Restrictions on art

Why in news?

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Chennai based cartoonist was arrested for criticising Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and officials.

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What is the reason of imprisonment?

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- Chennai based cartoonist Bala had uploaded a cartoon to his Facebook page, which the police describe as “obscene”.
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- It was posted a day after a labourer doused himself and his family in kerosene and set them on fire in the campus of the collector's office in Tirunelveli.
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- The cartoon had stuck to generalities and depicted no specific personality.
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- In the cartoon Tirunelveli district collector, the police chief and the chief minister himself, all three barely clothed.
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- It is one thing to say the emperor wears no clothes, quite another to show it.
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How state government had reacted over cartoons?

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- Tamilnadu has produced an array of political cartoonists powered by the freedom struggle and gag cartoonists who held forth on a society challenged by the Dravidian movement.
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- The cartoon then and now is far from silly and no-one knows this more than the Tamil politician.

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- Whenever the visual image gets even remotely dented, Tamilnadu authorities are quick to react.
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- Over the years, however, Tamil cartooning seems to have lost steam.
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- It doesn’t have anything like the patronage the cartoon enjoys, say in neighbouring Malayalam media.
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What is the response for the cartoon?

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- The cartoonist jogs recent memory by bringing the local authorities into focus.
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- When the dispute is between individual rights and group interests, officials directly in charge seem to routinely side with the latter.
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- The cartoon on the other hand is wordless barring the labelling of the three characters in it, helpfully in English. This powers it further.
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- It cuts across languages and given the multiple tweets and FB posts following the arrest, should go places.
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- Frustrating for the authorities but reassuring for the cartoon watcher.
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- If the courts don’t reverse its default setting, particularly in the case of an everyday art like the cartoon, it will go up and up into the unbridled cyberspace.
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Source: Indian Express

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