

Social media feud erupts as Goa politicians trade jibes over Bandodkar's legacy

Team Herald

MARGAO: A heated exchange ensued on social media between Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Goa Forward Party (GFP) President Vijai Sardesai over Sardesai's alleged comments on Goa's first Chief Minister, Dayanand Bhausaheb Bandodkar. Sawant alleged that Sardesai had insulted the late Bandodkar, by remarking that he had an 'allergy' towards Goenchi Asmitai (Goan identity).

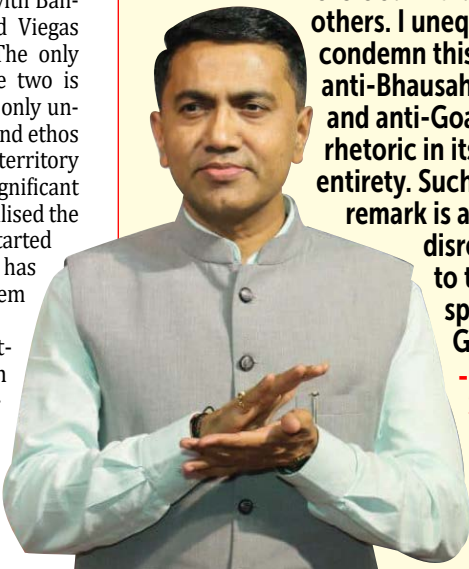
The controversy stems from a statement made by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas during an event in Colva last week, where he lauded Sawant's development efforts in Benaulim and drew a parallel with Bandodkar. Sardesai had criticised Viegas for the comparison, saying, "The only similarity I see between those two is their undisguised desire to not only undermine Goa's unique identity and ethos but also run Goa as an extended territory of Maharashtra. But I do see a significant difference: while Bhausaheb realised the importance of education and started many schools, the current CM has been going around shutting them down with passion."

The spat has now escalated and drawn reactions from political leaders across party lines, with many taking to social media to weigh in on the legacy of Bandodkar and its relevance to contemporary politics.

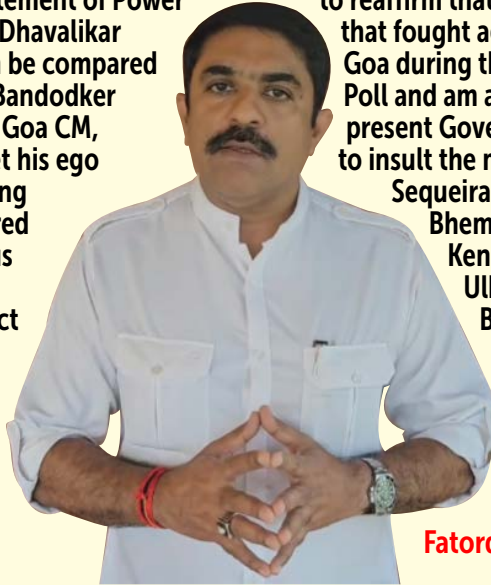
No! Bhausaheb Bandodkar never had an allergy to Goa's Asmitai (identity)! Claiming that Bhausaheb made a mistake or harboured an allergy to Goa's identity is not just a misrepresentation but a blatant and disgraceful insult to the legacy of Goa's first Chief Minister. Bhausaheb was a towering figure who tirelessly championed Goa's identity and development. The real problem lies with Vijai Sardesai and his inflated ego, which fuels his delusion that individuals like him are somehow

"more Goan" than others. I unequivocally condemn this anti-Bhausaheb and anti-Goa rhetoric in its entirety. Such a remark is a disrespect to the very spirit of Goa

-Pramod Sawant, Goa CM, on X



The Chief Minister's statement that I have an inflated ego and that I am anti-Bhausaheb Bandodkar and the spirit of Goa is nothing but yet another tactic to deflect public attention from the issue of Government of Goa ignoring "Asmitai Dis" or the Opinion Poll Day even after promising to restart the official function meant to commemorate modern India's first referendum that resulted in Goa maintaining its distinct identity and saving it from being merged into Maharashtra. I believe the statement of Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar that no CM can be compared to Bhausaheb Bandodkar has pained the Goa CM, who likes to get his ego boosted by being unduly compared to his illustrious predecessors. I have full respect for Goa's first Chief Minister and hold him in high esteem for ushering in India's first



democratic revolution by empowering Goa's Bahun Samaj through historic land reforms that gave ownership rights to Goan agricultural tenants. His invaluable contribution of establishing free educational facilities in the state cannot be erased from history. As opposed to this, Government primary schools are shutting down due to faulty policies and Goa's lands are being taken over by outsiders through collusion with the government in the tenure of the present Chief Minister. I would like to reaffirm that I belong to a family that fought against the merger of Goa during the historic Opinion Poll and am aggrieved that the present Government continues to insult the memory of Dr Jack Sequeira, Shabu Dessai, Udai Bhembre, Chandrakant Keni, Ravindra Kelekar, Ulhas Buyao, Shankar Bhandari and other heroes of the historic Opinion Poll! No one should attempt to teach me history or their version of it

-Vijai Sardesai, Fatorda MLA, on X

Vijai's constant need to give opinions on everything comes across as a classic know-it-all attitude. However, it's ironic that he was instrumental in contributing to the downfall of Goa by getting the BJP in power in 2017 & his repeated actions till 2019, leading to shutting down of government primary schools, land scams



and land conversions. It seems Vijai's personal development agenda is more focused on self-promotion rather than actual improvement. His tactics, including defaming the united opposition with his "Zanvai," appear to be driven by a desire for power and control rather than genuine concern for Goa's well-being

-Venzy Viegas, Benaulim MLA, on Facebook

I don't get why Vijai is targeting Bhausaheb Bandodkar. We're all Indians first, and then Goans. Bhausaheb faced immense pressure from top leaders back in the day. We can't just blame



him and move on. Bhausaheb can't be compared to any other chief minister of Goa,"

-Sudin Dhavalikar, MGP MLA and Power Minister, speaking to reporters

It is in the interest of Goa that the Opposition parties and their leaders who worked hand in hand for Lok Sabha elections maintain restraint. Instead focusing on exposing the BJP-led State government's loot, and raising people centric issues is necessary, divided opposition is advantage for BJP Goa

-Sunil Kawthekar, Vice President, Goa Congress on X



Respect Goa's first CM, Bhausaheb Bandodkar, for his vision and contribution, but don't use his name for political gains. True tribute is in action, not propaganda! Restart closed schools and revamp education model

Amit Palekar, AAP Goa Chief, on X



Outrage in Vasco as MPA begins blocking public access to Baina flyover ramps

At the inauguration on Tuesday, Union Minister Gadkari had stated that the infrastructure built at Baina was for public convenience and to ease traffic, locals demand apology from port officials

Team Herald

VASCO: A day after the inauguration of the new loop port connectivity flyover by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA) on Wednesday started constructing gates and a compound wall to block access to either side of the ramps at Baina, inviting outrage from the public and the Mormugao Municipal Council.

Following complaints by the residents of Baina, Mormugao chairperson Girish Borker, along with ward councillor Deepak Naik, rushed to the site and stopped the construction work carried out by the contractor.

They claimed that the MPA chief engineer allegedly insulted the Mormugao chairperson when the latter contacted him for clarification on the ongoing construction work and demanded an apology from him.

Reacting to the development, councillor Deepak Naik strongly condemned the MPA's actions and warned that they would not tolerate intimidation. Naik recalled that at the time of the inauguration on Tuesday, Gadkari had clearly stated that the infrastructure built at Baina was for public convenience and to ease traffic.

"How can MPA contradict the Minister's statement and block access to the people?" Naik asked. Naik further remarked that

the MPA's actions seemed intended to force people to obtain passes to use the ramps. "If the gates and wall are not removed, we will use bulldozers to raze them, irrespective of the consequences," Naik warned.

Borker criticised the MPA for not disclosing their plans before the inauguration of the new flyover.

He alleged that the MPA waited until after the event to start construction to block access. He further accused the MPA chief engineer of behaving arrogantly when approached for clarification and demanded an immediate apology. Borker stated that the MPA would not be allowed to continue construction until the issue is resolved.

How can MPA contradict the Minister's statement and block access to the people? If the gates and wall are not removed, we will use bulldozers to raze them, irrespective of the consequences - Deepak Naik, Mormugao councillor

He noted that the citizens, particularly the residents of Baina, had already faced hardships during the construction phase of the flyover. "We will not allow them to suffer again. They cannot be denied access. This is unacceptable," Borker declared.

South Goa Zilla P'yat proposes Quepem as Goa's third district

Team Herald

MARGAO: During the South Goa Zilla Panchayat meeting held on Wednesday, it was resolved that Quepem taluka should be declared the third district of Goa.

The meeting, chaired by Chairperson Sanjana Velip, also addressed several important issues, including the need to expedite the process related to performance guarantees from contractors.

Zilla Panchayat member Suresh Kepekar proposed the selection of Quepem taluka for the new district, highlighting that Quepem is centrally located and its selection would benefit many people across the region.

"Quepem's location is central for many remote areas, and it will help all the people

if selected to the third district of Goa," Kepekar stated.

Chairperson Sanjana Velip assured reporters that her office would follow up on the matter by sending the resolution to the government.

"After deliberation by the members, it has been instructed that the performance guarantee process with regard to works carried out by the concerned contractors be expedited. Many times what has been noticed is that the letters to be issued to the contractors are not issued immediately," Velip added.

Additionally, the meeting also focused on the utilization of rural development and sports funds, with members discussing the need for effective allocation and management of these funds for the benefit of local communities.

FORGOTTEN CRAFT

SAGUN GAWADE



Despite the crowds at Lokotsav in Campal-Panjim, the Goan tribal artisans tucked away inside Kala Academy are struggling to attract visitors, dampening their spirits and sales

Sardesai slams CMO as 'incompetent' after Gadkari flags highway flaws

Team Herald

MARGAO: Reacting to the Central Minister Nitin Gadkari's statement regarding discrepancies in road projects in Goa, when Gadkari reportedly asked the Goa administration to 'wake up', Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai on Wednesday criticised the Pramod Sawant government, stating that it is "asleep permanently, and will never wake up".

He also labeled the Chief Minister's office (CMO) in Goa as "incompetent."

A day prior, Gadkari had remarked that there were discrepancies in the

road projects carried out in Goa. He requested the Goa Chief Minister and Chief Secretary to conduct a thorough investigation, pointing out that the width of the roads was not up to standard. Gadkari further urged that notices be issued and work be carried out in accordance with the records.

Responding to these remarks, MLA Vijai Sardesai expressed little surprise at Gadkari's scathing comments, criticising Pramod Sawant's government for its "indifference and lethargy" in handling road projects in the state.

"CMO Goa's incompetence, along with that of his cabinet, is legendary, and for the Union Minister to admonish him publicly only highlights the intense frustration the minister, who is regarded as an infrastructure game changer across party lines, must be feeling," said Vijai.

Vijai also hoped that more Union Ministers would call out other State ministers for their "impotence and corruption," accusing them of turning Goa into a State where property is sold piece by piece, rather than a place where Goans have a say in their future.



SHOULD CENTRAL MINISTERS LIKE GADKARI VISIT PANJIM TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE 'SMART CITY?'

Nitin Gadkari is a well-performing Minister, I don't want to put him on the spot. The Goa government has not brought him to Panjim, because I'm sure he would have lost his composure on the Smart City works. This has just gone too far. Our ministers don't have brains. Why do they organise Lokotsav outside our houses? We have told them hundreds of times not to come here. There is so much traffic for Lokotsav and in spite of this, you have blocked four roads in Panjim? Three years have passed. Is this a Smart City? I wish some Central Minister sees this. Who is the person who is running this Smart City Mission, I just don't understand.

Armando Gonsalves, Goa For Giving

The people of Panjim and those who visit the city are losing their sanity due to the hardships they are enduring thanks to the never-ending digging. We asked citizens if Central leaders like Union Minister Nitin Gadkari should visit Panjim to take stock of the mess created by the Smart City works

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Smart City work is now progressing fast. I think now, the government has control over it. I feel the supervisors and contractors are supervising the work, since the speed has increased. People are facing problems, no doubt, but now the trouble is much less as seen in the last eight days. It is not that if Union Minister Nitin Gadkari does not come to Panjim, he doesn't know what is happening. He must be getting information. He is working all over India, he must be having his way of getting information. The concerned officer or engineer and the contractor has to be held responsible.

Uday Shirodkar, Panjim resident

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said that he's helping the State so much, but he does not know why the work is going so slow. But our government should have brought him to Panjim city to see for himself why the pilot project of Smart City is not getting completed. Deadlines after deadlines have expired, they are even attempting to fool the courts. It is very important for Nitin Gadkari to understand why Smart City works are not getting completed. Today Smart City looks like a Bombarded City. They do construction on one day, the next day they do destruction. Again they will construction. Panjim is completely finished.

Mariano Ferrao, social activist

Officials meet to tackle safety issues on Western Bypass

Team Herald

MARGAO: A review meeting on road safety in Benaulim constituency was held on Wednesday, led by AAP MLA Venzy Viegas, with the participation of the South Goa Collector, Traffic Cell, and PWD officials.

A key outcome of the meeting was the decision to expedite the installation of speed breakers and road safety signages at critical locations. Additionally, plans were approved to set up a designated stand for Benaulim's auto rickshaw drivers.

Concerns centred around the newly inaugurated stretch of the Western Bypass and its connecting service



roads, which have seen a surge in accidents since their opening in December. Officials emphasised the need to promptly address these safety concerns to protect commuters.

The discussion also extended to other accident-prone zones across the constituency, considering the heavy tourist

influx in coastal villages. Viegas called for site visits to assess safety concerns and stressed the importance of following up on suggestions made during the meeting and previous inspections. He assured that these issues would be raised in the Assembly and with the relevant departments to ensure swift resolution.