

O HERALDO

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Development versus democracy

In his latest budget speech, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant made a striking announcement. The power to grant approvals for mega projects in rural areas will now rest with a steering committee chaired by the Chief Minister himself, replacing the authority previously held by the TCP. A notification specifying the land threshold under this committee's jurisdiction is expected soon. The government has thus made a strategic move, transferring powers from the TCP authorities to this newly formed body.

The rationale behind this shift, according to the Chief Minister, is to address the common objections raised at the local level when mega projects are proposed. Concerns such as water and electricity shortages. To counter this, representatives from key departments, including water supply, electricity, water resources, and public works, will now have seats on the steering committee. The intent, as presented, is to ensure that infrastructural feasibility is assessed before granting project approvals.

However, a fundamental question remains unanswered: will the village panchayat, representing the very community affected by these projects, have any role in this decision-making process? The Panchayat Raj Act of the state guarantees local governance a voice in such matters. If that voice is being sidelined in favour of a centralised steering committee, then this move represents an alarming erosion of local self-governance.

A closer look at recent gram sabhas across the state underscores the gravity of this issue. Over the past several months, an overwhelming majority, over 90% of gram sabhas have witnessed strong opposition to proposed projects in their villages. Villagers have repeatedly passed resolutions rejecting projects they deem harmful to their local environment and way of life. Yet, these resolutions often amount to little more than symbolic resistance, as final approvals bypass them entirely. Companies behind mega projects frequently obtain clearances directly from state-level departments, rendering local dissent ineffective.

If the Chief Minister's office is now centralising all powers related to project approvals under a single steering committee, does this mean the existing system of permissions from various state departments will be dismantled? Will the upcoming notification explicitly state that all project approvals outside the steering committee's purview, except those granted by panchayats under their legal authority, will be frozen? These are the pressing questions that remain unaddressed.

The government should not merely focus on managing opposition to mega projects; it must instead examine the root causes of such resistance. The case of the Bhutani project in Sancoale is a telling example. Despite vocal opposition, multiple legal violations, and even hunger strikes, the project continued to push forward. This raises another critical concern: will the new steering committee genuinely acknowledge and act upon local resistance, or will it function merely as a rubber stamp for corporate interests?

Beyond Sancoale, villages across Goa, whether coastal hubs like Varca, Carmona, and Benaolim in Salcete, or mining-affected regions like Mulgaon and Mayem in North Goa, have been demanding comprehensive studies on their carrying capacities before permitting mega projects. The government should prioritise conducting environmental and infrastructural feasibility studies before approving large-scale developments.

Ultimately, governance is not merely about drafting policies and establishing committees; it is about meaningful engagement with the people. The increasing number of legal challenges against government decisions in the High Court is a testament to the growing disconnect between the administration and the public. If the newly formed steering committee is to have any legitimacy, it must not operate in isolation but in consultation with village panchayats and local communities. Otherwise, it risks becoming yet another bureaucratic tool to side-step democratic governance and facilitate unchecked development at the expense of Goa's identity, environment, and people.

Twitter World

Dia Mirza @deespeak

Students are raising their voices for a future where nature thrives. Forests, not IT parks, offer young people a chance at a sustainable tomorrow. 'Development' at the cost of biodiversity is DESTRUCTION.

comment



STEVE CORREA

comment



RONALD D'SOUZA

Finishers typically exhibit a unique combination of qualities. They are inherently self-motivated, overflowing with confidence and conviction. This confidence is not merely superficial; it stems from genuine experience and a history of delivering results



are vital to any team or project. Their ability to unite people and address last-minute challenges helps ensure that tasks are completed, bringing success to the entire group!

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The Great Finisher

Anyone who loves cricket knows just how important a great finisher can be! Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a perfect example - famous for his cool demeanour and incredible ability to wrap up games, even in the most nerve-racking moments. It's fascinating to note that not everyone sees it this way, as former player and coach Gautam Gambhir has even suggested that a game shouldn't depend on a single designated finisher. However, whether you agree or not, the idea of a "finisher" has grown to represent something much bigger than just one person's role in cricket. It embodies a valuable skill set that applies not only in sports but also in business, leadership, and many other areas where achieving results is crucial!

Embracing the essence of being a finisher goes beyond cricket or sports. In our daily lives, a finisher can be a dedicated individual who pays attention to the little details of a project or someone who lovingly finishes the leftovers to prevent waste. In the workplace, the finisher is the invaluable team member who ensures that a plan not only starts strong but also crosses the finish line successfully.

Planning and execution are essential; however, achieving a goal often requires that extra push or unique skill from someone who truly knows how to finish the job. This distinctive touch can transform an almost-complete plan into a successful outcome, especially when others may be uncertain. It is common for a finisher within a team to naturally assume a leadership role, assisting everyone in crossing the finish line together. Yet sometimes, the standout individual is a specialist who, despite not holding a formal leadership position, provides remarkable insight just when it is most needed. Regardless of their title, finishers

from genuine experience and a history of delivering results. True finishers possess the skills and a proven track record that demonstrate they can meet deadlines, see tasks through when others may give up, and manage crises with poise, even when the pressure is at its highest.

In simpler terms, a finisher on the field transforms the stress of a do-or-die moment into a focused intensity, steering clear of letting nerves take control. This mindset often leads to outstanding performance during key moments, while less composed competitors might falter. Coaches in team sports truly understand the importance of this role. One well-known international rugby coach even dubbed his substitutes "finishers," emphasising their game-changing influence in the final stages.

Finishers play a vital role in the business world, even if their contributions appear somewhat different across various settings. For instance, in sales, the "closer" is essentially a finisher - the individual who adeptly transforms a promising lead into a signed deal through their dedicated efforts and skilled persuasion. In project teams, a finisher may be the project manager or a team member who expertly guides a complex project through its final stages, ensuring it doesn't stall or deviate from its goals at critical moments. What distinguishes these business finishers from mere task-doers is their unwavering focus on the ultimate outcome. Unlike someone who merely checks items off a list to tidy up their space, a true finisher is genuinely committed to ensuring that every action aligns with the broader mission and objectives of the organisation. They challenge assumptions, pose the important "what next?" questions, and refine processes to guarantee that the final result is achieved as smoothly and effectively as possible.

In many industries and fields, finishers play a crucial role in turning plans into tangible achievements. They are those remarkable individuals who transform good efforts into satisfying results, ensuring that nothing slips away at the last moment. Whether in technology or creative realms, this could be the dedicated engineer who resolves those final pesky bugs before a software launch, or the meticulous editor who adds the final touches and coherence to a film. These finishers help everyone stay focused on the objective, and their talent for keeping everyone's eyes on the prize aids in connecting an idea with its successful realisation.

In an era where nearly every organisation and team is driven by goals and key performance metrics, having a dependable finisher can be the crucial factor that keeps a project on track when initial plans face challenges. They adapt and find a way

to get the job done, aligning the team's efforts with the target outcome until it is achieved.

Living as a finisher certainly presents its own set of challenges! While the traits that render someone a reliable closer are admirable, they frequently come with the pressure to deliver consistently. In the realm of sports, this entails carrying the team's hopes in every crucial match, which can be a significant mental strain that demands exceptional resilience. Likewise, in the business realm, finishers may face slow periods between major projects or intense bursts of activity when they are not fully engaged. This downtime can sometimes incite restlessness or even result in internal team conflicts, but recognising these challenges is the first step to overcoming them!

When a company's reward system concentrates solely on standard metrics and fails to recognise the individuals who contributed to achieving those goals, it can leave finishers feeling that their hard work has gone unappreciated. Over time, the lack of new challenges and recognition could dampen the spirits of even the most dedicated finishers, making it difficult for them to maintain their usual excellent performance. These skilled individuals thrive on fresh goals and exciting problems to solve; without these, they might start to feel stagnant or overwhelmed. That would be a significant loss, not just for them but also for the teams that depend on their essential skills during critical moments.

Ultimately, having a finisher can be the special ingredient that transforms potential success into genuine success. One observer noted that if the world were populated only by imaginative starters and devoid of finishers, nothing would ever be fully realised or sustained for long. This highlights a simple truth: brilliant ideas and hard work are commendable, but they require someone to see things through to completion. Finishers do precisely that. They merge vision with action, strategy with determination, and pressure with performance. By doing so, they not only achieve exceptional results but also elevate those around them, demonstrating that regardless of how daunting the challenge, success is attainable. In any field, having a finisher on the team is often the key to achieving ultimate success, as they ensure the team's journey culminates in a triumphant finale rather than an unfinished narrative.

(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

WHEN LIFE GETS HACKED...

JOHN MALVINO ALFONSO

A few years ago, my email account was hacked. The hackers sent emails in my name, claiming that I was in Spain and in trouble. Several people called to express concern for me. Some were surprised, while others even offered to send money. A few remarked that such incidents had become more common today.

To "hack" means to gain unauthorised access to something and manipulate it. Email accounts can be hacked to read personal messages, preventing the owner from using the account. Eventually, my email account was closed, and I found out that it actually belonged to someone else.

In a similar way, our lives can also be "hacked." Often, without our awareness, others can enter our lives and take control. Sometimes, we allow this to happen, especially when we feel vulnerable. What seems harmless at first can gradually make us feel as though we've become like puppets in someone else's hands.

Take the case of Stephen, a young man who reflected on his poverty and sought help from a political leader to secure a government job. As the election neared, the leader insisted that Stephen stay with him. Although Stephen disagreed with the leader's methods, he felt pressured to comply, realising that his life was now being influenced and controlled by someone else. In essence, his life had been "hacked."

It's vital to understand when and how our lives can be manipulated. Seeking help from others is a natural part of life, and there's nothing wrong with relying on others. But we must always be aware of the true intentions behind the help we receive. Gratitude for support is essential and humane, but handing over control of our lives to someone else is not.

We all make mistakes. Sometimes, the mistakes of our past resurface, and we may cling to others for fear of our reputation being tarnished. But it's never right for others to control our lives because of those past mistakes. No matter how long we try to avoid or hide from them, we should never allow anyone to take charge of our lives because of them.

When we surrender control of our lives—whether due to pressure, manipulation, or external forces—we lose our ability to grow. We live not for ourselves, but for the whims of those who dominate us. None of us truly wants to live this way. Yet, often, circumstances create opportunities for others to seize control. The real question is: How long will we allow this to happen?

Life is not meant to be lived merely by existing. It is meant to be shaped and made meaningful by our choices. Only by taking full responsibility for our actions, decisions, and future can we truly live the lives we choose.

We must recognise that while seeking help and relying on others is a natural part of life, we should never surrender control of our own lives. Life is a precious gift, and only we should determine the course it takes. If we let others take charge, we risk losing ourselves. To truly live, we must take responsibility and live according to our own values and decisions. We should not let our lives be "hacked"—let our creator take charge of our lives, guiding us with wisdom and purpose. In doing so, we regain our true freedom and identity.

Panjim Smart City: A spectacular marvel!

The CEO of Panjim Smart City has proudly announced today the completion of the Smart City project. "The Smart City Mission officially ended on March 31, with the Central government considering all projects completed," he declared.

With the completion of the works, Goa's capital has now transformed into a truly breathtaking urban paradise. Citizens who waited for many long years for this day can now expect world-class footpaths, well-structured underground ducts, neatly arranged cables, fully functional Smart services, lush greenery, and beautifully designed traffic islands making Panjim as stunning as the other charming cities of the world.

Welcome to the Smart City. Panjim now stands tall among the world's most beautiful cities, like Rome, Venice, Tokyo, Paris. Some say it rivals Singapore, others compare it to New York.

Every small detail is perfectly in order. No dimly lit street lights, no incomplete pavements, no misplaced drains, no open trenches, no potholes. Step out, and you'll witness this transformation first hand. The footpaths are smooth and spacious, the underground ducts

and cables have been meticulously structured, the roads no longer will need to be dug up every other week. Smart services will now be available to every tourist and resident round the clock, digital boards flashing information, traffic gardens adding a touch of beauty, offering drivers a scenic view with no traffic congestion or chaos. The landscaping simply breathtaking like the beautiful gardens of Mughal times. Just as flawless as the consultants had promised in their grand presentations at Hotel Fidalgo.

As citizens soak in the sheer brilliance of this urban masterpiece, one can't help but appreciate the impeccable timing of this announcement.

After all, what better day to declare Panjim's Smart City transformation complete than April 1st—April Fools' Day!

April Fool, folks!

Sandeep Heble, Panjim

Fudged rankings, bleak futures

The future of millions of young Indians is at risk as our higher education system, once held as an example of excellent ac-

letterstotheeditor

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demical rigor, faces unprecedented crisis.

Last year, the National Testing Agency was under the lens for widespread irregularities in crucial exams, including the medical entrance test. Now, the body that accredits colleges - the National Assessment and Accreditation Council is in the spotlight for corruption. Seven members of an inspection committee have been arrested for allegedly accepting bribes to inflate rating of a particular college.

Even the National Institutional Rankings Framework, which ranks top universities, is under scrutiny. These fudged indices lacking credibility are playing havoc with the future of many. Students apply to institutes of higher learning based on their NAAC/NIRF rankings, what will be the fate of these children when they graduate and enter the job market? Everything in India has become a huge scam now, too much of vikas and achey din in the education sector.

With the regressive New Education Policy being launched countrywide things will only get worse.

Rekha Sarin Trehan, Benaolim

India should align with Asian counterparts

In light of the trade policies implemented by the Trump administration, China, Japan, and South Korea have found ways to navigate these challenges collectively. In contrast, India must reconsider its role as a mere outpost for US interests against China. Instead, India should align itself with its Asian neighbours, fostering partnerships that reflect the realities of our region. India's current position appears to have capitulated to Trump's tariffs without actively engaging in global trade negotiations. This approach undermines our potential to strengthen our manufacturing base, which remains inadequate in terms of producing high-quality global brands. Rather than focusing on low-value products, we should aim to elevate our manufacturing capabilities and promote products that resonate with both local and international markets. Joining forces with our Asian counterparts could lead to a more balanced and strategic approach, one that prioritise our interests and fosters sustainable growth in the region.

And not get bullied by Trump!
Misha Sarin, Varca

What happened to smart work?

Once a beautiful city, well laid out, all public works perfectly functioning, peaceful and citizens living a cosy life is today a disgrace under smart city works making life difficult to live.

With so many extensions taken and given, the work is still incomplete and it will never be completed as all the concerned departments are not in cooperation with each other at the time of the execution of the smart works. The results: there is digging and re-digging, excavating and replacing over the last couple of years. What was planned, conceptualised with precision and put in place during the Portuguese regime is now destroyed and cannot be planned and executed with modern engineering technology.

Said one senior Ponjekar: without using common sense and precision, the failure of Smart City planners is on display today. If worst come to worst, this monsoon will be a trying time for Panjim residents to put our patience to test, added another elder visiting the market.

Ayres Sequeira, Salvador do Mundo