

Cover Story of the Month



Budget Making - Insights

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From the Desk of Editor-in-Chief

Greetings from all of us @ The Editorial Team to all our readers.



We are progressing slowly but surely in the year 2021, with hopes of a happier year than the one gone by. And if the convincing victory of our Indian Cricket Team is any sign to go by, the going should be getting better. Our Editorial reflects on these sung heroes and their life stories, and along with them the unsung heroes who are lauded with as much appreciation.

1st February is an important day in our country because that is the day our Hon'ble Finance Minister announces the Union Budget for the year to come, and what it has in store for the people. Our Cover Story is a report, explaining what the Union Budget is about, and what goes into it before and after its presentation in the Parliament.

Our 'Exclusive' segment carries interesting and relevant topics about the Safety of Women in the Digital Space, and the Trends in Journalism and Media.

This month's Anecdote dwells on a young boy's meeting with the First Man in Space, Yuri Gagarin.

We have initiated a new segment called Legal Point this month, inaugurating it with a discussion on the Freedom of Speech and Expression, as provided under the Constitution of India.

Besides our regular reports on the events held during the month, we also present our mascot, Prince with his satirical comment.

I hope you will enjoy reading this edition. Please share your feedback with us at editor@corpezine.com. Your feedback is important to us.

Susan

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Editorial

Unsung Heroes, Like Sung Heroes, Are Heroes

Recently, the Indian Cricket Team won the Test Series 2-1, against Australia in Australia, in a 4-match series.

This is not the first time that India has won a Test Series, and again not the first time India has won against Australia, and in Australia. Even then, the latest win stirred much emotion, passion and patriotism, both within the team and within India.

What drew these emotions was the way the victory was clinched. After winning a match each, India drew the third match, which seemed almost sure to go Australia's way. The final deciding match was won at the Brisbane Cricket Ground called Gabba – the Fortress because no foreign team had won a match there in over three decades. India broke that spell by winning convincingly, to take the Trophy back home. The highlight – the win was steered by six debutantes, for whom playing in an international test match was a new experience. They became overnight icons, national idols and success stories.



Sung Heroes

This article is not about their successes, but what went into making them success stories, against all odds. For example, we have among them, a player who grew up in a village in Tamil Nadu State, to parents who were from a low economic background. Even though he enjoyed playing cricket and showed promise, he had to discontinue as his family could not afford his classes. Fortunately, a mentor who could convince his family, got him into a city school for better coaching opportunities. He made the best of the opportunities, relying on his commitment and personal efforts, even as he could not afford suitable kits and shoes for the game. At a relatively old age of 29 years for a debut, he was immediately acknowledged as a legend, even by the Australian team.

Another player hailed from a remote locality in North India, where again his father earned a low income and life was a struggle for him. Here again, passion and commitment helped him strive against all odds to make it to the national playing team. And when his father died at the beginning of the Australian tour, he prioritised his father's dream of seeing him win, over quitting the tour to attend the funeral. When he visited his father's grave after his return, he had a proud moment to share in his father's memory, at his grave.

During the Australian tour, key players were rested for injuries and no one expected India to win, only draw, if possible. But these debutantes relied on their commitment, self-belief and team motivation, to face the aggressiveness of the opposing team. They lived up to the

famous motto, 'Yes, We Can!', and proved it, inspiring aspiring young sportspersons across India. And the entire nation now basks in ecstasy over the landmark win.

Unsung Heroes



But success stories do not always come gift-wrapped, with rich rewards and overwhelming home-coming receptions back home. Success stories also come in little acts that make a difference, silently but surely, to someone who needs it, or for the world or the Universe. There is no dearth of ideas and opportunities to make a difference in life, and it is possible once one realises that there is wealth, not just in physical assets, but also in

virtuous deeds, including random acts of care. We have such unsung success stories, right here in India.

We have one such success story of a Karnataka State-based 105-year-old woman who planted and nurtured nearly 400 banyan trees over her lifespan, in place of own children she could not have, and thus contributed to creating a greener environment. She converted her disappointment to an opportunity for a better world.

Another success story is that of an 85-year-old woman in Tamil Nadu State. She sells *idlis* for breakfast at just Rupee one (as against the normal price of at least Rupees five or more) for the past three decades, because the customers who visit her little shop, including migrant workers, are from economically backward families, and she did not want to tax them.

We have a transgender lady who adopts abandoned children, and is mother to eight such orphaned children today.

We have innumerable such unsung heroes who make a difference, by comforting a desperate soul, helping someone up, caring for the other species living with us in nature, so that the world becomes a better place to live in. If we look around, we might notice them – coming in different shapes, sizes, economic backgrounds, genders, ages, orientations. Let us applaud the unsung heroes who silently make a difference.

Let us also celebrate the unsung heroes amongst our soldiers who fight the bitter cold, and the enemies at the borders, even as we celebrated the 72nd Republic Day of India on 26th January 2021.

by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief

Cover Story

Know About the Union Budget

The Annual Financial Statement, which is more commonly known as the Union Budget is the Estimate of the Income and Expenditure of the Central Government for a definite duration, which is usually one year. Much planning and exercise goes into the preparation of the Union Budget and there is more to it after its presentation in the Parliament by the Union Finance Minister.

Your eMagazine PreSense had the privilege of interviewing Mr M R Sivaraman, Former Revenue Secretary, Government of India, with many years of experience in the preparation of the Union Budget and State Budgets. We bring you a synopsis of the interview about the Union Budget – Preparation, Presentation, Implementation and Audit.



Q1. We are familiar with the Hon'ble Finance Minister walking into the Parliament with the red cloth bag of documents, for presentation of the Union Budget. What goes into preparing the Union Budget, before it is ready for presentation?

There are six Articles in the Indian Constitution dealing with the Union Budget, and corresponding six Articles dealing with the State Budget. Article 112 deals with the presentation of the Annual Financial Statement, which is the analogue of the company (Government in this case).

The Government has certain commitments to fulfil, irrespective of whether it has enough money to fulfil them or not, such as the expenditure relating to the Judiciary, the Parliament, the President's Office, Interest payments to the public and other countries, Repayment of Loans. These are 'charged on the budget'. They are discussed in the parliament but not voted. The administration of the country which includes the expenditure on defence, police and similar forces, and those of other administrative departments of the government are committed expenditure even though economy cuts can sometimes be imposed on them.

Preparatory Exercise

In the month of October each year, the Government calls for the Budget estimates from all its departments and ministries. To arrive at this estimate, the actual expenditure for the completed period is first ascertained, and then the projected expenditure for the remaining months of the financial year. For example, in the current year 2020-21, the defence expenditure has unexpectedly escalated with the need for more equipment, high altitude clothing for the soldiers, arms and ammunition, warm tents and food, due to the emergency situation at the national border. These are added in what we call the Supplementary Budget, which will be part of the revised Estimate. Then, the Budget for the following financial year is estimated.

Every ministry has its normal schemes and projects. In normal, healthy practice, projects are classified under different categories – projects that can be completed in the current

year, those that can be completed in the ensuing year, and so on. The budget for those projects that are already underway and require additional allocation for completion, is given priority over new projects so that they are completed and utilised.

The Financial Advisor in consultation with the Joint Secretary and other officials, prepares the Budget for the ministry. When these proposals reach the Finance Ministry, they are examined and fine-tuned in consultation with the respective departments. The resources are divided into tax and non-tax sources. The Revenue Department consisting of the Central Boards of Direct and Indirect Taxes are involved in elaborate exercises, based on past performance and projections. For example, the services sector which accounts for 58% of the GDP has suffered due to the COVID situation this year. This factor has to be taken into consideration while planning for the next year. This is done by consulting with the various sectors of the economy. This exercise takes place in November-December. Extensive and detailed discussions are held with all the stakeholders, and notes are taken, prior to the preparation of the Budget. Experts and professionals in the respective fields are consulted while preparing the tax proposals.

The Finance Secretary then sits with his team and finalises the Expenditure Budget while the Resources Budget, including changes in taxes if any, is finalised by the Revenue Secretary. The tax proposals go under the signature of the Revenue Secretary. The consolidation of the budget and the finalisation of the budget speech is done by the Finance Secretary, who is the most senior secretary in the ministry in terms of service in the ministry.

Q2. How is the Budget dealt with, in the Parliament for its approval?



The finalised Budget is discussed in detail with the Prime Minister, by the team. Thereafter, the Budget is printed. One hour before the presentation, the Cabinet meets in the Parliament House and a summary is presented for their comprehension. The Presentation of the Union Budget is then made in the Parliament. The Bills, such as the Finance Bill, and Appropriation Bills, are introduced. The approval of the President of India is necessary before the presentation of the Union Budget, with the Appropriation Bill (which includes Demand for

Grants) and the Finance Bill.

The Appropriation Bill consists of the expenditure and receipts from the various ministries. The expenditure is prepared as a 'Demand for Grant'. Demand for Grant is the request for approval of the expenditure incurred/to be incurred by the respective ministries. A Cut Motion is a special power vested in the Members of the Lok Sabha, to oppose a demand being discussed for specific allocation by the ministry, in the Government Bill, as part of the Demand for Grants. The cut/reduction can be a token amount of Rupee one. These Demands are then voted by the Parliament for approval. Similarly, the Appropriation Bill is discussed. The Finance Bill deals with changes in Customs and Excise Duty, Income and Corporate Taxes. Changes in GST (Goods & Services Tax) have to be approved by the GST Council of India.

Q3. Once the Budget is approved in the Parliament, what does the Government do with the approved Budget?



Once the Budget is approved, the grants are communicated to the various ministries. It is the responsibility of the Financial Advisor and the Joint Secretary to take care of the periodical disbursement of the funds to the ministries or State Governments.

Q4. As the funds are utilised by the ministries in the course of the year, there is an element of auditing of the utilisation of funds. How is this carried out?

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), an independent Constitutional Authority, audits the accounts of the Central and State Governments, and submits the audit reports to the President of India. This report is examined by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Parliament, headed by an Opposition Leader. In case of surplus of expenditure over the budgeted estimate, the ministry concerned has to explain to a Parliamentary Committee, to justify the surplus expenditure without seeking a Supplementary Budget. In case of an emergency as had occurred recently for the Defence Ministry because of the development in the borders, a Supplemental Budget can be proposed and approved, or reasons justified if expenditure has exceeded the allocation. PAC can raise observations based on the reports, and the ministry concerned would be required to respond to the queries. These responses will be submitted to the Action Taken Committee of the Parliament. India's Union Budget is considered as one of the most transparent budgets in the world.

Q5. In your opinion, what should the focus of the forthcoming Budget for FY 2021-2022 be?

It should focus primarily on the creation of demand for capital goods and consumer goods. This is a complicated exercise since it involves the GST factor, which does not come directly under the Union Budget. Some of the industries that critically need revival are tourism, construction, and automobile. The extent of taxes in the price of an automobile is 45% - almost the highest in the world.

The India's Union Budget is considered as one of the most transparent budgets in the world.

There is at least 25% tax evasion in the country. We need to address this, and increase the tax revenue to the GDP of the country. Otherwise, it is challenging to depend mainly on borrowings.

Therefore, the focus should be:

- 1) Reviving the demand quickly,
- 2) Streamlining tax rates and raising the tax revenue of the country,
- 3) Encouraging employment generation,
- 4) Enabling Unemployment Security to migrant workers through a calibrated unemployment relief scheme.

It is advisable that the Finance Minister associate experienced former government officials for their expertise and advice, which would be valuable, while planning and drawing up the country's Budget.

The complete interview can be watched on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t8Py3iCZ48>

***by Prime Point Srinivasan, Publisher & Managing Editor,
with Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief***



Exclusive

Security of Women in the Digital Space

Digital Security Association of India (DiSAI), an initiative of your eMagazine PreSense organised a Webinar on 'Security of Women in the Digital Space' on 11th January 2021.

Dr M. Ravi, IPS, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Special Task Force, Erode, Tamil Nadu State, addressed the participants, which included practising advocates, law students and cyber security professionals. He took the audience through the *modus operandi* in various cybercrimes, especially those concerning women. He kickstarted his session by explaining about the digital space, the indispensability of a mobile phone, the vulnerabilities while using a smartphone, and the usual risk areas and situations where women fall victims, in the digital space.



Dr Ravi described some of the cases he had handled in his long career with the Tamil Nadu Police, particularly those relating to the investigation and prosecution of crimes against women. Drawing from his rich experience in cybercrime investigation and techno-legal issues concerning women and children, he stressed the importance of alertness and awareness about the different facets of crimes in digital space. He spoke about email spoofing, cyber stalking, and child trafficking, and elaborated about the efforts taken by the police in the country with particular reference to Tamil Nadu, in tackling the crimes against women in social networking sites.

Excerpts From His Talk:



Security of Women: Day by day, more women than men, are browsing the Internet and are active in social networking sites. It is reported that around 27% of the women in the cyber space, have been stalked at some point. Therefore, awareness about the possible risks and threats is the essence. Women should know what could be disclosed in a social networking site, how to keep their private information safe and secure, and how to exercise caution by taking some basic, simple steps, like never disclosing any personal information in social networking sites, not chatting with strangers, not keeping the GPS enabled, exercising restraint about

sharing any information in any app, not browsing the internet randomly without a proper device security app installed.

All-Woman Police Stations: There are all-woman police stations in many places in the state. Each of these stations is well-equipped with trained personnel to take care of women safety, maintain the anonymity of the women victims/complainants, handle cybercrimes efficiently, and deal with all kinds of women-related crimes occurring in the society. All such stations are provided with facilities like child-friendly corners to make children victims feel comfortable, and a speedy grievance mechanism on a 24X7 basis. They initiate pro-active steps of tracking down previous criminals with recorded history while tracing culprits. In spite of these women-friendly facilities, many women hesitate to approach the police for

fear of adverse publicity. There is however, a marked improvement in this attitude, with more women approaching the police for help and redressal.

Assistance Provided by Tamil Nadu Police: There are several helpline numbers for women in distress to contact in times of need or crisis, or as SOS. In addition to the general police helpline number of 100, there are other helpline numbers like 181, 1091, etc., and specific numbers of top police officials in the major cities of Tamil Nadu.

The Kavalan SOS app, developed by the Tamil Nadu Police, is a user-friendly app that can be used, to contact the police in times of distress. It is becoming a popular app in use among women. It works 24X7, with a team of alert, agile and well-informed police officials available on call. The moment an SOS or a distress call is sent through the Kavalan app, it instantly reaches the police. In prompt response, the police take immediate action to track the caller with the help of GPS, and alert the nearest police station or patrol police, so that a rescue team of police arrives at the distress spot within a few minutes. The police have been receiving positive, encouraging and appreciating public feedback about the efficiency and effectiveness of the Kavalan app.

Practical Difficulties While Investigating a Cybercrime: Dr Ravi said that when cybercrime is committed by a person who is abroad, even though detection is easy, the actual task of bringing the culprit to our court of law is a cumbersome process. We have to approach the Ministry of Home Affairs, and then take the assistance of INTERPOL to try to extradite the criminal. If the criminal is not an Indian but a foreign national, the issue could become more complex.

Crime Against Children: Many initiatives have been taken by the police to create awareness among children, both boys and girls, about crimes committed against children. The police also educate boys about how they could be innocently used, to be part of a criminal gang. The police pay equal attention to educating adolescent boys, who are as vulnerable as girl children.



Use of Smartphone: With the wide penetration of smartphones and the indiscriminate use of all kinds of apps in the smartphones, especially by people with insufficient basic knowledge about its use, the security of data is compromised. Privacy is also compromised to a great extent in the digital space. Therefore, users should be sure about the necessity, authenticity and safety of the apps before downloading them. Smartphone users should be adequately aware of the prevailing and common cybercrimes like phishing, email spoofing, cyber stalking, key-logger software, password theft, and such acts, to safeguard against them. People should not blindly believe anything that comes in a social networking site. Of late, fake news about employment opportunities and matrimonial offers are abundant, and people are being duped to part with their money without verifying the credentials of the person making such offers in the internet.

Awareness, and vigilance is the key to the safety and security of women and children, and men, be it in real life or in the virtual world of cyber browsing.

The complete interview can be watched in the link: <https://youtu.be/WNV6IYcEuv0>.

by V. Rajendran, Editor

Legal Point

Freedom of Speech is Not Absolute

The 17th Edition of the series, 'Dialogue with Experts', organised by your eMagazine PreSense and DiJAI (Digital Journalists of India) under Prime Point Foundation, had Mr Rahul Shyam Bhandari, Advocate on Record, Supreme Court of India, explaining about the often-misconstrued rights under Freedom of Speech and Expression as outlined in the Constitution of India. A report on the topic as discussed by Mr Bhandari, is brought out below.



Freedom of speech and expression, contained in Article 19(1) of the Constitution of India, is the most precious of all fundamental rights guaranteed to every citizen of India. 'Fundamental Rights' represents the basic structure of our Constitution, covered from Article 12 to 35 in Part III of the Constitution of India. Essentially, these rights are conferred to the citizens, and cannot be taken away by any Legislation. The Constitution of India is considered a 'living' document, which has catered to the needs of the citizens from generation to generation.

Article 19 provides 6 fundamental rights, and one amongst them is Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression. Undoubtedly, freedom of speech and expression is the mother of all liberties. This right has four broad social purposes to serve, which are:

1. Promotion of rule of self-governance,
2. Discovery of truth,
3. Strengthening the participation process in decision making,
4. Societal tolerance and self-restraint.

Freedom of the press is included within this right itself.

A famous judge of the US Supreme Court, Justice Holmes remarked that "free expression does not mean free thought for those who would agree with us, but freedom for the thought we hate". This means the value of a dissenting opinion is equally critical for any society. Interestingly, this right also includes the right to silence.

No country across the globe accepts freedom of speech and expression as absolute. Although the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution says that Congress shall make no law abridging freedom of speech and expression, and there are no specified restrictions like in India, in practice, the right is not absolute even there and from time to time, the Courts have been applying some restrictions. The same situation prevails in UK where there is freedom of expression, but that is again subject to specific restrictions, laid down by their law.

In India, 'Freedom of Speech and Expression' is controlled by 8 restrictions, viz.:

- Sovereignty and Integrity of India which is enforced to restrict activities that threaten the sovereignty of the country, such as alliance with foreign states to wage war, burning of the national flag etc.,

- Security of State, which means no state can tolerate activities that threaten the stability of an organised government by unlawful or unconstitutional means, giving aid to an enemy country, obstructing war activities *etc.*,
- Friendly Relations with Foreign States, based on the lines of International Principles/Conventions and mutual respect,
- Public Order, as minimum requirement in any organised society, and therefore to curtail any activity/ association that causes a state of disorder. Examples are restricted use of sound amplifiers in public places, curbing hate speech, fake news *etc.*,
- Decency or Morality, so as to control activities that undermine public morals, such as child abuse, provocative publications *etc.*,
- Contempt of Court, enforced to secure public respect and confidence in the judicial process. Maintenance of dignity of courts is one of the cardinal principles of any democratic set up. A fair criticism is permissible but not scandalisation.
- Defamation, so that freedom of speech and expression does not entitle you to hurt others' reputation in the public sphere. Right to reputation is a fundamental right, implicitly specified in Article 21.
- Incitement to an Offence, *viz.* an act to persuade others to commit a crime; abetment or instigating a person to commit an offence.

Article 19(2) limits the Freedom of Speech with reasonable restrictions.

These restrictions are subject to judicial review. Any democratic set up is expected to impose these restrictions only in a rare and exceptional case when the order of the state is under threat. One must not forget that this freedom is not absolute and should be exercised, keeping in mind the eight restrictions, which operate in the interest of the society.

In the last few years, social media, like Twitter and Facebook, has become the platform for freedom of speech and expression. Even during the lockdown, people used this right exponentially. But in the light of some recent incidents, it can be inferred that social media is no longer a neutral platform. Incidents like those of Cambridge Analytica, to the issue of regular data mining, polarisation, hate speech, and fake news have become a matter of grave concern. There is no control over the information on social media. Unlike the print and the electronic media, social media is not yet regulated by an external authority. Hence, they do not own any accountability for the content posted. For platforms like Netflix and Amazon, there is no accountability in the form of censorship of content, unlike the case of cinema-house screened movies.

The Supreme Court of India is considering the issue of accountability for social media. On the other hand, freedom of the press has always been kept at a pinnacle as an agency to promote healthy constructive democracy, till fake news became a serious threat. All these issues are pitted against Freedom of Speech and Expression. Therefore, fundamental rights are also subject to restrictions. Had there been no restraint, rights and freedom could threaten to become synonymous with anarchy and disorder. The complete interview can be watched in the link: <https://youtu.be/fEsd3RYfX3o> .

by Priya Dharshni Rahul, Deputy Editor



Anecdote

When I Met Yuri Gagarin, the First Man into Space



PM Nehru greeting Yuri Gagarin

Childhood is where we revisit our treasured memories. This is one such – my meeting with Commodore Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. He was the first man in the world that the Soviet Union had sent into space, thus winning its first round in the space race against the USA. India, under the Prime Ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru, shared Russia's joy and the world's excitement over this historic achievement.

Yuri Alexievich Gagarin (9th March 1934 – 27th March 1968), a Soviet Air Force pilot and cosmonaut, became the first human to journey into outer space, achieving a major milestone in the space race. His capsule, Vostok 1, completed one orbit of Earth on 12th April 1961. Gagarin became an international celebrity and was awarded many medals and titles, including 'Hero of the Soviet Union', his nation's highest honour. Vostok 1 was Gagarin's only spaceflight. A little later, USA not only put their man Shepard in space (May 1961) but also won the space race by putting Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon (July 1969), and Armstrong made the historic statement, *"One small step for man. One giant leap for mankind."*

Nehru shared a great camaraderie with the soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, and therefore, he organised a special reception for Yuri Gagarin at the Palam Air Force Base, Delhi with a spectacular air show for him to witness. Very few people were invited to the event, from

among politicians to celebrities and journalists whom he knew personally, my father being one of the privileged. My mom was quite excited. Since *Chacha* (Uncle) *Nehru* was fond of children, my mother was quick to seize the opportunity for the 'kiddies' meet' with Yuri Gagarin, for me. Hilarity dominated every home, the way mothers trained children for the fortuitous moment. You have to bear in mind that I was only eight years old then and was just learning English.

So, the tough training began at home – how to stand like a soldier, and salute like a soldier. My mother knew well about what exactly one had to do when Gagarin would bend down to shake hands with you and lift you up. So, she made me rehearse the lines. My mother told me, "Gagarin will ask you in English – what would you like to become?" and you should say, "I want to become a cosmonaut like you."

On the D-Day, a cold wintry morning at the Palam Air Force base, military protocols were strictly observed. Every family was led to the assigned seats. We, as children, were seated in the *dhurrie* (rug) close to the Prime Minister (PM) and chief guests who were seated on sofas right in front of the tarmac. This was where the customary salutes would take place for the PM and the Chief Guest. Nehru took the herded children one by one and introduced them to Gagarin. When my turn came, the Defence Minister Krishna Menon, who was my father's friend, smiled at my father and asked "Is that your son?"

He bent down towards me because we were small in size and still growing. "You are dressed like a Naval commander with your navy cap. Which is your ship?", he asked jocularly. It was a tense moment for me, the question unanticipated, and I, not at all rehearsed for this. So, as my father looked at me nervously, I just smiled with a nervous pout, biting my lips in anxiety. That was enough for Krishna Menon to depart and meet up with some cabinet ministers and converse with them.

Some security guards led *Chacha Nehru* to me. "Hello little commander", Nehru said. He stretched out his hand, and I clutched on to his index finger as I was led to Yuri Gagarin. Nehru introduced me as a journalist's child, to Gagarin.

Gagarin knelt half-way, and stretched out his big hands to shake with my tiny ones. He looked me in the eye and asked, "What would you like to be when you grow up?" "I would like to be a cosmonaut like you," I recited my rehearsed line. Gagarin played along with it. He caught me by the shoulders, and shook me a couple of times to show his gesture of kindness and happiness in meeting children and listening to them.

Later in life, Yuri Gagarin served as the backup crew to the Soyuz 1 mission, which ended in a fatal crash, killing his friend and fellow cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov. Fearing for his life, Soviet officials permanently banned Gagarin from further spaceflights. After completing training at the Zukofsky Air Force Engineering Academy on 17th February 1968, he was allowed to fly regular aircrafts. Gagarin died five weeks later when the MiG-15 training jet he was piloting with his flight instructor Vladimir Suryogin, crashed.

Years later in 1984, Nehru's daughter and then Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi sent an Indian man – Wing Commander Rakesh Kumar, into space in a soviet spacecraft under an Indo-USSR collaboration agreement. When Mrs Gandhi spoke to him from ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) Headquarters, she asked him how India appeared from space, and Rakesh Kumar replied, "*Sare Jahan se Accha, Hindustan Hamara*" (meaning "*better than the entire world is our India*").

by T.N.Ashok, Consulting Editor



Exclusive

Trends in Media & Journalism: Traditional vs Digital

In a recent interview held with Dr K Ramachandra Murthy, Senior Journalist, and Ms Sneha Gore, Journalist turned Journalism Educator, the profession of journalism as evolved over the years, was discussed. The seasoned panellists shared their experiences and stories as journalists. We bring you a synopsis of the conversation.

The detailed interview can be watched in the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAEwwdGwmrk> .



Traditional Working Style

Traditionally, journalism was confined to the print media where the editor of the newspaper personally wrote the editorial, and there was a full-fledged team of reporters who filed news for the daily newspaper, which was released the following morning. Editors remained in the office from late morning till the early hours of the following day to oversee the publication of the newspaper. There was little time for socialising. Journalists of the earlier era were known for their fearlessness in reporting facts. The bold stand and reporting by at least some of the journalists during the Emergency Rule in India is still laudable.

Emerged Working Style

With the emergence of political influence on journalists, the neutrality in reporting was compromised, as journalists and later on even the editors, developed proximity with the politicians. Editorial writers took over the writing of editorials from the editors. The editor's presence in the office was till late evenings, after which many were found in the company of politicians. The current trend is that media houses are affiliated to political parties, so that news reporting is influenced and biased in their policies and outlook. The quality of writing and reporting took a beating. Media became divided on cash lines and political lines.

Traditional Fact-based Reporting vs Modern Breaking News-based Reporting

The traditional focus on facts over news has also changed to the current trend of news over facts, due to the emphasis on speed reporting. Speed reporting runs the risk of wrong reporting, to be apologised for, later – an unhealthy trend that adversely affects the credibility of the news provider. It also compromises the sacrosanctity of journalism and its discipline. This is a continuing trend as breaking news is mainly from Twitter, from where even the web editions of the print media source most of the breaking news. This compromise on fact-driven journalism to breaking news-driven journalism has necessitated the development of fact-checking training modules, such as the one initiated by Google News. During the traditional era of print media, this aspect of fact-checking was inherent in the profession. This is a trait that the journalists of today need to learn to develop – stand up for what is right and against what is wrong, for the social good. Today, social media heads in news-break, followed by the television, and print media being last in the order.

Who is a Journalist?



The identity of today's journalist has become complex. In the era of the print media, the distinction between the common man and the journalist was clear. The journalist then had access to news first and it was his job to bring it to the common man who could access it from the newspaper, the radio or the television. Today, this distinction between the common man and the journalist has become unclear, with the democratisation of information that the Internet has brought about. Any blogger, Facebook user or smartphone user is a potential journalist since he can disseminate information. He can propagate fake news as is

happening with Whatsapp. Therefore, any common man is a potential competitor for the journalist. Another matter of concern is how to identify what is news. It has become a challenge for the journalist to navigate along ideological lines about what is news, that is good or worthwhile for society.

Almost every social media user posts individualised viewpoints on a spectrum of topics on such platforms as Twitter and Whatsapp. Journalists too have become biased, reporting viewpoints in place of facts. Journalists are divided based on their political affiliations and not on ideologies. Neutrality is no longer practised. Earlier, news was facts and the editorial was a viewpoint but today, news itself is a viewpoint.

Future of Journalism

Undoubtedly, the future lies with social media. As against the traditional habit of reading one newspaper, today's reader accesses multiple platforms for news, especially from social media.

It is important for the journalist to remember that everyone, including governments and politicians, have both good and not-so-good sides to their behaviour. Not all do all bad, and not all do all good. Therefore, while reporting, it is important for the journalist to have a balanced assessment of what he is reporting in order to report facts and the truth. A journalist's personal opinion should not colour his approach to his profession, and he should not be influenced by bias. This approach of avoiding both the extreme ends of the spectrum while reporting, is a major challenge worldwide.

The Young Journalist

The young professionals in the journalistic arena are a pessimistic lot, mainly because of the kind of content they are exposed to, and consume. These contents are usually skewed and paints the world in colours of bias. These contents are accessed mainly from social media, as print media is almost lost in the midst of social media. Journalists can safeguard their reputation and their credibility through their balanced and unbiased reporting, adhering to facts and the truth. This is called media ethics.

Etiquette in Journalism

Aggression in journalism is acceptable, provided it is sensible and unbiased. It is commendable for acquiring facts, and pursuing with people to obtain the truth because it facilitates in getting to the crunch of the matter and the truth. However, there is a thin line



between aggression and activism. Shouting guest speakers down on televised debates, for example, is far from aggressive journalism. It is poor media etiquette.

Media Policy and Monitoring

While there is a need for a media policy, the question is who will monitor them – the readers, the owners (of the media) or the government. It is difficult to monitor and moderate because of the democracy of social media. It is also important for the media policy to be constantly and regularly updated to accommodate changing trends. For example, the Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming media service has recently been brought under the purview of the media policy, and this move is commendable. However, the media policy was last amended in 1995 when the Act was amended to include the cable TV network. Thereafter, there has been no significant amendment or change to keep in line with the changes that have evolved.

One could conclude that journalism has evolved over the years from a conventional, time-bound, limited-edition circulation of news to an open-sourced, real-time, virtual platform of information, often circulated with views. The current trend of journalism is here to stay and traditional journalists must keep pace with the change to stay afloat in the profession. The current journalists however, have much to learn, imbibe and practise in order to bring some credibility and quality to the form of reporting that is happening today.

by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief

Cartoon Watch, the Only Cartoon Magazine of India, Enters 25th Year



**Cover Page
of First Edition**

Triambak Sharma, the cartoonist for 'Princetoon', carried in eMagazine PreSense regularly, also runs his own cartoon magazine, 'Cartoon Watch'. Cartoon Watch entered its 25th year of publication in December 2020.

The Shankar's Weekly, the only cartoon magazine running in the country till the mid-1970s, closed down in 1975 during emergency period. Several people tried to start a cartoon magazine thereafter, but none of them could survive. Triambak Sharma started 'Cartoon Watch', an exclusive cartoon magazine, on 5th December 1996. He has so far published 289 monthly editions without a break.

Cartoon Watch has been honouring outstanding cartoonists with Lifetime Achievement Awards annually since 2003. They have honoured 25 outstanding cartoonists, including Shri R K Laxman, Balasaheb Thackeray, Abid Surati, Pran, Madan, Shankar, and Surendra. Cartoon Watch has been honouring international cartoonists since 2019. The magazine regularly organises cartoon competitions, cartoon exhibitions and cartoon workshops, and have created an online cartoon museum.

The Limca Book of Records, and the India Book of Records have recognised Cartoon Watch as the only bilingual cartoon magazine of India.

Cartoon magazine can be downloaded from www.cartoonwatchindia.com.

PreSense greets Cartoon Watch and its team on this landmark occasion.



Report on Our Events

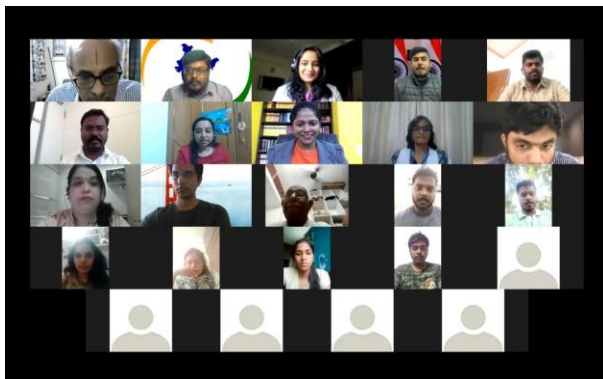
Aura, the Inspiration! – Edition 3

In the third edition of the series, telecast on 2nd January 2021, Ms Rehana Ameer, Councillor, London City Corporation shared her inspiring journey to success, and explained how she involved her children in her family decision-making. In the history of London City Corporation, she is the first person of Indian origin to hold the position. The entire conversation is available in the following link:

<https://youtu.be/0Negy7znSzg> .



NGPL – Elocution Competition:



Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) conducted an Elocution Competition on the topic, 'Ethics in Politics' on 29th December 2020. Ms Dipti Kumar, Director, Digital Engagement, US Consulate (for English Elocution) and Mr Nurullah, Senior Journalist (for Tamil Elocution) were the Jury Members. After the competition, the jury members gave their feedback and guidance, based on the performance. Ms Vijayalakshmi M was the winner, and Mr Meethun, the runner up. Cash prizes were awarded. The programme can be

watched in the following link: <https://youtu.be/mACz2sv3ipo> .

Dialogue with Experts – Episode 20

On 17th January 2021, Mr Arvind Thiagarajan, Serial Inventor & Entrepreneur from USA, spoke about 'How to be a Successful Inventor and Entrepreneur'. He shared his special moments of inspiration, from the life and character of late Dr APJ Abdul Kalam (former President of India), during his days as a University student and his personal interaction with him. He spoke about how he became an entrepreneur, and gave tips on how to be a successful one, based on his own life experience, inspired by Dr Kalam. The recording can be watched in the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47_Q4WDhLIU

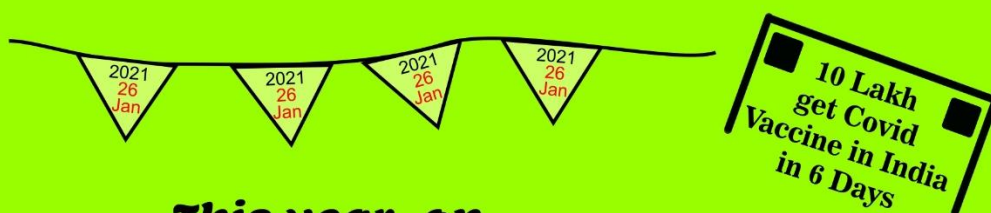




PPrince

By Triambak Sharma

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**This year..on
Republic Day
we are
feeling like
Independence Day
from Corona..**



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