

# 'HISTORY CANNOT BE CHANGED': GOANS RALLY BEHIND UDAY BHEMBRE

A steady stream of writers, politicians, friends, artists, and individuals from various backgrounds, pour in to Uday Bhembre's Margao residence to express their solidarity; condemn intimidation and mob mentality; question police inaction, government silence

“This is not the Goa I belong to! Everyone has a right to dissent! But you cannot threaten someone like Uday Bhembre, a few amongst those who gave us this state of Goa, to begin with! If you love history, please understand the history of Goa too, that will speak louder about people like Uday Bhembre than your loud voices! We can debate, but not in mobs that threaten at late hours! It is only apt that the honourable Chief Minister of Goa Dr Pramod Sawant visits Uday Bhembre at his residence and assures the entire Goa that he doesn't support this mob psychology and that he truly respects the sons of this soil who have toiled hard to keep our identity intact

— Anwesha Singbal, Konkani writer

“History cannot be changed! One is academically correct, while the other is politically right. We must learn to accept history—good, bad, or ugly! Why display brute anger at night? Shameful!

— Sanjeev Sardesai, historian

“Adv Udaybab Bhembre has selflessly contributed to preserve the unique identity of Goa. In democracy everyone has a right to freedom of speech & expression. Udaybab contested and won against my grandfather Babu Naik in 1984 in a democratic way. I hold Udaybab in high esteem. We may differ on ideology but we must all remain united to protect Goa's identity

— Prabhava Naik, social activist

“Are any discussions on Shivaji Maharaj the sole proprietorship of some mobs who can intimidate people to speak what they like to hear? Are these groups some kind of unofficial censor board who have to issue their NOC on every discussion of history or historical figures?

— Rohan Goverkar, writer

“How dare some right-wing groups approach a 85-year-old respectable gentleman, Mr Uday Bhembre at night? Will the Police take action and will the DGP take note of such incidents which are recurring because they go unpunished?

— Jose Maria Miranda, social activist

“What we have witnessed in the last few decades is that Islamic clergymen in Pakistan and Iran were keen to threaten free speech and led mobs to assault writers and thinkers. Unfortunately, many extremist organizations in India are now behaving like Islamists or the Taliban. It is extremely shocking that Uday Bhembre was gheraoed by a crowd in the name of agitation. This is simply the Talibanization of society, where people and writers are not allowed to have their own thoughts. If Uday Bhembre is unfree and unsafe to express an opinion, none of us is free as writers

— Rahman Abbas, Sahitya Akademi Awardee

“If the government fails to take action, it would send a troubling message to the public about its stance on such acts of intimidation, which are dangerous for Goa's social fabric. I'm horrified that such an incident could occur in Goa. Bhembre's statements were based on facts, not mere opinions

— Damodar Mauzo, Konkani writer

“Why have the police had not taken action or filed a suo moto FIR, given the clear evidence of illegal trespass and unlawful assembly? This was not just an attack on Bhembre but a threat to anyone who voices an opinion based on facts. Is this what democracy has come to? Bhembre's and all Goans' constitutional rights are being trampled upon

— Mohandas Lolyenkar, activist

“Goa is a land of wise and enlightened people. Hooliganism and rowdy behaviour never had a place here. However, such incidents have been occurring lately, and the government must take serious note of them. Uday Bhembre is a senior citizen of Goa, a thinker, and a man of great intellect. He is an inspiration to intellectuals and those who value wisdom. Hooliganism should never be tolerated in Goa. It is absolutely wrong to confront such a dignified individual at his home at 10 PM. The government must take action because tomorrow, this could happen to anyone. Today, it is essential for the sensible people of Goa to come together and condemn such acts. Uday Ji, we stand with you

— Akshay Naik, artist

“This is not acceptable. Period! You might agree or disagree with Uday Bhembre Sir and you are free to say so by countering his arguments through a video or a news article but gagging and threatening such a learned old couple at night at their residence is not acceptable. Request Goa Police to take action and teach them a lesson so that such things do not happen in Goa or anywhere else henceforth

— Dattaprasad Shetkar, entrepreneur

“Sad to see unnecessary aggression shown by few Bajrang Dal activists on Uday Bhembre, Goa's 85-year-old literary icon. A disturbing example of how intolerance can stifle intellectual discourse and creative thought. And much sadder to see the State be a silent spectator when this happens. A mature society engages in debate, allowing different perspectives to be examined and tested. Instead of silencing voices through intimidation, a more constructive approach would be to counter ideas with well-researched arguments, allowing the public to form informed opinions

— Sandeep Hebte, sportsperson

## Konkani forums slam police for not protecting ex-MLA from threats

Announce protest in Gogol on Sunday evening; challenge Bajrang Dal members to open debate

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Various Konkani organizations in Goa came together to condemn the recent incident where renowned Konkani writer Uday Bhembre was intimidated by Bajrang Dal members late on Friday night. Addressing the media at the Konkani Bhasha Mandal (KBM) premises on Saturday evening, KBM President Ratnamala Divkar questioned the lack of action by the police or the government in filing a case against those involved or taking measures to ensure Bhembre's safety. She added that they had planned to hold a protest at Lohia Maidan, given its symbolic significance to Goa's freedom struggle and other historical events, emphasizing that Bhembre had played a pivotal role in shaping Goa, be it through his contributions to the Opinion Poll or the Konkani language movement.

Due to Carnival festivities around Lohia Maidan, the group said they would hold a protest meet at the Chowgule College Junction,



Gogol-Margao at 4.30 pm on Sunday evening. Furthermore, the organizations defended Bhembre's recent video on the history of Shivaji, stating that all his remarks were based on historical references and documents that are widely recognized and available in the public domain.

Prakash Naik, another speaker and Konkani writer, stressed the need for fact-checking by Bajrang Dal activists. He pointed out that simple verification of details, such as the birth and milestones in Shivaji's life and their alignment with the timeline of Goa's history during Portuguese rule, would clarify the matter.

Divkar challenged the Bajrang Dal members to participate in an open debate, where Bhembre could present his side, and both parties could discuss historical matters in a conducive

environment without threats or attempts to silence voices.

She reiterated that this was not a language issue but a matter of the fundamental right to freedom of speech, emphasizing that Bhembre had not said anything wrong in his video.

Divkar also referred to comments made by Bajrang Dal members, both during their confrontation with Bhembre and while burning his effigy, stating that it appeared these individuals were unaware of Bhembre's rich accomplishments and background.

The organizations emphasized that this was not just an attack on Bhembre but an assault on the right to free expression. They expressed shock over the incident and declared their solidarity with Bhembre, urging like-minded citizens to stand together in support.

## VIVA CARNAVAL

Benaulim Constituency celebrated its 32nd Bem-Vindo de Carnival Float Parade on Saturday, with pomp and revelry. King Momo, Rocatho Joseph Gomes, led the floats which were a mix of village scenes and socio-political statements in trademark irreverent Banalkar-style. Dancers and villagers in costume accompanied the floats, while hundreds lined the streets to watch the spectacle

PICS: INACIO NORONHA



## 'Rlys should provide clarity on new station's location'

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Velim MLA Cruz Silva has backed the joint opposition to the new proposed Konkani Railway station by Sarzora and Sao Jose De Areal village panchayats. However, he pointed out the lack of clear information being provided by the railway authorities.

He said that when the Railway Ministry made the announcement, they referred to a new station that will come up at Sarzora. At the same time, there is talk by the Railways about constructing the station at Sao Jose De Areal.

He added that there appears to be a lack of clarity about the exact site for the new station. Nonetheless, he referred to the signature campaign carried out by the Sarzora villagers and the gram sabha held by the Sao Jose De Areal village panchayat and said he would take up these issues with the government and also ask for more information on the proposed new station plan, including all that will come up at this station.

## Sewage overflow sparks fears of disease outbreak in Jofilnagar-Ponda

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Residents of Jofilnagar, Ponda, have raised serious health concerns over septic and wastewater overflowing from gutters in the area.

Umesh Naik, a resident of Ponda, questioned, "Who will be responsible if dengue and malaria spread due to gutters overflowing with sewage on the road from residential buildings?" He stated that it is the responsibility of the Ponda Municipal Council (PMC) and local politicians to address the health hazards emerging in Jofilnagar, Ponda.

It may be recalled that the PMC had previously warned some residential buildings in Daag, Ponda, to disconnect their water connections if the sewage issue was not resolved.

According to sewerage officials, there has been a lukewarm



response from residents regarding sewage connections. They have urged people to apply for connections, as the sewerage department has already begun providing access to the 15 MLD sewage treatment plant for waste disposal.

PMC Chief Officer Yogiraj Gosavi has called on all residential buildings and societies in Ponda

to obtain sewage connections to prevent action from the authorities and to help maintain cleanliness in the city. He stated that the PMC and its buildings are already connected to the sewage network, along with some hospitals. He further stressed that residential buildings should also comply and apply for sewage connections.

## 'Consult schools, parents before imposing National Edu Policy'

GRLA calls for conference with all stakeholders to discuss the NEP's full implementation; urges schools to offer Romi script education if they comply with NEP's mandatory mother tongue rule

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Repeated Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan (GRLA) has voiced its support for parents in Goa regarding concerns over school timing changes and other policy shifts introduced by the State's education department under the National Education Policy (NEP). The organisation, however, argues that these adjustments are superficial and that the department must engage in broader consultations before implementing changes.

GRLA President Kennedy Afonso emphasised that the NEP grants autonomy to schools in setting their curriculum, syllabus, pedagogy, and assessment methods within the framework of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). He asserted that the education department should not impose decisions unilaterally but instead

engage with key stakeholders, including school managements and parents.

"The NEP provides flexibility and innovation in education, allowing schools the freedom to design their own academic approach," Afonso said. "It is time for school managements to assert their autonomy and not succumb to diktats from the education department." He urged schools to demand an immediate conference with all stakeholders to discuss the NEP's full implementation and its implications for Goa's education system.

One key aspect of the NEP is its emphasis on education in the mother tongue or local dialect up to the fifth standard. GRLA has therefore called on the education department to introduce Roman script Konkani as an optional subject

alongside Devanagari, stating that the policy allows schools to make such decisions independently. Afonso also urged diocesan school authorities to take the initiative in offering Roman script Konkani, as the education department has no authority to prevent it.

The organisation highlighted that the NEP promotes a flexible learning environment where students can explore multiple subjects based on their interests. "It is essential that students are given the opportunity to learn in the script of their choice, ensuring linguistic inclusivity in Goa's education system," Afonso said.

GRLA has reiterated its demand for a comprehensive review of the NEP's implementation in the state, stressing that policies should be framed only after thorough discussions with all stakeholders.

MAX. TEMP 36 °C  
MIN. TEMP 23 °C

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Sir! No VIP cars available, how about a helicopter?