

# O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

## Fragmented Opposition

The recent Maharashtra Assembly elections delivered a decisive victory for the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, cementing Devendra Fadnavis's return as Chief Minister. However, this resounding win has also left the Opposition in disarray, with the Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA) — a coalition of the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP, and Congress — suffering a crushing defeat. It has not been able to secure enough seats to even secure the Leader of the Opposition position in the State Assembly, a stark indication of its diminished clout.

In contrast, smaller political parties such as the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), AIMIM, and Prahar Sanghatana have seen their influence dwindle to near extinction. This outcome mirrors a national trend, where the Congress is now in power independently in just three states, relying on alliances to maintain relevance elsewhere.

The pressing question for the opposition is clear: Can it regroup and present a credible alternative to the BJP juggernaut, or will infighting and fragmentation continue to erode its base?

The BJP's success in securing power with a vote share of just 33-35% underscores the opposition's inability to consolidate votes. Fragmentation within the bloc is evident, with leaders like Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee, and Arvind Kejriwal failing to align consistently with the Congress.

A notable example of this discord is unfolding in Goa. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress, the principal opposition parties in the state, are locked in a competition for political supremacy rather than working cohesively to challenge the BJP. This rivalry was amplified when AAP President Amit Palekar publicly accused Congress of undermining their alliance by interfering in AAP's constituencies and failing to present a unified stance on critical issues like the cash-for-jobs scam.

In fact, the cash-for-jobs scam is a glaring example of the Opposition's missed opportunities. Despite its potential to corner the BJP government, the issue has been diluted by the lack of coordination between Congress and AAP. Instead of launching a joint State-wide agitation, the parties approached the matter independently. AAP met the Governor separately, while Congress held

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a press conference and organized a one-day protest at Azad Maidan.

These fragmented efforts have allowed the BJP to dismiss calls for a judicial inquiry and weather public scrutiny with relative ease.

Adding to the chaos, other controversies, such as the EDM festival debate and revelations of individual corruption cases, have distracted public attention from the scam. With the BJP deflecting pressure and the Opposition unable to sustain momentum, significant opportunities to challenge the government have been squandered.

Following the 2022 Assembly elections, Congress emerged as the largest opposition party in Goa but was soon weakened by the defection of eight MLAs to the BJP, reducing its strength to just three MLAs. AAP, with two MLAs, found itself nearly on par with Congress. This parity has fuelled a competitive dynamic between the two parties.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, AAP initially staked its claim on the South Goa seat but ultimately conceded it to Congress as part of the INDIA bloc's seat-sharing agreement. While AAP supported Congress candidate Captain Viriato Fernandes, it continues to signal its equal stature in the opposition by highlighting its activism and grassroots engagement.

This rivalry underscores a broader challenge: The inability of opposition parties to transcend individual ambitions and present a united front. Despite securing a combined vote share of 42% in the 2022 assembly elections, opposition parties remain divided, allowing the BJP to consolidate power with a smaller share of the electorate.

The BJP's ability to secure power with a minority vote share reveals a deep flaw in the Opposition's strategy. Fragmentation and infighting not only dilute their electoral strength but also alienate voters seeking a credible alternative. Unless the opposition parties resolve their differences and rally around common goals, the BJP's dominance will likely persist, leaving little room for a balanced democratic discourse.

## comment



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Thirdly, the State should distribute the wealth in such a way that the wealth is not concentrated in a few hands. The reality is the richest 1% of the Indian population owns 53% of the country's wealth, while the poorer half jostles for a mere 4.1% of national wealth.

## Good arrangements for the Exposition

I went for the Exposition at Old Goa twice so far, including on the feast day of St Francis Xavier and I must appreciate all the great efforts of the government agencies, the police, Church authorities, Catholic clergy/nuns, scores of volunteers and all the rest, who have made this the Exposition as a very well organised event, spanning over so many days!

Arwin Mesquita, Colva

## Promote rock concerts instead of EDMs

Adding Goa to his India World Tour, the legendary rock star Bryan Adams is set to enthrall the audience with classic rock hits as well as his new album 'So happy it hurts'.

The rock icon will also rock Goa to oldies such as 'Everything I do' and 'Summer of 69'. Bryan Adams will set the stage on fire at the Bambolim athletic stadium on December 17. Incidentally this is the first time Goa will be hosting the singer-songwriter.

Goan music lovers, especially Bryan Adams fans, are waiting with bated breath for the show to hit the stage. On the other hand, Electronic Dance Music (EDM) event Sunburn is allegedly facing opposition for various reasons in every location in Goa where it wants to have the event.

Given the popularity of rock stars like Bryan Adams, it

# Governance and the constitutional imperatives in India

The Constitution Day observed on November 26, saw unprecedented celebrations by politicians and political parties in India one wonders that if they (the governing elite) respect and adore the Constitution of India with total dedication as they say, then why is it that the constitutional imperatives are observed more in their non-fulfilment than their fulfilment?

The constitutional imperatives are spelt out in the PART IV of the Constitution of India, known as the Directive Principles of State policy. (Art 36 to 50), these principles are fundamental in the governance of the country (Article 37)

Directive Principles are primarily concerned with socio economic development, prioritising the welfare of people by securing and protecting a social order, in which justice - social, economic and political - are meant for realising the goals of social and economic democracy in India, aimed at ensuring economic and social equality.

Primarily, the State should ensure adequate means of livelihood for its people. But according to the Global Hunger Index at a score of 28.7, India has a serious and severe hunger situation.

Secondly, the State should ensure fair distribution of the material resources of the country for the common good. But India is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with the top 10% of the popu-

Fourthly, there should be equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

While the principle of equal pay for equal work in India is enshrined in law, the reality on the ground often falls short of this ideal. The latest World Inequality Report reveals that female employees in India earn only Rs 40 for every Rs 100 earned by their male counterparts, even though India is the world's fifth largest economy.

The World Bank reports that Indian women earn 34% less than men for similar work. This gap widens across sectors, education levels, and experience. The International Labour Organisation estimates that it could take 223 years to achieve gender pay parity in India.

Insufficient and inefficient minimum wage regulations with weak and limited collective bargaining rights, has caused income disparities and insecurity among the working class.

As regards to education, the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. India is home to 19% of the world's children. That is, India has the world's largest number of youngsters.

India also has one-third of the world's illiterate population. The total literacy growth from 1991 to 2001 was 12.6%, it has declined to 9.21% and the pupil-teacher ratio has fallen over 20 percent (from 47.4 to 39.8). The essential components of education are availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability.

With the kind of government tinkering in education and the policy of privatising elementary education have paved the way for profiteering in education, resulting in a system of advertisement and puffed-up statements with no substance and often total scarcity of teachers in required numbers at all levels.

This apathy towards children and youth has increased child abuse in India. In 2022, India witnessed a staggering 8.7% increase in child abuse cases, reaching a total of 162,000 incidents, as reported by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Also the NCRB report detailed a substantial escalation in reported crimes against women, soaring from 3,71,503 cases in 2020 to 4,45,256 cases in 2022.

As regards, the people's right to work, the unemployment rate in India averaged 8.20 percent from 2018 until 2024, reaching an all-time high of 23.50% in April of 2020. According to the latest data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), an independent think tank, the labour participation rate is only 41% and the employment rate 37.8%.

In the economic sphere, the State is to form its policies in such a manner that secures distribution of ownership and control of material resources of the community for common good and ensures that there is no concentration of wealth.

What worries the common man is the repeated failure of governments to fulfil these basic needs, which the country's founding fathers dreamt will be achieved within the first 20 years of India becoming a Republic and now even after 74 years, there doesn't seem to be any hope and worse still, there are no efforts from the governing elite to fulfil these basic constitutional imperatives.

Yet they choose to praise the Constitution and its values as if it's some religious text, which one adores, but doesn't practice the values and principles enshrined therein.

In this age of technology, when everyone is amazed by the possibilities of the use of Artificial Intelligence, one is rather prompted to suggest that perhaps, if the constitutional imperatives are fed into an AI system along with the present socio-economic realities of India, AI may come out with a road map as to how India could fulfil these pressing and urgent but crucial constitutional imperatives.

Adopting such an AI generated governance model may be the quickest and easiest and surest way to achieve the constitutional imperatives, rather than to depend upon the whimsical prejudice and personal preferences of elected representatives or Ministers to achieve these objectives, which may not happen even if India competes a century as a Republic.

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## letterstotheeditor

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All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

would be in the fitness of things for the Tourism Department to promote music and rock concerts by international singers and bands.

The music played by rock bands is entertainment for the entire family. The elderly people will listen with nostalgia to the hits of yesteryears played by these international bands. On the contrary, EDMs may not provide entertainment for the elderly people.

There are several international stars performing in various cities across the country. The Tourism Department needs to see to it that Goa is added as a venue in the itinerary when these international bands come to India.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

## Health is wealth

With reference to the caption titled: 'Safety is not a priority' in O Herald dated December 4,

make it mandatory with a written guarantee from contractors and their assistants to provide sanitation workers with medical insurance, gloves, gumboots, face masks and thongs for garbage beach collection or beach cleaning machines immediately and the waste should be daily taken to ward-wise recycling plants where usable garbage is converted into compost and plastic, while waste rubber

garbage is mixed with asphalt or concrete for durable roads and buildings. Hence health is wealth - do not ignore it.

Peter Castellino, Mumbai

## Vendors banned in Old Goa on feast day

It was heartening to hear the soothing message proclaimed by Cardinal Tagle on the feast day at Old Goa. He said, be a messenger of love and not division. False messengers propagate messages of hate and division, while true messengers bring 'Good news'.

As reported, some vendors were banned at Old Goa on the feast day. Some say it was the right decision because some devotees and pilgrims got disturbed by their approach while selling their items. Others say due to the ban on vendors there was a smooth flow of people in the streets and through the fair.

It seems that some sellers who can pay big money are allowed to put up their stalls and sell their goods including eatables. But the poor vendors selling ordinary items such as flowers, candles, candle figurines were banned. Was it really justified?

In pilgrimage centres all over the world, including different places in our own country, there are vendors selling flowers,

candles, candle figurines, holy pictures and other holy items. Such vendors are given special places to sell their items. One cannot be so ruthless in banning such poor vendors who earn their livelihood by selling these ordinary items.

## Rui Pereira, Navelim Union Carbide's toxic waste still not removed

It is a matter of utter disgrace and shame that tonnes of Union Carbide's toxic waste are still lying unremoved from the premises of Union Carbide India Limited in Bhopal despite four decades having passed since the world's worst industrial disaster took place in the city. It is all the more deplorable that both the central and State governments continue to pass the buck on disposal of these wastes even after 40 years of the tragedy.

Reportedly a "peer review committee" was formed in 2010 to examine government studies, which recommended a comprehensive reassessment of the whole tragedy. But, sadly it seems the recommendations remain on paper even after 15 years.

It is high time the Madhya Pradesh government addressed the issue of toxic wastes and the continuing contamination of the UCIL surroundings, rehabilitation

## people'sedit

### TIME REIGNS

PRADEEP LAWANDE

One of the names of time in Sanskrit is Kaal. Kaal also means death. There is a saying in Konkani that death comes unannounced and spares none.

There was an English poet named John Donne. One day his only son died untimely. The poet was greatly shocked. In that sad mood, a poem sprouted in his heart. In this poem Donne personified death and scolded him thus "O Death, be not proud.

I know you do not spare anything in this world. You destroy all the living and non-living things in the Universe. Moreover, because of you the suns, the moons, stars, planets, mountains oceans et al lose their permanence. This has made you arrogant. But listen carefully O Death, as soon as my son died; he took birth in another life. Therefore, it is you who has in fact died. O Death, only thou die!"

As regards death, Yudhishtir, the eldest among five Pandava brothers made an intelligent comment. Yaksha, a supernatural being asked him a question "What is the greatest wonder in the world?"

And Yudhishtir answered; "Every man knows that death is the ultimate truth of life. He sees countless people dying around him and he acts and thinks like he will live forever! This is the greatest wonder in the world".

We all live within a framework of time. Time means a particular period. Each one of us is born at a certain point of time and then dies at another certain point of time. And our life is a period between these two points of time. Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 and then passed away on January 30, 1948. Thus Mahatma's life is a period between the above two dates. Similarly, the life of each one of us is a definite parcel of time. The success or failure of our lives depends upon how we use this time.

There is a story by Aesop entitled 'The ant and the grasshopper'. The ant was hardworking and thrifty. She toiled and milled the whole summer and accumulated food for the upcoming winter. The grasshopper on the other hand did not like to work. Throughout the summer, he wandered from place to place singing.

In winter when there was nothing to eat, the grasshopper went to ant's house and requested her to give him some food as he had nothing in store. With great astonishment the ant asked him, "Then what were you doing the whole summer?"

"I sang," the grasshopper proudly answered the ant's question.

"You sang then? Well, now you go and dance," said the ant and closed the door. The ant made good use of time whereas the grasshopper misused it.

Broadly, time can be divided into three parts. They are past, present and future. One cannot change the past, nor does one know what is in store in future. But the present is in our hands and we can make the best use of it.

Therefore the name of this part of time is indeed significant. It is present. Present means gift! And this period of time is certainly a valuable gift for humankind. Spiritualism gives it the greatest importance. All the sages and saints across the world are appealing to us in one voice that we should live in the present tense.

of the victims and more compensation for their sufferings. Until this is done, Bhopal's hapless souls, whose world turned topsy-turvy on that fateful night 40 years ago, will have no closure.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai

## Volunteers are priceless

A nation is immensely benefited by the potential, utility and strength of a volunteer who can make a great difference to people in agony. It indeed is a soothing sight to see trained and untrained volunteers rushing to help in emergencies.

Volunteers, for socioeconomic development, are key cogs who work hard towards building resilient communities.

Passion, integrity, reality are virtues a volunteer aims to imbibe. By and large, volunteers benefit others without themselves being benefited, and one of the greatest gifts a person can give is his time. A voter exercises his franchise once in many years but a volunteer votes daily for a community that can change the world.

If one takes into account the whopping 70 per cent informal participation of workers for the cause of volunteerism, the esteem with which the service is held can be deciphered. Poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation and gender inequality are areas that can enormously gain from enthusiastic volunteers.

Ganapathi Bhat, Akola