

## O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

Padma Shree  
for Opinion  
Poll Heroes

Padma Shri is the fourth-highest civilian award of the Republic of India, after the Bharat Ratna, the Padma Vibhushan and the Padma Bhushan. The award is conferred in recognition of "distinguished contribution in various spheres of activity including public affairs."

Heroic Goans such as Purushottam Kakodkar, Dr Jack de Sequeira, Chandrakant Keni, Shabu Desai, Uday Bhembre, Narcinva Naik, Dr Alvaro Loyola Furtado, Urminda Lima Leitao, Vasudev Salgaocar, Vasudeo Sarmalkar, Ravindra Kelekar, Bakibab Borkar, Manoharai Sardesai, Ulhas Buyao, Vasudeo Sarmalkar and Vijayabai Sarmalkar and others who played a pre-eminent role in winning the Opinion Poll should be recommended for the Padma Shri awards or even for the Padma Bhushan award which is given for "distinguished service of a high order". The Padma Bhushan award criteria includes "service in any field." Their yeoman service has been to save an entire race of Goans from being extinguished, as attempted by the MGP and its allies.

The service rendered by the above eminent Goans is of such a high order that without their efforts, today

**The service rendered by the above eminent Goans is of such a high order that without their efforts, today Goa as a state would not exist. The fusion of East and West which creates a unique culture called Goa, would not exist to enrich the incredible India experience, which we portray to the world. Our politicians should realise that they wouldn't be holding their offices without the heroic efforts of the eminent Goans who fought for winning the Opinion Poll.**

Purushottam Kakodkar was instrumental in convincing Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and the Home Ministry about the unique identity of Goa and through official channels succeeded in getting the Opinion Poll for Goa.

Equally important was the role of Dr Jack de Sequeira, who as leader of the United Goans Party succeeded in mobilising political and public opinion for holding the Opinion Poll. He funded the UGP, given his background as a prominent businessman.

Besides the powerful group around the newly launched Marathi daily Rashtramat, headed by Chandrakant Keni funded by Shantilal and Bappalal Gosalia, three Timblo brothers and Vasudeo and Ramkrishna Salgaocar were instrumental in fighting to save Goa from merger. Through Marathi, Rashtramat sought to reach out to a larger section of the people but also carried articles in Devanagari Konkani to achieve its purpose.

Uday Bhembre gave up his college studies in Mumbai and came down to become a journalist and through his columns Brahmastra, where over 1500 articles were written, he managed to counter the Marathi-Merger propaganda of the MGP and other groups, point by point.

Shabu Desai formed a group called Sangapradesh Jyot (Torch of Union Territory) which went from place to place shouting slogans and indulging in pro-Union Territory propaganda. This Jyot was present at almost every major meeting.

Ulhas Buyao created a cultural troupe (to counter the Marathi artists who were brought by the Marathi-Merger lobby) and performed before every programme propagating a separate Union Territory.

Ravindra Kelekar who was the Congress candidate for Margao in the 1963 elections mobilised in favour of Separate Union Territory for Goa as a politician and as a writer. He wrote extensively in Rashtramat to save Goa from merger and propagated Konkani as the mother tongue of Goans.

Similarly, Manoharai Sardesai who was a French Teacher at Chowgule College wrote in favour of retaining Union Territory under the pseudonym 'Katupai' without speaking on a public platform. Bakibab Borkar too wrote under a pseudonym 'Umloh' since he was a government employee at All India Radio.

Besides the above eminent Goans, Narcinva Naik, Vice President of the UGP, Urminda Lima Leitao of Vasco, Enio Pimenta of Curtorim, Luis Proto Barbosa of Cansaulim, all members of UGP, and Dr Alvaro Loyola Furtado of Chinchinim, who was first elected president of the UGP and then made way for Dr Jack de Sequeira fought tirelessly for retaining Goa as a separate political entity, its culture and rich heritage. Vasudeo Sarmalkar and Vijayabai Sarmalkar from Margao too worked actively to save Goa from being merged with Maharashtra.

The least the State government can do is to recommend the names of these Goan greats for the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan or for the highest category of State Awards. The work of the eminent Goans who fought to save Goa should be written in the annals of the history of Goa, so that future generations will forever remain grateful that a beautiful land such as Goa was saved by them for generations to come.

## comment



TALLULAH D'SILVA

Searching for  
social justice

Sanjana Rishi, founder of Nindia Loungewear and Earth champion, recently shared a post about her horrific experience while travelling by the Mumbai Metro as well as other instances on social media where men and even teenage boys had made the most horrific remarks and lewd gestures about her. And this was not at late night hours, but at daytime in busy public spaces. What she was concerned about was the fact that she was raising a daughter, a toddler, now at an age where she was asking questions that needed an explanation. And these were instances where she too was also present and had heard these comments!

Therefore the question of how we raise girls, where men and boys even today have no sense of respect, courtesy and decency, is bearing down on us. Are we living in a country where the girl child has no chance to live in dignity? That her appearance and what she chooses to wear will always be dictated by men lurking in the shadows and what dirty remarks they are sure to hurl? Everyday we hear news about rape, abuse, domestic violence and murder too.

**Children have rights too. Let us stand in solidarity with all children so that we can nurture with empathy, protect their rights and fulfil our collective responsibility to raise responsible citizens**



Today a lot of children are grappling with very difficult situations at home or school. A child may have lost one parent or could be an orphan or have parents who are separated. Some have parents that do manual labour, dig roads or work as domestic help. Some children have parents who are never around, they feel alone. Some are exploited. Some are left to fend for themselves. Children have rights too. Let us stand in solidarity with all children so that we can nurture with empathy, protect their rights and fulfil our collective responsibility to raise responsible citizens.

Nigel D'Souza, an artist from Bastora is quite

vocal about what he has experienced.

"Today in society, we see many adults and children with disabilities, like Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD, Cerebral palsy, physically challenged etc. being sidelined, treated differently, denied access to mainstream schools, not given jobs etc. Thankfully, not all of them are treated this way, but even though now our world is more inclusive, still we see this. Being differently abled means having a quality most people don't have, but this could be a really good quality, maybe it could bring a positive change to society at large. Most of these people are capable. They also have a role to play and are an important part of our society like everyone else. We need to break stereotypes, and ensure equality and a fully inclusive India, and world for all like, include all these children in games, sports, etc. After all, everyone in the world has problems, and differences. All differences should be embraced, not thought as scary. Then we can truly progress socially and economically."

Another student from Goa adds, "Today, while we're discussing our rights, let's talk about the most basic human right - the right to life. Which is taken away from the most vulnerable in society - the child in their mother's womb. The child that never gets a chance to live because they're ill timed or inconvenient, or they have mental or physical disabilities. While listening to the voices of minorities, let's pay heed to those that do not have a voice. Let's stand for life because each of us is special, unique and incomparable."

Aarya Mane, a young student from Kolhapur shares her thoughts on defining gender roles.

"Have you seen your brothers refusing to do domestic chores just because they are boys? Well, it has been a common case for centuries. Defining gender roles is the biggest obstacle to personal growth and reaching your fullest potential. Let's have no shame in doing all the activities that are expected to be done by the other gender. Because the epitome of true

independence and self-sufficiency starts from your home. So let's make it our goal to say no to gender biases."

Avni Vishnoi, a young Architect from Delhi adds, "Power lies with the people. I would like to reiterate that power truly lies with the people, as it should. We can all choose how to be part of the resistance, it can be through protest, through art, through conversations we choose to have in our homes, workspaces, cafes, public spaces. Also, choose conversations we don't want to be a part of or are called to lead. We can choose how to show up in society. The hope is to nurture the feeling for everyone. So, at this point I remember the story we used to read as children - it is easy to break one stick but difficult to break a bundle of sticks. Let us become that bundle. Let us uplift each other, support each other, ask for help and be the help. Wherever and however we can. Together, we can challenge the norms of society and strive towards having justice for all."

Pundalik Naik another student is disturbed and says, "Today what we are seeing in society is that poor people are becoming poor and rich people are becoming richer. Is it because poor people are being exploited? Is it because no one really cares for the welfare of the underprivileged? A just society is one where fairness isn't a privilege of the rich and suffering for the poor, but it's a right which is equally accessible for all!"

"Where is our right to freedom of speech?" says a visibly agitated Aryan Busireddy, a student from Hyderabad. "When justice bends with the will of the majority, freedom of speech becomes a privilege, not a right. Social justice is all about listening to the singular voice that's suppressed."

So let's speak up even if we are alone. The voice of truth, goodness and righteousness will always prevail.

**(Tallulah D'Silva is an Architect and silver awardee of the Golden Door Award 2020 for truth and integrity.)**

## people's edit

BELGIUM, AMERICA AND  
MOTHER LANGUAGE

BY SUJIT DE

International Mother Language Day is observed every year on 21 February to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, one language dies every 14 days as powerful groups impose their languages on speakers of less common languages.

The imposition of a dominant language on people with a different language (linguistic imperialism) is a symptom of a disease that can cause long term problems and hinder a country's progress. There is no room for the 'one nation one language' policy in a multilingual democratic country like India.

Bangladesh's liberation against Pakistan's language imperialism has given us many lessons. First, it refutes the two-nation theory of Savarkar and Jinnah and shows that language imposition cannot be swept under the carpet of religious fraternity. Second, it proves that India's three language policy is a right step in the right direction.

On the other hand, a liberal language policy helps Belgium achieve peace and prosperity. Belgium has recognised Flemish, French, and German as their official languages even though German speakers constitute a small minority of the population to effectively solve their internal strife.

They solved the language conflict by implementing a federal system, dividing the country into distinct linguistic regions with significant autonomy, where Dutch (Flemish) is spoken in the north, French (Walloon) in the south, and a bilingual Brussels capital, effectively allowing each language community to govern its own affairs while maintaining a unified national government. It has been ensured that there would be equal representation for both Dutch and French speakers in the federal government.

Having thus solved its language problem, Belgium has got an enviable position in the Human Development Index. Between 1990 and 2025, Belgium's HDI value increased from 0.806 to 0.942 and now it stands at the 12th position out of 193 countries. We should learn from Belgium how peace and prosperity are directly proportional to liberal language policy. If India wants to better its 134th rank in the HDI, it has to take many measures. A liberal language policy is certainly one of them.

India also needs to follow the language model of the United States of America. In spite of being at the top of technologically advanced countries, the USA falls back on ballot paper voting to root out any suspicion of foul play stemming from voting through EVM. Interestingly, these ballot papers are available in all major languages of a state, depending on its demography.

While a voter in New York can choose a ballot paper in Bengali instead of English, Chinese, Spanish, and Korean, voters in Illinois can opt for a ballot paper printed in Hindi. It also shows how a democratic country should honour the mother tongue of even those voters who have origins in different countries.

The Reserve Bank of India needs to take a cue from the American election. As per the 2011 language census, states like West Bengal, along with southern and north-eastern States, are not Hindi-speaking and have adopted English as a secondary language. I am a Bengali and a resident of Kolkata. The RBI has surprisingly been sending a number of important SMS messages to me exclusively in Hindi.

I could infer that these SMS messages were about online fraud prevention, but I struggled to understand the instructions.

If the RBI has to use Hindi, it should stick to India's three language policy by sending SMS first in the primary language of the State, then in English, and at the end in Hindi for non-Hindi speaking States.

The Centre needs to follow the language policy of Belgium and the USA. Extra care needs to be taken to see to it that there is not a single attempt to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speaking states.

Dog breeds and  
Indian climate

It is learnt that the government's decision to ban Rottweiler and Pitbull dog breeds has reportedly received widespread support with experts and animal welfare advocates citing concerns over irresponsible ownership, illegal breeding and public safety breeds.

However it needs to be noted that any dog breed can show aggressive nature depending on the environment and circumstances. However, dogs attacking people on the streets is unacceptable. According to a recent study, dogs are more prone to display aggressive behaviour on hot, polluted days than on cold, rainy days. Hence dog bite incidents increased on hotter days but decreased on cooler days. The effects of climate change extend to dogs as much as to people. Choosing the right canine companion for the diverse climate in India is crucial for a harmonious pet-owner relationship.

Dog breeds which are small and with a helpful outer coat are suitable for Indian conditions. These include Dachshund, Beagle, Indian Spitz, Shih Tzu, Pug, Maltese, Yorkshire Terrier. Dogs not suitable for Indian weather are Saint Bernard, Mastiff, Siberian Husky, American Bulldog, Alaskan Malamutes and the like. These breeds are adapted to colder climates and may struggle to cope with the heat. They have thick coats which is meant to keep them warm in their native countries and is the

## letterstotheeditor

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reason they are unable to cope with high temperatures here. These breeds are not suited for a tropical climate and humidity in India. It's essential to consider the climate when choosing a dog breed to ensure their health and well-being.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

No time period to submit  
stampede report

On Feb 15, there was a human stampede at the New Delhi railway station that resulted in the death of 18 people. The reason is allegedly a confusion created when there was an announcement of similar sounding names of trains and platform numbers. In a hurry as not to miss the trains, people crowded the footbridge and in the ensuing chaos many fell and were trampled upon. Later the railway minister stated that a 'holding area' for passengers would be created at 60 stations that have high footfall, especially during events and festivals.

A manual on crowd-management would be readied and the people will be made aware of the safety measures to be followed at the stations. These are commendable steps but could have been made much earlier by the government of the day since human stampede has happened in the past too.

When asked if the officials

have been taken to task, he mentioned that it was a collective failure. And following the principle of natural justice, action may be contemplated only after the inquiry committee gives the report. When questioned about the deadline for the report, he supposedly said that there is no time period fixed because then the members will be under undue pressure.

Any investigative committee, whether one-man or multi-member, does have a submission date for the report. Depending on the subject and mandate, the date could vary from a day or two to a few months.

Therefore, in the present circumstance, the reasons to investigate the cause of the tragedy that occurred at New Delhi station is defeated because the committee must delve to find the reasons and give recommendations to avoid such a situation. A committee that works without a deadline does not make any sense and would appear to be a hogwash.

Sridhar D'Iyer, Caranzalem

US should be more  
humane to migrants

The US does have the right to deport illegal migrants from India or any other country of the world. Deporting the illegal migrants from India should have been done in a more humane

manner, not the way it was done -- handcuffed and deported in a military plane with no food and water given to them because they are people, not criminals. The US should take a cue from India on how to deal with illegal migrants.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai

Tesla-India should  
be a role model

In quest for making the coming to India of Tesla to manufacture EVs in to be set up manufacturing facility very soon, it would be most significant that this EV world leader with a total manufacturing capacity of 1.773 million cars globally should become a shining example of US-India co-operation.

Given to understand that Tesla is scouting for a suitable manufacturing site, it would be great significant if Tesla would seek to source power supply for its plant in India from electricity powered by other than coal-fired power in a country in which 78% of the electricity is generated from coal.

Also, the then service stations and charging stations and even Tesla offices to be set up should draw power from other than coal generated electricity so as to make it an ideal facility that is per se zero emission project. Tesla should become the harbinger of reduction in the emission

of greenhouse gases in totality in its role. It is also known that Tesla seeks to manufacture budget EVs costing between Rs 20-25 lakh which could become extremely popular in India in this technically most advanced EV manufacturers in the world. The Tesla India plant should become a role model for the world to look up to.

Elvidio Miranda, Panjim

Reach out to  
needy with love

In this war stricken world, we all are invited to be Pilgrims of Hope and messengers of Peace and Justice, and help all those who need our care and concern. There are many people who are lonely and have nobody to care for them. The world at its worst need every human person at its best and care for people who are suffering of depression, sadness and loneliness and have developed suicidal tendencies. There is a need to help these people to recover from their sickness. As a Pilgrim of Hope, we need to help and strengthen these people who are weak and need not just our moral support but also our financial support which will help them be true Pilgrim of Hope and thus spread our Grace to all around them. In this Jubilee Year 2025 that focuses on Grace, Hope, Forgiveness and Renewal, we have all to reach out to one another and empower those who are weak and bring them to God for true Renewal.

Cajetan Peter D'Souza, Mumbai