

## O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

Media's duty:  
To inform, not  
to inflame

The recent ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan marks a critical moment of relief, pulling the region back from the brink of a potentially devastating conflict. As the dust settles, it is an opportune time to reflect on the role of the Indian media during this period of heightened tensions. The crisis underscored the media's immense power to shape public perception, influence national morale, and either escalate or de-escalate volatile situations. This experience offers valuable lessons for how the media can navigate future crises with restraint, integrity, and a commitment to fostering peace.

During the recent escalation, the stakes were extraordinarily high. The prospect of conflict with Pakistan threatened regional stability and the well-being of millions. Yet, some media outlets succumbed to sensationalism, deploying jingoistic rhetoric, dramatic visuals, and speculative narratives that risked inflaming public passions. Such coverage, while attention-grabbing, was a stark reminder of the dangers of prioritising entertainment over responsibility. The ceasefire serves as a testament to the importance of sobriety in reporting, highlighting that war is not a spectacle but a grave reality requiring careful handling. The lesson here is clear: sensationalism can exacerbate tensions, while measured reporting can support de-escalation.

A cornerstone of responsible journalism, reaffirmed by this crisis, is the unwavering commitment to verified facts. The volatility of the India-Pakistan standoff demanded that media outlets rely solely on official government and military sources. Unconfirmed reports or rumours could have fuelled misinformation, especially given Pakistan's known proficiency in disinformation campaigns. The Indian media's ability to exercise rigorous fact-checking and resist broadcasting unverified claims helped mitigate the risk of propaganda in the parallel cyber warfare battle. Moving forward, this discipline must remain non-negotiable, as a single false report can destabilise public trust and embolden adversaries.

The evolving media landscape — encompassing traditional outlets, YouTube channels, social media influencers, and digital platforms — amplified both the challenges and opportunities during the crisis. While these platforms democratise information, they also blur the line between fact and fiction. The pressure to break exclusive stories led to instances of hasty reporting that sowed confusion. The ceasefire underscores the need for accuracy over speed, reminding media outlets that credibility is their greatest asset in times of uncertainty. By prioritising verified information, the media can serve as a stabilising force, countering disinformation and fostering public confidence.

Self-censorship, a hallmark of ethical journalism, emerged as a critical lesson from this experience. While the pursuit of truth remains paramount, the media must balance this with the need to protect national interests. Reporting that could have undermined military efforts or exposed sensitive operations risked aiding the adversary. The ceasefire reinforces the value of discretion, not as a suppression of press freedom but as a voluntary act of responsibility. Journalists must continue to ask: Does this story serve the public without compromising security? When in doubt, restraint is the wisest path, as self-imposed censorship reflects a commitment to the greater good.

The crisis also highlighted the media's moral obligation to foster unity and resilience. By focusing on stories of courage, solidarity, and the human cost of conflict, the media can inspire hope and collective resolve. During the tensions, outlets that avoided excessive demonisation of the other side or glorification of war laid the groundwork for reconciliation. The ceasefire agreement validates this approach, showing that narratives of peace and shared humanity can pave the way for diplomacy. In future crises, the media should continue to amplify voices of moderation, reminding the public of the shared stakes in stability.

As India and Pakistan step back from the precipice, the Indian media stands at a crossroads. The ceasefire offers a chance to learn from past missteps and embrace a higher standard of journalism. By prioritising restraint, verified information, and self-censorship, the media can uphold its duty to the truth while serving as a force for peace. This crisis has shown that even in the most precarious moments, the pen — or the keyboard — can be a beacon of wisdom, guiding the nation towards unity and stability. Let us hope India's journalists carry these lessons forward, ensuring that the media remains a pillar of integrity in times of both war and peace.

## Twitter World

Chetan Bhagat @chetan\_bhagat

down now.

Really proud of govt of India and the army to take the action they did. Equally proud of them for their decision to pause. Message sent. Long term interest of India kept intact. This is how it's done. always what I supported. Those screaming in shrill voices, calm

Harsh Goenka @hvgoenka War between two countries never truly ends on the battlefield. It ends in hospitals, in orphanages, in the silent tears of mothers on both sides- who never declared it, may not have wanted it, but lost the most to it.

## comment



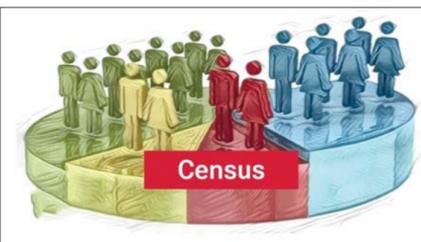
CLEOFATO ALMEIDA COUTINHO

Weaponising the caste  
census data?

The government has planned a surgical strike on the political space by accepting the opposition's demand of caste census in the country. It was not expected that inheritors of the legacy of M.S. Golwalkar and K.B. Hegdewar would go ahead with an idea not in keeping with the 'Sanatana Dharma'. It is also opposed to "Ek rahange to safe ranhenge" The very idea of elimination of caste is a progressive belief foreign to the *pampara* espoused by the RSS.

It is also interesting that Rahul Gandhi's stand is inconsistent with that of his great grandfather, grandmother, and his father all of whom skirted the caste census, when in power. Rahul's left turn in politics places him on the same side as Ram Manohar Lohia and Ambedkar, both of whom had very little in common with Congress. Full marks to BJP politically. They have seized the moment and accepted the atmosphere of inevitability created by Rahul Gandhi, something even Pandit Nehru was not open to. I believe that if there is one thing common between RSS and Nehru, it was avoiding caste census.

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Caste based reservation has always had polarizing tendency. Kaka Kalelkar who headed the First Backward classes commission himself opposed the provision for reservations, leading to his report being shelved. The circumstances under which the Mandal commission report was implemented by VP Singh are all known to all. That it led to OBC domination and change of political discourse in the Hindi heartland is a different matter altogether.

The problem with the caste census is the linkage with caste-based reservation. Backward classes have suffered discrimination and that is sought to be undone through reservations as the only ladder of upward mobility. Census will provide data on

economic, social, educational, and political issues of the backward castes. Some may require educational support, some may have to be supported economically. Some may require reservations and some may not. Looking at census only through the prism of reservations is weaponising the data. The robust data must be used for changing the stagnant system by reasonable policy. That's the challenge Reservation must bring in social change not further entrench the caste system. Caste Census in Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana did not bring in conflict but the implementation of Mandal commission recommendations ignited revolts and riots as the forwards felt they would have to share the cake with those who they felt were not their equals.

Rahul Gandhi's claim "we will X-ray the country through caste census and ensure equitable share for every section is in line with the thoughts of foremost Congress critic Ram Manohar Lohia. Lohia believed that merit comes from opportunity, not 'deceptive foundation of merit and qualification'

Anand Teltumbde grandson in law of Babasaheb is clearly opposed to caste census and resultant increase in the reservation a rhetorical flourish rather than a workable policy principle. He states that the moment castes are ranked for proportional benefits, the politics of competitive victimhood and sub quota agitations shall play out.

There has been little dispute over reservation as a ladder for upward mobility, the question has always been over the quantum. Ambedkar himself never called for proportional reservation. He demanded adequate representation. Babasaheb told the constituent assembly "Supposing, for instance, reservation were made for a community or a collection of communities, the total of which come to something like 70% of the total posts and only 30% are retained as the unreserved. Could anybody say that the reservation of 30% as open to general competition would be satisfactory from the point of view of giving effect to the first principle, namely, that there shall be equality of opportunity? It cannot be in my judgment. Therefore, if seats are to be

reserved, it must be confined to a minority of seats."

The interest of the community at large and advancement of backward classes was balanced by the 50% cap by the Supreme Court. 'Speaking generally and in broad way, a special provision should be less than 50%' said the apex court in 1968 (M.R.Balaji). In 1992, a nine judge bench accepted the 50% cap in the Mandal judgement with a rider that the rule could be breached in certain extraordinary situations. This laid a clear foundation for the principle of 'equality of opportunity' and protection of backward. The highest court brought in the 'creamy layer' to ward off fostering of caste system. A 2006 case required the quantifiable data on backwardness of communities and overall impact (Nagaraj). For nearly forty-five years, the interests of the society were protected through the reasonableness of 50% ceiling. The ceiling also applied to political reservations also except in scheduled areas where special considerations are required for tribal rights like the North Eastern states.

Many states failed to breach the reasonable line. Chattisgarh law reserving 58% failed the test before the High Court. Marathas could not cross the line without empirical data. Telangana has 67% reservation structure. Tamil Nadu has crossed the line to 69%. The highest court is yet to take a call on that since 2012. Is the ceiling a facilitation to the progress of the country or an impediment in the progress of the backward castes. Now that the caste census is announced, demands of politics shall create a flashpoint to breach the ceiling. All political parties favour increase of OBC reservations and addition of dominant groups within the OBC net. No government at Centre or state had the gumption to bring in a proper creamy layer so that those who benefited from quota are warded off. Both Congress and BJP will compete to present higher quotas like they did on 'revidis'. Reasonability and equality may be causality with the unselected getting the opportunity to have the last word!

(The writer is a political thinker who taught constitutional laws for over three decades)

Portugal years  
for political stability

Portugal goes to the Parliamentary polls on May 18. The third election in as many years following the collapse of Prime Minister Luis Montenegro's centre-right coalition Government on March 11 after barely 11 months in office. The voters are understandably increasingly frustrated with the political class over the worst political instability being witnessed in Portugal while every general election is costing the taxpayers around 30 million Euros.

The fall of the Montenegro government was due to an alleged conflict of interest in obtaining Government contracts. Similarly, in November 2023, Prime Minister Antonio Costa's administration was embroiled in an alleged corruption scandal involving his chief of staff, while Costa resigned paving the way for the last elections held in March 2024.

The successive political crises have led to frequent electoral cycles and heightened public disenchantment with traditional political institutions. Portugal is also grappling with the alarming problem of refugees and illegal immigrants. The government is facing grave financial challenges in dealing with these issues. A very heavy burden indeed. Understandably, there is a feeling of disquiet amongst the locals as crime and lawlessness is raising its ugly head.

In the May 18 General elections, the Portuguese nationals in Goa will be casting their votes

at the Consulate at Althinho in Panjim. I could have exercised my franchise at the Embassy in London. However, I decided to be in Portugal for a few days to witness the political discourse and cast my vote in Lisbon on 18th May. For a student of Political Science, this keenly contested election is worth observing.

Let's hope that the outcome of this democratic election results in a stable and sustainable Government that acts with the utmost integrity in the best interests of its people.

Aires Rodrigues, Lisbon

Ban fireworks  
during wartime

In an order issued on Friday, South Goa has reportedly prohibited the operation, flying or use of drones or any Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) regardless of size or category. The move comes as a result of the escalating tensions along the border with Pakistan and the heightened threat perception in terms of internal security, critical infrastructure vulnerability and civilian safety. This is a step in the right direction and needs to be extended to the entire state including North Goa. Be that as it may, it would be in the fitness of things to extend the ban to the use of firecrackers, bomb firecrackers and fireworks, especially rockets which are a part of any celebration.

## letterstotheeditor

For letters to the editor contact us at editor@herald-go.com.

All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

The use of fireworks can be banned for several factors, primarily related to security and public safety. Firecrackers, bomb firecrackers and fireworks, while often used for celebratory purposes, can be misused in a wartime environment. This can cause panic among the citizens. Fireworks, especially rockets, could even be mistaken for missiles. Fireworks can be a source of joy and celebration. However their potential for misuse by anti-social elements in order to create panic during wartime far outweigh their benefits thereby exacerbating the existing tense situation. Firecrackers and bomb firecrackers can be used to simulate attacks. Though there is no specific wartime ban on firecrackers and fireworks in India, it would be in the fitness of things to implement the ban, especially at marriage and other celebrations.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

## The new Pope

The entire world, particularly the 1.4 billion Catholic community was on tenterhooks in the last two days and from the time the 133 Cardinals of the Papal Conclave got themselves confined in the Sistine Chapel to elect the next Pontiff to succeed Pope Francis who passed away recently. Contrary to various guesses that were floating in the

media about the highly probable candidates to become the next Pope, a little known missionary from Chicago turned out to be the surprise choice of the Papal Conclave for this holy seat, confirming the strong belief that zeroing in on the right one among themselves numbering 133 as the next Shepherd of the Holy Church is only through the indulgence of God.

The new Pope assumed the papal name Leo XIV. Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost created history not only by becoming the first American to be elected as the Holy Father but also as the first one to be chosen from the Order of St Augustine to which he belongs. Moreover, this is the first time such a thing has happened in the 2000 year long history of the Church.

It is also heartening to learn that the late Pope Francis happened to be the mentor of Pope Leo XIV. It seems highly impressed with the services rendered by him to the poor, down-trodden and immigrants in Peru as Bishop, Francis elevated Bishop Robert Prevost as a Cardinal in 2023 and believed that he was fit to become the Pope one day.

On his first appearance to the thousands of people who had assembled in St Peter's Square to hear him and get his blessings, the new Pope commenced his speech saying, 'Peace be with you' denoting how his papacy

## people'sedit

THE NOSTALGIC  
LONGING OF  
MIGRANTS

JOSEPH LEWIS D'SILVA

Goan Hindus, Catholics or Muslims, speak Konkani, though many also speak English, Portuguese, Marathi or Hindi. Many Goans have always migrated, even during the colonial rule as they aspired to improve their standard of living. But in foreign countries, they always felt homesick.

The green-blue hues of hills and waving fields; the cluster of coconut trees swaying in the breeze; pearly sands, emerald seas, topaz mountains, azure rivers — all call migrant Goans back home. The valleys whisper, 'Bangarachem Goem apoita Goekarank' (Golden Goa beckons Goans), to return and relive the memories moving in their mind.

Goans abroad miss the unique sounds of home; the monsoon rain pounding on tiled roofs; the familiar rhythms of 'tiats' (local drama), and the joyous celebrations of Christmas, New Year and Carnival. Their memories force Goans to book a trip home, in time for Chapel, Church feasts and Cross Litanies (Ladins) where after prayers, at the foot of the Cross, boiled grams mixed with small pieces of coconut are traditionally served.

They even long for the thud or swish of footballs striking the village ground as it move across on the playground where barefooted boys spontaneously play the football game.

For the migrants, nostalgia is more than a longing for a place — it's a yearning for a way of life: Morning Mass at the local Church, then reading the elegant 'O Heraldo' with gusto while sitting on a rocking chair.

In the evening, Goans living in distant cities often remember peaceful walks through paddy fields, sitting on a 'mer' (ridge) to breath in fresh air. Such moments bring calm and clarity that urban life rarely offers.

The golden sands of Goa's virgin beaches also pull at migrant's hearts. They long to bathe in the warm, giggling waves of the Arabian Sea — believing it to cure themselves of arthritis and prickly-heat.

Food memories intensify the nostalgia. The aroma and tastes of home — savory 'sorpatel', piquant xacuti; freshly fried fish; mouth-watering para, spicy sausages of pork; grandmother's comforting 'pez' (canjee, rice gruel) with 'kalchi-kodi' (yesterday's curry) which bring deep emotional responses — a sense of well-being to the whole body. Many remember the taste of 'mangada' (mango jam), jackfruit dosh and the warm welcome of their ancestral 'cozin' (kitchen).

Even tavern culture leaves its mark. Some migrants fondly remember the time spent in Goan pubs, drinking 'urak' or 'fiery-feni' (caju or coconut liquor) with friends, under disco lights and soft music in drinking holes. And when their spirits rise, they walk homewards for a satisfying meal of 'xit and nistea coddi' (rice and fish curry), perhaps humming an old tune.

Elderly Goans dream of returning home for retirement; to spend their twilight years in ancestral villages where their hearts always remained. Others, tied down by responsibilities of family abroad, live out their days with unspoken longing.

All those who never make it to come back; die in foreign land; and they return posthumously; bodies are brought to Goa — and according to individual religious rites, their ashes are scattered in the Arabian Sea or their bodies buried in local cemeteries.

For many Goan migrants, the connection to their homeland remains unbroken by distance. They simply revisit their home in dreams. In life or in death, the migrant's heart often finds its final resting place in Goa.

is going to be. As one who not only has Francis in his name but also the adorable values of peace making, love for the poor and differentlyabled and humility which were embedded in the late Pope, we can be rest assured that the new Pope will only be a replica of Pope Francis.

Tharcus S Fernando, Chennai

Pakistan has been taught  
lesson for life

We have given a befitting reply to the terrorists and Pakistan by land, sea and air with Operation Sindoore which they will not forget for a long time and hopefully desist from any adventurous activity against us.

It was reported in the papers recently that Pakistan has ammunition for its artillery for just 4 days. So it will not be long before the Pakistani guns bombard the LoC go silent. The confirmation that the Pakistan Army Chief of Staff, Asim Munir has been sacked will be an indication that Pakistan has learnt its lesson and will be scaling down its response to our strikes against the terror infrastructure it has built over the years.

There are rumors that there has been a coup in the Pakistan Army and Asim Munir has been removed and placed under arrest. If this is true, he will probably understand that his tongue got the better of him in instigating the Pahalgam terror attack and its consequent repercussions and he will refrain from such irresponsible comments in the future.

Srinivas Kamat, Mysore