

O HERALDO

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Smart City shows no signs

Panjim City has become one of the most dangerous places in Goa, in terms of road safety. Roads which were once designated as “one way” are no longer safe. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, you will find a four wheeler or a two wheeler zooming into you on a sharp blind turn or a narrow corner. “No entry” roads are brazenly used by vehicle users with gay abandon.

The purpose of designating roads as “one way” or “no entry” was to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and road safety. The violation of the “no entry” and “one way roads” often leads to fights between vehicle users. The violators however just don’t care, even as they pose serious threat to the lives of others.

Most of the vehicle users who violate no entry or one way streets are rent-a-cab drivers, who are mostly tourists from other states. The reason is they do not know the routes in the city. When they don’t have a clue about the city, they use Google Maps. Unfortunately, though Google Maps are extremely useful to locate places and do away with the ordeal of asking locals, they also have a great limitation in terms of traffic safety. They do not show “no entry” and “one way” streets.

Hence tourists in Panjim drive full speed through no entry and one way streets, creating a traffic hazard. However, this is not limited to tourists either. Tourist taxis driven by drivers from other states, who are hired by local taxi owners, especially those from outside Panjim also take no entry routes and one way roads. Since there is utter lawlessness on the streets even locals are encouraged to take the no entry or one way streets. When questioned or told that this is a one way or no entry street, they shout back “zana re” (I know).

While this has been happening ever since the Smart City works began, where roads were suddenly closed overnight and one had to take no entry or one way routes, now that the Smart City has finished digging and tarring the roads, the habit still continues. Now that the roads are complete, the guardians of the streets — Goa’s Traffic Police should be out on the roads to fine the law-breakers. But this is not happening.

To complicate things and lessen the personnel on the street, the power of imposing fines has been given to only Police Sub Inspectors (PSIs) at night and Police Inspectors (PIs) by the day. The PI for instance has a lot of administrative work, so will he be on the streets or in his office as head of the department? This is simply incomprehensible.

There should be more traffic police on the streets to see that road users follow rules but more importantly to prevent violation of no entry and one way streets.

The violation of no entry happens more frequently after nightfall and the possibility of accidents increases manifold. The Mahatma Gandhi Road right from Don Bosco High School to the Head Post office and the old Patto bridge, the 18th June Road; the Atmaram Borkar Road and the Dada Vaidya road are all one way, where dangerous traffic situations arise.

However, the largest part of the blame lies at the doorsteps of the Imagine Panjim Smart City Development Limited. It appears after completing tarring of the roads, the Smart City officials seem to be taking rest. They have removed all the old “No Entry” and traffic sign boards which existed in Panjim. So neither the tourists nor the tourist taxi drivers from other states or from Goa can be blamed for violating no entry zones.

With no Smart City signboards and with no traffic policemen to guide vehicle users, Panjim has become a hot spot for accidents. There is a possibility of people losing a limb or life at every corner in Panjim. It is high time the Smart City gets its act together and puts up traffic signs especially no entry signs on a war footing to ensure traffic safety and that precious lives are not lost, due to their negligence.

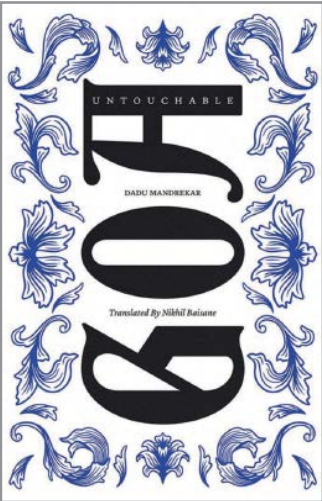


comment

AMITA KANEKAR

Even a superficial glance today would convince anyone that the Old Conquests — ruled by the Portuguese for 451 years — are better off than the New Conquests which joined Portuguese Goa only in the 18th century

The ‘Untouchable’ new conquests



of proper planning and crowd management by temple and government, ended in a killer stampede. (Here, incidentally, is another difference between the New and the Old — safe and efficient management of much larger crowds, as during the regular Expositions at Old Goa.)

Now this Hindu dominance of the New Conquests may be something to celebrate for a Hindutvawadi. But perhaps not for someone who is more neutral in their outlook. And certainly not if you are a committed activist for social justice, and a tireless investigator into the social conditions of some of the poorest communities of Goa. Which is exactly what Dadu Mandrekar was. His book was the result of his travels across Goa in the 1990s, especially the villages in the New Conquest regions of Pernem, Bicholim, and Sattari. He wanted to learn more about the Mahar community, perhaps one of the most ill-treated communities in Goa’s caste system.

And what he found was atrocities. Everywhere he went, he found the community impoverished; with scrawny bodies that spoke of generations of malnourishment; living apart from others in the village, sometimes separated by rivulets or jungle; in the poorest possible quality of housing (despite government housing schemes, clearly just namesake); and afflicted by lack of education, decent jobs, and healthcare. Not only this, he also found them living at the mercy of unspeakable, and unreadable, atrocities in the name of religion, custom, and tradition.

Here are some examples. In Vinorda, the annual Dussehra festival included a grand procession that required a Mahar man to actually slash his own thigh with a ritual sword and dance frenziedly so that his blood rained down over the crowd. In many vil-

lages, the Mahars were tasked with playing music during weddings and funerals; they led the wedding processions but when it came to the wedding feast, they were expected to wait till everyone else had eaten and then scavenge among the leftovers. In another common festival custom in many villages, Mahar women were expected to go begging door-to-door for alms after the celebrations were over. It was common, he found, for local tea stalls to refuse to serve Mahars. The list can go on. Dadu blamed all of this on the Brahminical mindset, rituals, and institutions of the people of these villages.

Besides the appalling living conditions of the Mahars, he also lambasted Brahminism for other divisive and violent superstitions, like ill-treating women (treating them like untouchables, actually) during menses or after childbirth; or cutting trees down for burning during the Holi festival (he likens the ritual sacrifice of all-giving trees to the sacrifice of Jesus who also gave his life for the common good).

Dadu’s book was published in 1997, and I am not sure whether all the atrocities that he documents continue today. But I can certainly vouch for the fact that untouchability is still practiced in many villages in the New Conquests, at least with respect to temples. It is absolutely normal to find, even today, Mahar communities who have never ever entered the main temple of their own village, despite being expected—even pressurised—to beat the temple drums. Both this ban on temple-entry and the temple drum-beating are justified as tradition.

You don’t see such happenings in the Old Conquests. It is not that casteism is not to be found there; it is indeed found there, just as it is found all over India. But blatant untouchability along with casteist atrocities? Expecting an impoverished community to shed blood as a religious ritual, and to beg for leftovers during festivals? No, you don’t find this.

One would therefore like to ask the Chief Minister to read Dadu Mandrekar’s book. And then tell us: were the New Conquests really saved by being conquered late by the Portuguese? Or was it the Old Conquests which were actually saved, by being conquered early?

(Amita Kanekar is an architectural historian and novelist)

people’s *edit*

CLIMATE CHANGE: TODAY’S KIDS WILL BEAR THE BRUNT

ALVARINHO LUIS

A 2025 study in esteemed journal Nature warns that under current climate policies, millions of young people will face unprecedented exposure to extreme climate events—heatwaves, floods, droughts, crop failures, wildfires, and storms. If global temperatures rise by 3.5°C by 2100, 92% of children born in 2020 (around 111 million) will endure extreme heatwaves. Limiting warming to 1.5°C, as outlined in the Paris Agreement, could protect 49 million of them. And this figure is only for one birth year. When considering all children currently aged 5 to 18, 1.5 billion would be affected under a 3.5°C scenario, while 654 million could be spared if warming is capped at 1.5°C—underscoring the urgent need for stronger global climate action.

What is the climate change’s disproportionate burden on youth? As the planet continues to warm, extreme weather events—such as heatwaves, crop failures, river floods, tropical cyclones, wildfires, and droughts—are expected to intensify. Today’s children are set to experience more of these climate extremes than any previous generation.

Scientist Luke Grant from the Canadian Centre for Climate Modelling and Analysis defines an unprecedented life as one in which a person experiences more climate extremes than 99.99% of people would have without climate change. This rigorous threshold highlights populations that are facing a future far beyond natural climate variability.

Using global demographic data and climate model projections, the researchers estimated the share of each generation born between 1960 and 2020 that will encounter unprecedented lifetime exposure to extreme climate events.

The younger a person is, the greater their risk of unprecedented climate extremes. Even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C, 52% of children born in 2020 will face extreme heatwave exposure—compared to just 16% of those born in 1960. Dr Grant notes that for those born after 1980, exposure levels are increasingly shaped by climate change. Stabilising warming at 1.5°C would still leave about half of today’s youth facing record heatwaves, while a 3.5°C rise would affect over 90%. Similar generational disparities exist for other climate extremes, with children in tropical regions bearing the heaviest burden—even under lower warming scenarios.

The study highlights the stark social injustice of climate change. Under current policies, 95% of the most vulnerable children born in 2020 will face unprecedented lifetime heatwave exposure, compared to 78% of the least vulnerable. Those most at risk endure the sharpest rise in climate extremes, yet have the fewest resources and limited means to adapt, making them disproportionately vulnerable.

As 30th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference in Brazil approaches, nations must strengthen their climate commitments. Current policies put the world on track for 2.7°C of warming this century. This study, along with a Save the Children report, stresses the critical need to limit warming to 1.5°C to protect today’s and future generations. This research shows there’s still hope, but only if we act now. With emissions rising and just 0.2°C left before we breach the 1.5°C limit, world leaders must act swiftly to cut emissions and put children at the heart of climate action.

in collaboration with the Government of Goa and members of the tiatr community to facilitate the process of securing UNESCO inscription for tiatr.

Having an auditorium dedicated for Konkani tiatr and Konkani films could be the first step towards this goal.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Wage war against forces of national disintegration

India needs to launch a war against the forces of national disintegration, who are trying to marginalise those who speak languages like Bengali. Even some law enforcers have been acting like catalysts of national disintegration. Recently, migrant workers from West Bengal, despite having valid Aadhaar and voter cards, were kept under police vigilance for nine days in Rajasthan just because they spoke in Bengali. Bengali contributes to our national anthem and national song. But migrant workers from West Bengal have continuously been harassed from Rajasthan to Odisha just for speaking Bengali. Only a continuous war against these forces can keep a multi-lingual and multi-religious country like ours strong and united.

Sujit De, Kolkata

Trump taking us for a ride

Donald Trump is leading the Indian establishment through a merry dance on the tariff issue. Now he wants India to drop tariffs to zero on all US goods. India was in a hurry to meet Trump’s demands when he commenced on his campaign of retaliatory tariffs.

It was also counting the brownie points that we were the first country to commence negotiations for a trade deal with the US which got us firstly relief and then preferential lower tariff compared to China. Now the bird has come to roost with Trump turning the tables on us and seeking more substantial concessions.

Clearly we were not able to read Trump through and through who was operating on an extreme strategy of negotiation consistent with his background in business.

Once his target succumbs, he will attempt to drive home his advantage home to secure his original objective. In contrast China played the confrontational game of retaliatory tariffs which forced Trump to come to the negotiating table and make concessions that China wanted.

The problem is that we are easily fooled by the West and presume that the joie de vivre

shown indicates friendship which it is not and we learn the hard way. Apart from this, Trump is known to be erratic which he has shown yet again by asking Apple not to make the iPhones in India.

Apple in the initial period of the tariff wars assuming that the high tariffs on China would stay had ramped up plans for the expansion of its iPhone manufacturing line in India.

Now that thing has gone for a toss with the latest Trump retraction. That’s more mud on the Indian establishment’s face who should learn that they should not count their chickens before they are hatched.

Srinivas Kamat, Mysore

Saga of water shortages and power cuts

Not a single day passes without the public resorting to morchas, agitations basically due to the authorities turning a blind eye to the basic human requirements of electricity and water. What is happening nowadays with taps running dry and frequent power cuts has never happened before and in this extreme heat conditions life becomes more misera-

ble. We had presumed that with the underground cabling network, situation would improve but it has turned worse.

Regarding the roads, the less said the better as the conditions are deplorable to say the least. Just to mention a small stretch from Agnelo Ashram to Nuvem on the old NH 17, half the road is dug at numerous places leaving just a small gap for just one bus or a four wheeler to pass and during night time no hazard lights are in place.

This work is going on for months now with no indication it will be completed before the monsoons. Why are the general public made to suffer when the knights in shining armour are having a cosy and luxurious lifestyle at the tax payers cost?

Lucas D’Souza, Verna

‘Monsoon break’ for Konkani tiatr?

Artists, especially tiatrists and tiatr lovers are in for some bad news, as the Kala Academy Goa’s premiere cultural centre which was closed for renovation, is now set to remain closed yet again for two months for rectification work.

Ardent tiatr lovers in the state may have to forgo watching their favourite tiatr at the Ravindra Bhavan in Margao in the monsoon. The management of Ravindra Bhavan has reportedly decided to shut the Pai Tiatrist hall for staging of tiatr shows in order to pave the way for the renovation and refurbishment of the amenities of the 2025 IFFI festival. It is learnt that the roofing of the main auditorium will be changed to plug seepage of water during the rains. Incidentally, repairs work has reportedly been carried out not only last year but over the past five years.

Tiatr happens to be a popular form of entertainment for Goans. The government could think of building a separate auditorium to be used exclusively to stage Konkani tiatr and screen Konkani movies.

The Pai tiatr hall which was built for staging tiatrs has now become a multi-purpose hall. South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes, has called for the recognition of tiatr by UNESCO as a cultural and heritage treasure. Speaking during the zero hour in Parliament recently, Capt Fernandes urged the Ministry of Culture to establish a task force