

# Can the drama over Kala Academy stop?

The Kala Academy was envisaged to be the house of drama and other performing arts, but from the current goings-on, there seems to be more drama unfolding outside the iconic centre than within it.

It all began after a Marathi play, 'Purush', starring veteran theatre actor Sharad Ponskhe, was disrupted after the stage lighting at the Kala Academy - where it was being performed - malfunctioned last Sunday. An upset Ponskhe apologised to the audience from the stage and subsequently began criticising the government for the glitch.

The incident drew widespread criticism from theatre artistes as well as the opposition, who claimed that although Goan artistes themselves had repeatedly raised concerns about faulty infrastructure following the Kala Academy's controversial renovation, no action was taken. They emphasised that the slipshod refurbishment project had now caught the attention of artistes from other states too, and that it was only a matter of time until international artistes would also voice their concerns.

While it would have been in the fitness of things for the government and the authorities concerned to own up to the glitch and work immediately to correct it, art and culture minister Govind Gaude - who department oversees the Kala Academy - chose to go on the offensive instead. He went so far as to say that Ponskhe was maligning his name and that he had taken a 'supari' (money) from his detractors to do so.

Peeved, Ponskhe wasted no time in shooting back. "What connection do I have with taking supari? Those who live in a world where supari and money are taken think like this. My drama was disrupted. That is why I said sorry to the audience." He said that up until then, he had no clue who Gaude even was despite the audience chanting, "Gaude, Gaude".

Ponskhe went on to say that he learnt that the Kala Academy was renovated at the cost of crores of rupees, but the AC system in the make-up room was leaking. "So where was the money spent? Instead of saying sorry, the minister is branding me a 'suparibaaz' (implying that he had taken money to align with Gaude's detractors). In fact, taking supari is their religion. I am an artiste, not a goonda to take supari" the actor said.

He didn't stop there. He said whatever any sensible human being would have said, "It would have been better had he (Gaude) said that he accepts the mistake and assured that such incidents would not happen in the future. The Kala Academy should be handed over to someone who knows what art is."

When renovation of the unique centre of the arts was taken up a few years ago, Govind Gaude had famously termed the Kala Academy as the "Taj Mahal of Goa". In July 2023, after work on the structure had begun, a huge portion of the academy's amphitheatre had collapsed, raising serious questions over the quality of work being put into renovating the building. Back then too, tiatrists complained of poor acoustics and lighting, which they said was adversely affecting live performances. With its back against the wall, the government constituted a 13-member task force to review the status of work. Theatre artiste, Vijay Kenkre, who chaired the task force, later said the work wouldn't be given even passing percentage. He even highlighted issues pertaining to AC leakage and faulty sound and acoustics, among a host of other deficiencies.

Kala Academy is widely considered to be not just an institution of brick and mortar, but an intrinsic part of Goan heritage and culture. This should give the authorities concerned, particularly art and culture minister Govind Gaude, all the more reason to ensure it is not only equipped with the best facilities but that all these facilities are maintained to the hilt. Being an artiste himself, Gaude should know better than to get defensive when criticism about the condition of the 'renovated' Kala Academy is directed at him. After all, artistes and the audience only want the best from what is often considered to be a world-class institution.

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BY INVITATION  
Sushila Savant Mendes

# Reflections on Easter: Path to a good afterlife

Every Catholic Goan has childhood memories of the Easter midnight mass, the lighting of the Easter candle, followed by the faithful lighting their own candles, sharing the flame with each other and the baptism of babies. As the festival was always on a Sunday, the sharing of a scrumptious family meal which ended the 40 days period of fast and lent when meats are mostly not consumed and even weddings and other celebrations are generally not held. After an almost 40 day period, there is a wedding invite today. Easter heralds the beginning of the wedding season. In today's circumstances, when meat is scarce in the market, whether to celebrate Eid or Easter, celebrations seem incomplete. Good governance respects the cuisine of all its people and needs to ensure its availability. As is said that the way to a husband's heart is via his stomach, so also is the way to the electorate's heart for any government to win elections. Unfortunately only majority votes matter! Jesus had said on the Cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do".

What is Easter? The New Testament speaks of how Jesus Christ was cruelly crucified by the Romans around AD 33. But after three days in the tomb, Jesus miraculously rose again, appeared to his disciples and ascended to heaven. Jesus' resurrection and triumph over death is what Christians celebrate every Easter. The celebration of this event, called Easter, or the Festival of the Resurrection and is a major feast day of the church.

The English word resurrection comes from two Latin terms, re meaning "again"; and surgere, "to rise." Resurrection means that a dead body is restored to active, everlasting life. Resurrection or anastasis (Greek word for "rising up") is the concept of coming back to life after death. The afterlife, refers to the belief that a conscious or essential aspect of an individual's being continues to exist after the physical body dies. This concept is widely practised across different cultures and religions, with different belief systems offering interpretations of what happens after death. As mortals, we see the resurrection through the eyes



of our faith. It can be a personal or universal event, with variations across different faiths. Many religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, have beliefs about an afterlife where the soul continues to exist after death. These beliefs include a concept of heaven as a place where souls go after death or where divine beings reside.

If most religions believe in resurrection and rebirth, this creates a motivation that we need to live a virtuous life by helping ourselves and others, without animosity to each other, it can lead to peaceful co-existence among communities

In Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an important tenet, signifying his victory over death and offering the faithful hope of eternal life. While not as important in other traditions, the idea of resurrection or rebirth can be found in various religions, those of Egypt and Canaan which had cults of dying-and-rising Gods, which may have laid the groundwork for later beliefs about resurrection. Many religions, especially the Abrahamic ones (monotheistic Judaism, Christianity & Islam) believe in an eternal life in a spiritual realm, either a heaven or hell, determined by an individual's actions and beliefs during their lifetime and a universal resurrection at the end of the world, before the final judgment. Jewish and Islamic eschatology (study of end things e.g. death & afterlife) also include beliefs in a universal resurrection, often involving a Day of Judgement, building upon earlier Middle Eastern and Hellenistic beliefs (influenced by Greek culture after Alexander the Great) about divine beings and the soul. In John 5:24. 24 is written "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life". Christianity believes in this resurrection of the body

and an eternal life in heaven or hell, depending on one's faith and deeds. It's seen as proof of Jesus' divinity and a promise of salvation for believers.

Our knowledge and hope of the Resurrection comes from the scriptures, - the story of Jesus, the witness of the Holy Spirit, personal revelation, and the testimony of the latter-day prophets. Jesus wasn't the only one believed to have risen from the dead. This concept is widely prevalent across various cultures and religions, around the world with different belief systems offering different interpretations of what happens after death. While earlier

terlife, or life after death, in ancient Egypt refers to the belief that an essential aspect of an individual's being continues to exist after the physical body dies. Egyptians believed in an afterlife where the deceased might reside near their tomb, in the celestial domain of the Sun God. Ancient Pharaohs hoped to become immortal through the embalming and mummification rituals. Islam also incorporates the concept of resurrection as a part of the Day of Judgment, where all the dead will be resurrected to face God's judgment.

If most religions believe in resurrection and rebirth, this creates a motivation that we need to live a virtuous life by helping ourselves and others, without animosity to each other, it can lead to peaceful co-existence among communities. Fundamentally all religions have the same teachings and we need to respect each other irrespective of our beliefs.

In yesteryears, there was much more co-existence among communities in the Goan villages. We have grown up with the village goldsmiths and grocery shops belonging to the Hindu community and the village butcher, always a Muslim. Festival times were times of fun and festivity for all. Today there seems to be a chasm of suspicion between neighbours, fuelled by politics and political parties. We Goans should never be puppets in manipulative hands!

Goa and Goans viewed Easter Sunday, Christmas, Eid, Chaturthi and Diwali as occasions when neighbours and friends invited each other to their hearth, homes and hearts with easterbuns, eastereggs, bibinca, kheer, biryani, modaks and nevreos spreading sweetness and love. Children love receiving easter eggs made of chocolate or filled with chocolates. The bigger the Easter egg, the wider is the smile on a child's face and much more wider is the smile of the commercial business' that market these Easter goodies. We need to emulate a child who always looks forward to these sweets from the neighbours on every occasion as much as we need to be good neighbours and give.

(Dr Sushila Savant Mendes is a Professor and Author of History and an Independent Researcher.)

# Enabling beef vendors to thrive post SC verdict

Despite four missed opportunities, beef vendors continue to wait for an amicable resolution from the Corporation of the City of Panaji. Although the verdict has been in their favour, their future remains uncertain, as conditions were arguably better when they operated out of the dilapidated building in the Panjim market. Back then, prices were affordable for Goan consumers, providing access to one of the most efficient sources of protein.

Today, sourcing beef products from neighbouring states has become a significant challenge, demanding serious attention. With cattle boasting rapid growth rates even without hormonal intervention, their population can become difficult to manage if unchecked. A thorough evaluation of regulatory measures governing the transportation of beef between states is urgently needed to create a balanced and sustainable solution.

It is crucial to develop a swift and effective solution that allows beef vendors to restart their operations following the hon'ble Supreme Court's favourable verdict. Such an approach would play a vital role in restoring normalcy to beef sales across Goa. While solutions may already exist, the key lies in questioning oneself deeply and finding ways to adapt those solutions

CHERYL VENAN DIAS

to address real-world challenges. Doing so can greatly benefit the broader community, encompassing both consumers and sellers.

Revolutionising beef vending with cargo container solutions

In an era marked by innovation and sustainability, businesses in every industry are finding unique ways to adapt to modern challenges. One such revolutionary concept is the use of cargo containers as a modular solution for beef vendors. These sturdy, adaptable structures are proving to be a game-changer for those in the food industry, offering practical features, cost-efficiency, and mobility.

The Concept: Repurposing containers for culinary excellence

Cargo containers, often used for shipping goods across the globe, are being reimagined as the backbone of modern vending solutions. Their modularity and robust design make them an ideal choice for beef vendors aiming to streamline operations while addressing logistical challenges.

At the heart of this innovation lies versatility. Containers can be customised to include refrigeration systems, processing areas, and hygiene stations, ensuring that vendors maintain food safety standards. With proper insulation and ventilation systems, the containers create an environment



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where beef can be stored and handled efficiently, regardless of external weather conditions.

Key features of container-based vending units

The beauty of cargo container vending lies in its simplicity coupled with technical advancements. Here are the essential features that make this solution stand out:

- 1. Cold Storage:** Refrigeration units are the cornerstone of these containers, providing vendors with the ability to store beef at optimal temperatures. These systems are designed to prevent spoilage and maintain product quality.
- 2. Processing and packaging areas:** Separate zones within the container ensure that vendors can cut, process, and package beef products hygienically and efficiently.
- 3. Hygienic surfaces and drainage:** The interiors are equipped with easy-to-clean surfaces and drainage systems that comply with health and safety standards.
- 4. Energy efficiency:** Solar panels or generators can be installed

to power refrigeration units and lighting systems, promoting eco-friendly operations.

Portability and accessibility: A vendor's dream

One of the most significant advantages of using cargo containers is their mobility. Designed to be transportable, these units allow vendors to relocate easily, ensuring accessibility to different markets or events.

This adaptability makes the concept particularly appealing to small and medium-sized businesses that need to balance cost efficiency with dynamic market requirements. With minimal logistical effort, vendors can set up shop anywhere, transforming urban spaces into vibrant hubs for fresh and delicious beef products.

Economic and environmental benefits

The economic benefits of using cargo containers are undeniable. Vendors save on construction costs compared to building traditional brick-and-mortar shops. Additionally, the modularity of containers allows

vendors to expand or modify their units as their business grows, reducing financial risks.

From an environmental standpoint, repurposing shipping containers supports sustainability by reducing waste and promoting the reuse of materials.

The future of food vending

As the world increasingly embraces unconventional solutions, cargo containers may well become the future of food vending. For beef vendors, they offer a one-stop solution that meets operational, logistical, and environmental needs. With customisation options, these containers can cater to a variety of business models, from large-scale meat suppliers to local vendors.

Consumers, too, stand to benefit from this innovation. Convenient access to fresh, quality beef products in hygienic and aesthetically appealing vending units enhances their shopping experience. The concept also opens doors for events, pop-up shops, and community initiatives that celebrate culinary diversity.

Real-world success stories

This innovative idea is not merely theoretical—it's already gaining traction in some parts of the world. Entrepreneurs and food vendors have transformed cargo containers into thriving business hubs. For instance, local markets in Southeast Asia have seen an influx of container-based food stalls that offer a range

of products, including beef.

Challenges and considerations

While cargo containers are a promising solution, vendors must navigate certain challenges. The initial cost of outfitting a container with refrigeration and processing equipment can be high, requiring strategic financial planning. Compliance with local food safety regulations is another critical factor that vendors must consider.

A vision for sustainable growth

Despite these challenges, the advantages of cargo container vending far outweigh the drawbacks. As the concept continues to evolve, it holds the potential to redefine how food is sold and consumed. For beef vendors, it represents a bold step toward sustainability, efficiency, and innovation.

In conclusion, cargo containers are more than just metal boxes—they're a symbol of adaptability and creativity. By embracing this solution, beef vendors can elevate their business while contributing to a greener and more dynamic marketplace. As industries across the globe strive to meet modern demands, solutions like this remind us of the limitless possibilities that come with thinking outside the box—literally.

(Dr. Cheryl Venan Dias is a renowned academician, dedicated researcher, and committed environmentalist)