

O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

The costs of quick delivery in Goa

The allure of 10-minute delivery services has reshaped how we consume goods and services, offering an unprecedented level of convenience. In Goa, where life has traditionally been laid-back and community-driven, this rapid-fire approach to retail is at odds with the state's ethos. While the speed of service may seem like an urban luxury, behind the scenes lies a system built on exploitation, manipulation, and unsustainable practices.

At the heart of this industry are the store workers and delivery riders. In an economy where jobs are scarce, many young Goans and migrant workers are drawn to these roles, hoping for stable income. However, the reality is far from ideal. Store workers have mere seconds to collect and pack items, working under intense pressure with little room for error. Any mistake, such as missing an item in an order, results in penalties, creating a work environment filled with fear and anxiety.

Delivery riders, the backbone of this system, risk their lives daily on Goa's narrow, often congested roads, racing against time to meet impossible deadlines. The pressure to deliver within minutes results in reckless driving, leading to an alarming rise in road accidents. These gig economy jobs, while marketed as flexible work opportunities, offer no real job security, fair wages, or benefits. Many riders work beyond legally permissible hours just to make ends meet, all while bearing the cost of fuel and vehicle maintenance. Their employers, shielded by the gig economy model, absolve themselves of responsibility, creating a cycle of worker exploitation.

Beyond economic and labour concerns, the biggest casualty of the 10-minute delivery boom is public health. Many of these services promise "fresh" food at lightning speed, but the reality is that much of it is pre-packaged, heavily processed, and laden with preservatives. Goa, with its rich culinary heritage and reliance on fresh seafood and locally sourced produce, risks losing its identity to a culture of instant gratification. Nutritionists warn that the growing consumption of these ultra-processed foods could have long-term health consequences, with children and young adults being the most affected.

Moreover, the convenience of instant delivery discourages physical activity. A society that once thrived on fresh air, daily walks to the market, and home-cooked meals is now becoming sedentary, reliant on screens and apps for every need. This shift is not just affecting individuals but has broader implications for public health in Goa, where healthcare resources are already stretched.

The environmental toll of rapid delivery is another pressing issue. Goa has long battled waste management challenges, with its beaches and green spaces often littered with plastic and packaging waste. The rise of instant delivery services exacerbates this crisis, generating excessive packaging waste—plastic bags, containers, and disposable cutlery—most of which ends up in landfills or the sea. This goes against Goa's ongoing efforts to promote sustainability and eco-friendly tourism.

Additionally, the increased number of delivery vehicles on the roads contributes to pollution and traffic congestion. With thousands of deliveries taking place daily, the carbon footprint of this industry continues to grow. Goa, which has long prided itself on its environmental consciousness, must weigh the convenience of instant delivery against the irreversible harm it causes to the state's natural beauty.

Beyond economics, health, and environmental concerns, the 10-minute delivery culture is altering the social fabric of Goa. The state has always been known for its sense of community, where neighbours shared meals and local vendors knew their customers by name. This personal touch is rapidly disappearing as anonymous app-based transactions replace traditional social interactions.

Tourists, too, now prefer to order food and groceries online rather than experience Goa's vibrant markets and traditional eateries. This shift not only affects small businesses but also diminishes the cultural experience that makes Goa unique. The charm of leisurely shopping at the Mapusa or Margao markets, engaging in friendly bargaining, and discovering fresh produce is being replaced by a sterile, digital transaction that lacks human connection.

While there is no denying the convenience of quick delivery, we must ask ourselves: at what cost? The illusion of instant gratification hides a web of exploitation, unhealthy consumer habits, and environmental degradation. As Goans, do we want to trade our quality of life, our safety, and our rich food culture for the sake of a 10-minute delivery? The solution does not lie in rejecting technology but in making mindful choices. Supporting local markets, embracing home-cooked meals, and being aware of our consumption habits can go a long way in resisting this culture of hyper-convenience. Companies must also be held accountable for fair wages, worker safety, and sustainable practices.

Government intervention is also crucial. Policies that regulate working conditions, limit delivery speed requirements, and impose stricter environmental guidelines can help curb the negative impact of this industry. Consumers, too, must play a role by making conscious decisions—opting for sustainable choices, supporting small businesses, and resisting the pressure of unnecessary, impulsive purchases.

The next time you feel tempted to place an order for instant delivery, take a moment to consider—do you really need it in 10 minutes? Perhaps, in slowing down, we can preserve what makes Goa truly special.



The KTCL with an eye on last mile connectivity and also with a desire to provide late night and early morning trips launched the Mhaji bus scheme, seen as a win-win situation for private operators unable to ply their buses on the nationalized routes



pledged in the Election Manifesto that should they be elected to power, the Government would form a Public Sector Transport Corporation. On 15/10/1980 the newly-elected Government formed the "Kadamba Transport Corporation Ltd.," (KTCL) as a State sector undertaking. The formation of KTCL, was preceded by several peoples' struggles against the ruthless, corrupt, profit-hungry and loathsome Private bus lobby and its Coterie: which also faced the ire of the student community led by All Goa Students Union (AGSU) who fought relentlessly and secured 50% bus concession for the entire student community from the then ruling MGP - led dispensation in the year 1978. Thanks primarily to the KTCL, this facility of 50% bus concession continues to be enjoyed to date by the student community throughout the state of Goa even after 46 years!

In recent years, the trunk routes

The transportation sector is the most critical sector in any economy. You understand a city after using its transportation system. Public transport, the engine of social progress is a basic human need. The Kadamba Transport Corporation Limited (KTCL) is the largest single bus operator in Goa. The entire share capital of the Corporation has been contributed by the State Government. The Corporation is thus a wholly owned Government Instrumentality. It was established to provide regular, punctual, reliable, comfortable and safe transport services to the people since the private operators were unwilling to operate the low-earning routes in the far flung villages; and as such one of the most important objectives of the Corporation was to connect the Goan villages with the urban centers in order to assist them in their socio-economic development. As on October 2024, the KTCL has 83 Electric Buses and staff strength of 2000 employees working at the Depots, Central Workshop and the Head Office.

In January 1980, the newly-elected Congress government under the then Chief Minister of Goa, Pratapsingh Rane who succeeded the erstwhile Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) Government, had

like Panjim-Vasco, Panjim-Margao, Margao-Vasco were nationalised; where only the buses operated by the KTCL ply. The KTCL which operates a comprehensive network of intra-state and inter-state bus routes across Goa is currently focused on expanding its operations by deploying electric and diesel buses. Launched with much fanfare on June 15 2023, the 'Mhaji Bus Scheme' a pilot project, appears to have failed in its tracks. The KTCL with an eye on last mile connectivity and also with a desire to provide late night and early morning trips launched the Mhaji bus scheme, seen as a win-win situation for private operators unable to ply their buses on the nationalized routes. This scheme aims to improve public transportation by hiring private buses to supplement the state-run Kadamba buses. The scheme has been seeing revenue loss, with lesser earnings on dead trips or non-profitable routes. The Mhaji bus scheme reeks of vestedness where someone from inside is making quick bucks. Workers of KTCL have clearly expressed that the Mhaji bus scheme is a scandalous drain on the limited revenue and resources of KTCL and neither in the interest of the Kadamba Corporation nor its Employees.

Inspite of numerous representations and prolonged discussions, the long standing issues between the Government of Goa and the KTCL union have remained unresolved. Some of the issues were - Payment of arrears of 7th Pay Commission as promised by C.M. of Goa on 28.08.24; Procurement of 300 diesel buses for KTCL since 200 buses have been scrapped/condemned during the last 2 years; Regularisation of all senior temporary drivers and conductors; Restoration of remittance of PF @ 12% on gross salary w.e.f. from December 2009. To stop out-sourcing of operations and the maintenance of Electric Buses (EV's) and ensure that every single employee deployed on electric buses be they drivers, conductors or the maintenance crew are employed on the permanent rolls of KTCL. To stop outsourcing of inter-state routes by deploying KTCL diesel buses since Electric buses (EV's) are not able to run for very long distances. Filling up all vacancies of technical staff - welders, tin smiths, mechanics, electricians and others: arising out of attritions/retirement. Mhaji bus scheme' to be scrapped. This scheme is indeed a scandalous drain on the limited revenue and resources of KTCL.

Ensure clean and spacious rest rooms, toilets and changing rooms for conductors, drivers, TCs, mechanics in the various depots/offices for male and female employees and staff of KTCL.

The KTCL Drivers and Allied Employees' Association had issued a 21 day strike notice to the management of KTCL to be effective from 19/03/2025. This decision was taken at a massive rally held by KTCL employees in Panaji city on 27/02/2025. Vide letter dated 11.03.23 the KTCL union and management were invited by the Director of Transport Mr. Pravimal Abhishek (IAS) who is also the Managing director of Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to meet at his office to discuss the various issues of the strike notice issued on 27.02.23 by the union. Those present were apprised by Mr. Abhishek that he had secured the administrative approval for three of the demands raised by the union, namely the Payment of arrears, restoration of Provident Fund to 12% on wages and grant of Temporary Status to those workers who complete 5 years of service in KTCL enabling them to draw pay benefits of regular workmen in the absence of regular vacancies. With regard to other pending demands there was a positive assertion that they would be resolved in due course.

During a massive meeting (Maha Melavo) held at the KTC Panaji bus stand by the KTC workers on 10.03.25 in preparation to the 19.3.25 strike, Comrade Christopher Fonseca announced that he would be undertaking a 24 hour hunger strike on 11.03.25. While his hunger strike was on, he received a message that the director of Transport has convened a meeting of the union representatives with the management of KTCL, on 12.03.25. Soon thereafter, the union received another message from the Labour Commissioner that the Chief Minister has directed the Chief Secretary to convene a meeting with the union representatives on 13.03.25. The delegation which met the Chief Secretary discussed all the issues. There was however no positive outcome except on the issue of restoration of Provident fund to 12% w.e.f. first April, 2025 and procurement of new buses and a serious look into the KTCL staffing pattern.

The KTC Drivers and Allied Employees Association (AITUC) has been relentless in its campaign to safeguard the interests of travelling people of Goa while upholding and fighting for the rights of the KTCL employees. The union and its members have exercised phenomenal patience in the pursuit of their justified demands. The people of Goa are eagerly watching the manner in which the government and KTCL management respond to demands of the employees in the light of the 19th March strike call.

(The writer is a social scientist and a senior practicing criminal lawyer)

Save Kadamba - Goa's iconic service provider

people's *edit*

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

GUILMAN FERNANDES

Every person is born with abilities and capabilities to shine and deliver. A rough diamond needs to be skilfully polished and cut to create its worth and value. The key to Excellence is to focus on self and making persistent pursuit of becoming the best version of yourself. A window for self-development and effective growth mind set must be opened, imbibing the following elements while navigating in life to excel and be a winner.

Setting smart goals: Ensure to set meaningful goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. By choosing areas of your life to improve, breaking big goals into smaller practical steps and regularly revisiting and checking the progress, you can stay motivated and succeed in your personal growth journey.

Self-Reflection: You must have the ability to think deeply about yourself and be self-aware to understand better, who you are and how you are progressing and if need be, do due diligence and course correction of actions for better performance. Success is a vehicle that moves on a wheel called hard work but the journey is impossible without fuel called 'self-confidence'.

Learn and Adopt: Learning and adopting can refer to a variety of concepts, including lifelong learning, knowledge and social learning. It means to choosing to continue learning and acquiring new skills and competencies throughout your life, beyond the end of formal education

Resilience during challenges: Resilience is the ability to recover from tough times and failures, to stay positive and move forward with new ideas and challenges. A winner never quits and a quitter never wins. The late Ratan Tata, who has inspired generations of young people, used to say "be persistent and resilient in the face of challenges, for they are the building blocks of success".

Prioritising mental wellness: Taking care of your body and mind is crucial for personal growth and excellence. Self-discipline and creating right habits to have work-life integration and gaining control of time will enable a person towards his drive to excellence, making work and life meaningful. A healthy mind includes emotional, psychological and social well-being and affects how you think, feel and act; in particular handle the stress and make the right choices.

Attitude: The pursuit of excellence is all about becoming better at what you do, gaining a competitive edge, better skills and expertise to accomplish the goals. Motivational speaker Ralph Marston is credited with the phrase "Excellence is not a skill; it is an attitude". Pursuing excellence is not for weak minds but for people who dare to dream, master in taking risks and think out of box for alternate ideas and solutions.

To reflect, I quote Aristotle, the towering Greek philosopher, "Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives - choice and not chance, determines your destiny". Go for a meaningful passionate pursuit of excellence and be a shining star.

Break of only one week for schools?

In what appears to be a face saving exercise, the government has reportedly announced that the upcoming academic year 2025-26 will commence from April 7 instead of April 1. The government has proposed to grant one week break between the end of the existing term and start of the new academic year.

This appears to be a case of too little too late. The main reason for the demand to start the term from the month of June is the unbearable heat that is prevalent during the month of April and May unlike in Delhi and other Northern states where the warm season commences in June. Since the start of the new academic year has been postponed by one week, the question that arises is whether the climate will be cool after the first week of April.

Children do need a break. It means going out on a vacation with family members, joining music classes, dance classes, joining coaching classes in various sports and doing things school children always wanted to do after a hectic academic year. Will all this be possible in just one week? Going on a vacation for a rainy reason may not be a good idea. School children may be voiceless to protest against the injustice being meted to them. However, parents have protested. It is for the Education Department to listen to the demands of all stakeholders

and continue the new academic year from June as has been the case for decades.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Govt's assurance proves hollow

The Goa government's attempt to transplant a 200-year-old Banyan tree has ended in failure, with the tree succumbing to the relocation process. The tree, which was uprooted from its original location, was replanted in Panjim's Campal and Porvorim areas, but unfortunately, it did not survive. This incident has raised concerns about the government's understanding of environmental conservation. It is alarming that officials were unaware of the potential consequences of uprooting a tree of such magnitude. The Banyan tree played a crucial role in absorbing groundwater, and its removal is likely to cause disputes over water scarcity in the surrounding area.

Moreover, the tree was a habitat for numerous birds, providing them with shelter and protection. The transplantation not only destroyed the sentimental value attached to the tree by locals but also deprived the birds of their natural habitat. This incident highlights the need for the government to engage in more thoughtful and environmentally conscious decisions-making to avoid such losses in the future.

We urge the government to reconsider the flyover plans and find a way to preserve this natural treasure for generations to witness.

Siddhant Fogueri, Bicholim

Women's safety still a pressing concern

Goa, a place celebrated for its breath-taking beaches and vibrant nightlife, harbours a harsh reality. Women's safety remains a pressing concern. It's not just tourists who feel vulnerable; even local women live with fear. Cases of harassment, eve-teasing, and even assault continue to rise, especially in nightlife hubs, deserted beaches, and isolated roads. Despite laws and awareness campaigns, many women hesitate to report incidents due to social stigma and ineffective law enforcement.

The main reason for this issue is the mindset that often blames the victim instead of the culprit. Weak law enforcement, poor lighting in isolated areas, and slow legal action make things worse. This gives offenders the confidence to repeat their actions. Women's safety should not be only their responsibility. It is something everyone must work towards. The government should increase

police patrolling, improve security in public transport, and ensure strict punishment for crimes against women. Until society takes this issue seriously, the beauty of Goa will always be shadowed by fear.

Bhumi Upendra Deshpurhu, Mapusa

Degradation of coastline is indeed in full swing

The Calangute Constituency Forum (CCF) in a memorandum submitted on Thursday to the Chief Secretary, the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) and other officials has called to take immediate action on multiple complaints regarding violations of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules and the Environmental Protection Act (EPA).

The memorandum has listed multiple alleged violations, including irregularities in the renovated Aguada Jail Complex, CRZ breaches by builders in Candolim, building permissions granted based on false documents, and destruction of sand dunes and beach vegetation.

Well, the degradation of coastline, right from Candolim, Calangute, Baga is indeed going in full swing and the officials are deliberately seen turning a Nelson's eye despite of several complaints being filed before the GCZMA regarding the blatant violations of

CRZ rules and the Environmental Protection Act, 1986.

I think that as long as people appointed in the above departments are not taken to task for promoting all types of illegalities, nothing is going to change even in the near future in Goa.

Jerry Fernandes, Saligao

Pakistan tasting its own medicine

The brazen hijacking of a train in the restive Balochistan province highlights the growing unrest in Pakistan. The incident has shocked South Asia. Interestingly, China, who is Pakistan's all-weather friend, is watching the insurgency activities closely as its workers are regular targets of the BLA militants. Successive Pakistani regimes have long been accused of exporting terrorism to India, failing to recognize that their own policies have destabilized their own country more than others. The escalating insurgency has exposed the state's weakening grip over its restive provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. On the other hand, the Taliban, the creation of Pakistani military bosses, is now biting the hand that fed it.

The Jaffar Express assault shows that time may be running out before the separatist insurgency spreads further. Pakistan must act now to save Balochistan without pointing out India's involvement in the hijack incident.

Gregory Fernandes, Mumbai