

**PreSense Speaks Series**

***COVER STORIES***  
***2025***



**Prime Point Srinivasan**  
**Ramesh Sundaram**  
**Priyadharshni Rahul**

**Prime Point Foundation**

# Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's Foreword for PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam  
Former President of India



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New Delhi-110011

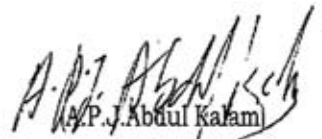
## FOREWORD

I am very happy to know that the PreSense monthly ezine published by Prime Point Foundation is bringing out a book based on some of the unique articles, interviews and events published in its editions so far since from March 2006. The 100 issues of the publication have gone through an eventful journey, focusing on knowledge capture and important knowledge dissemination. I recollect my direct association with PreSense in July 2008, when I launched the cartoon character, 'Prince', created exclusively for PreSense.

I see PreSense continuing in its journey under the mentorship of Prime Point Srinivasan, maintaining its status as a must-read ezine, in the fast moving and evolving world of communication, knowledge and connectivity.

I congratulate the Editorial Team of PreSense for bringing out the 100<sup>th</sup> Edition as a Collector's Digest.

28<sup>th</sup> May 2015

  
(A.P.J. Abdul Kalam)

## About Prime Point Foundation



### **PRIME POINT Foundation**

Prime Point Foundation, a Non-Profit Trust and NGO was founded in December 1999 by Shri K Srinivasan (popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan), a former Senior Banker and a Digital Journalist and Communication Professional, to promote leadership and communication skills among the youth. Very eminent persons are associated with the Foundation.

In the past 26 years, the Foundation has organised several seminars, workshops, training and interactive sessions, both offline and online, on various subjects of national interest. The Foundation manages various online discussion groups and podcasts on communication and digital journalism.

The Foundation has started 5 initiatives viz. eMagazine PreSense, Sansad Ratna Awards, Next Gen Political Leaders, Digital Journalists Association of India and Education Loan Task Force, to create awareness in various domains. All these initiatives are managed independently by passionate experts. These initiatives are non-commercial, and focussed on youth.

## About eMagazine PreSense



PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till March 2026, the Foundation has published 229 editions. Dr Abdul Kalam has written the foreword for the Digest of articles up to 100 editions. PreSense publishes the cartoon character Prince, which was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam in 2008.

PreSense Speaks: Cover Stories 2025

PreSense Speaks Series

***COVER STORIES***  
***2025***



Prime Point Srinivasan  
Ramesh Sundaram  
Priyadharshni Rahul

Prime Point Foundation

PreSense Speaks: Cover Stories 2025

Publishing date            March 2026

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Title of the Book            PreSense Speaks: Cover Stories 2025

ISBBN                        978-93-91803-86-5

Pages                         120

Price                         Free distribution

Publisher                    Prime Point Foundation, 14, Vasan Street, T Nagar, Chennai 60005

Printer                        Adyar Students Xerox P Limited, Triplicane, Chennai 600005

WWebsites                    [www.primepointfoundation.org](http://www.primepointfoundation.org)  
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## Introduction

## Dedication



To **Lord Sri Krishna**, the Almighty, my eternal guide and strength. Like the flute that sings only through His touch, this book flows through His divine will. May it serve as an offering at His Feet and illuminate minds with wisdom and purpose.

🙏 Jai Shri Krishna! 🙏

## Foreword From Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam For The PreSense100

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam  
Former President of India



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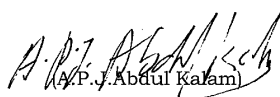
### FOREWORD

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## Author's Profile – Prime Point Srinivasan



K. Srinivasan, popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan, after serving the banking industry for more than 25 years, took voluntary retirement in 1998 to start his own public relations and communication consultancy.

He also founded Prime Point Foundation in 1999 for promoting communication awareness. On the suggestion of Dr Abdul Kalam, he started an eMagazine PreSense in 2006 for positive journalism and also Sansad Ratna Awards in 2010 to honour the outstanding Parliamentarians.

He founded other flagship initiatives like the Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI) and Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL).

He is considered as one of the communication and perception management experts. He introduced the concept of Image Audit to study the hidden perception of stakeholders. He has authored several books and received several awards for his digital journalism.

Srinivasan can be reached at [prpoint@gmail.com](mailto:prpoint@gmail.com)

Please visit [www.corpezine.com](http://www.corpezine.com)

## Author's Profile – Ramesh Sundaram



Ramesh Sundaram brings over 35 years of journalism expertise from The Hindu, one of India's most respected newspapers. Throughout his distinguished career, he mastered the vital craft of editing and proofreading—the backbone of quality journalism.

Today, he shares his wealth of knowledge with aspiring journalists, teaching them the fine art of editing and proofreading. His book "Stylebook for Digital Journalists" has become an essential guide for young professionals entering the field.

Currently serving as Joint Managing Editor of PreSense, Ramesh contributes well-researched articles every month. He also lends his experience to the Advisory Board of the Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI) and the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee.

Beyond journalism, Ramesh has excelled in printing technology and won numerous prizes in essay writing and quiz competitions. He is an avid reader with a passion for long-distance walking events. He has also translated several books from Tamil to English, bridging languages and cultures.

Connect with Ramesh at [ramactiva1956@gmail.com](mailto:ramactiva1956@gmail.com)

## Author's Profile – Priyadharshni Rahul

**Priyadharshni Rahul**, Supreme Court Advocate with dual degrees in Political Science and Law, plus a master's in psychology, Editor-in-Chief of PreSense and President of Prime Point Foundation, Digital Journalists Association of India, and Next Gen Political Leaders.



A distinguished achiever from childhood—Duke of Edinburgh Award, President's Award, Prime Minister's Award for leading Tamil Nadu NCC at Republic Day 2005, and India's Youth Ambassador to UK—she has authored six books and received multiple recognitions, including the Dr Abdul Kalam Award of Excellence.

She is a motivational speaker and writer. She has authored 10 books, including this book. She has received several awards including Dr Abdul Kalam Internal Award and PRCI's National Award as Young Visionary. India Book of Records (IBR) has also recognised her services and included her in the world records.

She is the Central Government Counsel at the Supreme Court of India and the Assistant Standing Counsel for the New Delhi Municipal Corporation and Counsel for Municipal Corporation of Delhi. She is one of the busiest advocates in Delhi. She has been assisting many senior Parliamentarians, including Chairmen of Joint Parliamentary Committees on legal matters. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Indian Parliamentary democracy.

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## Prime Point Foundation: 25 Years of Empowering India's Youth



**PRIME POINT  
Foundation**

Since 1999, Prime Point Foundation has been helping young Indians become better leaders and communicators. Founded by Shri K Srinivasan, a former banker turned digital journalist, this non-profit organisation has grown into one of India's most respected youth development platforms.

### What We Do

The Foundation runs five key initiatives that make a real difference:

**eMagazine PreSense** - Started in 2006 following Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's suggestion, this digital magazine promotes positive journalism. With 229 editions published till March 2026 and recognition from the India Book of Records, it includes the popular cartoon character Prince, which Dr Kalam himself launched in 2008.



**Sansad Ratna Awards** - Since 2010, these prestigious awards honour India's best-performing MPs and Parliamentary Committees. Dr Kalam inaugurated the first ceremony, and over 15 years, 143 Awards have



been presented. The India Book of Records acknowledges this as the largest parliamentary award programme run by civil society.

**Next Gen Political Leaders** - This programme trains young



people who want to enter politics, connecting them with experienced

Ministers and MPs through workshops and mentoring sessions.

**Education Loan Task Force** - Helping students and

Education Loan Task Force

**ELTF**

families understand education loans since 2010. The team has answered over 30,000 questions and helped resolve 5,000 serious

complaints with banks.

**Digital Journalists Association of India** - Training



journalists to adapt to the digital age, including AI through workshops and seminars with industry experts.

All programmes are run by passionate volunteers and focus entirely on helping young people succeed. Prime Point Foundation proves that dedicated efforts can create lasting changes in Indian democracy and society.

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## Publisher's Note

It gives me immense pleasure to present this digital compilation of cover stories published in PreSense during the year 2025. As we step into March 2026, marking two decades of our journey, this collection serves as a powerful testament to our commitment to "positive vibrations" and constructive journalism.

The year 2025 has been a year of profound historical reflections and significant contemporary analysis for PreSense. Our cover stories have traversed a wide spectrum, from celebrating the 150th anniversary of our National Song, *Vande Mataram*, to offering a deep, objective study of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as it entered its centenary year. We also revisited the prescient final warning of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, whose vision for India's democratic future remains as relevant today as it was in 1949.

In our pursuit of ground reality, we did not shy away from critical issues. Our feature on the Karur tragedy serves as a solemn reminder of the need for grounded leadership over screen-driven celebrity politics. Simultaneously, we celebrated excellence through the 15th edition of the Sansad Ratna Awards, honouring parliamentarians who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to their legislative duties.

This compilation also captures inspiring individual journeys—from a former Chief Minister's unstoppable academic quest to the rise of dedicated grassroots leaders who have proven that sincerity and hard work are the true currency of Indian democracy. Furthermore, we explored significant legislative shifts like the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and celebrated the sacred confluence of faith and governance at the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025.

This journey of digital integrity would not have been possible without the tireless dedication of our core team. I must express my deepest gratitude to **Ramesh Sundaram**, our Joint Managing Editor, and **Priyadharshni Rahul**, whom we have now elevated as Editor-in-Chief. Their continuous involvement, insightful editorials, and well-researched cover stories have been the bedrock of PreSense throughout the year.

My sincere thanks also go to our dedicated editorial team, including **R Nurullah** and **C Badri**, for their unwavering support, meticulous research, and wise guidance that continue to shape our vision.

As you go through these pages, you will witness a unique blend of heritage and future-ready journalism. While we honour the legacy inspired by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, we are also embracing the future by integrating AI-powered tools and podcasts to enhance our knowledge dissemination.

I invite you to read this compilation fully. It is not just a record of the past year but a source of inspiration for building a stronger, more informed India.

**Prime Point Srinivasan**

Founder and Chairman, Prime Point Foundation

Publisher, PreSense

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## **Cover Stories 2025**

***To understand the significance of PreSense's 20-year journey is to understand a unique and counter-cultural movement in Indian digital media. Its origins are not rooted in a commercial venture but in a direct call to action from one of the nation's most revered figures. The eMagazine was founded in March 2006, directly inspired by a suggestion from the late former President of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who envisioned a new form of journalism focussing on positive, nation-building stories.***

***- Ramesh Sundaram***

## **PreSense at 20: Celebrating a Legacy of Positive Journalism and Unveiling a Vision for the Future**

*(Published in the Dec 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor)*

*(Celebrating 20 years of PreSense, this article honours its Dr. Kalam-inspired legacy of positive, volunteer-driven journalism while embracing AI-powered tools for a new media era.)*



*(L to R: Priyadarshni Rahul, Prime Point Srinivasan, Justice Dr. T. N. Vallinayagam, R Lakshmipathy, R Bhagwan Singh)*

## **A Milestone for Media Integrity: The Confluence of Anniversaries**

A distinguished gathering of journalists, legal luminaries, and industry leaders convened to mark a rare confluence of milestones: the 20th anniversary of the pioneering eMagazine *PreSense*, the 10th anniversary of the Digital Journalist Association of India (DJAI), and, most significantly, the 25th year of their parent organisation, the Prime Point Foundation. The event served as a moment of profound reflection on a two-decade-long mission to champion "positive journalism" in an era often defined by sensationalism and fleeting digital trends.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the occasion was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, including the Hon. Justice Dr T.N. Vallinayagam (Chairman of the National Cyber Security Research Council, Delhi, and Presiding Judge, Lok Adalat, High Court Madras), R. Lakshmipati (Joint Director of the legendary media house Dinamalar), and the veteran journalist R. Bhagwan Singh (former Executive Editor of Deccan Chronicle). This report chronicles the event's key moments, from honouring the entirely volunteer-driven legacy that has sustained the e-magazine for 225 editions to the launch of new AI-powered tools designed to shape the future of media in India.

## **The PreSense Journey: A Mission Inspired by a President**

To understand the significance of PreSense's 20-year journey is to understand a unique and counter-cultural movement in Indian digital media. Its origins are not rooted in a commercial venture but in a direct call to action from one of the nation's most revered figures. The eMagazine was founded in March 2006, directly inspired by a suggestion from the late former President of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who envisioned a new form of journalism focussing on positive, nation-building stories.

Initially launched as *PReSense* with the tagline "Communicate the Communication," the publication later underwent a strategic evolution, simplifying its name to *PreSense* and adopting a new mission: "Spreading Positive Vibrations." This foundational ethos has guided the eMagazine through two decades, operating on a set of unwavering principles. Driven solely by the passion of its contributors, it has remained entirely volunteer-run, completely advertisement-free, and has distributed all 225 of its monthly editions universally free of charge.

This unique model has not hindered its innovation. Key milestones celebrated included the creation of the cartoon character 'Prince' in 2008—another suggestion from Dr Kalam—who saw the need for a conscience-keeper for the common person. The character created by Raipur-based senior cartoonist Triambak Sharma, became so beloved that it was featured in the *Wall Street Journal* after its 60th edition. In 2010, the organisation established the pioneering

Sansad Ratna Awards, an initiative also inspired by Dr Kalam, to honour top-performing parliamentarians, moving the digital magazine's impact from the screen to the national stage of governance. Till 2025, 143 Awards have been presented to individual MPs and Parliamentary Committees, through 15 Award functions. Hon'ble President of India also hosted High Tea for the Awardees in 2024.

### **Voices of Experience: Keynote Addresses on Journalism, Ethics, and Technology**

The intellectual core of the celebration featured keynote addresses from seasoned leaders in media and law, who offered their perspectives on PreSense's legacy and the formidable challenges facing modern journalism.

### **R. Bhagwan Singh: A Personal Tribute to Vision and Perseverance**

In his presiding address, R. Bhagwan Singh offered a heartfelt and personal tribute. Recalling his decades-long friendship with the founder Prime Point Srinivasan, he shared a defining anecdote from the 1980s. At the time, Srinivasan, then a bank manager, provided him with the "meat for the story" on a fraudulent Minister who had duped several banks. Yet, in a move that foreshadowed his future mission, he also insisted on editing the "spicy stuff" out of the report. This paradox, Bhagwan Singh noted, perfectly illustrated Srinivasan's nascent commitment to presenting

hard facts constructively—a philosophy that would later define *PreSense*. Hailing the eMagazine as a "trailblazer" and a visionary initiative, he concluded that its sustained success has done Dr Kalam's memory proud.

### **R. Lakshmipathy: Blending Ancient Wisdom with Modern Tools**

R. Lakshmipathy, Joint Director of Dinamalar, commended the consistent, volunteer-based effort that has powered *PreSense* for two decades, calling it a "great inspirational story." He offered insightful commentary on the two e-books launched at the event, noting how '*Unlock Your Inner Strength*' distills profound wisdom into simple, practical techniques, and how the articles in '*Insightful Reflections*' ought to be read by every journalism student. Looking forward, he framed Artificial Intelligence not as a threat but as a powerful tool. He argued that AI can help connect ancient knowledge—such as the three lakh formulations documented in Siddha literature—with contemporary challenges, enabling us to harness this wisdom for a more informed future.

### **Hon. Justice Dr T.N. Vallinayagam: Upholding Truth in the Digital Age**

Delivering the Chief Guest's address, Hon. Justice Dr T.N. Vallinayagam offered a compelling legal and constitutional perspective. He praised *PreSense* for its unwavering commitment to quality and integrity in an age of rampant

misinformation. Citing Article 19(2) of the Constitution, he reminded the audience that freedom of expression is tempered by "reasonable restrictions."

He issued a stark warning about the threats posed by deepfake technology, stating that the deliberate propagation of falsehoods does not fall within the protected sphere of free speech. On the subject of AI in the judiciary, his view was nuanced and firm. He stressed that while AI can be a valuable research aid, it must be treated with caution, citing instances of fabricated case citations, referred to as "hallucinations."

"AI can assist, but cannot replace judicial decision-making... It doesn't have emotions like us to analyse the situation completely."

He concluded that AI can never replace human reasoning, judicial principles, and emotional intelligence that are essential for delivering true justice.



**Group Capt. R Vijayakumar (Retd) VSM, Executive Director of Madras Management Association, receives the first copy of the book “*Insightful Reflections.*”**

**S S Ramasubbu, Former MP, receives the first copy of the book “*Yoga: Unlock Your Inner Strength.*”**

## **Unveiling the Future: New Publications and AI-Powered Assistants**

The celebration was as much about the future as it was about the past, serving as a launchpad for new initiatives designed to empower readers and journalists alike.

First, two new e-books were unveiled: ***'Insightful Reflections'*** by Ramesh Sundaram and ***'Yoga: Unlock Your Inner Strength'*** by Yogacharyan Suresh Veera. The free distribution of these, and the foundation's entire library of over 55 publications, stands as a testament to the same unwavering ethos that has defined the ad-free, volunteer-run eMagazine for two decades: a commitment to making knowledge accessible to all free of cost.

Second, the foundation launched two sophisticated AI assistants, both powered by Google Gemini, to revolutionise journalistic workflows:

## **Honouring the Pillars: A Tribute to Early Contributors**

In one of the event's most poignant segments, founder Prime Point Srinivasan paid personal tribute to the volunteers and supporters instrumental in PreSense's

journey. Moving beyond a list of names, he shared anecdotes that illuminated their crucial contributions.

Susan Koshy (Former Editor in Chief of PreSense), V Rajendran (Former Editor of PreSense), K. Ashokan (Senior Journalist and former Editor of Ananda Vikatan), R Nurullah (Senior Journalist), and T N Ashok (Senior Journalist) were honoured by the Chief Guest with '*Angavastram*' for their support to PreSense in the early days.

R Nurullah (Co-Chairman of DiJAI) welcomed the audience. C Badri (Editor in Chief of PreSense) proposed vote of thanks. Priyadharshni Rahul, President of DiJAI and Editor of PreSense, coordinated the event.

### **Conclusion: A Continuing Legacy for a New Media Epoch**

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of *PreSense* and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of DiJAI was a powerful testament to a dual vision: one that honours a remarkable legacy of positive, volunteer-driven journalism while simultaneously embracing the future through the strategic adoption of Artificial Intelligence. The core message from the day's speeches was clear: in a complex and often divisive media landscape, the mission to foster integrity, promote constructive discourse, and contribute to nation-building is more relevant than ever.

The event ultimately showcased a compelling paradox at the heart of this enduring mission. A journalistic vision inspired by a revered, pre-digital-era leader is now being propelled into the next epoch by the most advanced tools of the digital age. Guided by the principles of its past and equipped with the tools of its future, the Prime Point Foundation is poised to continue its influential journey, proving that journalism driven by purpose can indeed create tangible, positive change.

PreSense at 20: Celebrating a Legacy of Positive Journalism and Unveiling a Vision for the Future.

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# **The Architect's Final Warning: Dr Ambedkar's Vision and Vigilance for India's Democratic Future**

*(Published in the Nov 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(Ambedkar's final speech warned India that preserving its democracy requires constitutional adherence, rejecting hero-worship, fostering social equality, and overcoming deep-seated social contradictions.)*

## **Introduction**

On 25th November 1949, Dr B.R. Ambedkar delivered his final address to the Constituent Assembly before the adoption of India's Constitution. This profoundly significant speech goes beyond defending the Constitution he had meticulously drafted. It serves both as a reflection on the arduous journey of constitution-making and as a prescient warning about the challenges facing India's nascent democracy. His words remain remarkably relevant today, offering timeless wisdom on preserving independence, maintaining democratic values, and building social justice.

## DR B.R. AMBEDKAR'S FINAL WARNING: FIVE ESSENTIALS FOR INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

**1. EMBRACE CONSTITUTIONAL METHODS**  
Abandon 'bloody methods of revolution' and unconstitutional means like civil disobedience now that constitutional avenues exist [cite: 65-67].

**2. REJECT POLITICAL HERO-WORSHIP (BHAkti)**  
Avoid laying liberties at the feet of great men; in politics, hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and eventual dictatorship [cite: 69, 72-73].

**3. BUILD SOCIAL DEMOCRACY**  
Political democracy requires a foundation of social democracy, recognising liberty, equality, and fraternity as an inseparable trinity [cite: 74-77].

**4. RESOLVE THE GREAT CONTRADICTION**  
India enters a contradiction of political equality versus social/economic inequality; this must be removed or the victimised will blow up the structure [cite: 83-86].

**5. THE CHALLENGE OF FRATERNITY & NATIONHOOD**  
Recognise that castes are anti-national, creating separation. Overcoming them is essential to forge a true nation and achieve fact-based fraternity [cite: 91-94].

**READ THE FULL COVER STORY IN PRESENSE eMAGAZINE NOVEMBER EDITION.  
VIGILANCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO SERVE THE COUNTRY [cite: 109].**

### The Magnitude of the Constitutional Enterprise

Dr Ambedkar began by chronicling the extraordinary effort invested in creating India's Constitution. The Constituent Assembly laboured for two years, eleven months, and seventeen days, holding eleven sessions that consumed 165 days. Of these, 114 days were devoted exclusively to

examining the Draft Constitution. The Drafting Committee itself sat for 141 days, transforming an initial draft of 243 articles into a final Constitution containing 395 articles and 8 Schedules.

The Assembly considered approximately 7,635 amendments, of which 2,473 were actually moved in the House. Addressing critics who accused the Assembly of dilatoriness, Dr Ambedkar mounted a robust defence through comparative analysis. Whilst the American Convention completed its work in four months and the South African in one year, the Canadian Convention took two years and five months, and the Australian Convention consumed nine years. Given that India's Constitution dwarfed these others in scope—the American Constitution had merely seven articles compared to India's 395—and that the Assembly had to deliberate on thousands of amendments, the timeframe was remarkably efficient rather than excessive.

### **Acknowledging the Architects**

With characteristic humility, Dr Ambedkar deflected personal praise for the Constitution, insisting the credit belonged to many hands. He acknowledged Sir B.N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser, who prepared the rough draft; the members of the Drafting Committee who demonstrated ingenuity and tolerance through 141 days of deliberation; and especially Mr S.N. Mukherjee, the Chief Draftsman,

whose ability to render intricate proposals in clear legal form and whose capacity for tireless work—often beyond midnight—proved invaluable.

Dr Ambedkar credited the Congress Party for bringing order and discipline to the proceedings, preventing what could have been chaos in a "tessellated pavement without cement." Yet he also praised the "rebels"—members like Mr Kamath, Dr P.S. Deshmukh, Prof. K.T. Shah, and Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru—whose ideological challenges, whilst not always accepted, enlivened the debates and provided opportunities to expound the principles underlying the Constitution.

He expressed particular gratitude to the Assembly's President for conducting proceedings with courtesy and consideration, especially for not permitting "legalism to defeat the work of Constitution-making."

### **The Philosophy of Constitutional Flexibility**

Addressing criticisms from Communist and Socialist parties, Dr Ambedkar articulated a profound constitutional philosophy. He acknowledged that Communists condemned the Constitution for embracing parliamentary democracy rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat, whilst Socialists wanted unfettered power to nationalise property without compensation and absolute fundamental rights to facilitate revolutionary overthrow of the state if necessary.

Rather than defending these specific provisions as sacrosanct, Dr Ambedkar invoked Thomas Jefferson's principle that each generation constitutes "a distinct nation" with no obligation to remain bound by the institutions of its predecessors. The earth, Jefferson insisted, "belongs to the dead and not the living." Dr Ambedkar argued that the Constituent Assembly had scrupulously honoured this principle by providing "the most facile procedure" for constitutional amendment—requiring only a two-thirds majority in Parliament rather than the extraordinary conditions demanded in America or Australia, or the rigid finality of the Canadian Constitution.

This flexibility embodied democratic faith: if future generations disagreed with the Constitution's principles, they could amend it. If critics could not muster even a two-thirds majority in a Parliament elected by adult franchise, their dissatisfaction could hardly be deemed reflective of public sentiment.

### **Federalism and Emergency Powers**

Dr Ambedkar addressed the charge that the Constitution was excessively centralised, reducing States to mere municipalities. He firmly rejected this characterisation, explaining that true federalism rests on the fundamental principle that legislative and executive authority is partitioned between Centre and States by the Constitution itself, not by any law the Centre might pass. Under India's

Constitution, States possessed legislative and executive authority co-equal with the Centre within their respective spheres. Neither the Centre nor the Judiciary could unilaterally alter this constitutional partition of powers.

He conceded that the Constitution assigned the Centre a larger field of operation and residuary powers, but insisted these features did not negate federalism's essence. The charge of centralisation defeating federalism must therefore fall.

However, Dr Ambedkar admitted the Constitution granted the Centre overriding powers during emergencies. He defended this provision by posing the crucial question: in a crisis, to whom does the citizen owe ultimate allegiance—the Centre or the constituent State? The vast majority, he argued, would answer that residual loyalty must belong to the Centre, which alone could work for common ends and the country's general interests. Emergency powers merely obliged States to consider national interests alongside local ones during crises—a reasonable obligation given the primacy of national unity.

### **The Peril of Lost Independence**

Transitioning from constitutional mechanics to broader reflections, Dr Ambedkar revealed his deepest anxieties about India's future. On 26th January 1950, India would become independent, but would she maintain this independence or lose it again? This question tormented him

because India had lost independence before—not merely through external conquest but through "the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people."

He recounted painful historical examples: military commanders of King Dahar accepting bribes from Mohammed-bin-Qasim's agents; Jaichand inviting Mohammed Ghori to invade India; Maratha noblemen and Rajput kings fighting alongside Moghul emperors whilst Shivaji battled for Hindu liberation; Gulab Singh remaining silent whilst the British destroyed Sikh rulers; and Sikhs watching as silent spectators during the 1857 war of independence.

Dr Ambedkar's anxiety deepened with the realisation that independent India would have not only old divisions of caste and creed but also diverse political parties with opposing creeds. Would Indians place country above creed, or creed above country? If parties prioritised creed over nation, independence would be "put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever." Indians must be determined to defend independence "with the last drop of our blood."

### **Democracy's Fragile Inheritance**

Dr Ambedkar's second great anxiety concerned whether India would maintain her democratic Constitution. India had known democracy before—she was once "studded with republics," and even monarchies were elected or limited, never absolute. Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas functioned as

parliaments, observing rules of parliamentary procedure—seating arrangements, motions, resolutions, quorum, whips, voting by ballot, censure motions—that Buddha borrowed from contemporary political assemblies.

Yet India lost this democratic system. Would she lose it again? In a country where democracy, from long disuse, must be regarded as "something quite new," the danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship loomed large. Democracy might retain its form whilst dictatorship prevailed in fact.

### **Three Pillars for Preserving Democracy**

To maintain democracy in both form and fact, Dr Ambedkar prescribed three essential measures.

#### **First: Constitutional Methods Over Revolutionary Violence**

Indians must hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving social and economic objectives, abandoning "the bloody methods of revolution" and the unconstitutional methods of civil disobedience, non-cooperation, and satyagraha. When constitutional methods existed, these unconstitutional approaches—"nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy"—lost all justification and must be abandoned immediately.

#### **Second: Rejecting Hero-Worship**

Dr Ambedkar invoked John Stuart Mill's caution against laying liberties "at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions." Whilst gratitude to great leaders was proper, there were limits. As Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell said, no person can be grateful at the cost of honour, chastity, or national liberty.

This warning was especially urgent for India, where *Bhakti*—devotion or hero-worship—played an unequalled role in politics. Whilst *Bhakti* in religion might offer salvation, in politics it was "a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship."

### **Third: Social Democracy as Foundation**

Political democracy could not endure without social democracy as its foundation. Social democracy meant "a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life." These principles formed an inseparable trinity—divorcing one from another would defeat democracy's very purpose.

Liberty without equality would produce supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become natural but would require "a constable to enforce them."

### **The Contradiction India Must Resolve**

Dr Ambedkar acknowledged the complete absence of equality and fraternity in Indian society. On the social plane, India had "a society based on the principle of graded inequality"—caste hierarchy—with immense wealth for some and abject poverty for many. On 26th January 1950, India would enter "a life of contradictions": political equality through one person, one vote, one value; but social and economic inequality denying the principle of one person, one value.

How long could India sustain this contradiction? If denied for long, those suffering from inequality would "blow up the structure of political democracy" the Assembly had laboriously built. The contradiction must be removed immediately.

### **The Challenge of Fraternity**

Fraternity—a sense of common brotherhood making Indians one people—provided unity and solidarity to social life. Yet achieving fraternity was profoundly difficult. Dr Ambedkar recounted James Bryce's story of the American Protestant Episcopal Church debating whether to pray for "our nation," with many objecting that "nation" implied excessive recognition of national unity, preferring instead "these United States."

If Americans struggled to feel they were a nation, how much more difficult for Indians? Dr Ambedkar challenged the comforting delusion that India was already a nation: "How

can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation?" Only by recognising that India was not yet a nation in the social and psychological sense could Indians seriously pursue this goal—far more difficult than in the United States, which had no caste problem.

Castes were anti-national because they enforced social separation and generated jealousy and antipathy. India must overcome these difficulties to become a nation in reality, for "fraternity can be a fact only when there is a nation. Without fraternity, equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint."

### **The Urgency of Social Transformation**

Dr Ambedkar's reflections, though perhaps unpleasant to some, acknowledged that political power had too long been monopolised by a few whilst the many served as "beasts of burden" and "beasts of prey." This monopoly had not merely deprived them of betterment but "sapped them of what may be called the significance of life."

The downtrodden classes were "tired of being governed" and "impatient to govern themselves." This urge for self-realisation must not devolve into class struggle or class war, which would divide the house. As Abraham Lincoln warned, "a House divided against itself cannot stand very long." Room must be made quickly for realising their aspirations—for the few, for the country, for independence, and for

democratic continuance. This required establishing equality and fraternity in all spheres of life.

### **The Weight of Responsibility**

In his conclusion, Dr Ambedkar reminded the Assembly that independence brought great responsibilities. Indians had lost the excuse of blaming the British for failures; henceforth, they had "nobody to blame except ourselves." The danger of things going wrong was substantial. Times were changing rapidly, and people worldwide, including Indians, were being moved by new ideologies. Many were "getting tired of Government by the people" and prepared to accept "Governments for the people" whilst indifferent to government of and by the people.

To preserve the Constitution's enshrinement of government of, for, and by the people, Indians must resolve not to be "tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path" nor "weak in our initiative to remove them." This vigilance and action is "the only way to serve the country."

Dr Ambedkar's final speech stands as both a blueprint for democratic success and a prophetic warning against complacency. His vision extended beyond constitutional text to the social transformation essential for democracy's survival—a vision that continues to challenge and inspire India today.

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## Vande Mataram- Celebrating 150 Years of Motherland

*(Published in the Nov 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor)*

*(Vande Mataram, India's National Song, celebrates its 150th anniversary, symbolising unity, inspiring the freedom movement, and embodying the nation's patriotic spirit.)*



India is celebrating the **150th Anniversary** of the National Song, *Vande Mataram*. This timeless composition continues to inspire patriotic spirit among all Indians,

regardless of their caste, creed, or religion. It is India's most iconic poem, praised for eulogising the nation and kindling a great pride in being Indian.

### **The Sacred Origin and Vision**

The song was written as a poem by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** in 1875. The words are a mix of Bengali and Sanskrit languages. The poem first appeared in his famous novel, **Anandamath**, in 1882. The author blended nationalism, nationalistic identity, and spirituality in his writing. Even after 150 years, the poem deeply stirs the emotions of people whenever it is sung. It inspires soldiers, farmers, politicians, students, and the elderly alike.

The composition visualises **Mother India as a Goddess**. It praises Her beauty by extolling the rivers, agricultural fields, and natural resources. She is characterised as the benevolent, nurturing, fierce, and protective Mother. The poem was inspired by the spirit of Bengal and the reverence for Durga Pooja.

### **The Slogan that Fuelled the Freedom Movement**

The emotional fervour of the song quickly moved out of the novel and took centre stage in the Indian Independence Movement. The slogan *Vande Mataram* (I bow to thee, Mother) became a powerful rallying point against the tyrannical British Rule.

- **A National Call:** The Nobel laureate **Rabindranath Tagore** first sang the song at the National Conference of the Indian National Congress in 1896.



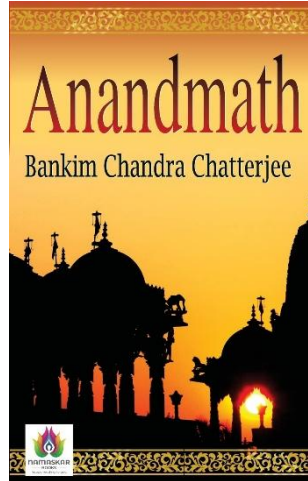
*Bankim Chandra  
Chatterjee*

- **The Bengal Partition:** When Bengal faced Partition, the words *Vande Mataram* became extremely popular and were chanted with great vigour by students and protesters. It soon spread all over the country, crossing the boundaries of Bengal.
- **A Symbol of Defiance:** The British Government banned the slogan. However, the song's emotional power made it a strong symbol of protest against colonial rule. The words gave the freedom fighters the courage to face the Englishmen bravely.

### **Sacrifice and Martyrdom in the South**

The slogan's profound significance in kindling patriotism is evident in the stories of sacrifice across the country.

- **Tirupur Kumaran:** Known as "**Kodi Katha Kumaran**" in Tamil(the Kumaran who protected the flag), he was a young freedom fighter in Tamil Nadu. During a protest in Tirupur on 10 January 1932, he led a group of volunteers, defying British bans and raising slogans like *Vande Mataram*. Even after being severely beaten and injured by the British police, he clung tightly to the national flag. Kumaran became a martyr the next morning, never letting the flag touch the ground, and was heard murmuring "**Vande Mataram**" in his dying moments.
- **Matangini Hazra:** This 73-year-old woman led a large procession during the Quit India Movement in Tamruk, Bengal. When ordered to stop, she refused, appealing to the police not to fire. Despite being shot multiple times, she kept marching, holding the Indian tri-colour high, and chanting "**Vande Mataram**" until she fell.
- **Arya Bhashyam:** Another great leader from Tamil Nadu, **K. Bhashyam Iyengar**, used the pen name 'Arya'. He was an extremist who was also attracted



to the Gandhian movement. In 1932, he performed the heroic act of secretly hoisting the Indian Tricolour on the 148-foot flagpole at Fort St. George in Madras. He was later arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. In jail, he described facing torture. When he was given 30 lashes for questioning the authorities' atrocities, he continued to shout '**Vande Mataram**' throughout the punishment.

### **The National Song and the Controversy**

On **24 January 1950**, the Constituent Assembly officially named *Vande Mataram* as the National Song of India, according it equal honour with the National Anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*.

However, the song has faced controversy. Some Muslims object to the song because they feel it refers to the nation as the Motherland. They claim that *Vande Mataram* is a Hindu hymn that praises a mother goddess. This, they feel, is a form of idolatry which is forbidden in their religion.

The controversy became a political issue in **1937** when Mohammad Ali Jinnah questioned the song. He claimed the song was not only idolatrous but also spread hatred for Muslims.

To address the feelings of minority communities, a subcommittee was formed in 1937, including leaders like

**Jawaharlal Nehru** and **Abul Kalam Azad**. The committee recommended that only the **first two stanzas** of the song should be sung. These stanzas focus on the love and praise for the Motherland, making the selected part to please the Muslims and avoiding references to Hindu Gods. This decision aimed to focus on the song's modern evolution as a part of national life rather than its original context in the novel. Thus, the National Song adopted by the Parliament worships Bharat as the Mother.

### **An Ever-Relevant Legacy**

The cry of *Vande Mataram* remains a potent symbol of national energy and devotion to the nation. Even today, leaders like **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** champion its significance. The Prime Minister inaugurated the year-long commemoration of the **150th**

**Anniversary** of *Vande Mataram* on 7th November 2025. This marked the formal launch of celebrations running until November 2026. The celebrations often feature a **Mass Singing** of the song across the nation, with citizens joining in unison. The Prime Minister has described *Vande Mataram* as a sacred mantra that symbolises India's unity, strength, and devotion to Maa Bharati. The collective singing of the song in public meetings and official commemorations continues to energise the people,

#### LYRICS:

Vande Mataram!  
Sujalam, suphalam, malayaja shitalam,  
Shasyashyamalam, Mataram!  
Vande Mataram!  
Shubhrayotsna pulakityaminim,  
Phuutikusumita drumadala shobhinim,  
Sukhasinim sumadhura bhashininim,  
Sukhadam varadam, Mataram!  
Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram!

#### Translation

I bow to thee, Mother,  
richly-watered, richly-fruited,  
cool with the winds of the south,  
dark with the crops of the harvests,  
The Mother!  
Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,  
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,  
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,  
The Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss.

echoing the powerful patriotic feeling that drove the freedom fighters.

As we honour the 150 years of this powerful composition, we remember its history and the sacrifices made while chanting its words. *Vande Mataram* is more than just a song; it is the unwavering spirit of patriotism that continues to unite the nation.

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## Part I - The Century of the Shakha: Unmasking the RSS

*(Published in the Oct 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*



### Perception on Vandemataram

All events of Prime Point Foundation and PreSense used to start with the invocation song "Vande Mataram". At one such event organised by us in a reputed educational institution, during the tea break, a student approached the author of this article and organiser of the event and asked in a low voice, "Are you a Sanghi?" Confused by his

question, I responded, "Why are you asking?" He promptly replied, "Sir, you started the event with the Vande Mataram song. Generally, only Sanghis sing that song. That is why I asked you." I received the shock of my life and explained to him that Vande Mataram was a National Song with equal status to "Jana Gana Mana". I also explained that every session of Parliament ends with the Vande Mataram song.

A few years ago, in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, the Government removed the words "Jai Hind" from the draft version of the Governor's speech, and when the Governor ended his speech with "Jai Hind", he was branded as a "Sanghi".

Even in Parliament, some members do not sing Vande Mataram or use slogans like Jai Hind or Bharat Mata ki Jai. Consequently, some political parties claiming themselves as "secular" are hesitant to use these slogans for vote bank politics. Interestingly, these three slogans are used as "war cries" in the Indian Army. This is creating an impression amongst young minds that these slogans are 'anti-secular' and used only by RSS and other connected organisations. Though these slogans were used effectively by Congress leaders during the freedom movement, today, even Congress seems reluctant to use them visibly. Since RSS uses these slogans effectively, persons talking about the nation are being branded as 'Sanghis'. Strangely, many of the so-called secular parties have politically given up these national slogans.

## RSS celebrates Centenary



In October 2025, on Vijayadashami day, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh celebrated its 100th anniversary, and Prime Minister Modi released a commemorative 100-rupee coin and a postal cover to mark this occasion. Braving all challenges and criticisms, RSS has grown to become the largest voluntary cultural organisation in the world with activities across the globe. For the first time in India, a coin carries the image of 'Bharat Mata'.

The RSS has been perhaps the most influential, yet consistently misunderstood, socio-cultural phenomenon of modern India. Its cadres occupy the highest offices in the land—including the President of India, the Vice President of India, and the Prime Minister. Yet, for every story of disciplined, selfless service during a disaster, there exists an enduring narrative of controversy and political rivalry.

The recent release of a special stamp and coin by the Prime Minister celebrating this centenary highlights the organisation's undeniable national significance. For our cover story, we move beyond partisan praise and ingrained scepticism. Acting as veteran editors and writers, we have carefully reviewed the foundational documents and historical records. We also held candid discussions with RSS workers and senior leadership.

The PreSense editorial team visited a Shakha in an open ground to understand their way of practice. This two-part feature seeks to measure the RSS against the yardstick of history and contemporary reality, presenting a clear, verifiable picture for our Indian audience, especially to those critics who view the Sangh with deep suspicion.

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## **Part II - A Century of National Commitment**

*(Published in the Oct 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(The RSS, founded in 1925 by Dr. Hedgewar, focused on building national character through disciplined, selfless service, aiming to create a cohesive, strong society.)*

### **A Response to Colonial Indifference**

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was not born in a vacuum but in the socio-political turmoil of 1925, a year marked by surging nationalism. Its founder, Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a doctor and committed freedom fighter from Nagpur, had participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement and had been jailed in 1921. His experience in the national movement and his close observation of the plight of the society led him to a crucial conclusion: political independence, though imminent, would be insufficient without fundamental social consolidation.

## PreSense Speaks: Cover Stories 2025

# RSS Chief over the years

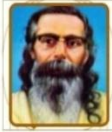
1925-1940



### Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar

Founder of RSS in 1925. Doctor by qualification. Born patriot. Vision: Nation-building through man-making

1940-1973



### M. S. Golwalkar ("Guruji")

Professor of Zoology in BHU. Became the Sarsanghachalak at a young age of 34. Expanded RSS and grew it into a large socio cultural organisation.

### Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras

An organisation man since Hedgewar days. Led RSS during the emergency. He encouraged Sangh's social outreach and Service activities



1973-1994

1994-2000



### Rajendra Singh

First non-Brahmin chief from Uttar Pradesh. Professor of nuclear physics at Allahabad University. Focussed on grass root expansion

### K. S. Sudarshan

An engineer from Madhya Pradesh. Known for his strong exposition on Swadeshi economics and cultural nationalism



2000-2009

2009-present



### Mohan Bhagwat

A veterinarian by profession. Leading RSS into its centenary year. Strong advocate of outreach, dialogue, social harmony and self reliance

Dr Hedgewar believed that the lack of national character, social cohesion, and disciplined patriotism was the root cause of India's recurring subjugation. The RSS was thus founded not as a direct political or anti-British front—though its founder and many early members remained deeply involved in the freedom struggle—but as a laboratory for building national character. The objective was to create a body of citizens, or Swayamsevaks (selfless volunteers), who were physically, mentally, and morally prepared to defend the nation, irrespective of external politics.

This focus on 'man-making' (Karyakarta Nirman) over momentary agitation is the foundational principle that separates the RSS from most of its contemporaries.

### **The Shakha: Cradle of Discipline**

The primary distinguishing feature of the RSS is the Shakha (branch), its smallest and most enduring unit. The Shakha is a daily gathering, typically held in open public grounds, where individuals—from young boys to the elderly—assemble for an hour each day. This routine, replicated across thousands of locations, is the heartbeat of the organisation.

The format is highly regimented: it begins and ends with the RSS prayer, interspersed with physical exercises (Yogasana, Surya Namaskar, traditional games), discussions on national history and current events (Baudhik), and lessons in leadership and self-restraint.

There is no formal membership, and a member's status is determined by their conduct and commitment, not wealth or social standing. Shaka is designed to imbibe certain collective qualities that are to be practised in a collective way

As the RSS celebrates its centenary, the scale of this quiet revolution is staggering. It is estimated that there are currently over 83,000 daily Shakhas with more than 4 million members. The weekly and monthly gatherings (Milans) across India see an average daily participation of approximately 5 lakh individuals. The organisation is sustained by a team of dedicated Pracharaks (full-time, unmarried life-volunteers, numbering around 3,000–3,500 nationally) and hundreds of thousands of active Karyakartas (volunteers with regular jobs and families). This vast, decentralised network is the reason why the RSS—unlike many other organisations founded around 1925, or various sectional bodies—has not only survived but thrived.

### **The Soul of Dedication: The RSS Prayer**

The daily Shakha in RSS starts with "Ekatmata Stotra", recalling and offering pranams to mountains, rivers, and great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar, Subramania Bharathi, and others. The Shakhas end with group singing of the Prarthana, 'Namaste Sada Vatsale Matrubhume' (Salutations to you, O loving Motherland).

This Sanskrit Prarthana, finalised in 1939, is a solemn commitment to the nation, placing the Motherland at the centre of the Swayamsevak's existence.

The prayer is fundamentally a vow of service to the Motherland (Bharat). It is a request for strength, discipline, and humility to tread the "thorny path" of national duty. This singular, unwavering focus on the nation's well-being and its 'supreme glory' (Param Vaibhavam) demonstrates that the commitment instilled daily in the Shakha is purely national, spiritual, and moral, rather than overtly political or communal.



***RSS volunteers carrying dead bodies during Tsunami***

## **Parivar Organisations of RSS**

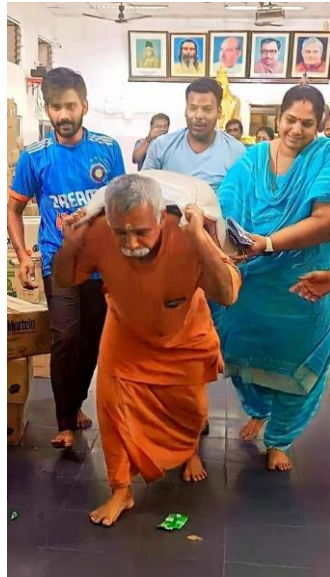
RSS has started nearly 40 Parivar organisations to serve the nation in different domains. Bharatiya Janata Party (political wing with 140 million members), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Trade Union wing with 100 million members), Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (Student wing with 6 million members), Vidya Bharati (Education wing running more than 25,000 educational institutions benefitting more than 3.5 million students) are a few flagship organisations. Besides these, Rashtriya Seva Bharati dedicates itself across the nation to serve the

people during disasters. Akhil Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram serves more than 1,500 tribal villages for their economic and educational development. All these organisations are independently managed and affiliated to RSS. For brevity, we have not listed the other organisations.

### **Relief and Rehabilitation (1947 & Disasters)**

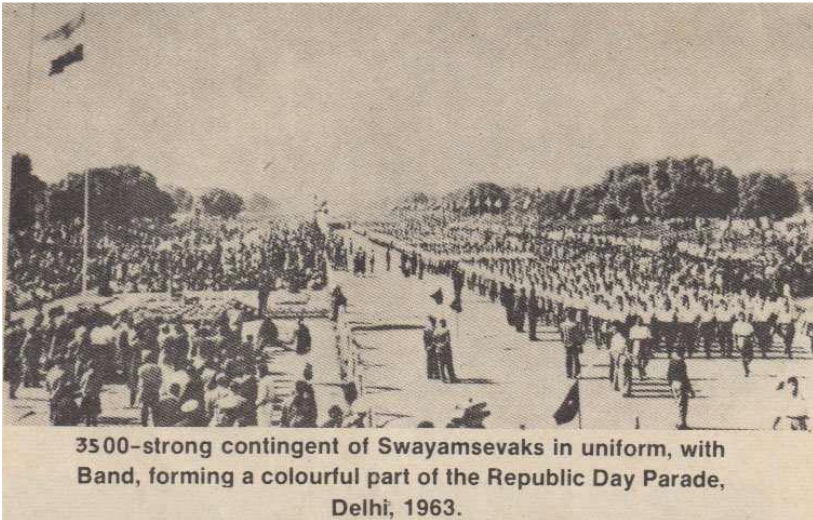
RSS silently and voluntarily springs into action to serve the nation during disasters and crises without any expectation or publicity. During the traumatic 1947 Partition, RSS volunteers organised massive relief camps and provided security, medical aid, and logistical support to refugees streaming across the border. This large-scale, organised effort across North India earned the grudging respect of many, even within the Congress government.

More recently, the RSS-inspired welfare arm, Seva Bharati, has become synonymous with disaster relief. Whether it was



***Kesava Vinayagam,  
Organising Secretary of  
BJP, TN and RSS pracharak  
carrying a rice bag for the  
relief camp***

the devastating Latur earthquake (1993), the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (where Swayamsevaks were crucial in handling deceased bodies and performing rites in coastal Tamil Nadu), the 2015 Chennai floods, or the COVID-19 pandemic, RSS cadres were invariably amongst the first responders, often working tirelessly on the ground regardless of the recipients' background. Seva Bharati manages hundreds of thousands of service activities covering five key areas: health, education, culture, self-reliance, and relief, functioning through local trusts under a national umbrella organisation.



### **Support During Wartime**

Immediately after Independence in 1947, when there was a war between Pakistan and India, RSS helped the Indian

Army in Kashmir. During the Indo-China war (1962) and Indo-Pak war (1965), RSS was requested by the Prime Minister to take care of Delhi's security. As a gesture of gratitude, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru requested RSS to participate in the prestigious Republic Day Parade at Delhi's Rajpath in 1963, and 3,500 RSS volunteers marched in their full uniform.

### **Resistance to Authoritarianism (1975–77)**

The RSS demonstrated its mettle not only in service but in organised resistance during the 1975–77 Emergency. Banned for the second time, thousands of its leaders, including the then Sarsanghchalak, Balasaheb Deoras, were jailed. Operating underground machinery, the RSS played a decisive role in mobilising public opinion and providing logistical support to the Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) Movement for the restoration of democracy. This period of quiet, principled resistance solidified its image as an organisation capable of enduring state pressure in defence of constitutional liberties. During the 1977 General Elections, RSS was mainly responsible for the defeat of Indira Gandhi and for the great victory of the Janata Party. All the senior RSS leaders including Vajpayee and Advani were jailed during the Emergency. Out of 1.25 lakh people jailed during that time, one lakh were from RSS. RSS was banned. Still, they worked underground to restore democracy.

## The Centenary Agenda: Five Pillars of Social Transformation



RSS has outlined a comprehensive social agenda—the Panchaparivartan (Five Transformations)—as the focus for its centenary activities. This vision is directed entirely at correcting societal faults and reinforcing national values, appealing directly to the Indian citizen.

Through this centenary agenda, the RSS sees its mission as fundamentally cultural and social, aiming to elevate the character of the nation from the grassroots upwards.

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## Part III - Dismantling the Myths Surrounding the RSS

*(Published in the Oct 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(This section addresses common myths about the RSS, including claims of secrecy, political bias, and divisiveness, countering them with historical facts and the organisation's actions.)*

For every chapter of dedication penned by the RSS, a counter-narrative of deep suspicion, political condemnation, and outright myth has been written by its critics. As the organisation completes its first century, it is vital for any serious magazine to confront these myths head-on, measuring the allegations against verifiable historical facts.

### **Myth 1: The RSS is a Secret, Closed Organisation**

The most common refrain amongst critics is that the RSS is a clandestine body operating behind "iron gates" with a hidden agenda.

**The Reality:** As senior RSS leaders confirmed, this perception is fundamentally at odds with the organisation's

structure. All Shakhas operate in open public grounds—in parks, school fields, or municipal spaces. They are neither secret nor exclusive. RSS leaders routinely reiterate that the organisation is "like sugar"—one must experience it to know it. They openly welcome the general public and critics to observe or participate.

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NATIONAL

## Gandhiji's murder: apex court asks Rahul to apologise for blaming RSS

Or, face trial in a defamation case, says top court

 authorimaor

By Press Trust of India



Updated · January 17, 2018 at 10:13 PM. | New Delhi, July 19



rahul-gandhi

This perception of secrecy likely arose from two factors: the RSS's initial lack of media engagement (seeing publicity as detrimental to selfless service) and its use of a distinct uniform and command structure, which critics compared to European paramilitary groups. However, the organisation functions entirely in the light of day, and its goals, structure, and prayer are openly published.

According to the RSS leaders, RSS is not a secret organisation but an organisation that works silently

### **Myth 2: The RSS is the Killer of Mahatma Gandhi**

This is the most damaging and politically charged accusation hurled against the RSS, one that has defined the relationship between the Sangh and the establishment for decades.

**The Reality:** Following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 by Nathuram Godse (who had been loosely associated with the RSS at one point before leaving), the organisation was banned by the government, then headed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

However, the ban was conditional. When the government, including Home Minister Patel, failed to establish any institutional link between the RSS and the conspiracy to murder, the ban was lifted in 1949. The matter was definitively closed decades later by the Jivan Lal Kapur

Commission (1966–1969), appointed by the then-Congress government under Indira Gandhi. The Commission concluded that whilst Godse was a part of the Hindu Mahasabha and had been an RSS member previously, "the RSS as such were not responsible for the murder of Mahatma Gandhi."

Perhaps the most potent historical evidence against this



enduring political charge came fifteen years after the assassination.

Following the 1962 Sino-Indian War, where the RSS provided exemplary service to the war effort—managing traffic, establishing supply lines, security, and coordinating relief in Delhi—Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru personally invited the

RSS to participate in the 1963 Republic Day Parade. This gesture, extended by the political adversary who had previously banned the organisation, was a public acknowledgement of the RSS's discipline, commitment to the nation, and invaluable service during a moment of crisis. The spectacle of 3,000 disciplined Swayamsevaks

marching on Rajpath, authorised by Nehru, stands as a potent historical counterpoint to the charge of anti-nationalism. Later in 1965, during the Indo-Pak war, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri invited RSS to take care of Delhi's security and other tasks. Rahul Gandhi had to retract his accusation against RSS and express regret for his statement before the Supreme Court in 2016.

Interestingly, Mahatma Gandhi himself visited a RSS Shaka in Wardha in 1934 and appreciated them for their equality. In the Organiser edition (official mouthpiece of RSS) of January 26, 1939, they have published this picture of Mahatma Gandhi saluting the RSS flag in the camp.

### **Myth 3: The RSS Opposed the Freedom Struggle**

Critics often argue that the RSS remained aloof from the Quit India Movement and other mass protests, thus discrediting its patriotic credentials.

**The Reality:** The organisational decision of the RSS was to prioritise social consolidation and character-building over participation in direct political confrontation, which Dr Hedgewar viewed as short-term. He wanted to build youngsters with good character for managing the country. However, the members were free to participate in the freedom movement:

- **Founder's Role:** Dr Hedgewar was jailed for revolutionary activities in 1921. Later, he participated

in the 1931 Forest Satyagraha, stepping down from his post as Sarsanghchalak to lead a group of Swayamsevaks who were subsequently imprisoned for nine months.

- **Member Involvement:** During the 1942 Quit India Movement, countless Swayamsevaks participated in the agitation in their individual capacity. These members provided crucial underground logistical support and refuge to Congress leaders, including Aruna Asaf Ali, and helped secure the escape of figures like Vasantdada Patil. Future leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee were jailed during this period as Swayamsevaks.

The overall aim of the RSS was to prepare disciplined, patriotic citizens for the task of post-independence nation-building, an objective it adhered to throughout the struggle.

#### **Myth 4: The RSS is a Divisive Force Promoting Hatred**

The common political accusation is that the RSS divides society along religious lines, focusing only on the Hindu community to the exclusion, and even antagonism, of others.

**The Reality:** RSS leaders insist that the organisation focuses solely on a positive agenda—the unity and strengthening of Hindu society without caste discrimination—with no negative intent or hatred towards any other community. Some RSS observers feel that since

various political parties thrive on dividing people along caste and religious lines for their vote bank politics, they are unable to accept RSS which wants to unite the Hindu community without caste discrimination. According to them, this has made them spread false narratives against RSS. RSS tries to bring all nationalist people together through Seva Bharati, Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, and other organisations. Muslim Rashtriya Manch, an organisation of lakhs of Nationalist Muslims, also supports RSS.

Rashtra Sevika Samiti (Women's wing) has more than 5100 shakas with 15000 plus weekly/monthly gatherings. This wing trains women for leadership, including self-defence. They prepare them for future leaders. It may be noted that the present Delhi Chief Minister, Rekha Gupta has been trained by Rashtra Sevika Samiti and the student wing ABVP to become an effective leader.

RSS leaders reiterate that they are never against any religion or caste. They fight against people who are against the nation, irrespective of their affiliation. They also point out that only during the Vajpayee and Modi regimes has India developed strong relationships with all Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, etc. In fact, these countries support India instead of Pakistan, they argue.



*Shaka of Rashtra Sevika Samiti*

### **Myth 5: The RSS is a Political Organisation in Cultural Garb**

With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—its political offshoot—in power, the line between the RSS and politics appears to be blurred, feeding the perception that the RSS is fundamentally political.

**The Reality:** The RSS maintains its identity as a cultural organisation focused on individual and social transformation. Its political wing, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), was founded in 1951 by Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who sought Pracharaks to assist in its political work.

*Muslim ladies tying Rakhi to RSS leaders*



become Organising Secretaries in the BJP structure, such as B.L. Santosh) but retains organisational and financial autonomy. A Pracharak taking on a political role is relieved from their core RSS duties, underscoring the functional distinction between the cultural root and its political expression. This model ensures that whilst RSS ideology informs national policy, the day-to-day organisational energy remains committed to the non-political Shakha and service work. Though RSS does not involve itself directly in political works, they do not hesitate to enter the fray whenever the nation faces a political crisis. In the post-Emergency era, during the 1977 general elections, RSS ensured the defeat of Indira Gandhi to restore democracy. Similarly, when corruption was at its peak, during the 2014

The relationship today is one of a Parivar (family) where different organisations work in different spheres (politics, labour, students, education, welfare) towards a shared national objective. The RSS provides personnel (like the Pracharaks who

general elections, RSS worked at the ground level to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister with a huge majority. "RSS is like a fire engine. It will come out only when the need arises," said one senior RSS leader.

### **Concluding Reflection**

A century after its founding, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh continues to be defined by its greatest asset: discipline and selfless dedication. For its critics, the challenge is to separate the political actions of the Parivar's affiliates from the social and cultural work of the core body. For the Swayamsevak, the challenge is to maintain the purity of their founding principle—service without expectation—in an era of unprecedented visibility and political power.

The survival of the RSS, unlike many other idealistically founded bodies of the 1920s, is a testament to the effectiveness of its cadre-building model. It has proven that a dedicated, disciplined, grassroots effort, cemented by a single, powerful Prarthana of national devotion, can reshape the political and social landscape of a nation over a hundred years.

Though RSS is doing yeoman service to society and the nation silently, for obvious reasons, they do not publicise their activities. In the age of social media and Instagram, critics spread false narratives. Unless the correct narrative is spread, the present younger generation, the future pillars

of the nation, may carry a negative perception about RSS. These are days when even 'flower shops' need publicity. In the interest of the nation, RSS should rethink its 'No publicity' policy and set up an effective team to counter the repeated false narratives, which may be believed by the young generation as true.

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## Search Leaders on Ground, Not on Screen: The Karur Tragedy and Its Harsh Lessons

*(Published in the Sep 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

***(An unprepared Actor Vijay's rally caused 41 deaths in a stampede, sparking a debate on celebrity politics and the need for regulation.)***



The recent stampede tragedy at Karur on 27th September 2025 has left an indelible scar on Tamil Nadu's political landscape. Forty-one lives were lost—including 10 children

and 18 young women—at a political rally conducted by popular actor Vijay. This man-made disaster, as aptly described by the Madras High Court, demands serious introspection about the dangerous trend of elevating screen idols to political pedestals without adequate preparation or experience.

### **The Rise of Celebrity Politics in South India**

Actor Vijay, supposed to be one of the highest-paid actors in India, and reportedly commanding Rs 150-200 crores per film, launched his new party "Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam" (TVK) a few months ago. The launch witnessed an unprecedented crowd, fuelled by the frenzy that characterises fan culture in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana—the only States where popular actors are literally worshipped and their film dialogues are accepted as gospel truth.

The southern States have indeed witnessed successful political transitions by actors. M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), Jayalalithaa, and N.T. Rama Rao became Chief Ministers, leveraging their massive fan bases to build enduring political legacies. Their parties continue to survive and thrive even today. However, there is a critical difference that sets them apart from the current generation of actor-politicians.



## **The Missing Foundation: Political Apprenticeship**

Before floating their own parties, both MGR and NTR were deeply entrenched in politics and maintained continuous engagement with people's problems. They understood the grassroots, the machinery of governance, and the weight of political responsibility. Before assuming the leadership of AIADMK, Jayalalithaa underwent rigorous political training under her mentor MGR and even served as a Member of Parliament. They paid their dues, learnt the craft, and earned their stripes in the political arena.

In stark contrast, actor Vijay's entry into politics appears to be driven primarily by the euphoria of his cinematic success. His fan clubs routinely sell tickets at exorbitant prices and indulge in 'Milk Abhishekam (anointing)' of his

cut-outs during film releases. This frenzy apparently enthused him to believe that cinematic fame alone could translate into electoral success—a dangerous delusion that has now cost precious lives.

### **The Structural Weaknesses of TVK**

Vijay's party suffers from fundamental structural deficiencies. His top office bearers and district functionaries are neither trained politically nor are they seasoned ground workers. The party appears to be run by advisers lacking working knowledge of political systems. More alarmingly, Vijay himself remained largely inaccessible to his own leaders and party workers—an unsustainable model for any political organisation.



The actor was led to believe that his cinematic fame and massive fan following could sweep all Assembly seats and make him the Chief Minister without any alliance. His supporters, predominantly in the age group of less than 25 years, possess tremendous energy but lack political acumen. Tragically, even these enthusiastic fans were kept at arm's length, with 'bouncers' physically pushing them away. Vijay's interactions with crowds were limited to reading emotionally-charged scripts peppered with cinematic

'punch dialogues'—a far cry from genuine political engagement.



In overconfidence and without grasping ground realities, Vijay declared all major parties—DMK, AIADMK, and BJP—as his enemies. Such brinkmanship might work in cinema, but politics demands coalition-building, negotiation, and strategic alliances.

### **The Fateful Day: 27th September 2025**

The tragedy unfolded with cruel predictability. Though Vijay announced he would address the public rally at 12 noon in Karur, he arrived seven hours late, forcing the crowd to wait without adequate water or food. Anxious to see their idol, people had begun gathering from 8 am itself, many bringing their children along.

Despite being denied permission to conduct a 'road show', Vijay's large bus moved slowly along the highways, followed by thousands of followers. During this rally, whilst Vijay was speaking from atop the bus, 41 people died from stampede, suffocation, and dehydration.

### **The Inexcusable Response**

What happened next exposes the hollowness of celebrity-driven politics. Despite knowing about the crisis, Vijay and his team left the venue and proceeded to Tiruchirappalli to board a private jet to Chennai. Whilst Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, the Opposition leader, and representatives from other parties visited the hospitals that very night, not a single TVK functionary was seen comforting the victims or their families.

The police blamed Vijay for not following guidelines and arriving late to deliberately inflate crowd numbers for self-promotion. TVK leaders, in turn, blamed the police for not allotting adequate space—conveniently ignoring that the Opposition leader had addressed a rally at the same venue with similar crowd strength just two days earlier without incident.

The Madras High Court condemned Vijay and his team for abandoning the scene without caring for those who died during his rally. Adding insult to injury, Vijay released a video statement three days after the incident—speaking in a conspicuously 'husky' voice—blaming the government for



the entire tragedy. Shockingly, as a leader, he offered no apology to the families of the deceased who had come to support him.

One of his General Secretaries further inflamed the situation by tweeting a call for youngsters to engage in revolution, citing Nepal and Bangladesh as examples. The High Court took serious note

of this irresponsible provocation and ordered immediate action. The ruling NDA government at Delhi has dispatched a delegation of eight MPs to study the situation and submit a report. The Madras High Court has now ordered an investigation by a senior police officer.

### **Lessons That Must Be Learnt**

With 41 lives lost and nearly a hundred people still under treatment, the general public must recognise a fundamental truth: film actors without political experience cannot be effective rulers. We must search for leaders on the ground, not on screen.



Vijay may be an excellent entertainer, but that does not qualify him to govern a State. It would be akin to making actor Vijay the captain of the Indian cricket team solely due to his popularity. Every profession demands its own competencies and skills. Entertainment and governance require entirely different skill sets.

Film personalities who aspire to political leadership must first equip themselves thoroughly in the political field. MGR, Jayalalithaa, and NTR succeeded because of their prolonged exposure to politics before launching their parties. Many actors—including Chiranjeevi and Sivaji Ganesan—failed in politics despite their cinematic popularity, precisely because they lacked this foundation.

### **From Fans to Political Workers: The Critical Transition**

Popular film stars are undoubtedly powerful influencers, particularly among youth. However, fans who promote films are not automatically political workers. This transformation requires conscious effort, training, and mentorship. Vijay's fans were never converted into political workers. We have witnessed them climbing trees and jumping from floor to floor merely to catch a glimpse of their favourite actor. Due to his lack of political experience, Vijay enjoyed these spectacles without recognising the risks involved. He never cautioned or warned his fans to behave responsibly.

This lack of leadership, coupled with inexperienced functionaries at top and district levels, directly led to this tragedy. Even after such a catastrophe, Vijay and his team showed no genuine concern and fled the scene. One must ask: what would happen if Vijay becomes Chief Minister and similarly abandons responsibility when facing a governance crisis?

### **The Way Forward: Regulation and Accountability**

Vijay urgently needs guidance from experienced political leaders before continuing his political journey. Moreover, this tragedy underscores the necessity for comprehensive regulation.

**PreSense appeals to both the State and Central Governments to frame suitable laws and guidelines for political rallies, clearly defining accountability**

**mechanisms for future implementation.** Such regulations must include:

- Mandatory crowd management protocols
- Strict adherence to timelines announced by organisers
- Provision of basic amenities (water, medical facilities, sanitation)
- Criminal and civil liability for organisers in case of negligence
- Mandatory insurance coverage for attendees
- Clear demarcation of responsibilities between organisers and law enforcement

The Karur tragedy is a wake-up call. Celebrity status cannot substitute political competence. Cinematic success does not qualify one for governance. And most importantly, the lives of ordinary citizens cannot be sacrificed at the altar of political ambition.

It is time we learnt to search for our leaders on the ground—among those who have worked with people, understood their problems, and demonstrated commitment to public service—not on the screen based on the ‘punch dialogue’ delivered by the hero who vanquishes villains in two hours of carefully scripted fantasy.

The 41 lives lost at Karur deserve this much from us: that we never again confuse entertainment with governance, or stardom with statesmanship.

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## **A Historic Day: Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma Honours North East's Freedom Fighters**

*(Published in the August 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(Assam's Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma honours 25 forgotten Northeast freedom fighters despite heavy rains, demonstrating extraordinary leadership that puts heritage before politics.)*

A memorable moment took place in Assam when Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a special book called "Valiant Freedom Fighters of North East India". This book features 25 brave heroes, including 8 women freedom fighters, who gave their lives for India's independence.

### **A Three-Year Journey of Love for Our Heroes**

For three years, eMagazine PreSense has been doing something very special. They have been writing about India's freedom fighters who died for our country's freedom. Every year, they compile all these stories and make them into books.



They have already published three books. The first was released in Chennai. The second was released at the famous Cellular Jail in Andaman. The third was released in Delhi.

This year, they wanted to do something different. They decided to write only about the freedom fighters from Northeast India.

### **How It All Started**

When the PreSense team talked to Shri Dilip Saikia, Member of Parliament from Assam, he got very excited. He suggested making a whole book just for Northeast's freedom fighters. This was a brilliant idea.

The team had already written about some Northeast freedom fighters over the past three years. C Badri, the Editor-in-Chief, is an expert researcher on India's freedom movement. He added more stories to make it 25 freedom fighters in total.

When Shri Dilip Saikia MP heard that the book was ready with 25 heroes' stories, he immediately called Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam's Chief Minister. The Chief Minister gladly agreed to release the book during Independence Day celebrations 2025.

### **When Nature Tried to Stop Them**

The book launch was planned for 27th August 2025 in Guwahati. But heavy rains and floods hit the city. The event had to be cancelled.

Did this stop the great leaders? Not at all! Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma showed what true leadership means. He invited the PreSense team to his office the very next morning.

### **A Chief Minister Who Truly Cares**

Here's what made this day so special. The Chief Minister had very important meetings with Home Minister Amit

Shah, who was visiting Guwahati that evening. But he still spent 20 precious minutes with the PreSense team.

This shows the kind of leader Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma is. Even with such a busy schedule, he made time to honour his commitment to release the book on our freedom fighters. The PreSense team was amazed by his patience and care.

He listened carefully to everything the team said. He was very interested in their work. He was also open to new ideas for developing Assam.

### **A Leader Who Reads and Appreciates**

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma launched the book "Valiant Freedom Fighters of North East India" with great honour and respect for our heroes. The first copy was received by Shri Dilip Saikia MP.

After the launch, the PreSense team presented him with two additional books:

1. "Digest of Voices and Views by Prime Point Srinivasan" - a collection of articles authored by Srinivasan.
2. "Polity and Governance in Modern India" by Priyadharshni Rahul

What happened next shows the Chief Minister's true character. He didn't just accept these books and keep them

aside. He quickly scanned through both books to understand the contents. He wanted to get a feel of the contents right away. Then he kept them by his side to read them properly later.



The Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, appreciated the hard work of Prime Point Foundation and PreSense. This shows how much he values education and knowledge.



***Presenting the book “Digest of Voices and Views” authored by Prime Point Srinivasan to Shri Dilip Saikia MP***



***Presenting the book “Polity and Governance in Modern India” authored by Priyadharshni Rahul to Dilip Saikia, MP***

## **MP Dilip Saikia's Outstanding Support**

Shri Dilip Saikia MP also received all three books. His team made perfect arrangements for the whole event. Everything was organised carefully without violating the protocol.

Even though he was also busy with the Home Minister's visit, he spent quality time with the PreSense team. This shows his dedication to preserving our history.

## **What Made This Day Unforgettable**

Prime Point Srinivasan, Priyadharshni Rahul, U Sridhar Raj, C Lokesh Reddy, and G Suresh, representing Prime Point Foundation and PreSense travelled to Guwahati for this special event:

They were all deeply impressed by what they experienced. The Chief Minister's hospitality was remarkable. The entire team was received at the entrance of his Office with a shawl representing Assam's culture. His vision for Assam's development was inspiring. His commitment to the State was clear in everything he said.

### **Leaders Who Put People First**

Think about this: Both Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and Shri Dilip Saikia had to prepare for Home Minister Amit Shah's visit. This was surely very important and challenging work. But they still made time for this book launch.

This tells us something unique about these leaders. They understand that remembering our heroes is just as important as handling big political meetings.

### **Why This Matters So Much**

This book launch was not just about releasing a book. It was about something much bigger:

- It shows that our freedom fighters will never be forgotten
- It proves that today's leaders respect our history
- It tells young people that their heritage matters
- It brings Northeast India's heroes into the spotlight

For too long, many freedom fighters from Northeast India were unknown to the rest of the country. Now, thanks to

leaders like Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and Shri Dilip Saikia, their stories will be told.

### **A Gift to the Nation**

The best part? All three books can be downloaded for free! As a matter of policy, all the publications of Prime Point Foundation are distributed free.

### **What This Teaches Us**

This wonderful day in Guwahati teaches us many things:

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma showed us what great leadership looks like. A true leader makes time for culture and history, not just politics and development.

Shri Dilip Saikia showed us how MPs should work with State Governments. Together, they can achieve amazing things for their people.

Both leaders showed that they truly love their region and their country.

### **Looking Forward**

Under the leadership of Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and with the support of dedicated MPs like Shri Dilip Saikia, Assam is not just growing economically. It's also celebrating its rich history and culture.

This book launch proves that Northeast India's contribution to our freedom struggle is finally getting the recognition it deserves.

The 25 freedom fighters whose inspiring stories are in this book can now rest in peace. Their sacrifices are remembered. Their courage is celebrated. Their legacy lives on.

### **A Day That Will Be Remembered**

Years from now, people will remember this rainy day in Guwahati when two great leaders came together to honour 25 forgotten heroes.

They will remember how Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and Shri Dilip Saikia showed that true leadership means caring about the people's history, culture, and heroes.

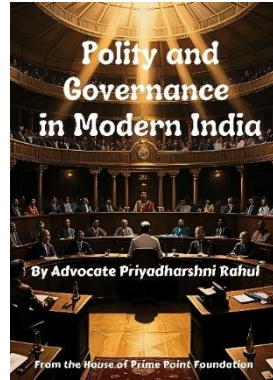
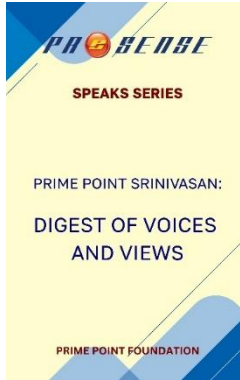
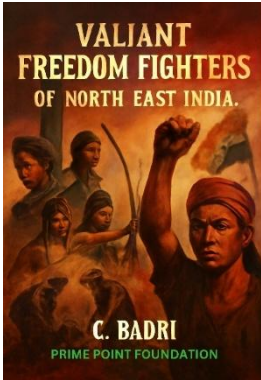
This was not just a book launch. This was a promise not to forget those who died for our freedom.

### **Leaving with Hearts Full of Hope**

As the PreSense team departed from Guwahati, their hearts were filled with beautiful memories. They had met two extraordinary leaders of Assam - Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and Shri Dilip Saikia. These weren't just political meetings. These were encounters with true visionaries.

The team left feeling something wonderful. They could see India's bright future in the dedication of these two remarkable leaders. With such committed and forward-thinking people guiding our nation, India will surely become stronger and greater.

Sometimes, you meet people who restore your faith in leadership. That day in Guwahati was one of those special times.



***Download all three books for free at:***

<https://tinyurl.com/booklaunch270825>

**Please listen to the Podcast on this launch event created through NotebookLM, AI tool**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjI7IDXPQ24>

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## 15th Edition of the Sansad Ratna Awards Ceremony – At a glance

*(Published in the July 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Ramesh Sundaram, Joint Managing Editor)*



The 15<sup>th</sup> Edition of Sansad Ratna Awards event was held on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at New Maharashtra Sadan, New Delhi. Hon'ble Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju was the Chief Guest. Hansraj Ahir, Hon'ble

Chairman of National Commission for Backward Classes in the status of Union Cabinet Minister and the Chairman of Jury Committee for the Sansad Ratna Awards, presided over the event. Bhartruhari Mahtab, 7<sup>th</sup> time MP, Chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Finance and the Co-Chairman of Jury Committee delivered the Keynote Address.

### **Presentation of Awards**

15 Members of Parliament and 2 Parliamentary Standing Committees received the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025. The following Members of Parliament received the Awards.

Please watch the Award presentation ceremony in this link:

<https://youtu.be/XF-VwGljcqs?si=28P-oAl8TNMdlstg>

### ***Jury Committee Chairman's Special Award for outstanding consistent performance***

- Bhartruhari Mahtab MP, Odisha
- N K Premachandran MP, Kerala
- Shrirang Appa Barne MP, Maharashtra

### ***Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 – Lok Sabha***

- C N Annadurai MP, Tamil Nadu
- Smita Uday Wagh MP, Maharashtra
- Dilip Saikia MP, Assam
- Ravindra Shukla Kishan alias Ravi Kishan MP, Uttar Pradesh

- Bidyut Baran Mahato MP, Jharkhand
- P P Chaudhary MP, Rajasthan
- Arvind Ganpat Sawant MP, Maharashtra
- Praveen Patel MP, Uttar Pradesh
- Naresh Ganpat MP, Maharashtra
- Dr. Gaikwad Varsha Eknath MP, Maharashtra

***Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 – Rajya Sabha***

- Dr. Medha Vishram Kulkarni
- Madan Rathore MP, Rajasthan

***Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 – Parliamentary Standing Committees***

- Finance Committee – Chairman: Bhartruhari Mahtab MP (Odisha)
- Agriculture Committee – Chairman: Dr Charanjit Singh Channi MP (Punjab)



## Book Launch

Prime Point Foundation releases books during all the events, for the benefit of youngsters. Till now, the Foundation has released 55 Books in the digital format, including some books in print format.

All the books can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/PPFpublication>



During this event, three books were released by Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Kiren Rijju. These books are:

1. The Journey of Sansad Ratnas 2025 – contains exclusive interviews with all the Award-winning MPs – Authored by Prime Point Srinivasan and Priyadharshni Rahul
2. Ideas to Institutions: 75 Years Journey of a visionary – Biography on Prime Point Srinivasan written by Priyadharshni Rahul
3. Mentor Code: Ordinary to Extraordinary – the need for good mentorship for success – authored by Sukruti Narayanan

All the above three books in the digital format can be downloaded free of cost from the link:

<https://tinyurl.com/ppf-books260725>

## **Greeting Messages**

Greeting Messages were received from Ramnath Kovind (Hon'ble Former President of India, C P Radhakrishnan (Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra), Sarbananda Sonowal (Hon'ble Union Minister of Sports, Shipping and Waterways), and Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma (Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam). These messages were read out by N Varadharajan, Advisor to Sansad Ratna Committee. Please watch the reading of messages in this link”

<https://youtu.be/d4gJWfohJdk?si=03Fc-8N1S3mfsT24>

# PreSense Speaks: Cover Stories 2025



**Ram Nath Kovind**  
FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA



**23 July, 2025**

**Message**


I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the distinguished Members of Parliament being honored at the 15<sup>th</sup> Sansad Ratna Awards. This prestigious recognition is a tribute to the relentless commitment, dedication and exemplary services rendered by our elected representatives in shaping the future of our nation.

The Sansad Ratna Awards are a reflection of the vital role that our Parliamentarians play in strengthening democracy, promoting public welfare and ensuring the growth and prosperity of India. By recognizing their achievements, we not only celebrate individual excellence but also inspire the future generation of leaders to follow the ideals of service, integrity and nation building.

I commend all those who have demonstrated outstanding performance and wish them to continue their dedicated efforts towards the betterment of our society.


My Best Wishes to the Organisers.

  
**(Ram Nath Kovind)**



**सर्वानंद सोनोवाल**  
**SARBANANDA SONOWAL**

धरम, पोत, शिपिंग और जलमयन मंत्री  
महान सचिव  
Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways  
Government of India



**Message**

It gives me great pleasure to extend my heartfelt greetings to the organisers, awardees, and participants of the 15th Edition of the Sansad Ratna Awards, instituted by Prime Point Foundation and PreSense.


This unique initiative, inspired by the vision of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, continues to play a vital role in strengthening our democracy by recognizing and appreciating the exemplary performance of our Parliamentarians. Over the past sixteen years, the Sansad Ratna Awards have set a high benchmark for accountability, transparency, and dedication to public service within the highest legislative institution of our nation.


I commend the Jury Committee for its diligent efforts in selecting deserving Members of Parliament and Standing Committees who have demonstrated commitment to the democratic process and the welfare of our people.

As we celebrate this milestone, I extend my best wishes to all the awardees. May this recognition inspire more Parliamentarians to uphold the values of good governance and constructive parliamentary engagement.

With warm regards and best wishes for the continued success of the Sansad Ratna Awards.

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2025  
Place: New Delhi

  
**(Sarbananda Sonowal)**



Room No. 201, Transport Bhawan, 1, Sansad Marg, New Delhi-110001  
Ph : 811-23177423, 23177423, 23177424, Fax : 811-23138770  
E-mail : minister.shipping@gov.in | Website : www.ship.gov.in



**सी. पी. राधाकृष्णन**  
**C. P. Radhakrishnan**

श्री 9807,  
समस्त भवन, पूर्वी ब्लॉक 100 429,  
राज भवन,  
भारतीय रेल, भुवनेश्वर 751008

राज्यपाल, महाराष्ट्र  
**GOVERNOR OF MAHARASHTRA**

**MESSAGE**



**4 July 2025**

I am pleased to know that the Prime Point Foundation and the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee are organising the 15th Edition of the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 in New Delhi on 26th July 2025.

It is heartening to note that the Sansad Ratna Awards, instituted at the Instance of Bharat Ratna Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, honour Members of Parliament who exemplify dedication, integrity, and excellence in their parliamentary performance. These awards reflect our collective aspiration for a participatory, transparent, and accountable democracy. I am glad to note that this year's awardees have been selected by an eminent Jury Committee chaired by Shri Hansraj Ahir, Chairman, National Commission for Backward Classes and co-chaired by Shri Bharturchari Mahab, MP, along with former Chief Election Commissioner Shri T. K. Krishnamurthy.

I extend my felicitations to the Parliamentarians chosen for the Sansad Ratna Awards and commend the Foundation and the Awards Committee for their consistent efforts in recognising exemplary public service.

My best wishes for the success of the Awards function.

  
**(C P Radhakrishnan)**

**Sri K Srinivasan**  
Founder and Chairman-Emeritus  
Sansad Ratna Awards Committee



**डॉ. हिमन्त बिषा सर्मा**  
**Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarmā**

मुख्यमंत्री, असम  
Chief Minister, Assam



**Message**

CMS: 72023/ 23933  
Dispur  
26 June, 1472 Bhasanabadi  
5 July, 2025

I am pleased to extend my warm greetings to the organisers, jury members and recipients of the 15<sup>th</sup> Sansad Ratna Awards.

Over the years, the Sansad Ratna Awards have emerged as a commendable civil society initiative recognising parliamentary excellence and democratic accountability. By honouring the contributions of Members of Parliament, the Awards highlight the vital role of informed debate, legislative oversight and sustained public service in nation-building.

It is also encouraging to see the recognition given to Parliamentary Standing Committees, which play a pivotal role in strengthening parliamentary processes through rigorous and inclusive deliberation.

As the Awards mark their 15th edition, I hope they continue to inspire greater integrity, transparency and commitment within our democratic institutions. My best wishes to all associated with this meaningful endeavour.

  
**(Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarmā)**

NCC cadets from Ahlcon International Public School, New Delhi, escorted the Award-Winning MPs and the Chief Guests. Family members of the award-winning MPs and the students from various Universities attended the event.

### Speeches:



**Welcome Address:  
Priyadharshni Rahul,  
Chairman, Sansad Ratna  
Awards Committee**

Priyadharshni Rahul, Chairman of the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee, welcomed the guests. She explained the procedures relating to the selection of MPs for the Sansad

Ratna Awards. Please watch her speech:

<https://youtu.be/4guXec5hyZ0?si=aetDJgdcVPCrYBic>

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## **Introductory Remarks: Prime Point Srinivasan, Founder & Chairman, Prime Point Foundation**



Prime Point Srinivasan, Founder and Chairman of Prime Point Foundation and the Founder & Chairman Emeritus of Sansad Ratna Awards in his introductory remarks traced the history of Sansad Ratna Awards as suggested by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. He also appealed the MPs and the Hon'ble Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister to ensure “Zero Distuption” in the 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. He termed the “disruption and Parliament ruckus” as being against the interests of common men.

<https://youtu.be/kMkJc67OLg0?si=XxsfV1pYXG5pZ9zC>

## **Keynote Address: Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, 7<sup>th</sup> time MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Finance and Co-Chairman, Jury Committee for Sansad Ratna Awards**

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab MP and Co-Chairman of the Jury Committee, during his Keynote address, emphasised the need to celebrate India's achievements during the 78 years of Independence, countering the negativity emanating from



Parliament with recognition of its positive contributions. He credited Dr. Abdul Kalam's vision, communicated through Mr. Srinivasan, for this celebratory approach.

He praised Shri Hansraj Ahir's parliamentary dedication, highlighting how Ahir single-handedly brought specific issues before Parliament, the Government, and the nation despite opposition from various quarters. Mahtab commended Ahir's steadfast endeavour in ensuring culprits were imprisoned, demonstrating the achievement potential of a single parliamentary member, which the Sansad Ratna Awards Committee recognised.

He detailed the selection criteria established by the Foundation, including the number of starred and unstarred questions posed, calling attention motions, half-hour discussions, debate participation, and private member bills. He noted one missing category—amendments—where he believed Mr. Premachandran would excel, having competed with him from the opposition benches before joining the treasury bench.

Shri Mahtab addressed the "anguish of the common man," referencing a historical anecdote from 1946 when Britain's Mr. Atlee advised against implementing adult franchise in India. Atlee argued that Britain had introduced the adult franchise only after 21 years, in 1923, the United States hadn't achieved universal adult franchise, and no Asian

country possessed it, whilst parliamentary democracy was just blossoming.

He discussed the current intensive voter list revision in Bihar, which has sparked Supreme Court challenges and parliamentary disruptions. Mahtab congratulated the Chief Election Commissioner for making bold statements about removing deceased persons, migrants, and duplicate names from voter lists. He questioned why such intensive revision, last conducted in 2003, wasn't performed regularly by the Election Commission across the States.

Shri Mahtab philosophically reflected on democracy's arbitration mechanism: when two persons disagree, an arbitrator settles disputes, but when larger parliamentary groups disagree, the common man—whose anguish was heard today—becomes the arbitrator. This represents democracy's beauty. He pointed out the concerns and anguish expressed by Prime Point Srinivasan during his speech about the Parliament disruption.

Shri Mahtab recalled his initial elation upon receiving Prime Point Foundation's invitation to Chennai's IIT campus, noting parliamentarians' constant need for recognition beyond electoral validation. He shared a profound moment when asked about his ultimate satisfaction as an MP: true satisfaction comes not from bouquets or garlands, but when unknown beneficiaries approach, shake hands, and acknowledge being helped through parliamentary actions.

He concluded that this unknown face recognition—people benefited through parliamentary actions without a direct approach—exemplifies parliamentary democracy's beauty, encouraging awardees to remember this principle while celebrating their parliamentary achievements.

Please watch his speech at this link:

[https://youtu.be/9UP1wE\\_j0jQ?si=h\\_a5JqM18wWyDs1D](https://youtu.be/9UP1wE_j0jQ?si=h_a5JqM18wWyDs1D)

**Presidential Address: Shri Hansraj Ahir, Chairman, National Commission for Backward Classes and Chairman of the Jury Committee for the Sansad Ratna Awards**



Shri Hansraj Ahir, during his Presidential Address, emphasised the Foundation's commitment to impartiality, stating that awards are conferred based solely on statistical data from the Lok Sabha website without any bias or recommendations.

He further highlighted the fundamental role of Parliament in protecting India's democracy, noting that India, with its vast population, represents the world's largest democracy. He stressed that parliamentarians have a constitutional duty to

maintain Parliament's dignity and add to its pride whilst working from "Delhi to Gulli" (grassroots level).

Shri Ahir Ji shared his personal parliamentary journey, having served four terms in the Lok Sabha and receiving the first Sansad Ratna Award 15 years ago when the Award was established in 2010 under the guidance of former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. He recounted how Dr. Kalam blessed the initiative through a tele conversation during the first award ceremony.

He referred about the scrutiny that parliamentarians face. Whilst parliamentarians have two eyes, they are watched by lakhs of constituents' eyes. He described Prime Point Foundation as the "third eye" monitoring parliamentary performance, noting it operates as a private organisation without government grants.

Shri Hanraj Ahir candidly discussed electoral challenges, sharing his personal experience of losing an election in 2008 despite leading by 3,500 votes until a power cut occurred during counting.

Ahir Ji strongly criticised parliamentarians who defame Indian democracy whilst abroad, particularly when meeting counterparts in countries like China and Pakistan. He termed such behaviour as an insult to the Constitution and causing a "black mark" on the country's reputation.

He praised the diversity of award recipients, noting that 61 Parliamentarians from various States have been honoured,

including representation from the North East for the first time. The ceremony included MPs from different political backgrounds, demonstrating the Foundation's non-partisan approach.

He concluded by congratulating the awardees, encouraging them to continue their exemplary work and maintain standards worthy of future recognition. He expressed particular pleasure at seeing strong representation from Maharashtra and emphasised that winning once creates healthy competition for continued excellence.

The speech underscored Parliament's cultural heritage and the responsibility of current members to uphold the dignity established by their predecessors whilst serving the nation and protecting constitutional values.

Please watch his speech at this link:

<https://youtu.be/HiiyIMCCBT0?si=P34UusNVhBTbfl-W>

**Chief Guest Address: Shri Kiren Rijiju, Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Government of India**



Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijju delivered a heartfelt address at the Sansad Ratna Awards ceremony, expressing happiness about the initiative started on the suggestion of Dr. A.P.J. Kalam. He congratulated fellow Parliamentarians receiving awards, emphasising that awards are priceless recognition for one's contribution and protection of democratic work.

Speaking from the heart rather than delivering a technical speech, Shri Rijju addressed the misconception about parliamentary rivalry. He quoted Winston Churchill's distinction between "political opponents" (opposition) and "political enemies" (one's own party members), clarifying that whilst political rivalry exists, there is no enmity. Having been mostly in opposition until 2014, he celebrates colleagues' achievements with genuine happiness.

Shri Rijju highlighted the unique challenges facing Indian parliamentarians compared to developed nations. In England, MPs represent 66,000 voters against India's 20 lakh voters per constituency. British MPs receive only policy-related queries about street lighting, taxation reforms, or environmental issues through formal parliamentary procedures. Conversely, Indian MPs face

500 people waiting outside their homes daily, seeking help with money, bail recommendations, medical bills, and personal problems—challenges unimaginable in developed countries.

Despite these burdens, Indian MPs must still fulfil core parliamentary duties: attending Question Hour, participating in motions, reading laws, party work, and constituency responsibilities. Rijju saluted all Indian MPs, stating they deserve recognition for managing such enormous responsibilities.

He shared personal anecdotes, including being innocently trapped by senior Communist MPs in 2004 to request a smoking room from Speaker Somnath Chatterjee, who scolded him for approaching with such a trivial matter on his first meeting. Later, he received the Young Parliamentarian Award for speaking seven times in one day across different parliamentary sessions.

Representing only two Lok Sabha MPs from his State, Rijju noted his compulsion to speak frequently, unlike States with larger delegations where members can remain silent.

He identified two critical issues affecting parliamentary work:

First, media reporting focuses on sensational disruptions rather than on substantive debates. When Sharad Pawar's excellent agricultural policy discussion occurred,

newspapers ignored the content entirely. This forces MPs to create headlines through disruptions since good work goes unreported, creating a vicious cycle where the media prioritises negative news for higher TRP ratings.

Second, parliamentary disruptions harm the Opposition more than government. When Parliament is adjourned, prepared ministerial answers never come up, benefiting officers who escape scrutiny. Democracy requires governments to be answerable through Parliament, making its functioning vital for the country.

Shri Rijju praised Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab's exceptional memory, recalling how he instantly referenced specific budget corrections during tea break. He commended Hansraj Ahir's concrete parliamentary work and diligent approach to notices and controversies.

Concluding, Shri Rijju felt privileged to share the platform with committed citizens like Srinivasan and Priyadarshini, who carry forward this initiative for the nation. He praised their commitment to the essence of Indian parliamentary democracy and promised future association with such noble work, congratulating all colleagues and expressing gratitude for their national service.

Please watch his speech at this link:

[https://youtu.be/V4BoTqInT5Y?si=W2o8Ck\\_gFp4NaGD](https://youtu.be/V4BoTqInT5Y?si=W2o8Ck_gFp4NaGD)

**Other Important Links**

All the Photos of the event

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/qiCJBbrTenfBUiQg8>

Live streaming of the entire event in YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/live/0pmjfeSZy2Q?si=EBFDYkq3VSIS8Qz>

Award Presentation

[https://youtu.be/XF-VwGljcg8?si=EH29JB0keOb3lb\\_s](https://youtu.be/XF-VwGljcg8?si=EH29JB0keOb3lb_s)

**Some highlights of the event**



***A section of the audience***



***NCC Cadets leading Shri Kiren Rijju***

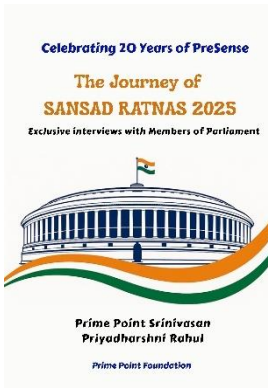


***Team behind the success of this event – Youngsters in the front and seniors at the back mentoring***

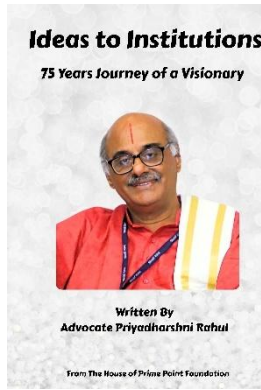


***NCC Cadets from Ahlcon International Public School, New Delhi with dignitaries***

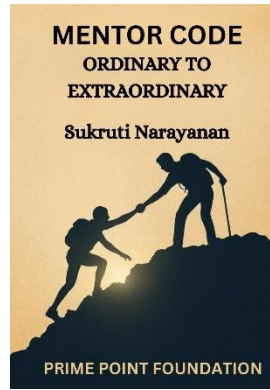
## **Three Books launched**



***This book contains  
the interviews with  
all the Sansad  
Ratna Award-  
winning MPs 2025***



***Biography of Prime  
Point Srinivasan –  
Story behind the  
Sansad Ratna  
Awards***



***The role of  
mentors in  
developing the  
mentees and the  
role of mentees***

**All three books can be downloaded from this link free of cost**

**<https://tinyurl.com/ppf-books260725>**

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## **Dr. Medha Kulkarni: Champion of Women's Empowerment and Cultural Heritage**

***(Published in the June 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)***



***Hon. MP Dr. Medha Kulkarni represents the epitome of principled leadership and grassroots empowerment in Indian politics. A distinguished educator-turned-politician, she has served as Corporator, MLA, and now Rajya Sabha MP whilst simultaneously holding the position of National Vice President of BJP Mahila Morcha. Her unwavering commitment to women's rights, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation has earned her the prestigious Sansad***

***Ratna Award in her debut parliamentary year. This exclusive interview for eMagazine PreSense explores her remarkable journey from academia to Parliament, her transformative initiatives for women's empowerment, and her vision for India's future development. Excerpts:***

**You began your career as an academic before entering politics in 1998. Could you share what inspired your transition from the classroom to public service, and what challenges you faced during those early years in politics?**



I entered electoral politics in 2002 through municipal corporation elections, but the roots of my public life go much deeper. I grew up in a household where service to the nation and society wasn't just talked about — it was lived day in and day out. My father, Dr Madhukar Patankar, a freedom fighter, was jailed for two years during the Goa Liberation Movement. Later, as a practising doctor, I saw him routinely treat patients who couldn't afford care, often without charging a single rupee. That kind of selflessness left a deep impression on me.

My husband, Shri Vishram Kulkarni, was also deeply involved in social work, particularly with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). I too was involved in many social and Sangh activities. As a teacher and professor, my

core belief has always been to bring about positive change in society and contribute to nation-building. While education and instilling good values in classrooms can create lasting change, I realised that politics offers a broader platform for transformation. I believe that good politicians can build a nation through development and social service.

This conviction led me to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) through the women's wing in Pune. I was tasked with leading the Annyaay Nivaran Samiti, a cell focused on reducing injustice and atrocities against women. In 2002, the party urged me to contest the municipal elections in my residential area, and I won the election for Corporator from a reserved seat for women. This marked my entry into electoral politics.

In those early years, the primary challenges I faced were societal and bureaucratic. People, especially men, weren't accustomed to a woman independently taking on a leadership role. However, I personally handled all tasks, decisions, meetings, speeches, research, and interactions with officials from the very beginning. In fact, being a woman turned out to be an advantage; I could connect directly with women in their homes and organise them effectively.

Another challenge was the bureaucratic mindset. Officials often resist any public representative, but when a woman representative approached them, their first thought was

outright dismissal. Women are expected to be agreeable by default, which is difficult when you're elected to fight for people's issues.

**Reflecting on your time as a corporator in Pune and later as an MLA, what do you consider your most significant achievements prior to your election to the Rajya Sabha?**

I served three terms as Corporator (2002-2014) and one term as MLA (2014-2019). Being a public representative allows me to contribute more effectively due to the officiality of the position and the ability to allocate necessary funds.

I established study centres and gymnasiums and set up anganwadis during my tenure. I believe anganwadis are especially crucial institutions impacting early childhood education. I organised various training programmes for women, including vocational training and free courses to help them achieve self-reliance. I initiated literacy classes for women who primarily earned their living through small household chores, teaching them basic literacy, which significantly boosted their confidence.

For children in slum areas, I set up free study centres and libraries. Another significant achievement was creating a grand memorial at the site where Veer Savarkar had famously burnt foreign clothes during the freedom struggle. The memorial includes a museum and library.

I contributed to the PMC's hawkers' policy and played a vital role in AIDS awareness programmes. I established free clinics in slum areas and spearheaded initiatives for people with disabilities, including providing free prosthetics and distributing wheelchairs. I set up free gymnasiums primarily for women, along with yoga classes.

Being passionate about the environment, I organise large-scale cycle rallies every year on the Honourable Prime Minister Modi's birthday. As an MLA, I funded rainwater harvesting projects in many housing societies within my constituency and commissioned audits providing before-and-after groundwater level reports to demonstrate effectiveness.

One of my most significant contributions was addressing severe traffic congestion at Chandni Chowk. I collaborated with the Honourable Minister Nitin Gadkari to develop a major six-lane integrated plan under the NHAI, costing 900 crore rupees. I also played a major role in implementing the Metro city development plan and took initiative on projects like the Pashan Lake and Ram Nadi project. I also established free legal aid centres and career guidance centres.

**Your political journey has been shaped by your family's legacy and your association with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Who have been your key**

**mentors or sources of inspiration, and how have they influenced your approach to leadership?**

My political journey has been deeply shaped by RSS ideology, instilling profound respect for the thoughts of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Veer Savarkar in me. I believe in dedicating one's life to larger national goals and considering the individual secondary to the nation.

Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an inclusive personality with exceptional oratory skills. His ability to articulate and explain a point was remarkable, deeply influencing my political style. Shri Lal Krishna Advani was a principled politician whose Rath Yatra provided the strong inspiration for staunch Hindutva. Late Pramod Mahajan was a true perfectionist who demanded meticulous planning and execution in every task.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat, demonstrated how a leader could be accessible to anyone, even ordinary citizens. He set an example of transparent governance and accessibility that greatly influenced my commitment to good governance.

**What lessons from their leadership have you applied in your political career?**

From Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pramod Mahajan, I have learnt the importance of studying an issue thoroughly and articulating it effectively. From Advani Ji, I learned the

lesson of being firm and principled in decisions when necessary.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's working style is very unique. He's taken on the monumental task of advancing the nation in terms of development, preserving Indian culture, and ensuring national security. The significant developments under his tenure in such a short time are unparalleled. He brought in radical changes through initiatives like Make in India, Digital India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat. This inspires me to ensure that no issue concerning our citizens' needs goes unaddressed.

**As National Vice President of the BJP Mahila Morcha, you have worked extensively to promote women's participation in politics. In your view, why is it essential for more women to join public life, and what barriers still need to be addressed?**

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, numerous women-centric schemes have been launched nationwide, including Matru Vandana Yojana, Lakhpati Didi, Mudra Loan Yojana, Ujjwala Gas, and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. To ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level, a force of women activists is vital.

Through the BJP Mahila Morcha in various States, a large number of local women have benefited from these initiatives. Women activists and leaders are uniquely positioned to connect with local women, understand their

needs, and bring about positive change. When a woman changes, it impacts her entire family and, by natural extension, the whole society. Therefore, more and more women must enter politics and utilise their positions to advance women's progress. It is crucial for them specifically and for society as a whole.

**Could you elaborate on specific initiatives you have championed to empower women at the grassroots level?**

As National Vice President of BJP Mahila Morcha, I extensively toured the country studying how Anganwadi programmes were implemented in various States. This research culminated in a 100-page report, which I submitted to the central government, presenting it to Prime Minister Modi and other relevant officials. I'm pleased that some recommendations have been implemented in States like Maharashtra.

I compiled a book titled "Mahilanchya Hakkachi Sanad" (Charter of Women's Rights) during my time as Corporator and MLA. This comprehensive compilation of laws relevant to women makes crucial information accessible to ordinary women.

**Your advocacy for recognising Marathi as a classical language and your emphasis on rainwater harvesting are notable. What drives your focus on cultural and environmental issues?**

If a language survives, culture survives, and if culture survives, the nation survives. Marathi is an ancient and classical language enriched through its journey via Sanskrit and Prakrit. As head of the Marathi Language Committee, I actively sought its recognition as a classical language.

Regarding rainwater harvesting, it's predicted that the next global conflicts will be over water. Environmental imbalance due to climate change shows shifts in rainfall patterns and seasons. I initiated changes in the criteria for using MLA funds, implementing rainwater harvesting in hundreds of societies within my constituency when I was an MLA. This resulted in rising groundwater levels, allowing societies to access water during summer. If such programmes are implemented throughout Maharashtra, we can avoid the cycle of floods followed by drought.

**As a Member of Parliament, what is your vision for your future political career, and which areas do you intend to prioritise?**

My focus isn't on my political future, but on how I can use this position to benefit Pune city's future. Pune is an incredibly important city with rich culture and heritage — an educational hub, cultural city, and IT hub.

Currently, Pune is expanding rapidly and undergoing significant cultural changes. My priority is ensuring that whilst we develop the city, we also preserve its cultural heritage. Issues like traffic congestion, unauthorised

constructions, and encroachments have contributed to cities losing their original charm. My vision is to act as a link in creating a more law-abiding society and improving everyone's quality of life.

**You were recently honoured with the Sansad Ratna Award. What does this recognition mean to you personally?**

I'm incredibly grateful to the selection committee. The award is important to me. This recognition is a huge pat on the back and will undoubtedly motivate me to work even harder. When an individual receives an award, it's not just for them; it is for every team member.

This award truly emphasises my sense of responsibility. Even though I received it in my very first year, I know there's still so much to learn from my seniors. I intend to use this platform to master parliamentary procedures, ensure justice for the public, and address various national issues effectively.

**For young Indians, especially women, who aspire to enter politics, what advice would you offer?**

Our nation is young, and it's essential for this new generation to provide fresh direction to politics. My advice to anyone aspiring to public service is this: nothing is possible without thorough study. There's no shortcut to gaining knowledge.

You must study various subjects, understand the media, familiarise yourself with parliamentary tools and working procedures, and delve into the Constitution's various rules and articles. Beyond academic preparation, cultivate strong public speaking and communication skills, develop a genuine passion for social work, and maintain sensitivity towards the public's problems. If you possess these qualities, I believe you can overcome any challenges and truly contribute to society.

## PODCAST

PreSense has created Podcasts of the cover story with the help of the AI Tool NotebookLM.



Listen to the podcast <https://youtu.be/4rLUBpSXjvl>

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## **Naresh Ganpat Mhaske: From Slum to Sansad Ratna in Maiden Term**

*(Published in the June 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)*



**Shri Naresh Ganpat Mhaske, first-term Member of Parliament for Thane, rose from student activism in the**

***Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena to civic leadership as Mayor of Thane before entering the Lok Sabha in 2024. In his maiden year as Member of Parliament itself, he secured the coveted Sansad Ratna Award 2025 for his prolific parliamentary interventions and tireless constituency work, earning 7,34,000 votes on the strength of his grassroots rapport. In this exclusive PreSense conversation, the commerce graduate reflects on his journey, the hurdles he overcame, and his vision for addressing urban challenges across Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mira-Bhayandar. Excerpts:***

**What inspired you to join politics, and were there any pivotal moments or influences that led you to dedicate yourself to public service?**



While studying at college, I began helping fellow students resolve their everyday problems, which drew me into the Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena and, through it, into active politics. My greatest inspiration was my mentor, Dharmaveer Anand Dighe Saheb — a tireless champion of Thane’s citizens whose dedication deeply influenced me. I grew up in a slum where residents struggled with basics such as water, electricity, roads, drainage, toilets, health, and cleanliness, and I made it my mission to tackle these challenges. Whenever required, I led protests on behalf of local people and students, and that journey steadily deepened my engagement in public life.

**Every political journey has challenges. Could you share the key difficulties you faced and how you overcame them?**

While serving the public, I faced constant opposition from rival parties: some adversaries had criminal backgrounds, others possessed great wealth or inherited political influence, and all were keen to criticise and target me. Yet I never allowed fear or discouragement to take hold of me. I worked with unwavering dedication and consistency,

remained closely connected to citizens, and patiently addressed their problems. I also forged strong ties with cultural and social organisations. Staying totally focused, maintaining public contact, and working tirelessly, I overcame those political challenges.

**As the Member of Parliament for Thane, what do you regard as your most impactful contributions, both in Parliament and in your constituency?**

Although only a year has passed since my election, I have already raised numerous important issues in Parliament, especially the people's long-pending railway demands, and have pursued them with sustained follow-up. Thane Lok Sabha constituency is entirely urban, covering Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Mira-Bhayandar. I concentrate on matters within those municipal areas and keep in constant dialogue with residents to understand and address their concerns and problems.

**How do you balance party responsibilities with a commitment to voters' welfare, and what keeps you motivated?**

Though elected on a party ticket, I maintain direct personal contact with constituents and strive to balance party duties with public welfare. Solving citizens' problems is my priority. Fulfilling promises, staying accessible, and witnessing the positive results of our efforts continually motivate me to push for further change.

**You received the Sansad Ratna Award in 2025. How did that recognition feel, and what does it mean to you?**

I was delighted to receive the Sansad Ratna Award. Being honoured in my very first year makes it especially meaningful and has strengthened my positive image among voters. Parliamentary speaking time is limited, but I seized each opportunity to raise significant public issues. That proactive engagement earned me the reputation of an active MP who champions people's rights. The award has boosted my confidence and motivates me to work even harder.

**In your view, what are the most pressing problems facing Thane today, and how are you addressing them in Parliament?**

Thane is a fully urban constituency, so many issues come under the State Government and Municipal Corporations, requiring constant follow-up. The most serious concern is the railways: passenger numbers have soared, necessitating more trains, and there is an urgent need for modernised stations and better facilities. I have raised these demands vigorously in Parliament, and improvement works have already begun at many stations.

**What advice would you offer young people wishing to build a career in politics and create meaningful change?**

More young citizens should step forward. Politics offers a powerful platform for public service, and the greater the number of educated youth participating, the better the changes we can bring for society, helping curb the commercialisation of politics and strengthening democracy.

**Women's representation is vital. Why should more women enter politics, and how can they be supported?**

Women are always welcome in politics, but must not become mere figureheads. Some enter through reservation yet remain controlled by others. Women should come forward with their ideas and have independence in their thoughts, refusing to be managed like puppets.

**Reflecting on your journey to the Sansad Ratna Award, which values and principles have guided you?**

Consistency, honesty, and prioritising ordinary citizens have guided me. I never tried to project myself as a leader; instead, I worked as a common karyakarta. That approach earned me 7,34,000 votes and, more importantly, the community's trust.

**Your background is in commerce. How has education shaped your approach to policy-making, and does diverse academic exposure enrich parliamentary debate?**

Education equips us to study precedent, understand policy, and act with a disciplined mindset. It undeniably improves

performance in Parliament. Diversity of educational backgrounds enhances debate and decision-making, so I strongly advocate higher learning for all aspiring public representatives.

## PODCAST

Presence has created Podcasts of this cover story with the help of the AI Tool NotebookLM. Please listen to the AI-generated Podcasts on the achievements of these MPs.



Listen to the podcast

<https://youtu.be/0m8JX25L7Uo>

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## **Dr Channi's Lifelong Learning: A Former CM's Unstoppable Academic Quest**

*(Published in the May 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)*

*(Despite a demanding role as MP and active political leader, former Chief Minister Dr Channi, already a PhD holder, continues pursuing multiple postgraduate degrees, proving that true leaders never stop learning or growing.)*

At 60, Dr Charanjit Singh Channi epitomises the spirit of lifelong learning and humble service. His journey is remarkable, from his modest beginnings in a Punjab village to becoming the State's first Dalit Chief Minister. A former sports champion who represented Panjab University in handball, an NCC cadet, and a dedicated public servant, Dr Channi recently completed his PhD whilst serving as MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture. Even today, he pursues an MA in Public Administration, balancing parliamentary duties with

academic pursuits. In an exclusive conversation with Prime Point Srinivasan, Publisher and Managing Editor, and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor, Dr Charanjit Singh Channi narrates his journey. Excerpts:

***Dr Channi, your journey from a small village in Punjab to the Chief Minister's Office is truly inspiring. What were the key moments that shaped your path in public life?***

I come from a simpleton background — my father, S. Harsa Singh, was a small shopkeeper and my mother, Ajmer Kaur, was a devoted homemaker. Growing up in modest circumstances taught me the value of hard work, empathy, and staying connected to the grassroots.

The earliest turning point was my entry into student politics, where I experienced the power of collective voice and realised the importance of leadership with integrity. Later, serving as a municipal councillor and twice as President of the Municipal Council of Kharar gave me invaluable grassroots experience.



***(Governor Banwarilal Purohit greeting Chief Minister Dr Charanjit Singh Channi in the presence of Rahul Gandhi)***

A major milestone was my being elected as an independent MLA, reinforcing my belief that people's trust is earned through service, not just party affiliation. Eventually, being chosen as Punjab's Chief Minister (photo above) and becoming the first Dalit CM of the State was not just a personal achievement but a powerful symbol of representation for marginalised communities. In this regard, I am thankful to our leader, Rahul Gandhi, who played a significant role in my selection as Chief Minister. After Baba Sahib Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru, Rahul Gandhi is the man who is working strenuously to uplift the weaker sections of society.

***What prompted you to enter politics? Who inspired you?***

Actually, it was my father who first showed me the path to politics. Though a small shopkeeper, he also served as Sarpanch of our village Bhajauli and as a Member of the Block Samiti. He believed deeply in public service.

My first leadership experience came during 10th class when students encouraged me to contest for President of the Students' Welfare Association. When asked to speak at assembly, I froze. That evening, my father took me to the fields and said, "Imagine the crops are students — now speak to them." I practised that way, and next morning, I spoke with confidence.

Another critical turning point was when Congress denied me a ticket in 1999, 2002, and again in 2007. My father pushed me forward, saying, "Don't wait for someone to choose you, go to the people and contest independently." I did exactly that and won.

Just a day before that election, I said: "No rich person should vote for me. I am not their representative. I am here to serve the poor, the middle class, the kisan (farmers), and the khet mazdoor (farm labourers)—regardless of caste or religion."

That speech wasn't strategy — it was truth – the words came from my heart. I won as an Independent MLA, defeating the candidates of other political parties.



***Charanjit Singh Channi being awarded PhD***

***Despite your demanding political responsibilities, you are persistently pursuing higher education, including recently completing a PhD. What motivates this commitment to academic growth?***

Though my childhood circumstances weren't promising, my father always believed education was the only way to rise above poverty. He used to say, "We may not have wealth, but we can build our future through learning."

With that encouragement, I pursued education seriously, completing my BA, LLB, MBA, MA in Political Science, and recently a PhD. Even today, I haven't stopped learning. I'm

currently pursuing an MA in Public Administration and am in the middle of my second semester exams.

People ask why I continue studying when I don't need more degrees for career or financial reasons. The answer is simple: I don't study for personal gain, I study because I want to serve my nation better, especially Punjab. Education broadens one's perspective, sharpens decision-making, and deepens empathy.

***You were an accomplished athlete, playing handball at the university level. How has your sporting background influenced your leadership style?***

Sports, cultural activities, and disciplined training have been the foundation of my personality and have played a vital role in shaping my journey in public life.

I actively played cricket as a wicketkeeper and football as a goalkeeper, but my main game was handball, where I represented Panjab University as a goalkeeper. Our team proudly won three gold medals in inter-university championships.

My entire education was supported through sports. I never paid admission or tuition fees; colleges and the university awarded me full scholarships for my Sports achievements. Even my pocket money came from scholarships. My sports

kits were provided by institutions, giving me early financial independence.

I was also actively involved in cultural activities, especially as captain of Bhangra teams. Performing Bhangra kept me rooted in our culture and gave me confidence, teamwork skills, and public presence — qualities that later became essential in leadership.

Additionally, I was a cadet in the NCC and a member of the NSS during my college days. These programmes taught me discipline, service to society, leadership, and physical endurance. That training built a strong foundation for public responsibility and civic duty.

***Punjab has seen significant socio-economic challenges. What would you consider your most meaningful achievements in addressing these issues?***

Coming from a humble background, my passion has always been to uplift the downtrodden and work for the welfare of the weaker and middle-class sections, regardless of caste or religion. I firmly believe that education and healthcare are the two main pillars that need strengthening.

During my tenure as Chief Minister, one of the most impactful initiatives was the 'Mere Ghar Mere Naam' scheme. In many rural areas, especially within Lal Dora

zones, poor families lived in houses not legally registered in their names, leaving them without property rights or collateral security.

Under this scheme, we facilitated registration of these houses in the actual occupants' names. This transformative step gave poor families legal ownership of their homes. With registered deeds, they could now get loans and credit to start small businesses. This initiative not only provided economic security but also dignity and empowerment to thousands of families.

Recognising evolving needs of Punjab's agricultural sector, I recommended renaming the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to include Farm Labour Welfare. This reflects my commitment to inclusive growth and justice for all stakeholders in agriculture.

***You've held various ministerial portfolios. Can you share a project you're especially proud of?***

One initiative I'm especially proud of is overseeing the celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th birth anniversary as Tourism Minister. This event was appreciated worldwide and showcased Punjab's rich spiritual heritage on the global stage.

As MLA from Chamkaur Sahib and Tourism Minister, I fulfilled a long-cherished dream by building the 'Dastan-e-Shahadat' theme park in Chamkaur Sahib. This unique park tells the inspiring history of Sikh martyrs through animated films and immersive storytelling. It welcomes thousands of visitors from across the world daily.

Another project close to my heart is initiating the Skill University's construction, aimed at empowering Punjab's youth with practical and industry-relevant skills.

***You've been described as humble and approachable. How have you maintained this grounded approach in politics?***

Staying humble isn't a strategy — it's simply my lifestyle. I haven't done anything special to stay grounded; this is how my parents raised me. They taught me to live with contentment, irrespective of the circumstances.

Arrogance creates distance between you and the people, but humility builds trust. Even today, though I've been an MP for over a year, I haven't been allotted an official bungalow in Delhi. Instead, I live in a single hostel room. But I have no complaints because I lived in a mud house during childhood, and completely comfortable with simplicity.

Power is temporary. Values are permanent. I want to serve with humility, not demand with entitlement.

***Many young people are disillusioned with politics. What needs to change to attract idealistic youth?***

They often associate politics with negativity, power struggles, or a lack of accountability. But politics, at its core, is one of the most powerful tools for bringing positive change if practised with sincerity and integrity.

Political spaces must become more transparent, inclusive, and merit-based. Young people want to see that ideas, effort, and honesty matter more than influence or background.

At the same time, we must restore the dignity of public service. politics is guided by integrity, humility, and purpose, it naturally attracts the right kind of participation.

Most importantly, I would say to the younger generation: if you want to see change, you have to be part of the process. Real transformation doesn't happen from the sidelines.

***What is your message to young aspirants in politics?***

Don't run behind positions; always work with passion, honesty, and sincerity. Then the positions will automatically follow you.

Politics should not be seen as a shortcut to power, but as a lifelong commitment to public service. If you enter with the right intentions, to uplift others, solve problems, and be the voice of the voiceless, you will earn respect, and eventually, responsibility will find its way to you.

And never stop learning. Keep strengthening yourself through education and experience, because when you grow, your ability to serve grows too.

India needs not just young leaders; it needs young leaders with values, vision, and a true sense of duty.

***Your Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture has been selected for the Sansad Ratna 2025 Awards. How do such recognitions motivate parliamentarians?***

I am deeply grateful to my party and especially to Shri Rahul Gandhi ji for entrusting me with the responsibility of chairing this important committee. It is under his visionary leadership that our work has found meaningful direction.

It's a great honour to receive an award initiated by the late Dr APJ Abdul Kalam ji.

Such recognition from respected civil society organisations motivates parliamentarians to maintain high standards of transparency, performance, and public service. It reassures us that our efforts are noticed beyond political arenas.

This award is a collective achievement, reflecting the hard work of the entire committee and the democratic values we uphold.

**Jai Hind**

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## PODCAST

Presence has created Podcasts of the two cover stories with the help of the AI Tool NotebookLM. Please listen to the AI-generated Podcasts on the achievements of Dr Charanjit Singh Channi.



Listen to the podcast

<https://youtu.be/VYzKl4rwrhI?si=TG4p7vIZaSUUdB26>

## **From Silver Screen to Sansad: The Remarkable Journey of Ravi Kishan MP**

*(Published in the May 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor and Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)*

*(Ravi Kishan transforms from village dreamer to Bollywood star to award-winning MP, proving authentic service transcends traditional political backgrounds in modern India.)*

Ravindra Kishan Shukla, popularly known as Ravi Kishan, represents a rare breed in Indian public life — a successful entertainer who has seamlessly transitioned into a respected parliamentarian. The well-known actor has been nominated for the Sansad Ratna Awards 2025 for his outstanding performance in the Lok Sabha during the 18th Lok Sabha, marking, what is perhaps, the first time a prominent actor has proven himself equally effective as a parliamentarian.

In this exclusive conversation with Prime Point Srinivasan (Managing Editor) and Priyadharshni Rahul (Editor), Ravi Kishan opens up about his extraordinary journey from the heartlands of Uttar Pradesh to the corridors of Parliament,

sharing intimate moments and insights with PreSense readers.



**You've had a remarkable journey from the heartlands of Uttar Pradesh to the Silver Screen, and now to Parliament. Could you take us back to your early days — what were your dreams as a young boy, and what first drew you to the world of cinema?**

I was born in a small village in Jaunpur, UP, where life was genuinely tough. But my dreams were always bigger than my circumstances. I was absolutely mesmerised by Amitabh Bachchan ji — I desperately wanted to be like him. At just 17, with merely ₹500 and my mother's blessings, I left for Mumbai. I had no contacts, no backup plans — just unwavering faith.

Cinema wasn't merely an ambition for me; it was survival. It gave me an identity, a voice that I'd never had before. That transformative journey shaped everything that came after — every decision, every choice, every dream.

**From acting in over 750 films to becoming a respected voice in the Lok Sabha—what inspired you to make such a bold transition from the entertainment industry**

**to political life? Was there a defining moment that triggered this shift?**

Yes, I've acted in over 750 films, but there came a pivotal point where I felt deeply that it was time to serve beyond the screen. The defining moment was witnessing how disconnected the system sometimes becomes from the real struggles of ordinary people, especially in rural India.

And it was Narendra Modiji's extraordinary leadership that truly inspired me. He demonstrated that if you possess vision and willpower, you can genuinely transform the nation. I wanted to be part of that monumental change, not as a mere bystander, but as an active contributor to India's growth story. I took an active role in politics with the blessings of Modi ji and Yogi ji.

**Your name is synonymous with Bhojpuri cinema, yet you've also left an indelible mark on Bollywood and South Indian films. How do you view your role in promoting regional cinema and giving it a national identity?**

Bhojpuri isn't just a language — It's an emotion, the authentic voice of millions of Indians. When I started, Bhojpuri cinema wasn't considered glamorous or mainstream, but I made it my personal mission to give it the respect and reach it deserved.

I've worked extensively in Bollywood and South Indian films, but my heart belongs unequivocally to regional

cinema. When Bhojpuri gains recognition — in Parliament, on OTT platforms, across India — I feel I've truly honoured my roots and given voice to the voiceless. I am grateful to popular Tamil Director T Rajendar, who introduced me to South films as a hero and brought out my hidden talents.

**The Sansad Ratna Award 2025 recognises outstanding performance in Parliament. How did you react when you learnt about this honour, and what does this award mean to you personally and professionally?**

When I heard I had been chosen for the Sansad Ratna Award, I was genuinely emotional. I've received numerous awards for acting, but this one was different — it was for real work, real impact on people's lives.

It meant that the sleepless nights, the 100% attendance record, and the issues I consistently raised were all seen and valued. Personally, it gave me tremendous strength. Professionally, it reminded me that Parliament isn't merely a platform — it's a profound responsibility. And I plan to honour that responsibility every single day.

**You're known to be an active voice in the Lok Sabha, speaking on diverse issues. What key causes or policies are closest to your heart, and how do you plan to push them forward?**

For me, youth employment, drug awareness, and the inclusion of Bhojpuri in the 8th Schedule are absolute top

priorities. I come from the grassroots, and I've witnessed firsthand what unemployment does to young potential.

I regularly raise these critical issues in the House. I continuously push for comprehensive skill development programmes, improved rural connectivity, and accessible digital education. And I will continue relentlessly until these causes transform into concrete policies. Because I don't want to just speak eloquently — I want to see real, tangible change on the ground.

**Many still view entertainers as outsiders in politics. What challenges did you face when entering public life, and how have you earned credibility as a serious and committed parliamentarian?**

There were inevitable whispers — "He's just an actor, not a politician." And I don't blame them for their scepticism. The industry had seen many celebrities come and go without making meaningful contributions.

But I knew I couldn't prove myself with bare words, but only through dedicated work. I focused rigorously on attendance, thorough research, and raising genuine and relevant issues — from youth unemployment and drug addiction to local infrastructure development. Slowly but surely, the perception changed.

Today, I'm not viewed merely as an actor dabbling in politics — I'm recognised as a working parliamentarian. And I've earned that respect not through legacy or connections, but

through unwavering commitment and consistent performance.



**Behind the camera and beyond politics — what hidden talents or passions do you have that people may not know about? Are there any creative or social pursuits that still inspire you?**

People see me as an actor or a politician, but at heart, I remain a small-town boy deeply rooted in simplicity. I'm profoundly spiritual — meditation and moments of silence keep me grounded amidst all the chaos.

I'm also passionately committed to youth welfare and drug awareness — I've witnessed too many promising dreams destroyed by addiction. That's precisely why I speak out so vocally, in Parliament and beyond. Behind all the spotlight,

I basically believe in service, seva, and staying connected to something higher than myself.

**Balancing fame, public expectations, and parliamentary duties must be extraordinarily demanding. How do you manage your time, energy, and focus between these very different worlds?**

Balancing fame and public service certainly isn't easy, but when your purpose becomes crystal clear, everything else naturally aligns. I begin each day with meditation — it keeps me thoroughly grounded.

In Parliament, I'm completely focused on my duties and responsibilities. In cinema, I now carefully choose roles that align with my available time and my values. Fame initially gave me recognition, but public service gives my life genuine meaning and purpose.

And I constantly remind myself that you're here because people believed in your struggle and sincerity. Make every moment count.

**As someone living both the celebrity life and the grassroots political experience, what advice would you offer to young Indians who aspire to enter politics or public service?**

To every young Indian who genuinely wants to enter politics or public service, I want to emphasise this: You don't need

to be born into political families. You need to believe wholeheartedly in the cause.

Don't wait for a significant post or a party ticket. Start exactly where you are — in your village, your college, and your neighbourhood street. Help people actively and genuinely. Understand their real struggles intimately. Politics isn't about grand speeches and catchy slogans — it's fundamentally about solving people's problems.

Be patient, but be persistent. Be thoroughly informed. Stay completely grounded. Yes, the system can be incredibly tough and sometimes frustrating. But India is genuinely changing — and if you are honest, consistent, and genuinely connected to the people, you will definitely be noticed.

I came from a small village with absolutely no political background or connections. But I came with clear intent, unwavering discipline, and fire in my heart. And today, I stand proudly in Parliament—not because of fame or celebrity status, but because people recognised and trusted my sincerity.

**Looking ahead, what is your vision for the next ten years? Do you see yourself taking on larger responsibilities in public life, and what legacy would you ultimately like to leave behind?**

Looking ahead, my vision is to serve with even greater depth, clarity, and unwavering commitment. Over the next decade, I want to focus intensively on youth empowerment, comprehensive rural development, and accessible skill education, ensuring that no child in India feels left behind because of where they happen to be born.

Yes, I'm open to taking on larger responsibilities — not for power or prestige, but to make a deeper, more significant national impact. I want to represent not just a single constituency, but the genuine aspirations of everyday Indians across the country.

And if one day people say with conviction, 'He didn't just shine brilliantly on screen. He served his people faithfully, he stood his ground courageously, and he gave back with his entire heart' — that will be the legacy I'm truly proud to leave behind.

I remain profoundly grateful to Modi ji and Yogi ji for giving me unwavering support and invaluable guidance to be an effective 'sevak' to my people.

**Jai Hind**

## PODCAST

Presence has created Podcasts of the two cover stories with the help of the AI Tool NotebookLM. Please listen to the AI-generated Podcasts on the achievements of Ravi Kishan.



Listen to the podcast

<https://youtu.be/WMjAffx5wtE?si=Erjbo-GwfhaNvhR3>

## **Rewriting History: Shri Jagadambika Pal Speaks on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Path to Transparency**

*(Published in the April 2025 edition of PreSense,  
authored by Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)*

*(The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 ensures transparency, curbs misuse of Waqf land, mandates inclusive representation, and restores constitutional rights, benefiting poor and backward Muslim communities.)*

### **Introduction**

The Indian Parliament's recent passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has ignited nationwide debate. The Act aims to reform the administration of Waqf properties, historically established for the welfare of poor Muslims but often plagued by allegations of misuse and corruption. Critics argue that previous laws allowed the Waqf Board to arbitrarily claim properties, including ancient temples and government land, without judicial recourse. The new amendment, which notably repeals Section 40,

seeks to restore transparency and accountability. While some opposition parties have challenged the Act in the Supreme Court, with certain provisions stayed pending judgement, many people across communities have welcomed the reforms.



***Shri Jagadambika Pal, Chairman, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf, with Smt. Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor, PreSense***

In this context, Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor of PreSense, speaks with Shri Jagadambika Pal, Chairman of the Joint

Parliamentary Committee (JPC) that examined the Bill, to unravel the facts and dispel misconceptions.

## **A New Dawn for Waqf Properties: Addressing Decades of Mismanagement**

**PreSense:** When you were appointed as Chairman of the JPC for the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, what was your initial reaction, given the sensitivity and national attention surrounding this committee?

**Jagadambika Pal:** On 8th August, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr Kiran Rijju, presented the Bill in the House and requested its referral to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. The Honourable Speaker accepted and constituted the JPC, naming me its Chairman about a fortnight later. I took charge in August and immediately convened our first meeting. Over five months, we held 38 meetings, totalling more than 113 hours, unprecedented for any Parliamentary Committee. We met with 284 delegations, giving each two to three hours to present their views. Every stakeholder who wished to be heard was given the opportunity; there were no complaints of exclusion.

**PreSense:** The committee reportedly received over a crore emails. How did you manage such a massive response?

**Jagadambika Pal:** Indeed, we received more than a crore emails. I requested the Honourable Speaker for additional support, and 30 officers and staff were assigned to assist us for three months. We filtered out one-line emails expressing only agreement or disagreement, which comprised 50–60% of the total. Every email or letter with substantive suggestions was reviewed line by line. Delegations also submitted written materials. It was a challenging task, but thanks to the dedication of the team, especially officers like Swathi Parwar, Disha, and Joint Secretary Mr Besak, we completed the report within six months, despite the sensitivity involved.

### **Inside the JPC: Unprecedented Consultations and Challenges**

**PreSense:** How did you navigate the committee's most sensitive issues?

**Jagadambika Pal:** Patience was key. The proceedings were often tense, with some opposition MPs attempting to disrupt the process - one even threw a bottle at me, though fortunately I was not harmed. At times, arguments erupted in front of witnesses, which was embarrassing. However, I remained calm and focused on diffusing tensions, ensuring the committee's work continued uninterrupted.

**PreSense:** What was your experience leading such a historic and sensitive committee?

**Jagadambika Pal:** I never expected to chair the JPC. The decision was made by the party leadership, and I am grateful for their trust. It felt like a rigorous examination. The issue spans the entire country, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. There were days I worked for 12 hours straight to meet the tight deadlines set by the Home Minister and Speaker. We visited numerous States - Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, among others - often amid protests by farmers whose lands had suddenly been declared Waqf property. The 2013 amendment to Section 40 had given the Waqf Board unchecked powers, which led to widespread discontent and injustice.

### **Dispelling Myths: What the Amendment Means for the Muslim Community**

**PreSense:** What message would you like to convey to Muslims who fear the implications of this amendment?

**Jagadambika Pal:** The vast majority of Muslims are peaceful and have not participated in protests. While the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board tried to incite opposition, most people simply offered prayers and left peacefully. Many poor Muslims, OBCs, Pasmandas, and

even Muslim women intellectuals I met supported the Bill. Only a few vested interests, certain madrasas and minority organisations, are attempting to mislead the community.

**PreSense:** How safe are Muslims under the new law?

**Jagadambika Pal:** The protests are largely orchestrated by a handful of Maulanas and minority groups. For example, during a dharna at Jantar Mantar called by the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board, many attendees were unaware of the Bill's contents. It was clear the protest was sponsored. The common Muslim is not involved in these agitations.

### **Towards Inclusive Representation and Accountability**

**PreSense:** What have you personally gained from chairing the JPC?

**Jagadambika Pal:** This experience has taught me patience like never before. For six months, I was fully dedicated to this task, working daily on reports and amendments. We faced resistance similar to that during the repeal of Article 370, Triple Talaq, and the CAA. Only after the Bill was introduced and the JPC formed did some Muslim organisations begin their protests.

**PreSense:** What are the key benefits for Muslims in these amendments?

**Jagadambika Pal:** The amendments bring significant advantages. Previously, OBCs, Pasmandas, and poor Muslims had no representation in the Waqf Board or the All-India Minority Council. Now, there will be mandatory representation for backward groups, including two women members, ensuring checks and balances. The income from Waqf properties will finally reach the poorest, orphans, and women, as was originally intended. Earlier, the Waqf Board operated with unchecked powers, overriding constitutional rights and violating Articles 14, 15, 19, 21, and 300(A). This amendment restores constitutional balance and transparency. The matter is now before the courts, which I am confident will judge on merit.

**PreSense:** Thank you, Shri Jagadambika Pal, for sharing your insights and helping clarify the true intent and impact of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024.



## **Podcast on the Interview with Hon'ble Jagadambika Pal**

PreSense has created a Podcast with NotebookLM on the above interview with Shri Jagadambika Pal, Hon'ble Chairman of JPC on Waqf. Please watch this podcast, a conversation generated by AI.

<https://youtu.be/FcupLbZPelw?si=wwW07b0fr8eijlp62>

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## Two Decades of Digital Integrity: The Journey of PreSense

*(Published in the March 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor)*

*As PreSense enters its 20th year this March, Editor Priyadharshni Rahul sits down with Prime Point Srinivasan, Founder and Managing Editor, to trace the remarkable journey of India's oldest digital-only eMagazine and the vision that has sustained its commitment to positive journalism.*

### A Humble Beginning with a Vision for Change



**Priyadharshni:** Sir, as PreSense has completed 19 years and is entering its 20th year this March, could you take us back to how it all began?

Prime Point Srinivasan: The seeds were sown much earlier than most people realise. In December 1999, we launched Prime Point Foundation as an NGO dedicated to spreading awareness among people about communication,

journalism, and public relations. The foundation was inaugurated by Dr M S Swaminathan, Father of the Indian Green Revolution, and T S Raghavan, then Chairman of Indian Bank. Our motto was to create awareness among legislators, business houses, and the general public about the importance of communication.

### **A Glimpse into the Future of Communication**

***Priyadharshni: What drew you specifically towards digital communication when traditional media was still dominant?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: (smiles) I was fortunate to witness



***July 2000 Seminar on Internet and Media***

the birth of the Internet in India. I was present at the 'First day, First show' of the Internet launch at Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited in Chennai on 15th August 1995. At that time, I was the Founder–Secretary of the Public Sector Public Relations

Forum of Tamil Nadu. Even with those primitive connections, I immediately sensed that the Internet would change the thumb rule of the game.

In July 2000, when the public was still struggling with 18 kbps speeds – imagine that compared to today's megabytes per second – I organised a seminar under Prime

Point Foundation to create awareness about how the Internet would transform communication. Many media persons attended, with Prof. Sree Sreenivasan, Dean of Columbia School of Journalism, as our key speaker.

### **The Internet Dream That Faced Doubt**

***Priyadharshni: How did people respond to your vision then?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: (laughs) They mocked me! The Internet was so slow that 'www' was jokingly described as 'world wide wait'. Print and broadcast media were ruling the roost, and few could imagine the imminent digital revolution. I could visualise the change but couldn't articulate it properly. In the year 2000 itself, I conducted three seminars on this topic.

### **Lessons from Early Attempts**

***Priyadharshni: I understand that PreSense wasn't your first digital publication attempt...***

Prime Point Srinivasan: That's right. I was among the earliest in India to create online discussion groups way back in 1999 itself, for PR and media professionals. Being close to Dr Abdul Kalam, I created another group focused on India Vision to bring together young people for social

service. I used platforms like egrouops.com and onelist.com, which were later acquired by Yahoo.

In March 2002, I launched 'PR Point Newsletter', carrying interviews with international experts on communication trends. I distributed it through auto-responders – a technology not popular then. I even featured an exclusive interview about 'Blogs' before they became mainstream. I was releasing issues every 10 days, but after eight editions, I had to close it down.

### ***Priyadharshni: What happened?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: (chuckles) Excepting myself, nobody was reading them! I had to step back and make a deep study of why my dream project failed.

### **A Turning Point with Presidential Encouragement**

### ***Priyadharshni: So how did PreSense eventually come into being?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: The turning point came in 2006 when Dr Abdul Kalam suggested that I restart the digital magazine with positive content. In February 2006, some team members – Vidya, Sakthi Prasanna, Satish and I –

#### **Newsletter - Interviews - Archives**

Prime Point Foundation releases 'PRPoint Newsletter' every ten days for circulation amongst the PR and Communication professionals. Each of the issue of this newsletter will contain an 'exclusive' interview with one of the eminent professional on various related topics. In order to get the uninterrupted reading of the newsletter, please join the "image management" group (Please fill-in the email id on the left side of this page and click to join).

Vol No	Month	Topic	Interview
8	Jun 2002	<a href="#">Blogging</a>	Mr Monsur Hossain, New York
7	May 2002	<a href="#">Managing the reputation</a>	Mr Deon Binneman, CEO & President: RERUCOMM, Johannesburg, South Africa
6	May 2002	<a href="#">Industry Analyst Relations</a>	Mr Ed Gyurko, Founder of Brand Illumination, New York
5	Apr 2002	<a href="#">Job market for PR professionals and the expectations from the employers</a>	Ms Veena Solomon, Placement consultant, Bangalore, India
4	Apr 2002	<a href="#">Drafting of an effective Press Release - Dos and Don'ts</a>	Dr I Arul Aram, Chief Sub Editor, The Hindu, Madras, India
3	Apr 2002	<a href="#">Media Training, Media campaign and spokesperson</a>	Mr Al Rothstein, President, Al Rothstein Meida Services, Atlanta
2	Mar 2002	<a href="#">Brochures, logos and business cards</a>	Mr Michael Reidy, Marketing Director, Bespoke Publications Ltd, London
1	Mar 2002	<a href="#">B2B Public Relations and Market entry study</a>	Mr Frank M Shediak, Founder, Shediak Communications, Hong Kong

met at my office and decided to relaunch the magazine using contemporary technology, content and distribution systems.

As we were all from the communication domain, we wanted to create a digital eMagazine on various aspects of communication for professionals. We named it PReSense, and Satish created the first masthead. 'Communicate the Communication' was our tag line.

## Launching with Passion and Purpose

### *Priyadharshni: Was there a long planning period?*



**First edition – March 2006**



**Online launch by Dr Y S Rajan**

Prime Point Srinivasan: Not at all! I've always believed in "Aaj hona; Abi hona" – it should happen today; it should happen now. We decided to launch in just 15 days, setting 6th March 2006 as our launch date.

### *Priyadharshni: That's remarkably quick! Did you face any challenges with the inaugural issue?*

Prime Point Srinivasan: Indeed. Despite managing large Yahoo groups with many communication professionals, I couldn't secure any CEO interviews for our first issue. Everyone hesitated to give interviews to a yet-to-be-launched tiny eMagazine – they were all looking for established media brands.

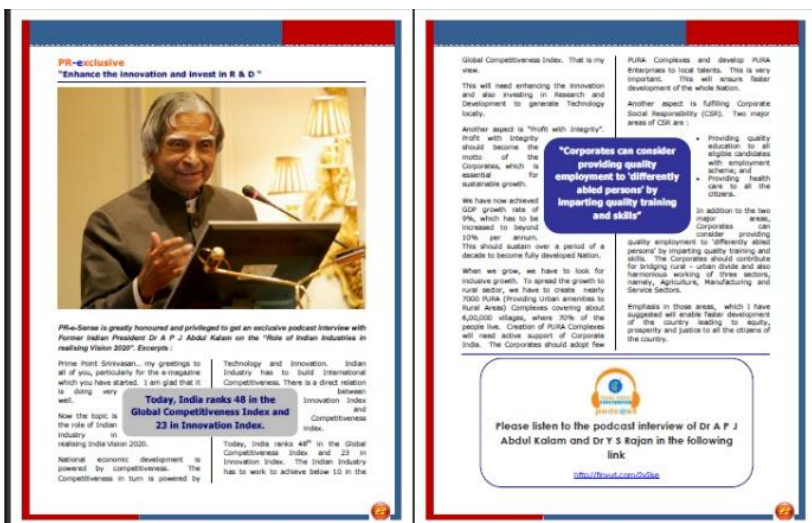


I shared my difficulties with Dr. Y.S. Rajan, a close associate of Dr Abdul Kalam and co-author of the book "India 2020" with Dr Abdul Kalam. He not only encouraged me but also readily agreed to give an interview and launch the first edition online. Suresh Kamath, Chairman of Laser Soft Info Systems Ltd and our well-wisher, also agreed to be interviewed.

Dr. Y.S. Rajan launched the first edition of PreSense online on 6th March 2006. That was our small step towards what would become a remarkable journey.

## ‘Prince’ the Cartoon: A Symbol of Wit and Wisdom

**Priyadarshni: The cartoon character 'Prince' has become iconic for PreSense readers. How did that come about?**



### **Feb 2008 issue with Dr Abdul Kalam exclusive interview – New Layout and New Masthead**

Prime Point Srinivasan: Dr Abdul Kalam was one of our regular readers. He gave an exclusive interview for our February 2008 edition, marking our second anniversary, which had 'Change' as its theme. He suggested including cartoons, as he was fond of them himself.

From this edition, we changed the Masthead and the layout of the eMagazine with the help of Tushar, a leading Communication expert from Mumbai and the Editorial team member. This masthead and layout continue till now.

After discussions in our Yahoo group, Triambak Sharma, a well-known cartoonist from Raipur, offered to draw a monthly cartoon featuring a character named 'Prince'. The first cartoon was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam at Raj Bhavan, Chennai in July 2008. To date, we've published more than 200 Prince cartoons drawn by Triambak. 100<sup>th</sup> Cartoon was launched at Raipur by Dr Ramon Singh, then Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. Wall Street Journal, Internationally renowned media carried one of our cartoons with our permission.

During one cartoon function, Dr Abdul Kalam suggested that all cartoonists should create characters like R.K. Laxman's Common Man and Triambak's Prince. He himself was quite a fan of Prince cartoons.

### **Digital Milestones Worth Celebrating**

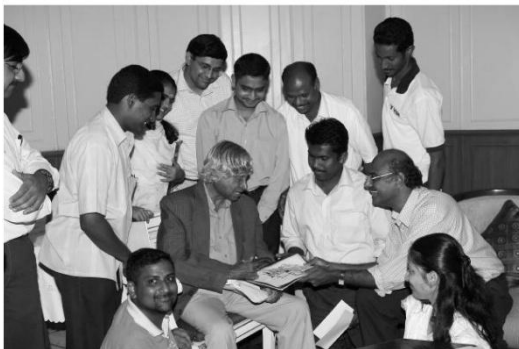
***Priyadharshni: Over these two decades, what achievements of PreSense make you particularly proud?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: There are several milestones that stand out. We're recognised as India's oldest digital-only

eMagazine – we've never had a print edition, which earned us recognition from the India Book of Records.

We were the first eMagazine to integrate podcasts alongside articles way back in 2006. In 2007, we introduced the concept of Guest Editors, with many eminent Indian and international personalities taking up the role.

We also broke new ground in 2008 by becoming the first eMagazine to serve as a Media Partner for international events – starting with the Annual Convention of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations in London. Until then, only traditional print and TV media would be invited as media partners.



Dr Abdul Kalam launching the first cartoon with his autograph (24 Jul 08)



## Beyond Journalism: Building Impactful Initiatives

***Priyadharshni: Beyond publishing the magazine, PreSense has also launched several initiatives. Could you tell us about them?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: Yes, PReSense, which was focussing exclusively on communication, converted to general journalism from its 61<sup>st</sup> Edition. From 61<sup>st</sup> edition, we renamed it as **PreSense**, without changing the masthead. The tagline was changed from 'Communicate the communication' to 'Spreading Positive vibrations,' which continues till now. Prime Point Foundation and PreSense started the Sansad Ratna Awards in 2010 to recognise top-performing Parliamentarians, following Dr Abdul Kalam's advice.



***Masthead up to 60<sup>th</sup> edition***



***Masthead after 61<sup>st</sup> edition***

Our other initiatives include the Digital Journalists Association of India, Next Gen Political Leaders, and Education Loan Task Force. All these initiatives are run by volunteers actively serving society.

We've also compiled articles from PreSense into e-books and printed books, distributed free of charge. Dr Abdul Kalam wrote the foreword for our first compilation after the 100th edition. In toto, we've published 49 e-books, some in print as well. Our 50th book will be released during the Sansad Ratna Awards in May 2025.

## **A Magazine that Policy Makers Respect**

***Priyadharshni: How would you describe the impact and influence of PreSense today?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: Today, our eMagazine is circulated digitally and read by intellectuals and policymakers. People in positions of power keenly follow our editorials and cover stories. We've always maintained a neutral stance, analysing all aspects of an issue thoroughly.

We are proud that PreSense is the only surviving digital-only magazine in India that has never had a print version. What's more, we have operated all these years on a voluntary basis—never carrying a single advertisement.

## **Honoured for Positive Journalism**

It is gratifying to note that our efforts have been recognised by many prestigious national organisations. PreSense received the Narada Award from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)—their first award in the Digital Journalism category. This is a great honour. Similarly, the globally respected Brahma Kumaris organisation honoured us with the Golden Triangle Award, again the first of its kind for digital journalism.

We've also been recognised by the Association of Business Communicators of India and the Public Relations Council of India, in appreciation of our sustained efforts in promoting

positive journalism. These honours are deeply encouraging.

## Values That Never Wavered

***Priyadharshni: What principles have guided PreSense through these two decades?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: We've always believed in providing the highest quality content while adhering to ethical standards. Many eminent people have associated with this eMagazine on our editorial board. For the past 20 years, it has been run as a voluntary service committed to ethical journalism. We've never solicited advertisements.

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***First Editorial Board***

***March 2006***

## A Legacy Rooted in Ethics, Vision, and Service

***Priyadharshni: As we celebrate this momentous milestone, who would you like to acknowledge for their contributions?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: I'm deeply grateful to Susan Koshy, Former Editor-in-Chief; V Rajendran, Former Editor; Ramesh Sundaram, present Joint Managing Editor; C Badri, present Editor-in-Chief; and yourself, Priyadharshni Rahul, our present Editor, for your valuable contributions in

maintaining the high quality of our editions. I also acknowledge Triambak Sharma, well-known Indian cartoonist for his Prince cartoons. Dr Kalam himself was a great fan of Triambak's cartoons.

And finally, I always say that all this has been possible only because of the Divine Blessings of Lord Sri Krishna, who provides the strength and energy to continue our journey in positive journalism.

***Priyadharshni: After 217 editions and counting, what's next for PreSense?***

Prime Point Srinivasan: We will continue to maintain our standards of quality and ethics in the coming years. When I look back, I realise how far we've come from those days of 'world wide wait' to now having published 217 editions and 49 eBooks. It is an epic journey indeed. When I started this eMagazine in March 2006, nobody was willing to give their interview to this tiny magazine. Later, we carried exclusive interviews from Dr Abdul Kalam, Jimmy Wales (Founder of Wikipedia), Vinton Cerf (Father of Modern Internet), and many national and international celebrities. I firmly believe that passion and persistence can indeed turn visions into reality. The digital landscape has evolved dramatically, but our commitment to positive, ethical journalism remains unwavering.

As PreSense celebrates this significant milestone, it stands as a testimony to perseverance, visionary thinking, and

adaptability in the digital age. From a time when few believed in the power of online media to become a respected voice among policymakers, the PreSense journey embodies the transformative potential of digital communication when guided by ethical principles and unwavering dedication.

\*\*\*

## Podcast on Two Decades Journey of eMagazine PreSense



Watch at YouTube

<https://youtu.be/mnTStrAVe68?si=JiypYIMDgscEmX2m>

(courtesy: NotebookLM)

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## **Sacred Confluence: The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 - An Extraordinary Triumph of Faith and Governance**

*(Published in the February 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 showcased a remarkable blend of faith, governance, and global unity, managing 66 crore pilgrims with seamless logistics, security, and spiritual devotion in Prayagraj.)*



Three days before the final day of Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, Triambak Sharma, Cartoon Editor of PreSense, rang with palpable excitement from the railway station at Prayag. "Sir, I am at Prayag to board the train. I have been here for the past two days and took a holy dip in Triveni. The

arrangements are more than excellent to manage this mind-boggling crowd. Irrespective of their social status, rich or poor or any caste, everyone volunteers to ensure smooth flow of the crowd. I am now volunteering at the railway station to guide pilgrims. We should run a cover story on this lifetime event. I will send the cartoon after reaching Raipur." His enthusiasm resonated clearly through the phone. "It is a confluence of faith, governance and public," he added, capturing the essence of this monumental gathering.

Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor of PreSense, and Mugavari Ramesh, one of the team members, also endorsed Triambak's excitement. Having visited the Maha Kumbh Mela and participated in the holy dip themselves, they brought back stories of devotion and exceptional organisation. "Numerous organisations offer food of the highest quality to yatris with remarkable dedication," Mugavari Ramesh observed, highlighting the spirit of service that pervaded the event.

### **The Celestial Gathering: Understanding Maha Kumbh Mela**

The Kumbh Mela is a sacred religious gathering that takes place every 12 years, whilst the Maha Kumbh Mela occurs once in 144 years, making it a truly generational phenomenon. Recognised as the world's largest religious congregation, it draws millions of devotees, saints, and

tourists from across the globe. The event unfolds at the Triveni Sangam, the auspicious confluence where the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers meet. The sacred bathing rituals, known as Shahi Snans, are believed to purify the soul and wash away sins, offering spiritual renewal to participants.

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela commenced on 13th January and concluded on 26th February, transforming Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh into the world's largest temporary spiritual metropolis. The event stands as a remarkable testament to India's capacity to orchestrate an unparalleled gathering of devotees while maintaining order, safety, and reverence.

### **Unprecedented Scale and Pilgrim Participation**

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela witnessed participation on a scale that defies ordinary comprehension. The Uttar Pradesh government reported that 66 crore devotees (660 million) had taken the holy dip by 22nd February, a figure projected to have surpassed 65 crore by Maha Shivaratri. This staggering attendance—representing over 55% of India's Hindu population and 50% of global Sanatan followers—reflects the mela's transcendental appeal and spiritual significance in contemporary times.

Pilgrims from 73 nations, including Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, joined millions of Indians in this sacred ritual. The participation of 50 lakh attendees

from Nepal further underscored the event's cross-cultural resonance and its importance beyond India's borders.

Key bathing dates witnessed extraordinary turnouts: 8 crore devotees on Mauni Amavasya, 3.5 crore on Makar Sankranti, and 2.57 crore on Basant Panchami. Such immense numbers, managed without centralised funding, highlight the organic, devotion-driven nature of the Kumbh. As Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath noted, "This grand event has rewritten records in spiritual congregation," a sentiment echoed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who praised the organising team for their exemplary execution of this monumental undertaking.

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela's attendance of 66 crore pilgrims represents an extraordinary increase compared to the 8 crore who participated in the 2013 event, marking an eightfold growth in just twelve years.

## **Logistical Mastery and Infrastructure Innovations**

### **Engineering Marvel on Sacred Shores**

The Uttar Pradesh government's meticulous planning transformed Prayagraj into a temporary metropolis of remarkable efficiency. Over 700 temporary bridges, 20,000 sanitation workers, and 125 road ambulances equipped with Advanced Life Support systems ensured smooth operations throughout the 45-day event. A fleet of seven river ambulances patrolled the Sangam, whilst 2,700 AI-enabled cameras provided real-time crowd surveillance.

This forward-thinking technological approach, combined with the deployment of 50,000 police personnel, enabled incident-free management even during peak attendance days.

The transformation of the mela grounds was nothing short of an engineering marvel, as described by Shantanu Gupta, Author and Biographer of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath: "I am amazed at the engineering marvel that Maha Kumbh 2025 was. It became the 76th district of Uttar Pradesh for these 45 days. Ten thousand camps by Akhadas, religious, social and other organisations, with water, electricity and sewage, was magical. Four hundred and seventy kilometres of temporary iron plate roads and 30 pontoon bridges made the mela motorable. One and a half lakh toilets and 25,000 safai karmamcharis kept the mela clean and hygienic. It was a logistical, urban planning, engineering and obviously a spiritual marvel where 66 crore people took the dip." Gupta, who spent 31 days at the venue volunteering to serve devotees, witnessed firsthand the seamless integration of ancient tradition with modern infrastructure.

### **Seven-Layer Security: Tradition Meets Technology**

The Uttar Pradesh Police implemented a groundbreaking seven-layer security apparatus, blending traditional vigilance with cutting-edge technology. Drones monitored the 3,200-hectare site, whilst facial recognition systems

identified potential threats, creating an invisible but omnipresent safety net. Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak emphasised, "Our priority was devotee safety without compromising spiritual sanctity." This comprehensive strategy proved remarkably effective, thwarting attempts by disruptive elements to incite chaos and ensuring the sacred nature of the gathering remained undisturbed.

### Community Service and Spiritual Ambiance

The spirit of service permeated every aspect of the Maha Kumbh Mela. Numerous charitable organisations provided 'Annadhan', high-quality food to all pilgrims free of cost, embodying the Sanatana Dharma belief that providing shelter and nourishment to devotees bestows the greatest spiritual blessing upon the giver. This tradition of selfless service created a harmonious atmosphere where material status dissolved in the face of shared spiritual purpose.

"The entire crowd was well disciplined, excepting some stray unfortunate instances due to over-enthusiasm of people. The entire atmosphere was reverberating with 'Har Har Mahadev' chanting only," observed Valasai Jayaraman, a devotee from South India, capturing the profound spiritual energy that enveloped the gathering. The chants of devotees, the rituals performed by sadhus, and the collective faith of millions created an ambience of transcendence rarely experienced in the modern world.

## **Addressing Criticisms and Challenges**

Despite its overall success, the Maha Kumbh Mela faced several criticisms that warrant acknowledgement. Opposition parties and environmental advocates expressed concern over water pollution at the bathing places, questioning the environmental impact of such a massive gathering. Religious scholars countered these concerns, noting that the Ganga River has traditionally been revered for its purifying properties. They pointed out that despite over 660 million people taking ritual baths, no epidemic outbreaks were reported, and not a single related hospitalisation was documented.

Another significant controversy emerged when the Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP) did not permit non-Hindus as food vendors within the Mela area. Though many Muslim leaders and opposition leaders raised objections, ABAP clarified that their decision stemmed from concerns about food contamination rather than religious discrimination. The organisation emphasised that non-Hindus were employed in numerous other capacities throughout the event.

A stampede that tragically resulted in the deaths of 30 persons led to serious criticism of the security arrangements. In response, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath intervened directly, ordering enhanced security measures that prevented further incidents. Additionally, some

opposition voices criticised the ruling party for allegedly politicising the event, though this did not deter millions from participating with devotion and discipline.

Despite these controversies, the overall conduct of pilgrims remained exemplary, with devotees from across social strata converging on the small town to take the holy dip, creating global record for the largest religious gathering in history. Notably, while the President and Prime Minister visited the Kumbh Mela to participate in the holy dip, many senior opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and his family, Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal and others, did not attend the event.

### **International Perspectives and Global Recognition**

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 transcended geographical and cultural boundaries, attracting over three million foreign devotees from 183 countries to the sacred confluence. This once-in-144-year event became a microcosm of global spiritual unity, with pilgrims from countries as diverse as Israel and Peru immersing themselves in rituals, philosophical exchanges, and India's civilisational ethos. Their experiences—ranging from awe at the mela's scale to introspection about its deeper meanings—revealed how the Kumbh has evolved into a planetary pilgrimage while retaining its quintessentially Indian character.

International media coverage acknowledged the unprecedented scale of the gathering, with some reports

noting that the Maha Kumbh 2025 welcomed "nearly twice the population of the United States." The New York Times mentioned the significant logistical accomplishment of constructing "a temporary city covering approximately 15 square miles on the riverbed—comparable in size to Manhattan," highlighting the engineering feat behind the spiritual gathering.

The Maha Kumbh 2025 succeeded in capturing global attention, with representatives from over 100 countries visiting Prayagraj during the 45-day event, including ambassadors and high commissioners from 74 nations and ministers or heads of state from various countries. This international interest underscored the universal appeal of this ancient tradition and its relevance in the contemporary world.

### **A Model for Future Gatherings**

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela, occurring once every 144 years, has established a benchmark for managing mega-events through collaborative governance and spiritual harmony. The Uttar Pradesh government's fusion of technological innovation, cultural sensitivity, and infrastructural prowess ensured a safe, enriching experience for hundreds of millions. As the final *amrit snan* concluded on 26th February, the mela's legacy endures not just in statistics, but in its affirmation of India's enduring

spiritual ethos — a confluence of faith, tradition, and modernity.

The event demonstrated that with proper planning, even the world's largest gathering can proceed with minimal incidents, offering valuable lessons for event management on an unprecedented scale. The synergy between government infrastructure, religious institutions, and ordinary citizens volunteering their services created a template for how ancient traditions can be honoured whilst embracing modern solutions.

PreSense congratulates the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, and his team for making this unique event a memorable one. In essence, the Maha Kumbh Mela has truly become "India's Pride, World's Envy" — a phrase that encapsulates how this ancient tradition continues to astonish the global community with its scale, spiritual significance, and organisational success.

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## **India's Forgotten Senior Citizens: The Case for a Dedicated Ministry**

*(Published in the January 2025 edition of PreSense, authored by Prime Point Srinivasan, Managing Editor)*

*(India's senior citizens face neglect, financial insecurity, and healthcare challenges. A dedicated ministry is essential to address their needs, ensuring dignity, security, and policy-driven support.)*

In a country where the youth, minorities, and children have dedicated ministries to champion their causes, India's senior citizens find themselves relegated to a small division under the Social Justice Ministry. This division, tasked with coordinating the needs of the elderly across a dozen ministries, operates without a specific budget allocation. It starkly contrasts the focused attention given to other demographic groups. Recognising this glaring oversight, Priyadharshni Rahul, editor of PreSense, took a bold step. She filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court of India, advocating for establishing an exclusive ministry for senior citizens. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, acknowledging the gravity of the issue, advised her to submit a representation to the Government of India for consideration. Following this

guidance, Priyadharshni has presented her case directly to the Hon'ble Prime Minister. This move highlights a critical gap in India's governance structure. As the country's population ages rapidly, the need for a dedicated ministry to address the unique challenges faced by senior citizens has never been more pressing. Priyadharshni's action brings to the forefront a long-overlooked issue: the necessity of giving our elders the same level of governmental focus and resources that other segments of society receive.

Year	Children (0-14 years)	Senior Citizens (60+ years)
1991	37.2%	6.8%
2001	35.3%	7.4%
2011	30.8%	8.6%
2021	25.7%	10.1%
2031	21.8%	13.2%
2036	20.2%	15.0%

### **The Silver Tsunami: A Global and Indian Perspective**

The world is experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift, with the elderly population growing remarkably. This 'silver tsunami' is particularly pronounced in India, where the number of senior citizens is projected to surge dramatically in the coming decades. According to the India Ageing Report 2023:

- In 2022, there were 149 million persons aged 60 years and above in India, comprising 10.5% of the country's population.
- By 2050, this share is expected to double to 20.8%, with the absolute number reaching a staggering 347 million.

This demographic transition is further illustrated by the narrowing gap between the population of children (0-14 years) and senior citizens:

By 2050, it is projected that one in every five Indians will be a senior citizen, a demographic reality that demands immediate and focused attention from policymakers.

### **The Plight of Our Elders: Challenges and Inadequacies**

Despite their growing numbers, senior citizens in India face many challenges, many of which stem from inadequate governmental support and societal neglect. The current institutional framework, which relegates senior citizens' issues to a mere division under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is woefully inadequate to address their multifaceted needs. Some of the key challenges include:

1. **Healthcare Access:** There is limited access to specialised geriatric care, especially in rural areas.

Insurance companies charge huge premiums to senior citizens. This coupled with the GST of 18% have become a heavy burden on senior citizens who have very little source of income. There is also an age restriction for taking insurance. Many hospitals do not accept the recent Insurance Scheme of the Government of India for 70 years and above, forcing senior citizens to dig into their already meagre source of income and personal savings.

2. **Financial Insecurity:** Inadequate pension schemes and a lack of financial products tailored for the elderly.
3. **Social Isolation:** The breakdown of traditional family structures leads to loneliness and neglect.
4. **Lack of Infrastructure:** Insufficient senior-friendly public spaces and housing options.
5. **Abuse and Exploitation:** Inadequate legal protection against elder abuse.
6. **Travel concessions:** The Railway concessions for senior citizens were withdrawn during COVID time and is yet to be restored.

Perhaps most alarmingly, there is a significant lack of awareness and utilisation of existing schemes meant for senior citizens. The India Ageing Report 2023 reveals:

- 45% of senior citizens are unaware of the Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme
- 56% are unaware of the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme
- A staggering 88% are unaware of the Annapurna Scheme

Even among those aware, utilisation rates are dismally low:

- Only 28.4% of the elderly are aware of any concessions across the country
- Merely 15% have availed concessions for train and bus travel
- Utilisation of other concessions like Income Tax Rebate (1.4%), Special Interest on Bank account or loan (3.3%), and telecommunication services (1%) is negligible.

The recent Medical Insurance Scheme for persons above 70, is yet to get popularised.

These statistics paint a grim picture of a vulnerable population left to fend for themselves despite the existence of various welfare schemes.

**The Need for a Dedicated Ministry: A Moral Imperative**

Establishing a dedicated Ministry for Senior Citizens is not just a bureaucratic necessity; it is a moral imperative for a

nation that prides itself on its rich cultural heritage and respect for elders. As Priyadharshni poignantly states in her representation: "If India fails in accommodating, addressing and appreciating the welfare of senior citizens, we will fail in our culture, we will fail in our morals, we will fail in our tradition, and we will fail in our history and we will fail as a country."

A dedicated ministry would provide:

1. Focused Approach: Undivided attention to the unique needs of senior citizens.
2. Comprehensive Policy Formulation: Development and implementation of integrated policies for senior care.
3. Efficient Resource Allocation: Ensure adequate budgetary provisions for senior citizens' welfare.
4. Improved Coordination: Act as a nodal agency coordinating efforts across various departments.
5. Enhanced Awareness and Accessibility: Improve outreach and utilisation of welfare schemes.
6. Tailored Solutions: Develop strategies catering to different segments of the elderly population.

Global Best Practices: Learning from International Models

Several countries have recognised the importance of dedicated institutional mechanisms for elderly care:

- Japan: Has a dedicated Elder Care Bureau
- Norway: Operates a specialised Elder Care Division
- Singapore: Has a ministry focusing on ageing planning

These countries have implemented comprehensive long-term care insurance systems, universal healthcare with specialised services, and action plans for successful ageing. With its rapidly ageing population, India can ill afford to lag in this crucial area of governance.

### **The Way Forward: A Blueprint for Change**

The proposed Ministry for Senior Citizens could be structured with the following departments:

1. Department of Health and Wellness
2. Department of Financial Security and Pensions
3. Department of Social Integration and Community Services
4. Department of Housing and Infrastructure
5. Department of Research and Policy Development
6. Department of Legal Affairs and Rights Protection

Key functions would include policy formulation, scheme management, healthcare coordination, ensuring financial security, promoting social integration, infrastructure

development, research, legal protection, awareness campaigns, and international cooperation.

### **A Call to Action: Honouring Our Elders**

As India stands at the cusp of becoming a global superpower, it cannot afford to neglect its elderly population. Establishing a dedicated Ministry for Senior Citizens would address the pressing needs of this vulnerable group and reaffirm India's commitment to its cultural values of respecting and caring for the elderly. In the words of Priyadharshni, "We do not need a 'Ministry for Loneliness' like in Japan and the UK. We need a Ministry for Senior Citizens, making ourselves global leaders and respectfully handling seniors who have relentlessly spent 60 years of theirs in raising this country and their people."

"The time has come for India to take this bold step to create an institutional framework that ensures our elders can live their twilight years with dignity, security, and purpose. It is not just a matter of policy but a testament to our values as a nation. As we look to the future, let us not forget those who have brought us this far. Creating a Ministry for Senior Citizens would be a fitting tribute to their lifelong contributions and a beacon of hope for future generations."

\*\*\*

## Our Publications



### Some of our Publications



**Prime Point Foundation has published more than 50 books in digital and print formats. All books are distributed free of cost. The books can be downloaded from the following link.**

<https://tinyurl.com/PPFpublication>

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