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The Rot Within:
A Government
in Denial

When a sitting BJP member and former cabinet minister openly declares that "looting is going on everywhere in the state" and confesses to paying bribes to get work done, the claim cannot be dismissed as mere political rhetoric. Former minister Pandurang Madkaikar's allegations strike at the heart of the BJP's self-proclaimed image as a corruption-free government. This is not an opposition leader hurling accusations; it is a BJP insider, someone who once held power within the very system he is now exposing. His words have shattered the pretence of integrity that the state government has tried to maintain.

Madkaikar's revelations, made after his meeting with BJP National General Secretary B L Santosh, have sent shockwaves through the state. He alleges that he personally handed over Rs 15 to 20 lakh to a minister's

Predictably, the BJP has gone into damage control mode. Chief Minister's special aide, Mauvin Godinho, has attempted to brush aside the allegations by advising Madkaikar to file a police complaint. At the same time, he has thrown a veiled threat, reminding Madkaikar that he too was once a minister. In other words, Godinho is hinting that skeletons exist in everyone's closet

personal assistant to get a "small" task done. While he has not named the minister, his warning is clear: if he is forced to leave the party, he will reveal the full truth. The implications of this statement are staggering. If a former minister had to pay bribes, what does this mean for the common citizen?

Of course, Madkaikar himself is no saint. His assertion that such hefty sums are unnecessary for minor tasks only exposes his own familiarity with the underbelly of power. "I was a minister; I know

how these things work," he claims. His frustration seems less about the existence of corruption and more about how deeply entrenched it has become, even within his own party. That in itself is a damning statement.

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The harsh truth is that nothing will come out of this unless Madkaikar takes the bold step of naming the corrupt minister. But will he do so? It is more likely that this is a strategic move to reassert his relevance in a party that has sidelined him since the passing of Manohar Parrikar. With elections approaching, he may be trying to exert pressure on party leadership in hopes of securing a ticket. Even if that is the case, his allegations cannot be dismissed lightly.

The BJP's credibility has taken a severe beating, not just because of Madkaikar's claims but due to a series of unresolved corruption allegations over the years. Babush Monserrate had earlier accused the government of corruption in the recruitment of civil engineers. When Deepak Pauskar was the construction minister, the recruitment process was cancelled due to suspected irregularities. But the government never disclosed who was responsible for the corruption. The same pattern continued under Nilesh Cabral's tenure. Industrialist Datta Nayak recently alleged that money was demanded from him by the Planning and Development Authority to clear a file. These are not isolated incidents; they paint a picture of systemic corruption where allegations surface, but accountability remains absent.

Pandurang Madkaikar joined the BJP in 2017 when Parrikar was Chief Minister. Since Parrikar's demise, he has been pushed to the sidelines. It is no secret that he wants a ticket for the upcoming elections from the Cumberjua constituency. His detractors will claim that his allegations are merely a pressure tactic. But even if we accept this argument, he will eventually have to back his words with evidence. Otherwise, his credibility will be lost.

Madkaikar's past does not absolve the present government of accountability. Whether or not he is politically motivated, his words have put the BJP in a difficult position. If he is lying, the government must act against him. If he is telling the truth, the guilty must be exposed. Either way, silence is not an option.

Twitter World

Bernie Sanders @SenSanders

Elon Musk and Donald Trump's dismantling of USAID will lead to millions of preventable deaths. The decision of the richest person in the world to destroy an agency that delivers life-saving aid to the poorest people on the planet is unconscionable.

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M K Stalin @mkstalin

Widening disparity, narrowing minds! Don't penalise us for excelling and contributing to the nation!

comment



STEVE CORREA



RONALD D'SOUSA

The crucial role of
teachers in the formative
stage of a student

Teachers occupy a special place in students' lives, particularly during their formative years. It is in this period that the seeds of curiosity, discipline, and character genuinely take root. A teacher's influence extends beyond imparting knowledge; they serve as guides, mentors, and supportive witnesses to their students' thrilling journeys. The connection between a student and their teacher is profoundly transformative, leaving enduring impressions on the hearts and minds of all who are fortunate enough to experience such a bond.

Yesterday, we lost a truly exceptional teacher. A gentle soul, he shared his love for mathematics with quiet elegance. The lessons he imparted may begin to blur over time, but his warm presence continues to shine brightly in our memories. He was more than just a teacher; he was a pillar of support, patience, and encouragement for students who faced challenges in keeping up with the fast pace of the classroom. His passing evokes fond memories of our school days and a deep sense of gratitude and respect for the remarkable individuals who have shaped our lives.

At a reunion several years ago, I reflected on the unique bonds between teachers and their students, particularly those who faced academic challenges. Backbenchers, often labelled as slow learners or underachievers, shared an extraordinary camaraderie with their mentors. These relationships were not born out of academic excellence or shared achievements but rather forged in the crucible of struggle and perseverance. These students, once dismissed or overlooked, were now embracing the very educators who had guided them through their most challenging days.



Backbenchers often regarded their teachers far more highly than the top-ranking students. For them, education was not merely something they received; it was a hard-earned treasure, with teachers serving as the remarkable architects of their transformation. These dedicated students sought out their teachers long after school had ended, and some even travelled great distances—like the group

that drove all the way to Kerala just to visit a cherished teacher during their holiday. They desired nothing more than to relive those precious moments of shared growth and resilience.

The role of a teacher truly shines in their connections with slow learners. For these students, every lesson feels like climbing a mountain, and every exam becomes a genuine test of character. Here, a teacher's patience and encouragement can make all the difference between success and feeling overwhelmed. Our wonderful mathematics instructor, for instance, invests not only their time but also their heart into helping these students, making every step of the journey rewarding, even when challenges arise.

In the classroom, a slow learner may carry a heavy sense of inadequacy. They observe their classmates grasping concepts effortlessly, which can leave them feeling somewhat left behind. However, a teacher's gentle encouragement during these moments can serve as a lifeline. A kind word, a little extra attention, or quiet reassurance that they truly are capable can ignite a change that lasts a lifetime. Often, these students go on to achieve not only academic success but also a profound sense of gratitude for the mentors who believed in them during their doubts.

Naturally talented students might view education as just a stepping stone. They often lean on their natural skills or support from parents and tutors to achieve success. While they admire their teachers, the relationships they build can feel more transactional—focused on outcomes and performance instead of the beautiful journey of learning. On the other hand, slow learners, who face challenges and take their time, often form the deepest connections with their teachers, treasuring those relationships long after leaving the classroom.

As we grow older, the pursuit of high scores and academic rankings fades into the background. What remains are the values, character, and memories shaped by the relationships we build along the way. The news of our mathematics teacher's passing came from an alumnus who would never have been seen as a top-ranking student. Yet, it was he who took the initiative to inform the alumni network and coordinate a response. His actions exemplify the true spirit of education—that it is not academic performance, but the strength of character and the bonds we forge that define success.

Gratitude for our teachers often flourishes later in life as we begin to truly appreciate all they have done for us. When we are

children, it is easy to overlook the sacrifices they make and the emotional energy they invest in their work. However, it is through our own challenges or when we take on mentoring roles that we genuinely start to recognise the incredible patience they demonstrated, the unwavering belief they had in us, and all the little ways in which they have shaped our lives.

A teacher's influence reaches far beyond the walls of the classroom. They serve as a moral compass, a source of inspiration, and a wellspring of wisdom. Their teachings resonate in ways that extend beyond the subjects they covered. While a maths lesson may fade, the confidence they instilled, the encouragement they offered, and the values they imparted remain with students for life. These beautiful gifts help shape not only the student but also the remarkable individuals they become.

For teachers, the journey is characterised by quiet dedication and heartfelt commitment. They spend countless years nurturing their students, often without the immediate reward of witnessing the impact they have. Their true success lies not just in the grades their students achieve, but in the lives they touch and the bright futures they help to create. This is particularly true for those who mentor slower learners, where each small victory reflects their unwavering belief in the incredible potential of every child.

The bond between a student and their teacher is genuinely special. It is built on mutual respect, trust, and the delightful journey of growing together. For teachers, this relationship represents a heartfelt commitment that, although often unnoticed, leaves a lasting impact. For students, it serves as a dependable source of guidance, strength, and inspiration, particularly during those pivotal and sometimes challenging formative years.

When we reflect on the incredible lives of our teachers, including the cherished mathematics instructor we lost yesterday, we naturally feel a heartfelt appreciation for all they have given us. Their presence in our lives truly is a gift that continues to enrich us, shape our identities, and guide us through the world. By honouring their memory, we joyfully celebrate the values they embodied and the countless lives they positively impacted.

(Steve Correa is an Executive Coach and Author of The Indian Boss at Work, Thinking Global, Acting Indian. Ronald D'Souza has Corporate and Consulting Experience and mentors new startups.)

people's edit

STAND UNITED TO
SAVE OUR LAND

FELICIO S. FERNANDES

With ref. to your Editorial 'Celebrate landmarks in Goan History' (Herald, 14 February), I salute and honor your efforts to highlight and celebrate the defining moments of Goan history post liberation. It is these historical events (Opinion Poll, Official Language Act, Statehood) that have given us the identity of Goenkars and a shared Goan consciousness called "Goenkarponn". Sad however that the current dispensation given its viscous agenda has turned a Nelson's eye and is doing its utmost to douse the fire burning among Goans to reclaim and revel in the oneness that we Goans embrace. Their surreptitious efforts to regularise migrants in the Goan fabric, the communalisation of employment, the anti-Portuguese rhetoric, the blatant disregard to the recognition of the Romi Konkani script, the devious conversion of ancestral lands, the open patronage to the 'Delhification' of our beautiful villages, the 'care-a-damn' attitude to the destruction of our hills, rivers, trees, valleys and fields, the unabashed corruption in almost every sector where government machinery and ministerial berths compete to churn out money for personal greed, yes its the 'brokerisation' of governance, the 'lollipop' schemes for senior citizens and housewives, the subtle patronage to right wing agenda rather than to the civility of our culture. It's "make hay while the sun shines" and the loot goes on and on without thinking for a moment that one must close his eyes one day and become ossified.

Goa has become a 'Looters Paradise' where land, law and license has become free enterprise for the right bidder with all controls and vigilance thrown to the winds by charlatans holding power.

Goa, the once nurturing mother has now been turned into a harlot by the stark silence and undiscerning tolerance of its own sons and daughters who stand by and watch like helpless impotent savants, afraid of confronting this malignant dispensation. Inaction and indifference are social sins that rob us of our innate rights toward a just and responsible governance.

Today Goa is like a "Pearl thrown to the swine". It has been raped, ravaged and trampled by our mindless leaders and their selfish, short sighted nay self-centered policies. However, more so it is the silence of most of us (we the educated Goans) who love to sit back and watch the disastrous devastation happening around us and expect someone else to take up the cudgels.

If Goa has to retain its Goenkarponn than every Goan has to become a stakeholder in the idea of "GOA". Every Goan must feel the urgency of standing up and challenging everything that is against the Goan identity, culture, ethos, heritage, environment et al. Right from the Panchayats to the Legislative Assembly our policies, regulations, directives, have to be deliberated to save Goa for our future generation. Every corrupt batsman has to be bowled off during the elections.

We need to banish the communal ideology that is being thrust upon us, the subtle 'divide and rule'. We need to weed out the rusted and rotten leaders who shamelessly dictate our well-being and put back instead a people centered leadership. If we Goans can look beyond our narrow domestic walls and stand united to save our land only then will the Opinion Poll, our fight for Konkani and our Statehood will not have been in vain.

Rise in clashes between
tourists and locals

A roadside disagreement at Candolim on Monday night escalated into a brawl with one of the involved parties whipping out a gun and allegedly threatening people. Of late, there has been rising tension between tourists and locals, many times ending in a brawl. Road rage is the prime reason for the confrontations. Drunken driving, not following traffic rules, and over-speeding are some of the reasons for accidents involving tourists. However the general feeling among tourists is that they can get away lightly.

Many of the tourists could be belonging to families with a political clout in their home states hence they feel that they cannot be touched by law-enforcement agencies in Goa. This attitude by the tourists needs to change. Tourists have also indulged in disruptions in residential areas like in Fontainhas which has led to confrontation in the past. The Parra road appears to have been "hijacked" by the tourists. Many tourists had even gone to the extent of demanding a separate road for the locals. While tourism remains a key source of revenue for Goa, its unchecked growth and laxity in law enforcement has led to disorder in public. Disrup-

tion actions by the tourists seem to be let off by the police only after a warning. There is a limit up to which locals can tolerate such misbehaviour. It appears that the limit has been crossed and the patience of the people has been tested for far too long. If things are not normalized, it could lead to a serious incident.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Falling repeatedly
in same trap

There are some elements such as rejected / forgotten political figures, self proclaimed writers, educationists and social workers who tend to periodically spill adverse remarks, controversial statements, prepare videos and make it viral. The public over reacts instantly by condemning, giving threats, filing FIRs, hold protests, burn effigies etc. In this process, those persons get wide coverage in print and social media for free more than their expectation. The facts / history will not change merely by some statements here and there. The so-called sympathisers or critics wait for an opportunity to jump in fray to take advantage of the

letterstotheeditor

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situation for individual gains. It is a well planned process to keep them in limelight and instigate the public who falls repeatedly in the same trap. It is the need of the hour for the public to be wiser and break this unending chain and refrain from getting over-worked instead of using time, energy for productive purposes, but will it happen?

Bhalchandra V S Priolkar, Margao

Zelenskyy bows to
Trump's pressure

Zelenskyy is shifting his stance after Trump froze military aid, signalling readiness for peace talks. His call for a truce and willingness to grant the US access to Ukraine's resources seem like attempts to regain favour. Trump, meanwhile, is using the aid freeze as leverage to push Ukraine into negotiations with Russia, aligning with his preference for reducing US involvement. The big question now is how Russia will respond and whether this move will lead to genuine peace talks or just more strategic manoeuvring.

Gopalaswamy J, Chennai

Sustainability of nature

The resplendent beauty of nature cannot be described in a few words. Its importance to mankind's health and prosperity cannot be over-stressed. Maintaining a fine balance between usage and wastage is important to fight natural calamities. A study has shown the pressure exerted on the planet has doubled the last fifty years while the rich natural resources have declined by more than thirty per cent.

Conservation of nature is vital because many scientists have warned of mass extinctions. The concrete jungle of today requires to be transformed into a green heaven. Spending more time with nature is known to increase happiness and longevity.

The rich natural resources of the earth are to be savored; not to be destroyed. Water and energy, paper and fuel have to be prudently used. Misuse of electricity and water should be a big "no". Nowadays, awareness on the hazards of using plastic bags has percolated through the society but more needs to be done.

People are paying a heavy price for the increase in urbanisation. Fossil fuels and minerals

are being degraded. The common habit of the citizens to litter everywhere, unmindful of the consequences, has almost become a social epidemic.

Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Perfect team work

India beat Australia in Dubai to reach the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy final quite convincingly. The target of 265 wasn't a big one for team India but Aussies couldn't do much when Rohit Sharma (28), Virat Kohli (84), Shreyas Iyer (45), Axar Patel (27), Hardik Pandya (28) and KL Rahul (42 not out) played their role to prove the perfect team work to knock out the Aussies. Mohammed Shami has bagged three wickets and for Varun Chakravarty and Ravindra Jadeja the scalp of two each helped the team to restrict the Aussies to a mediocre total to give the batters the chance to chase the kangaroos out of the tournament. By this win, India has qualified for their third successive ICC Champions Trophy final after thumping Australia by four wickets. India certainly has got a clear edge irrespective of whether they would be facing the Kiwis or Proteas in the finals and the most probable winner of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

A P Thiruvadi, Chennai