Our Publications

Afternoon Voice
Afternoon Voice is a Mumbai based daily tabloid which covers all aspects of the city. Besides the daily diet of news, sports and business; readers are served stimulating columns and features related to the theme of the day. With an ever-expanding readership base, this tabloid tries to be different by not just focusing on city-centric reporting but also presenting the relevant national events with the city’s viewpoint. In-depth coverage of top stories deal with responsibility, courage and honesty has made our presence felt in the market! It was launched on July 3, 2009, and within a short span of time it has reached majority of the stalls all over the city with a door-to-door circulation in the pipeline.
www.afternoonsvoice.com

Beyond the News
It is the only international fortnightly magazine published from Mumbai. It has got the recognition for a comprehensive analysis of events covering a wide range of subjects; the magazine has been appreciated and awarded on so many occasions for its bold presentation of facts. Responding to the desire of readers to know more than what the newspapers report, our publication endeavours to take up issues often side-lined by other mainstream publications. The exclusive news, views and interviews have become the talk of the town. Our readership profile comprises of common man, businessmen, hoteliers, entertainment industry, medical professionals and others interested in gaining in-depth understanding of the subject. In addition to reaching out to all the important cities in India, this magazine is also read in international cities like Sydney, Singapore, Bangkok and Dubai.
www.beyondthenews.biz

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The monthly magazine gives an insight of the country’s shipping industry. We bring our expertise on reporting hard news and apply it to this sector. The focus of the magazine is on the maritime events occurring along the country’s vast coastline. It aims not only to cater to the industry specific need of understanding the events that mostly affect them but also serves as a platform for the members of the industry to form their opinions.

Mumbai Manoos
Mumbai Manoos is a daily Marathi tabloid published from Mumbai. Launched on January 13, 2010, it was targeted at Marathi youth readership. Mumbai Manoos is Mumbai’s fastest growing Marathi tabloid for Marathi manoos. Richness of the content is the USP of this small sized newspaper.

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The evolution of cyber world, new technologies and the latest hacking techniques has introduced great opportunity and significant risks to our lives. Everyone from IT personals to youth and common users are confronted by complex and critical choices of ethics and responsibility for which they may be little prepared. Hacker5 presents the reality of those choices and their consequences. It directly addresses to the key issues to influence youth, IT personals and common users toward personal safety and socially acceptable use of cyber tools. The main objective of this magazine is to help the user to understand how the cyber world, new technologies and latest hacking techniques contribute to their lives and to the lives of their family, community, nation and society. Hacker5 concentrates to understand individual and corporate responsibility for maintaining the integrity and the availability of cyber commerce. It also focuses on "Cyber Awareness" and understands the ethical considerations associated with the use of cyber technologies. Our motive is to expose hidden and underground threats mainly caused by using internet and to spread awareness among the people.
www.afternoonzvoice.com

This website runs with the intention to encourage fair, sensitive and accurate news coverage of issues concerning India. This interactive medium is envisaged as one of the leading voices of the people of the state, as well as the purpose of upholding journalistic standards and ethics. Like our publications, the site provides all kinds of assistance to fledgling journalists and instils greater independence in them and promotes what is important in the interest of the public. We have a Directory, Photo Gallery, an Interactive Window through which trainee journalists can access help from us on any issue. We eagerly await your feedback to update the site to suit your need.
Are we losing our traditional ways of celebrating festivals?

Controlling politics and politicians of his era was Don Karim Lala's strong point

Jana Sena in Andhra joins hands with BJP, after Shiv Sena in Maharashtra dumps it

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ARE WE LOSING OUR TRADITIONAL WAYS OF CELEBRATING FESTIVALS?

When I was a kid, there used to be hustle and bustle in my house before and after festivals. All this included days long preparations, new clothes, house cleaning and most favourite part of all this was shopping. And then greeting relatives going to friend’s house for greetings and get together was fun.

Things have changed now. Our hectic lifestyle is majorly to be blamed also since most of the families are nuclear, it becomes very difficult to follow all those rituals of celebration. However, I know of a few families who still get together and celebrate festivals the same old way. It’s really good because in doing so they preserve our customs and traditions. Moreover, the smartphone addicts have distanced people from meeting and talking. Everyone is in some or the other kind of stress, one is running from the other. In the Indian culture, there was a time
When there used to be a Holi Gulal Hindu Festival every day of the year, 365 festivals in a year because a festival is a tool to bring life to a state of exuberance and enthusiasm. That was the significance and importance of festivals. The whole culture was in a state of celebration. If today was a plugging day, it was a kind of celebration. Tomorrow was planting day, another kind of celebration. Day after tomorrow was wedding, that was a celebration. Festivals bring happiness, cheer, hope, optimism, celebrations, lights, joy, cooperation and many more pleasant things in our lives. During Diwali, Christmas, Holi, Eid, Guru Purab, Passover or any other festival, the world appears to be a heaven. It appears as if the entire world is attending a wedding celebration. Children, adults, teenagers, elders, and middle-aged people all of them look cheerful and vibrant. The ambience looks bright and poise.

Now life is mostly restricted to urbanites, we are losing our culture. The cause behind it is the new moderately well to do middle-class parents of youngsters. They fail to educate the kids about Indian culture but get thrilled when the kids dance to a Bollywood tune or a MJ song. Nowadays, these kids would not be able say which is Bharatanatyam and which is Odyssey or Kathak. They would identify any western singer but not Pt. Jasraj or any other Indian classical musician. They would have seen 2012 or Star Trek but not Shakuntala or Ramayana. Their parents who are in the age group of 30 to 50 years as of now had no time to teach the young about anything Indian. Further, if you take a look at the schools today you may notice that all their school day functions vibrate with even five year olds dancing to Shella Ki Jawani. I remember of having acted as Krishna or Rama in school functions and girls performing Bharatanatyam or singing classical songs.

With a much more demanding work life than earlier and with the amalgamation of cultures happening globally, we are losing our cultural identity. I wouldn't know if it's good or not. All I know is we are no longer following age-old practices which reflect our true culture. One reason which comes to mind is, maybe we have a more demanding working lifestyle than ever. There's too much at hand to be doing things the traditional way. I would like to believe that this is not the case. Many will disagree, I'm sure. Secondly, we, in today's world, have enough distractions to be able to reflect on our past way of life. I'm sure many of us have childhood memories when our grandpa used to do the traditional "pooja"(prayers) which seemed to go on for eternity. I also remember my grandparents were very particular about how things were done. There was no reasoning with them as to why they were doing the way they were doing.

Finally, time is of utmost importance according to today's generation. We do celebrate festivals but more often than not, it's more of a family get-together rather than following tradition itself. All of our festivals have become more of coming together for a day or two and then going back to your separate individual existence. We aren't patient enough to go through all procedures for lack of time and more than that, a lack of interest. The rich and vibrant festivals of India are a testimony to our diverse tradition and culture. Festivals in India revolve around Lord's birthdays, traditional myths, seasonal changes, relationships and much more. Festivals are celebrated irrespective of religion or caste in the country, bringing people closer and creating a strong bond of humanity. Right from childhood, infants in India are part of every festival celebration in the house. This helps them understand the rituals of each festival and they develop a liking for the festivals and celebrations.

As they grow older, they get fond of these festivals and want to celebrate it in its full potential to enjoy it thoroughly. You will notice a lot of youngsters participating in festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Durga Puja and Christmas. These festivals bring them closer to each other as well as the country and instill a feeling of patriotism as well. For students, it is a great way to understand the rich heritage of India and learn about the importance of various festivals. These festivals also help students from across the world to know about India and its history. This creates a good reputation of our country in the world and we get an opportunity to spread our country's rich heritage. Many schools organise cultural exchange for students that foster intercultural learning experiences. Cultural exchange programs promote mutual understanding between nations and students get an opportunity to learn the culture of other
Controlling politics and politicians of his era was Don Karim Lala's strong point.

Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut has kicked up a controversy by making a statement that Indira Gandhi used to meet Don Karim Lala and this has caused a political stir in India. Well! There is no point in feeling so offended or proving Raut wrong. Criminalisation of politics has long been a concern especially in Maharashtra where then the flourishing underworld was part of its political milieu for several decades. Several State-level politicians have longstanding or newly established ties with Dagdi Chawl, Chhota Rajan and especially Dawood gang with the criminal-politician network developing significant muscle and money power in what appears as a resurrection of the syndicate. There are many reports and evidences to prove that the fugitive dons Dawood Ibrahim and his aide Chhota Shakeel used their close links in local politics to influence key redevelopment schemes in South Mumbai in those days without even the operators of the
project knowing it.

Now coming back to Indira Gandhi meeting Don Karim Lala, Karim Lala aka Abdul Karim Sher Khan was born in Afghanistan. He came to Mumbai in 1930. He was a household name for his notorious jobs as a don of underworld from 1960s to 1980s. Similarly, Mastan Mirza known as Haji Mastan was an underworld don originally from Tamil Nadu and based in Bombay. Haji Mastan and Karim Lala were not only Mafias but they were political financiers too from crime to politics they dominated every sector then. After the 1993 Bombay blasts, the Home Ministry collected considerable information on the links between Congress politicians and the underworld. The details of this investigation were submitted to the Vohra Committee.

If you look at the connects, Dawood Ibrahim has amicable relations with Sharad Pawar, Salim Zakaria, Javed Khan (both ex-ministers close to Pawar), Mohammed Dosa was close to Madan Baffna (ex-minister), P. Raj Koli, he was a gangster and a contract killer active during the 1990s majorly was very close to Arun Mehta (former home minister), Haji Ahmed was smuggler and etornist and he was close to D.V. Patil, Javed Khan. Gangster Khan Brothers were close to Arun Mehta, Salim Zakaria (ex-ministers), Tiger Memon was in nexus with Javed Khan.

Abdul Latif was known to Chimanbhai Patel (ex-chief minister), Izzu Sheikh, Haji was with Ahmed Patel, AICC general secretary. Hassana Dada was in shelter of C.D. Patel (home minister), Thakor Nair (supply minister). Amar Subhania was shielded by Chimanbhai Patel. Ram Bhai Gadwai : Ashok Lal ("s/o Babu Lal, minister of sports") Santosheben Jadeja, MLA: “Earlier of Janata Dal. Joined Congress. Known as mafia queen.” In mid-1995, N.N. Vohra Committee report on the criminal-politician nexus was tabled in Parliament, the Opposition was united in heaping scorn on it. The perception was that the 12-page report was incomplete and politically sensitive information had been suppressed. Months later, after the episode had receded from public memory, there is evidence to confirm that suspicion. Some documents submitted to the committee by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revealed shocking charges of the murky link between prominent politicians and the underworld. According to the report, Moolchand Shah alias Choksi a hawala racketeer also involved in the Jain case and "close to Dawood Ibrahim and gang" had, on various occasions between December 1979 and October 1992, transferred or paid Rs 72 crore to Pawar.

Many other Congress leaders have also been listed as recipients of money from Shah. When Raut mentioned Indira meeting Karim Lala, several
There was a time when Chhota Shakeel, Dawood Ibrahim, Sharad Shetty used to decide who would be Police Commissioner of Mumbai and who would sit in Mantralaya.

The statement and demanded that Raut should withdraw his remarks. Karim Lala was leader of the Pathan community; he led an organisation called 'Pakhtun-e-Hind'. It was in this capacity of the leader of Pathan community that he met several top leaders including Indira Gandhi. There was a time when Chhota Shakeel, Dawood Ibrahim, Sharad Shetty used to decide who would be Police Commissioner of Mumbai and who would sit in Mantralaya. For over two decades, he was the leader of the dreaded "Pathan Gang" that operated from impoverished and crime infested Muslim ghettos of South Mumbai like Dongri, Nagpada, Bhendi Bazaar and Mohammad Ali Road. The Pathan Gang was involved in operating illegal gambling (satta) and liquor dens, illegal money recovery, illegal land evictions, kidnapping, protection racket (hafta), contract killing (supari), distribution of narcotics and counterfeit currency.

Karim Lala's family settled in one of the most densely populated and impoverished Muslim ghetto of Bhendi Bazaar in South Mumbai. Starting as an ordinary worker in the Mumbai docks, he later joined a gang of ethnic Pathans who worked as illegal recovery agents for Marwari and Gujarati moneylenders, landlords and businessmen. These money lenders and landlords employed the burly Pathans whose tall imposing size and intimidating demeanour made it easy to recover money from defaulting debtors, evicting tenants and owners from prime properties in expensive South Mumbai. Lala soon rose up the ranks to be the chief of the "Pathan Gang". From the seventies, Lala agreed to a pact with the other two ganglords namely Haji Mastan and Varadarajan (Varada bhai) to divide Mumbai amongst them so that they could freely run their crime activities without any conflict between each other. Due to failing health during the late seventies, Lala gradually transferred the leadership of the Pathan gang to his nephew Samad Khan and then managed his hotel and transport business. Although Lala had several illegitimate businesses, his legitimate business included two hotels (Al Karim Hotel and New India Hotel) and a travel and passport agency called New India Tours and Travels.

During his peak, Lala frequently invited several personalities from Bollywood (Hindi film industry) to his daawats (parties) and Eid celebrations. Many characters from Bollywood movies closely resemble Karim Lala and his mannerisms and accent. Lala also held a weekly "durban" where people from different walks of life narrated their grievances to him and in return, he helped them financially or to get justice using his gang's muscle power. He died on 19 February 2002 at the age of 90. Karim Lala was the first mafia don of the underworld. His influence on Maharashtra politics was visible; there is no surprise if he met Indira Gandhi the then prime minister of India.
Jana Sena in Andhra joins hands with BJP, after Shiv Sena in Maharashtra dumps it
BJP-Sena alliance has always hit the headlines. This time, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan and state BJP president Kanna Lakshmi Narayana announced an alliance at a press conference after a four-hour-long meeting of leaders of the two parties in Vijayawada.

Kalyan, who made derogatory statements about the BJP in the past, landed up praising Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Well politics knows no morals and it's all about the greed of power. In Andhra Pradesh, if BJP projects Pawan Kalyan as its CM face there are chances that his community may support the alliance. On the other hand, there is news of an internal unrest in the BJP because many of the local leaders are not in favour of projecting Pawan Kalyan as CM face. Besides CM candidate, what Andhra needs is a strong leader who is not corrupt and has a vision. Since Andhra Pradesh became a separate state, they did not get a non-corrupt government. The development of the state is at stake. Though we cannot guarantee about Pawan Kalyan being clean as he has both money and muscle power and with wasted power comes the wasted interest too. But, still BJP has a choice to pick a lesser evil. If we look into the past, Jana Sena was formed in March 2014 amid the Modi wave and after supporting the BJP-TDP coalition initially, had fallout out it. The two outfits have also announced that they will contest the 2024 assembly elections together and will have a seat sharing arrangement well in time. For now, the alliance will focus on strengthening the protest against decision to have three state capitals.

For the first time, Pawan came to active politics in 2009 when his brother Chiranjeevi launched the Praja Rajyam party. He campaigned across the state against the then atrocities of then YSR led Congress government. He worked very hard in those election campaigns for his brother. But those election results were very shocking and eye opener for Chiranjeevi. He flopped in his political debut. There are so many reasons for the failure and mega star ended up with a mere 18 seats and then Kalyan took it in a sportive spirit. But after two years, Chiranjeevi merged his party PRP into the Congress against whom they campaigned all these years, same like Shiv Sena in Maharashtra who were ideologically and principally against Congress-NCP recently sidelined BJP and joined hands with the secular alliance. This triggered a silent rift between the two brothers and Pawan Kalyan distanced himself from that merger. He ideologically always hated Congress, he campaigned against Congress but his big brother merged the party for the sake of a Ministry. After the 2009 election defeat of Praja Rajyam, things did not go well with them. The state too was divided as Andhra and Telangana. The 2014 election was power packed that elected Telangana’s K. Chandrashekar Rao better known as K.C.R the First Chief Minister of Telangana and the leader and Founder of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, a regional party. in the centre of it was the Modi wave, the political equations across India took new twists. BJP was all set to concur and everyplace the leftists & seculars got disowned by voters. There was threat and challenges for the survival of regional parties. Looking at emerging new equations and total failure of big brother Kalyan, he launched his new party Jana Sena and gave the slogan “Congress Hatao Desh Bachao “ similar to Modi’s “Congress Mukt Bharat”.

Pawan Kalyan was always overshadowed by his more illustrious brother. Everyone knew that Pawan didn’t have it easy coming from a family of such a popular actor. However, it is to Pawan’s credit that he proved his mettle by becoming a Power Star. It all culminated in Pawan launching his own political outfit Jana Sena in style just like his brother Chiranjeevi’s now extinct Praja Rajyam.
Jana Sena started giving voice to people’s problem like special status to Andhra Pradesh, land acquisition for farmers.

Pawan’s debut political speech too was loaded with the same power and intensity as of Chiranjeevi when the latter had launched his outfit. He campaigned heavily, but did not contest elections as it would have split the votes and YS Jagan could have benefitted of it. He compared both the leaders at the Central and the State level and went with Narendra Modi as PM and Chandrababu Naidu as CM. He campaigned for both of them in the state and helped them at his level to win in the election. During the campaigning of 2014 elections, he announced that he will question the Central Government and State Government if they fail to keep their promises. For a long time, he kept silent but when the Central Government led by Modi refused to give special status to Andhra Pradesh which was their election promise, the State Government started downplaying it by passing statements like “special status is not a sanjeevani.” Kalyan came to the surface questioning Modi and Naidu. Jana Sena started giving voice to people’s problem like special status to Andhra Pradesh, land acquisition for farmers, mega aqua food park issues at East Godavari, kidney diseases at SriKakulam, sand dumping at Polavaram, farmers land and mainly the Agrigold victims. After many permutations and combinations once again BJP and Pawan Kalyan announced an alliance and emerged as ‘third alternative’ in Andhra.

Chiranjeevi in 2008 in a grand manner announced the launch of Praja Rajyam in Tirupati with the slogan ‘PREMELAKSHYAMSEVAEMARGAM.’ He began with: “Who called me into politics? It was you people. What do you want? ... It should be a rule by the people for the people.” About his party, he said: “Praja Rajyam will be a party of backward and weaker sections, farmers, labourers and women. Pawan Kalyan too while launching his Jana Sena followed the same. On why, he entered politics, he averred, “Politics is nothing when compared to the love showered by my fans and supporters. While Chiranjeevi’s PRP launch was a mega affair in open grounds, Pawan Kalyan’s Jana Sena launch was just a press meet but made best use of technology for wider reach. The PRP launch saw many speakers address the gathering before Chiranjeevi spoke. However, during Jana Sena launch, Pawan was the sole speaker. While Chiranjeevi confined himself to state politics, Pawan touched upon national politics. The actor did not spare even Pakistan and China to prove his general knowledge. Meanwhile, Praja Rajyam faded out and now it’s almost forgotten. Let’s see what fate Kalyan brings to his political party and his persona as politician.

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Next step of CAA is a promise of holding a nationwide NRC
The proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be an official record of all legal citizens of India where individuals would have to provide a prescribed set of documents issued before a specified cutoff date for inclusion in the register.

A bandh has been called by Prakash Ambedkar to protest against CAA and NRC in Maharashtra. We don’t know how much this bandh is going to be supported, but ever since the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019, one is witnessing protests across the length and breadth of the country. And post the events at Jamia Millia, the agitation has only intensified and has come to involve the student community in large numbers. How does one explain this spurt in the protest?

Five factors need to be budgeted into any analysis of recent developments. The protests have resulted in thousands of arrests and 27 deaths as of 27 December 2019. Two 17-year old minors were among those reported to have been killed due to police firing live ammunition on protesters in Assam. On 19 December, the police issued a complete ban on protests in several parts of India. As a result of defying the ban, thousands of protesters were detained. So far, at least eight states have announced that they will not implement the Act or the National Register of Citizens (NRC). While one state and two union territories have refused to implement the CAA, three other states have only declined the implementation of the NRC. However, the Union Home Ministry said that states lack the legal power to stop the implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act.

The Citizenship Amendment Act protests are a series of ongoing protests in India which was enacted into law on 12 December 2019 and against proposals to enact a nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC). The protests that began in Assam slowly spread to Delhi, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura on 4 December 2019. In a few days, the protests spread across India though the concerns of the protesters vary. The Amendment benefits Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian and Parsi refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who sought refuge in India before 2015; the Amendment leaves out Muslims and others from these countries as well as refugee Sri Lankan Tamils in India, Rohingyas from Myanmar and Buddhist refugees from Tibet. The proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be an official record of all legal citizens of India where individuals would have to provide a prescribed set of documents issued before a specified cutoff date for inclusion in the register. The exercise of the NRC has already been carried out in the state of Assam. Those who fail to qualify for the NRC will be able to avail the benefits of the CAA if they claim to be religious minorities fleeing persecution from the listed countries.

Protesters throughout India see the new law as discriminating against Muslims and as unconstitutional. They are demanding the amendment to be scrapped and the NRC to be not implemented nationwide. They are concerned about Muslim citizens of India that they will be rendered stateless and put into detention camps by the proposed nationwide NRC in combination with the CAA. They are also concerned that all citizens will be affected by the bureaucratic exercise of the NRC where they will have to prove their citizenship for inclusion in the registry. The protesters have raised voices against authoritarianism, the police crackdown in other universities and suppression of protests.

The CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) have evoked much stronger reactions than the decision on revoking Article 370 or the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram temple-Babri Masjid dispute. The CAA and NRC touch a much wider segment of society. While in many parts of the country, the debate is on whether the basis of citizenship is religion, in the North-East it is being looked at from the insider-outsider lens. In the North-East, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faces challenges from both its allies and among segments from within the party. Meanwhile, when the Citizenship Bill was being debated in the two Houses, the Prime Minister was not present. It was left to the home minister to defend the stand of the government in both Houses. The equating of partition with religion could well have been a tactical error. The debate in the two Houses heightened tensions and could have well caused the unrest. The involvement of the youth in the...

This government blamed Nehru for failing to integrate Kashmir with the rest of India - now the supporters of Nehru can blame this government for doing exactly the same with the North Eastern states of India with the Inner Line Permits.
agitations got heightened after the developments in Jamia Millia University. Police action always invites a reaction. Finally, from the protests one notices on the street may not necessarily be led or inspired only by the parties opposed to the ruling coalition. Those who have been bitter critics of the Congress and the Left have been part of the agitation especially in the North-East and in premier state-funded research institutions. One would be underestimating the intensity of the protests by laying it at the door of select political forces.

NRC (National Register of Citizens) was an exercise solely for Assam to identify indigenous people and those who would have proof of entry into the state/country latest by midnight of 24th of March, 1971. The state of Assam decided to increase the ambit of relevance to people who for all intents and purposes were believed to be localised enough if they had voted in an election or two or could prove positively a direct descendant connection with somebody who had passed the 1951 NRC test. CAB and NRC prove to be disasters like Demonetisation, this time, the supporters can dump all the blame on rulers of India. This government blamed Nehru for failing to integrate Kashmir with the rest of India - now the supporters of Nehru can blame this government for doing exactly the same with the North Eastern states of India with the Inner Line Permits. At the end of the day, all of this friction is happening just to grab political power in the state of West Bengal. Where most saw a defeat of all purposes, a few special ones saw an opportunity. Thus was brought in the Citizen Amendment Bill 2019, an old tool, with a renewed purpose primarily to ensure that all the Hindus identified as Aliens by the process of NRC in Assam get Indian Citizenship. Now you know the actual reason why CAB welcomes Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians into the Indian fold but does not mention the Muslims. The next move on this political chess board is the 'promise' of holding a nationwide NRC. Please do not get excited, it won't be executed in real - it is just a long carrot to stir the political pot in West Bengal.

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Devendra Fadnavis meeting Raj Thackeray created many speculations in the corridors of Maharashtra politics. After Shiv Sena joining hands with the NCP and the Congress, it was expected that Raj Thackeray could lead a new role. For the last few years, MNS has lost political ground in Maharashtra. In the last Assembly Election 2019, the party led by Raj Thackeray has won just one seat and 2.3 per cent vote share. Moreover, Uddhav has comprised his Hindutva line by joining hands with secular ideologies. This is a good opportunity for Raj Thackeray to make a passage closer to the Hindutva dogma. Shiv Sena is facing criticism after forming the government with mismatched or unparalleled ideological parties like Congress and NCP. BJP also needed a quick replacement in place of Shiv Sena. After forming the alliance with Raj Thackeray, BJP would be able to spread a message to unsatisfied Shiv Sena’s that the other Thackeray is going to stand by what the Supremo has uttered all this while. By this, the selection of Uddhav Thackeray as a legacy of Balasaheb Thackeray’s would be proven wrong.

There is already a whisper that Uddhav Thackeray has shown disloyalty to the founder of Shiv Sena. Most probably on 23rd January 2020 on the birth anniversary of Balasaheb Thackeray,
BJP also needed a quick replacement in place of Shiv Sena. After forming the alliance with Raj Thackeray, BJP would be able to spread a message to unsatisfied Shiv Saniks that the other Thackeray is going to stand by what the Supremo has uttered all this while. By this, the selection of Uddhav Thackeray as a legacy of Balasaheb Thackeray’s would be proven wrong.

main parties at the centre. If he chooses NDA, he will lose his Muslim vote bank. He should decide if his Muslim support means a lot to him or if he can make do with most of them.

If he chooses UPA in the current scenario, it will not benefit him. The third option for him is to go to South India and try to find allies in other regional parties and try to make the ticket to the Centre. This will also not work. Regional parties are not strong enough to make him enter the Centre. There are some practical aspects of politics without which a party cannot come to power. Now, most of the strong opposition parties have aligned with Shiv Sena by rejecting the BJP. Therefore, BJP has no obligation to support Sena anymore. Raj Thackeray is a political arch enemy of Uddhav Thackeray. He is popular with Maharashtrians. He can give a tough fight to the Shiv Sena. Now he has been marginalised by Shiv Sena. So, it is natural that BJP and Raj Thackeray will talk with each other under new circumstances. It will be beneficial to both the parties politically.

After MNS was formed in 2006, the Shiv Sena unit of Nashik joined him. Within 6 years, he won the municipal polls. He promised to visit Nashik every month and transform it into an ideal city. Had he done that, he could have showcased it as a model city and used it to broaden his base in the highly urbanised Maharashtra but that never happened. He hardly visited Nashik. After singing praises for Narendra Modi, Raj Thackeray was in two minds about whether to fight the 2014 general elections or not till the very end. Finally, he fought against the Modi wave and lost deposits in all places! This was the beginning of the fall of his party. Raj couldn’t stop it when he faced the Assembly elections that happened just five months ago. MNS won only one seat in Pune district. By now, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena that was wiped out of Maharashtra, can work wonders by joining hands with the BJP.
Sarvabhaummatva Samvidhanach, Janhit Sarvancha’ (Sovereignty of the Constitution, Welfare of All), all primary and secondary schools must undertake collective reciting of the preamble every day.

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution declares: “We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist and Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens. The Maharashtra government has made it compulsory to recite the preamble of the Constitution in all schools starting January 26. A government resolution states that the objective is to instil values such as justice, freedom and equality enshrined in the Constitution. A similar resolution had been issued in 2013 by the then Congress-NCP government. The preamble is a brief introductory statement that sets out guidelines that guides the people of the nation and presents the principles of the Constitution and indicates the source from which the document derives its authority and meaning. The hopes and aspirations of the people are described in it. The preamble can be referred to as the preface that highlights the entire Constitution. It was adopted on 26 November 1949 by the...
Constituent Assembly and came into effect on 26 January 1950 celebrated as the Republic day in India. It is customary for a Constitution to have a preamble, but is not compulsory. The Govt. of India Act, 1935 did not have a preamble. It is a summary and essence of the whole Constitution. It is the prelude of the Constitution.

In a nut-shell, it tells what the Constitution is all about. In the era where most of the people are clueless about the Constitution and there are many misuses of the same reciting preamble keeps them updated of their rights as citizens, it reminds them of their duties. To understand the scope of their constitutional values and their all-inclusiveness and instill values such as justice, freedom, equality and fraternity on the society, it is important that students have a comprehensive introduction to the Constitution...The young minds of this age will thus become responsible, cultured citizens. It is expected that this starts from the school-going age and that is why every day, during the morning routine, there should be collective reading of the preamble and a government resolution is already in place for it from 2013. It has now been noticed that the decision is not being implemented. Therefore, under an initiative titled “Sarvaabhaumata Samvidhanache, Janhit Sarvanche” (Sovereignty of the Constitution, Welfare of All), all primary and secondary schools must undertake collective reciting of the preamble every day. The Maharashtra government will also be making Marathi language compulsory in all Maharashtra schools. A law to this effect will be brought in the next session of Assembly.

The Constitution is nothing but an elaboration of the preamble. The preamble is itself a most important part of the Constitution. The people, sovereign it means India has no other external power to rule, and the people of India are the sole power. Almost all of it barring the injunctions are indeed important. The preamble of the Indian Constitution serves as its identity card. It lays out what our Constitution is trying to achieve. It is largely based on the Nehru’s objective resolution passed on the first meeting to draft the Indian Constitution. It reflects the philosophy and the ideology of the Indian Constitution. It tells the people of India what the framers had in their minds while making the biggest Constitution of the world.

The amendments to the Constitution have been debated and added; added and subtracted. So, let us take a moment to appreciate and learn from the 52 uplifting and permanent words of the preamble. The Constitution being no ordinary document but the ultimate law of the land, it required an introduction so that every person before reading the other provisions may keep in mind what are the objectives and aims of the Constitution and what it is expecting from the people. It also reflects the vision of the Constitution makers. Well, if it was not included in the Constitution probably we would have been still searching for the true meaning of the Constitution. Although the preamble is used as an interpretation tool sparingly as the articles of the Constitution have more authority than the Constitution, nonetheless it is a valuable part of the Constitution. The preamble secures to every citizen, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It provides social, economic and political justice. It secures liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. It provides equality of status and opportunity. It assures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

The preamble of the Constitution is quite relevant for the interpretation of the Constitution. This question was raised for the first time before the Supreme Court in the historic case of Keshavannand Bharti vs. State of Kerala. In this case, the Attorney General of India argued that by virtue of its amending power in Article 368, even the preamble of the Constitution could be amended. The petitioners however contended that the amending power under Article 368 is limited. The preamble creates an implied limitation on the power of amendment. The preamble contains the basic elements or the fundamental features of our Constitution. Consequently, amending power cannot be used so as to destroy or damage these basic features mentioned in the preamble.

It was argued that the preamble cannot be amended as it was not a part of the Constitution. The Supreme Court held that the preamble is part of the Constitution. The majority view of the Supreme Court was that although the preamble is part of the Constitution, it could be amended but subject to the condition that “the basic features” in the preamble could not be amended. The Court held, “The edifice of our Constitution is based upon the basic elements mentioned in the Preamble. If any of these elements are removed, the structure will not survive and it will not maintain its identity. The preamble declares that the people of India have resolved to constitute their country into a Sovereign Democratic Republic. No one can suggest that these words and expressions are ambiguous in any manner. The amending power would be interpreted so as to confer power on the Parliament to take away any of these fundamental and basic characteristics of our Constitution. The amending power cannot change the Constitution in such a way that it ceases to be a Sovereign
MNS FACE LIFT

Saffron, Shivaji, Savarkar and Son introduced in politics
It is the story of how two men bound by family ties and political ideology came face-to-face by challenging the ideologies and legacy of the party line. They made entirely different paths. Today, one of them is a chief minister, while the other is finding a path to conquer state politics. They are Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray. After looking at the successful launch of Aaditya Thackeray in active politics, Raj Thackeray's son Amit was tossed into politics recently. With a new flag and a new leader, Raj Thackeray gave a facelift to his Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. Amit Thackeray's short thanksgiving speech was applauded enthusiastically by his immediate family. The new party flag features Chhatrapati Shivaji's "Raj Mudra" on a saffron base. A "Raj Mudra" was the royal seal used during the time of Shivaji. With the party's earlier flag having been saffron, blue and green, the switch triggered speculation about a possible consolidation of the Hindutva credentials of the party. Since Shiv Sena has aligned with Congress-NCP, people think that the Hindutva credentials are diluted. BJP has never worked on Hindutva agenda. Moreover, Modi ji clearly announced "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" and it was the Shiv Sena which was widely known as custodians of Hindutva politics in India. Now, with the BJP out of the ruling alliance, the race appears to be on for the saffron-Marathi vote bank. Uddhav Thackeray is expected to visit Ayodhya after he completes 100 days in power. The Shiv Sena leader has also extended an invite to Rahul Gandhi to travel along with him to Ayodhya along with Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

On the other hand, Raj Thackeray who had sided with the opposition and his repeated attacks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had been widely circulated on social media. He was also said to be keen on joining the opposition alliance. But the idea was turned down by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in view of the party's anti-migrant rhetoric. So, now to regain the lost sheen, he had no other option but to adopt the Hindutva ideology shifting from Marathi Manoos. Raj Thackeray had launched the new party in 2006 after he split with the Shiv Sena. The feud started after party patriarch Bal Thackeray chose his son Uddhav Thackeray to lead the party. Since then, the cousins have been chasing the Marathi vote and taking swipes at each other. With Hindutva equations, Raj might split the votes of BJP as well as Sena. BJP is keen on him filing the Hindutva void in the state. The former chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis met Raj Thackeray two weeks ago while Ashish Shelar, the party's former Mumbai president had called on the MNS chief in the last week of December. BJP also hopes that Raj will revive his sons-of-the-soil plank as it will help with the implementation of the controversial National Register of Citizens (NRC).

As people see Indira in Priyanka Gandhi, Raj is seen as a mirror image of Balasaheb, the way he gives speeches, one can easily relate him with Saheb. He has all those peculiar qualities of Balasaheb and to deal with one Thackeray one needs another Thackeray. Perhaps, this is the reason why BJP in spite of taking all attacks and humiliation from Raj is now seeking his support. Uddhav Thackeray walked away from the 25-year-old Sena-BJP alliance to come together with the NCP and Congress as the Maha Vikas Aghadi. Uddhav held Sonia Gandhi and Pawar to walk his ambition; Raj Thackeray began his mega rally by garlanding the picture of Savarkar along with B R Ambedkar, Prabodhankar Thackeray and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Savarkar on stage, saffron in flag, Raj Thackeray gave new hopes to saffron voters. MNS currently has a single representative in the 289-strong Maharashtra state assembly. For one, the Shiv Sena, under Uddhav Thackeray, is no longer a vehement proponent of Hindutva, an ideology that the senior Thackeray championed. Having formed the government in alliance with the Congress and the NCP, the Shiv Sena has also set aside its shrill sons-of-the-soil rhetoric. The opposition BJP, on the lookout for an alliance partner in the state, appears to now believe that the right person to perpetuate Bal Thackeray's brand of politics is his nephew, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray.

Despite the fact that Raj had been a vehement critic of the BJP and had campaigned against the party in the assembly elections, he had called for a "Modi-Shah-free India" ahead of the Parliamentary elections declaring that the country needed to get rid of the duo. Though his party did not contest, his "Laav toh video (Show the video)" campaign against the BJP became extremely popular as it sought to expose the failures of the Modi government. Now, a friendless BJP in Maharashtra has knocked on his doors out of compulsions of regional politics though the party has its conditions. But Raj is not an easy leader to accept what they say, but adopt a larger goal. Raj has taken up Hindutva as the MNS ideology. There is a huge vacuum where the Hindutva ideology is concerned. With this, he can get huge support from the people and once again the dead MNS can regain its lost sheen.

Let's see how does Uddhav's 'Secular Turn' and cousin Raj's floating Hindutva go with the voters. A transition to soft Hindutva by the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena may pave the way for an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party to take on the ruling triumvirate of Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP. The BJP, despite being the single-largest party in the Maharashtra legislative assembly, has been left licking its wounds after the Shiv Sena broke
National Girl Child Day

On the occasion of Girl child day, nothing much has changed for the daughters of India. In our country of an estimated 20 million commercial sex workers, 16 million women and girls are victims of sex trafficking according to non-government organisations working in India. Most of the poor girls pushed into sex trade by family members is to counter poverty. The father literally bargains for perks while letting go his daughter in an agent’s hand. Once the girls were gone, families rarely find out what had happened to them and had no further communication at all. Researchers found 78 per cent of girls sold for commercial sexual exploitation were from West Bengal. Official data of 2019 shows that West Bengal accounted for about a fifth of India’s 5,466 cases of human trafficking with the state both a source and a transit location for women and children trafficked into the sex trade. Reports of human trafficking in India rose 25 per cent in 2015 compared to the previous year with more...
than 40 per cent of cases involving children being bought, sold and exploited as slaves, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

In the recent past, a study led by the My Choices Foundation in partnership with major anti-trafficking groups across India found that the average age of girls being trafficked had fallen to ages 10-14 in recent years from 14-16 in the past. Fathers in rural India are the targets of a new campaign to stop traffickers trapping young girls into the sex trade as research showed the average age of girls forced into prostitution had dropped with some as young as eight. But a key finding was the role of fathers with researchers discovering that traffickers were convincing fathers to give away their daughters by promising to arrange a marriage without the need to pay a dowry to the boy's family or a job in a metro city. Apart from selling or bartering daughters, the large number of missing girls are mostly found in the flesh trade business especially from rural areas. Researchers also found during work in the field that parents were also unwilling to report a missing girl to the police fearing stigma. Few months ago, there were two minor tribal girls of the same family aged 12 and 14 who went missing from Lemru village of Korba district, were rescued from traffickers. 11 people including 3 women were arrested. The girls were raped by six 'customers' and were kept confined at a farmhouse. One of them was almost sold and she was supposed to be sent to another city for flesh trade.

Girl trafficking is strengthening its roots in tribal dominated regions or in the rural villages where jobs and economy is big crises. On grounds of providing jobs in metro cities and also locally where girls get exploited. Last year, a 17-year-old girl was sold and pushed into flesh trade in Thane, Mumbai. She was hailing from Bangladesh and was repeatedly raped by her friend's acquaintance while promising marriage at her native place. In the same month, he sold her to agents (involved in trafficking) in Bangladesh who in-turn sold her to their counterparts in India. The girl was subsequently brought to Thane district; she was taken to customers at various places in Thane, Vashi in Navi Mumbai, Mumbai and Bangalore. These days even social network is used for exploiting these girls; they are from village and not educated. The agents take advantage of such situations. They create their FB profiles and even websites; they display their pictures inviting customers. These girls are exploited to the core and if they dare to oppose, they face cruel treatment. There is no one in their life to fall back on. Trafficking of women from the state to metros has increased though the government has chosen a mystifying silence.

More than 60,000 girls between 12 and 15 years work as domestic workers in Delhi and Mumbai. One girl in every ten families is pushed into prostitution by middlemen who take them to the cities with the promise of a job. The government should take steps to stop this violation of human rights. In a male-dominated society, women are not allowed to claim their rights. There is another example, the 'Rajnats' community of Rajasthan is struggling to give up prostitution, a profession it has practiced for generations. But with no jobs on offer, even for educated members of the community, the girls have been forced to join dance bars in Mumbai. At least it ensures a decent income and a better future for their children. The 'rajnats' or 'nats' were dancer and singers in the royal courts but were reduced to utter penury and took to prostitution with the decline of the feudal order. While most girls in the community were pushed into commercial sex, the men functioned as pimps and the tradition has continued.

Though in most parts of the State, commercial sex work has been given up, there are pockets where some girls still follow the profession because even the educated men have no jobs and the situation has become even more difficult when it comes to girls. Even if the community want their daughters to be educated and live a respectable life, but when they educate the girls they do not get good grooms as the men are jobless and no one wants to have a matrimonial alliance with this particular community even if the community gives up commercial sex work altogether, there is no other option for survival. Each state of India is going through worst for girls; we need some drastic step towards the prevention of such practices. Just saying Beti Bachao is not enough.

India is in denial of the fact that a majority of its women do not feel safe alone on the streets, at work, in markets, or at home even though they have learned how to cope with this existential anxiety. When I asked young educated women in Delhi if they feel safe, most said no. And most of those who said yes had learned to modify their behaviours to feel safe – they don't go out alone unnecessarily; come home at night before dark; get permission to go out; are always careful and alert; and they censor their speech, their clothes and their body posture, including whether or not they look men in the eyes. Indian women are in a constant state of vigilance, like a country on terrorist alert. Satish, a 52-year-old banker, told me: “For rape there is no fixed time: always be alert.” No democracy is a democracy when half of its population lives in fear. India – and the rest of the world – would do well to make women's safety and freedom central goals of democracy and development and learn about the science of
Is there absence of law regarding Indian prisons system?

A few women who served prison terms have recorded torture and inhuman treatment within the prisons across other states too.

ABUSE
OPERATION
LEGAL
VIOLENCE
A 45-year-old woman prisoner Manju Govind Shette had died in jail at the hands of jail officials after which the inmates protested against jail authorities.

Indrani was produced in Court after she moved an application alleging that jail officials roughed her up. Recalling the events on the day of the protest, she alleged that the superintendent had ordered a lathi charge after turning the lights off in the jail. The special CBI court allowed Indrani Mukerjea to lodge a complaint against prison officials.

Narrating the incident, Indrani told the Court that she was threatened and assaulted after she said that she would give a statement (in connection with the case) to a magistrate under the provisions of Section 164 CRPC which unlike a police statement is admissible in court.

Anyways this is not the plight of Mumbai or Maharashtra prisoners alone, almost everywhere in India they go through this hell. A few women who served prison terms have recorded torture and inhuman treatment within the prisons across other states too. In Tamil Nadu, prison female inmates were stripped naked and abused verbally and physically and not provided even basic facilities. The NHRC recorded 39 cases of rape from judicial and police custody from 2006 to 28 February 2010.

Citing the case of Maloti Kalandi, wife of Badal Kalandi who along with children was rescued from being trafficked was handed over to the Tamulpur police station, Baksa district of Assam for safe custody. Instead of providing safety, Sub-Inspector Sahidur Rahman summoned the victim to his official quarter and raped her. Similarly two more prisoners, Munniammal who had been lodged in the Nilakottal sub-jail for robbery and M Muthulakshmi who had been arrested by the police for illicit brewing of liquor said they were never given anything but gruel in the prison. They also said that four to eight prisoners were crammed into a cell and they were forced to use a small corner as their toilet without even a curtain to provide them privacy.

A Tihar Jail's woman prisoner facing trial in cases of cheating and forgery has accused the jail warden of torturing her with the help of HIV positive woman inmate for extorting money from her. She was beaten up for an hour in front of the deputy superintendent and the jail staff who remained mute spectators.

Ms. Saradha was brought to Special Prison for Women, Vellore, Tamil Nadu as a remand prisoner having been remanded by the Judicial Magistrate. She was undressed totally and dragged nude for quite some time till they reached the entrance of her cell and was put in solitary confinement and she was never given back her clothes and no official in the prison bothered about her. She was awarded 50,000/- as compensation by the Court. But no one ever bothered about her mental state or what happened to her after that. Her dignity was paid in rupees as recompense.

Soni Sori, a 38-year-old
schedule tribe school teacher, warden and mother, was subjected to sexual violence while in custody in the Dantewada police station in Chhattisgarh under directions of the Superintendent of Police. She was repeatedly given electric shocks, her clothes were taken off. She was made to stand naked. The SP was watching her sitting on his chair. While looking at her body, he abused her in filthy language and humiliated her badly.

The horror doesn't stop here. In a Nagpur prison, six napkins were given every month but this quantity was not sufficient. Earlier, the staff asked inmates to strip to show if they were menstruating. This practice was stopped after complaints. Sometimes the jailers used to put fingers in inmates private parts to make sure that they are menstruating. Criminal justice system has failed to protect the rights of women who are often victims of violence and discrimination.

Some 1,000 women were jailed in a space meant for 150, each making do with one bar of soap to bathe and to wash clothes for a whole month. Their children grow up knowing little about the outside world, unable to recognise even cats and dogs.

According to the NCRB Crime Report, a total of 344 convicted women with their 382 children and 1,226 under-trial women with their 1,397 children were lodged in various prisons across India at the end of 2012.

There is high corruption inside the jails, and there are ways by which one can get the necessary things inside too (cigarettes, alcohol, a girl for a night, good food etc) usually corporate criminals and politicians are the ones availing these facilities as prices are spiked like anything inside. The recent example is politician Sashikala. Whenever a high profile woman gets in prison, she is given all special privileges because she can afford to buy the authorities with common woman especially those who were caught in petty thefts for survival prison becomes one living hell. Any jail in India is a death trap.

Poor criminals, with no serious background and who are inside for petty crimes, often become victims in everyone's hands. Most of the time, they try to commit suicide. According to my opinion, in a certain number of cases bullied criminals who die in brawls are framed as 'committed suicide in guilt' just to curtail the inefficient ineffective Indian Jail System.

Indian jails, in reality, are nothing short of a nightmare. In India, two types of prisoners are detained. First, those under trial prisoners whose cases are being investigated/tried and judgement are yet not pronounced. Moreover, they do not even get bail. Nearly two third of Indian prisoners are under trial in Indian jails who are languishing in jail for years. Some women spend 10 years, some with their infants till they become five years of age. Not only the mother, but also even a child goes through hell seeing his mother's jail term. When such children are sent off the jail they tend to become criminals or low esteemed suppressed personalities. They see their mother been brutally harassed by authorities inside the jail. They come out with hate and revenge. There is a facility of education for these kids.

The second category is of convicts who are undergoing their pronounced sentences. Both have different daily routines. They are nearly one third of total inmates lodged in Indian jails. Convicts are in minority while under trials are in majority in Indian jails. Their daily routine is little bit more relaxed. Under trials have fixed hour of free life, but convicts have their own relaxation based on their work routine.

Coming back to Mumbai prison, every month, each of the more than 1,000 women at the Aadharwadi prison in Kalyan is given a bar of soap. They have to use this to wash all their clothes, utensils and themselves. Skin ailments are routine. Throughout the day, there are two toilets for all of them to share. Several women have had a series of urinary tract infections. At night, they crowd into a space meant for 150.

1,000 women jailed in a space meant for 150, each making do with one bar of soap to bathe and to wash clothes for a whole month. Their children grow up knowing little about the outside world unable to recognise even cats and dogs. This is the world of women prisoners in the two jails that house them in and around Mumbai, one at Byculla and the other at Kalyan. It’s tragic, but true that women prisoners are ostracised much more by their kin than men.

There is a stigma attached to women in prison. They are not supposed to be 'criminals', so their families want nothing to do with them. While family members come to the aid of many male prisoners, with women they are reluctant. These female criminals have no one to care for them, neither jail authorities nor family members. No one comes forward to help them with, for instance, another bar of soap. No one offers medical aid or moral support. No one explains where their cases stand, what their legal options are.

Many of these women are facing trial for murdering their husbands or domestic disputes. Families find it difficult to reconcile with this and snap all ties with them. Sometimes NGOs step in and counsel the relatives. Some of them come around. And sometimes, as it happened with a mentally ill woman at the Kalyan prison in 2010,
families don’t even know they are in jail and give them up for dead. It was only after extensive counselling that she was able to tell them her family’s address. Then, officials get in touch with them and they are reunited.

The absence of family is felt most when health problems strike. Those suffering from high blood pressure or diabetes require a regular supply of pills. This is possible if their family members buy it and give it to them. Those with no relatives are taken to the nearby JJ hospital only after their condition worsens from lack of medicine. A psychiatrist and a gynaecologist visit the prison once a week and there is a full-time doctor. These women are mentally disturbed and physically exhausted, they become aggressive haters towards each other.

In such an atmosphere, fights are common, and prison guards often have to intervene. Staff and teachers who sometimes visit also need to have tremendous patience. The job of looking into the problems of prisoners is the probation officers (PO) who are appointed by the department of women and child development. But there is a shortage of POs and they are often handed other responsibilities. So inmates are hardly a priority.

Traumatising prison conditions and practices often have damaging and long-term impact on the mental health of inmates especially women. Institutions of correction and custody are as fraught with gender and other biases as the world outside. The World Health Organisation suggests that one in nine of the total prison population of 9 million in the world suffers from some form of mental disorder or illness. The total capacity of women inmates was highest in Tamil Nadu (1,070) followed by Uttar Pradesh (420), West Bengal & Delhi (400 each), Rajasthan (350), Andhra Pradesh (308), Maharashtra (262), Punjab (150), Bihar (83), Kerala (72), Odisha (55) and Tripura (30), according to a NCRB data. There is a need to provide dignity and hygiene to women who serve long sentences inside as well as under trials. Let’s hope some change comes in this dark world.

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China always gives virus attacks to India; this time it is Coronavirus
As fears about Coronavirus is spreading fast, India is battle-ready to identify, isolate and prevent the spread of this epidemic. Like the Chinese health bureaucracy, in India too there is a remarkable time lag before diseases get identified and before they get notified if at all there are. India's medical bureaucracy is often loath to report bad news. We see that happening in case of Dengue and Chikungunya outbreaks in most Indian cities where news only emerges after a few people die and several seriously take ill. The risk from communicable diseases increases manifold when other factors-environmental, socio-economic and demographic are concerned. The Nipah virus outbreak of 2018 in Kerala has several lessons for today's emergency. This epidemic showed how the Indian infectious disease management infrastructure could be severely challenged. After its discovery in a small Malaysian village in 1999, the virus emerged in Kerala in May 2018 claiming 17 lives. The seriousness of the public health threat was underscored by the lack of a vaccine or even targeted treatment. This allowed the virus to spread unchecked initially.

No wonder India ranks high globally in the burden of communicable diseases, a burden which causes approximately 10 per cent of deaths in the country. The issue is serious considering the phase of rapid urbanisation, the country is going through raising challenges to an already beleaguered and cash-crunching healthcare system. Barring a few states, India's medical system is not in the best of shape. But the Indian public health machinery has shown that it can fight well when it wants to. As China struggles to curtail the deadly new virus that has killed 81 people and spread to four continents, there are flashing warning lights for India. Vaccinations are among the most efficient and effective instruments for preventing diseases, operating primarily by providing acquired immunity and thereby preventing the easy spread of infectious diseases among large populations. However, developing vaccines, especially for new and mutated strains of diseases can take a very long time. Coupled with the time and the resources needed for mass production and delivery, vaccines cannot be seen as the only solution during fast-spreading epidemics.

The Coronavirus epidemic was a major crisis in China even before the news came out on 10 January and alerted the Chinese leadership. The illness by then was no longer localised. In fact, it had even travelled abroad. China's rigid bureaucracy discourages local officials from raising bad news with central bosses. China's health sector is so heavily compartmentalised that officials in the public health division, the disease control department, in hospital administration and drug procurement seldom speak to each other. This makes it harder to manage or even see a crisis in the making. Those systemic flaws appear to have played a role in the pace at which Chinese officials responded to the outbreak and the country's inability to address the health risks from its so-called wet markets which are stuffed with livestock living and dead, domesticated and wild. The real bad news is the Coronavirus which comes from a family of viruses that affect the respiratory tract, seems to be far deadlier than before. In 2002, when the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus hit China, it took more than 90 days to mutate and take its new deadly form. But the Coronavirus seems to have achieved the capability of transmitting among humans within the first month. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has clarified that the disease only spreads from
Indian diplomats held a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China regarding the evacuation of the Indians from China.

animals to humans and is not communicable between human beings. However, now questions are being raised as some among those affected claim not to have been near any animals in the recent past. That is why the panic within the public health machinery in China is palpable even as human resources are being mobilised and sent to the epicentre in Wuhan, the capital of central China’s Hubei province by the thousands. For over a month from 8 December 2019 to 17 January 2020, all the confirmed cases in China were from the sole city of Wuhan. Yet meanwhile, there were already confirmed cases in Japan and Thailand. Many in the Chinese social media commented on the implausibility of the data and suggested that the authorities must be concealing the actual numbers with some sardonically calling the outbreak a "patriotic virus" due to its appearance of infecting people overseas rather than people in China. Several Hong Kong media correspondents were detained by the police for over an hour when they were interviewing in Wuhan’s Jinyintan Hospital on 14 January. Reports said that the police brought the correspondents to a police station where the police checked their travel documents and belongings and then asked them to delete video footage taken in the hospital before releasing them. Authorities in Wuhan and Hubei provinces have been criticised for downplaying the severity of the outbreak and responding slower than they should. Caixin blamed Wuhan for not rolling out the first level of "public health emergency response mechanism" until 24 January which came even later than several other provinces and cities outside of the centre of the outbreak. On 19 January, four days before the city’s lockdown, a "Wanjian," literally meaning "banquet of tens of thousands of families," was held in Wuhan with over 40,000 families turning out at the banquet tables. Experts said that the authorities "lack basic common sense" for allowing such a banquet to be held. China continues to reel under the deadly Coronavirus (nCov) outbreak as the sharply rising death toll reached 106 causing a global alarm. The virus, which has spread across the country, has infected over 2,700 people mostly in Wuhan and other Chinese cities. Meanwhile, the Indian and the Chinese officials discussed plans to evacuate over 250 Indians from Wuhan city and Hubei province in view of the virus outbreak. Indian diplomats held a meeting with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China regarding the evacuation of the Indians from China.

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In the recent past, political parties have become excessively dependent on celebrities as campaigners. Unlike the 80s when Amitabh Bachchan and only a handful of other actors and sports personnel focused on a political career, the present epoch is witnessing a surge in celebrity participation. Some of them became victims of receding interest in the daily rigmarole and political slug fest. Be it Mohammad Azharuddin or Navjot Singh Sidhu, their presence in the Parliament as honorary members are far from satisfactory. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always placed its bet high on the sports celebrities. Eminent sports personalities including wrestling champions Babita Phogat, Yogeshwar Dutt and former India hockey captain Sandeep Singh have been joined BJP during Haryana assembly elections. A glorious career in the film industry or sports guarantees you a head start in politics if you want to pursue it, given the fact that you’ve earned a place in people’s heart with your work. But, there’s no way one can determine that a successful film star or a sportsperson can repeat the same magic in politics as well.

From Hema Malini to Smriti Irani there is a long list of film industry personnel, actors and actress coming to politics some made it huge for themselves and many just flopped. We’ve seen many cases where some of the biggest celebrities fell flat on their face during elections, but that hasn’t stopped renowned artists, actors, and sportspersons from trying their luck in politics. Now whether or not
the public accepts them as their leaders is a different thing, but we've seen that these celebrities leave no stone unturned in campaigning for their respective political parties. With Delhi Assembly elections going on this year, Saina Nehwal joined the BJP. She would be campaigning for BJP against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi. We've seen many people from sports, as well as Bollywood, joining BJP and other national parties.

There are many sports personalities who join politics and soon get forgotten. Deepa Malik, a para-athlete who represented India in Shot Put in Paralympics, is first Indian woman to win a medal in the games. Malik recently joined BJP and was to contest the elections for Lok Sabha. A three-time Olympic participant, Krishna Poonia represented the country in disc throw. She joined Congress in 2013 and contested elections against Rajavardhan Singh Rathore from Sadulpur constituency in Rajasthan. Celebrated boxing champion Vijender Singh, who won a bronze medal in the Beijing Olympic Games, is now a Congress candidate from South Delhi and is extremely active in his political campaign. Pargat Singh was a former captain of the Indian Hockey team who has played in three world cups and Olympics. He entered politics after his retirement. Pargat Singh was suspended by Shiromani Akali Dal in 2016 after which he joined the Indian National Congress.

Former cricketer Mohammad Kaif, who was known for his excellent fielding, joined Congress in 2009. He contested 2014 Lok Sabha elections from Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh which he lost to BJP's Keshav Prasad Maurya. Ex-cricketer Chetan Chauhan, who has played 40 test matches for India and had most of his international cricket career in the 1970s, is now an active member of the BJP. Former Indian cricketer Kiran Azad is currently serving his fourth term in the Lok Sabha and is a part of BJP. After a bumpy career in sports, Navjot Singh Sidhu retired and took a shot at politics. He joined the BJP in 2004 and also went on to win the elections. His alliance with BJP, however, didn't last for long when he left the right-wing party to join Congress. After making the country proud by winning India's first ever individual silver medal in the 2004 Athens Olympics, Rajivardhan Singh Rathore joined politics. Currently, he's a member of BJP and an MP from Jaipur (Rural). The middle distance runner, who won several medals for India in 800 meters, joined the Communist Party of India and was an MP from Krishnagir constituency of West Bengal.

One of the most sought-after players, Mohammad Azharuddin's image was marred after the match-fixing scandal of 2000. In 2009, the former captain of Indian cricket team joined the Congress and was also elected the member of the Parliament from Moradabad, UP. The former cricketer is one of the latest additions to politics from sports. Gambhir contested elections on BJP's ticket from East Delhi. Babita Phogat has been a vocal supporter of the BJP. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government at the Centre scrapped Article 370, which provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir, she had voiced her support on microblogging site Twitter. BJP in Kerala got five champions in its hand, as five prominent personalities joined the party, including former ISRO chief G Madhavan Nair and former president of the Travancore Devaswom Board — the governing body of the Sabarimala temple — G Raman Nair. The other prominent individuals from God's own country who embraced saffron are former women's commission member, Dr. Premeela Devi, Janata Dal (Secular) Trivandrum district vice-president; Karakulam Divakaran Nair and Malankara Church functionary; C Thomas John. The induction of these five prominent individuals especially ex-ISRO chief Nair comes amidst the unprecedented Hindu unity in Kerala, in the wake of protest against the Sabarimala verdict.

In Southern India, the BJP has been on a consolidation mode. Recently, Sri Peetham Seer Swami Paripoornananda had joined BJP in poll bound Telangana. Swami Paripoornananda is also called as the 'Yogi of South'. He is very popular among Hindus and the tribal communities of the region. Swami Paripoornananda is a well-known Hindu figure in almost all southern states with millions of followers. His devotion to country is admired by many people, his entry into the BJP would improve party's prospects in the state of Telangana as well as in other southern states. Except for Karnataka, BJP doesn't have many credible faces in the South. What BJP needs in South, are crowd pullers and popular faces. Induction of prominent personalities like Swami Paripoornananda would fulfill that void in the region. They have their own fan base and mass support, so their entry gives mass acceptance to the party, in southern states. Against all odds the BJP has managed to gradually increase its vote share in the state of Kerala, but is yet to make a major impact on a political note.

With the popular sentiment in BJP's favour and now with the induction of new, prominent leaders, the party is on a firm foot and looks well prepared for upcoming elections. Let's see how Saina is going to bring back the lost sheen to BJP. Political parties need to pull in more voters in their boot and one of the tried and tested ways is to field celebrities and let them cast a spell on the target audience (even if its effect is temporary). It is argued that since celebrities come from non-political background and most of them are a success in their chosen profession, the chances of them engaging with the prospective voters remain high. On the flip side, there has been a scramble for popularity and national visibility among the celebrities themselves. Those who are well over their prime, have all the leisure to focus on something as demanding as politics. Moreover, they stand a chance to get special privileges if their endorsements prove lucky for the party.
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