The judge said that actress Eryn Jean Norvill's evidence was inconsistent and that she "was at times prone to exaggeration and embellishment."

Wigney said he would assess further damages for lost earnings at a later date. Australia's defamation laws are notoriously strict and often favor the person accused of bad behavior. Rush won the Best Actor Academy Award in 1997 for his role in "Shine" and is one of the few stars to have also won a Golden Globe, an Emmy and a Tony Award. The Daily Telegraph is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. —AFP



For the ultimate 'Game of Thrones' fan, how to speak Valyrian?

American linguist David J. Peterson may have built up the unique and ancient languages for the television series "Game of Thrones" but when it comes to who speaks Valyrian best, there's no contest. "The best is Jacob Anderson," Peterson told Reuters. "He plays Grey Worm on 'Game of Thrones' and he's so good, he's so good. He is head and shoulders better than me." "When I heard him the first time speak the Valyrian language I just said, 'wow.' I went back and re-watched it," he said.

Peterson, a co-founder of the Language Creation Society, started off by building on a few keys words and phrases created by George R.R. Martin in his "A Song of Ice and Fire" novels that form the basis of the HBO hit medieval fantasy series about warring families. "I didn't reference any other languages. After I included all of (Martin's) material I built it up in a way that I thought book readers and George R.R. Martin himself would expect and appreciate." When Peterson got the scripts for the TV show, producers tagged all the lines he had to translate into Valyrian or Dothraki. He then broke up the language syllable by syllable for the actors, and recorded it for them. "I record really slow so they can hear exactly how it's pronounced, and then I record the English for reference," Peterson said. —Reuters



Mum chops a year's worth of vegetables

An Australian mum has chopped a year's worth of vegetables so she can save time for herself every evening. Her freezer now contains an incredible 65kg worth of veg including 20kg of potatoes, 15kg of carrots, 15kg of sweet potatoes and 10kg of tomatoes. She posted on her Facebook page: "Veg prep for what feels like the next year. Carrots: sliced, roast chunks and chopped. Potatoes: chunks, sliced and diced for mash. Onions: sliced, chunks and onion rings."

"I do it so I don't have to waste time every night chopping up veg for dinner, as we all work and I have university and the two kids have after school sports. "It's not pre-cooked, just raw, and the roast vegetables turn out great. Just thaw them out the night before - and the diced up vegetables are perfect for the slow cooker and spaghetti etc." —BangShowbiz

Ban on TikTok app would harm free speech, China's Bytedance tells India's top court

An Indian court's call for a ban on the popular video app TikTok will hurt free speech rights, China's Bytedance Technology Co has said in a request for the Supreme Court to quash the directive. Bytedance is one of the world's most valuable start-ups and its TikTok app lets users create and share short videos with special effects. It has become popular in rural India, where most of a population of 1.3 billion lives. TikTok, whose video-only interface makes it easier to use than platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, has been downloaded more than 240 million times in India, says app analytics firm Sensor Tower.

A ban "amounts to curtailing of the rights of the citizens of India...who have been using the platform everyday to express themselves and create content," the company said in a court filing reviewed by Reuters, asking for the order to be quashed. The company's Monday filing is not public and has not previously been reported. The Supreme Court has set next Monday for a hearing. Bytedance did not respond to a request for comment. India's information technology ministry also did not respond.

Last week, a court in the southern state of Tamil Nadu asked the federal government to ban TikTok, saying it encouraged pornography and made child

users vulnerable to sexual predators. TikTok's inappropriate content was a dangerous aspect of the app, it added. Jokes, clips and footage related to India's movie industry dominate the platform, along with videos in which young people, sometimes scantily clad, lip-sync and dance to music.

Bytedance said users flagged only a tiny proportion of TikTok videos, showing that a "very minuscule" proportion of its content was considered inappropriate or obscene. TikTok was primarily used to circulate amusing videos, it added. It also argued that it could not be held liable for content posted by users.

Some of TikTok's content was "unbearable", M. Manikandan, the minister for information technology in Tamil Nadu told Reuters in February, and a Hindu nationalist group close to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also called for a ban. In its filing, the company said TikTok had experienced immense success in India, which fuelled controversy. Bytedance employs more than 250 people in India and plans more investment as it expands the business, it added. The BJP is tracking conversations on TikTok, the party's information technology chief, Amit Malviya, has previously told Reuters, calling it a brilliant medium for creative expression. — Reuters

Mother makes butter at home to save money

A mother has revealed she makes her own butter at home to save money. She said all that was needed to make the butter was some pure cream and a mixer to whip up everything in 15 minutes. Sarah wrote on the 'Mums Who Budget & Save' Facebook page: "To make butter, you just keep whipping cream until it splits into butter and buttermilk."

"You then need to rinse the butter, to make sure all of the buttermilk is gone, and then you can add salt if desired." Her cunning idea has been well received on social media. One woman wrote: "I never thought to do this! This is great." It takes around 21 pounds of milk to just make a pound of butter. —Bang Showbiz

