

O HERALDO

Triumph and tragedy

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

It was one of the greatest triumphs of RCB Challengers after an 18-year wait and ironically also one of the worst tragedies of the cricketing world. Eleven fans, mostly youth, died and at least 30 were injured, during the victory celebrations of the RCB franchise which turned into tears for many on Wednesday. The RCB even with the best of world cricketers such as Chrys Gayle, AB de Villiers, Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli himself could not win the coveted IPL trophy for nearly 2 decades. Due to this history, the whole of Bengaluru exploded with joy and emotion at the victory of their team. Over two to three lakh people converged near the Chinnaswamy Stadium, which was much beyond the expectations of the organisers and the police force.

When the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) sought permissions for the celebrations from the Bengaluru Police, they denied permissions, citing security reasons and traffic snarls, but the KSCA, DNA Entertainment Private Ltd and RCB allegedly insisted on holding the June 4 celebrations which turned tragic. The Bengaluru Police have filed an FIR against the RCB, DNA and KSCA since they had no permissions to hold the event. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has ordered the suspension of Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayanand and several senior police officials in connection with the deaths and stampede outside Chinnaswamy stadium. He also ordered the arrest of the RCB, DNA and KSCA representatives and ordered a magisterial inquiry.

Earlier this year, at least 30 people died and 60 were injured in a stampede at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on January 29.

The stampede occurred as pilgrims gathered near the Sangam to take a holy dip during Mauni Amavasya. A judicial inquiry was ordered, which was later expanded in its scope.

Nearer home, six persons were killed and more than 60 injured in the stampede during the annual jatra at Lairai Devi temple in Shirgao village on May 3. Again another inquiry was ordered and one is yet to see the outcome. Apart from the blame game, nothing beneficial has happened or lessons learnt.

Lack of crowd management skills and improper planning are the two main factors that are responsible for these stampedes and loss of precious human lives. No amount of inquiries and compensation can bring back people from the dead. Yet lessons are never learnt and life goes on as usual till the next tragedy occurs.

Advanced crowd management skills involve not only basic crowd control but it includes proactive strategies, real-time monitoring of crowds, and the ability to adapt to changing situations. Safety requires understanding of crowd psychology, types of crowds, use of technology and having a strong emergency preparedness plan in place while dealing with huge crowds, which seem to be lacking in all the above three instances.

Effective crowd management is essential for ensuring public safety during large gatherings such as rallies, concerts, festivals and celebrations. Crowds can vary in nature—dense crowds are typical in high-attendance events and pose risks like stampedes, requiring real-time monitoring, effective barriers, and clear pathways. Excited crowds, such as those seen during celebrations, can be unpredictable and require heightened security vigilance to prevent chaos.

To manage crowds effectively, thorough planning and preparation are crucial. This includes risk assessments, venue evaluations, defining capacity limits and implementing structured crowd management plans. Reserved seating can help reduce disorder.

Security and check-in systems play a vital role. Smooth check-ins, access control and the presence of well-trained personnel at key points help maintain order. Effective communication tools like walkie-talkies and mobile phones are essential for coordination.

Barriers and signage are important tools for directing crowd flow and preventing access to restricted zones. Proper queue management, clearly marked emergency exits, and flexible barriers contribute to safety.

Staff training and communication are critical. Regular training and simulation drills prepare personnel for real-life situations. Clear role definitions and responsibilities ensure coordinated responses.

A well-prepared emergency plan should address potential risks such as unrest, pushing, fires, severe weather, or medical incidents. It must include contingency plans, evacuation procedures, and accessible medical support like first aid and ambulances.

Technology enhances crowd safety through tools like video surveillance, AI-powered monitoring software, and heat map analysis, helping detect overcrowding and ensure smooth crowd flow.

Finally, post-event analysis is essential to identify successes and areas for improvement, ensuring more effective crowd management in future events.



ALBERTINA ALMEIDA

The drainage system in many villages is choked, leaving many fields so flooded that it is not possible to sow paddy seeds or nurture paddy cultivation



As if this is not enough, raw sewage is also being discharged into the fields, and those doing so are not being held to account. For example, despite a report by the State Human Rights Commission requiring the Village Panchayat of Taleigao to address the issue, the results are not showing. A dark thick film of sewage discharge is so apparent even to the naked eye. As a matter of fact, there should be a similar directive to all Panchayats, and the Director of Panchayats should ensure

Include tree plantation in school curriculum

A tree plantation drive was reportedly launched at the Somsodo waste site on World Environment Day to convert the legacy dump area into a dense forest and green recreational space. Nearly 400 saplings were planted at the dump yard to mark the beginning of the project. The government has announced plans to plant five lakh trees across Goa over the next three months. The government has also given a push for vertical forests. This is a good move as vertical forests enhance air quality by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen, contribute to urban cooling by providing shade, and promote biodiversity.

Be that as it may, it seems prudent to involve school children in the green mission. School children are the future citizens of the country and the love for plants should be imbibed in them at a young age. It is pertinent to note that every year the new academic year for schools coincides with the onset of the monsoon which is the right time to carry out tree plantation.

Hence it would be befitting to include tree plantation drive in the school curriculum. Children should be given practical guidance on planting saplings and caring for them subsequently.

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Where are all the fields going?

The monsoons are here again. And time to start growing the paddy seeds. But hold on, the Agriculture Department has said that people should not change the usual timing of agricultural activities, since the monsoons arrived early because of climate change. Is just making these statements enough? Without duly enabling farmers and disabling those factors that are responsible for the decline in paddy cultivation? What action has been taken to help farmers adapt to these changing weather patterns? After all, it is a question of food security.

Another Environment Day has been celebrated to the drums of beating plastic pollution. The Goa Government decided to celebrate it by talking of alternatives to single use plastics. Where does one buy those alternatives? The sale of the single use plastic still continues. But whether it is single use or multiple use plastics, these plastics are being randomly thrown into the fields, specially, by passing scooters and cars and occasionally by some pedestrians. One would assume that those in cars and on scooters at least should have civic sense and find bins where there is some arrangement for collection of their garbage. Some of the pedestrians, especially migrant workers, though, do this because there is no other place to dump their garbage. The migrant workers are made to live in shanties or illegal structures, which then do not have the adequate amenities, when by law their contractor-employers or builders should have been providing habitable accommodation for them.

that the Panchayats enforce the directives. The paddy fields then lie barren and not cultivated due to the sewage in the fields.

Then comes the drainage. The drainage system in many villages is choked, leaving many fields so flooded that it is not possible to sow paddy seeds or nurture paddy cultivation. I have seen a few paddy fields so flooded that the farmers lost their crop for the season or are unable to plant in the field. Along with the flooded water, there is a lot of plastic waste that enters the fields.

Stagnant waters, as opposed to the monsoon rains and controlled flooding, reduce oxygen available for roots, turn into a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and result in poor soil health. This leads to other public health challenges of vector borne diseases and crop losses for the farmers, for which getting compensation is another nightmare.

And not forgetting the Goa Restrictions on Transfer of Agricultural Land Act, 2023, which does a function creep on its name. Where there may have earlier been doubt about which is the agricultural land that may not be transferred, now it clearly gives a go-signal for releasing all agricultural lands other than those used for cultivating paddy including the morods, for the land sharks. Because agriculture has been defined for the purposes of this law as 'cultivation of paddy' alone. To top it all, after saying the land may not be transferred to any person other than an agriculturist, it surreptitiously allows for the transfer of agricultural land in favour of the Government for any Government project, and prohibits the civil court from intervening in these matters.

After all, these factors exist for disabling agriculture or putting pressures on family members to alienate agricultural land, if some of the co-holders of inherited land wish to pursue their interests in agriculture and continue to be agriculturists, they are discouraged by other family members who object to any benefits being given to them and get their Krishi cards cancelled.

Any co-family member seeking to do this, should not be encouraged, and it should at best be a situation where they also can be issued Krishi cards. Not the other way round.

Now about the Schemes: The schemes are only available to the Krishi Card holders. But Krishi cards are not issued if the farmer's name is not on the Form I and XIV, either as an occupant or a tenant. Fair enough, as some standard is required and arbitrariness cannot be allowed to hold sway. But if their par-

ent's name is there, they should be able to avail of it. Specially with tribal communities, where succession and inventory documentation is hardly done or sometimes not possible, because of various issues. Here the birth certificates should be sufficient to enable the person to get a Krishi card and avail of the schemes. One is not even getting to the point of the paperwork involved to get the schemes and the access of the concerned offices for the farmers. Further, tractors and harvesters are a nightmare to chase. This ultimately results in opportunistic politicians entering the fray.

Who wants to continue agriculture in these circumstances? This then becomes an easy bargain for land sharks to negotiate with owners or tenants of land to part with their land, to industrial or commercial undertakings that claim to want to pursue agriculture, and then we know how the doors open up for land filling and more.

In many gram sabhas in different parts of Goa, raising these issues at the gram sabha, results in booing/disruption by a coterie of people who are engaged - for reasons best known - only to boo. Because this happens, after persistent demand, there was a requirement introduced that an observer should attend the gram sabha meeting and report the proceedings. But the remit of the observer is so limited that the observer is only found recording who was present and what were the decisions taken. Even this information is taken by that observer from the Secretary. Apart from the wider reporting that should be required of the observer, is the question of who the Block Development Officer should send. There will need to be some arrangement made for this purpose where fit persons duly equipped are deputed to observe. The disabling of democracy is a recipe for disaster. And literally disaster. The low-lying fields for instance, have been the catchment areas to prevent flooding during the monsoons and while at the same time, serving paddy cultivation. If the low lying fields are being filled, can disaster be far behind?

In other words, so long as the disablers of agriculture are not addressed, we have a situation where the State is actively contributing to food insecurity and disaster and must be held responsible for the same - for doing what it is not supposed to do and not doing what it is supposed to do.

(Albertina Almeida is a lawyer and human rights activist)

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 forest department needs to distribute saplings and also provide necessary gardening equipment to all the schools at the start of the academic year. Grace marks could be given to the students at the end of the academic year depending on how well they have tended to the plants.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Hero worshipping of our cricketers

The recent tragedy at the Chinnaswamy Stadium Bengaluru which left 11 dead and many others injured some critically could have been avoided if only the stadium authorities in the state administration had taken more pro active steps prior to the felicitation ceremony for the IPL winning team. In our country, cricketers are treated like demi gods which no other team sport enjoys vis-a-vis football, hockey etc.

The stadium authorities and the RCB team management are to be squarely blamed for allowing free unrestricted entry on first come first serve basis which led to this catastrophe. Imagine lakhs of cricket enthusiasts try-

ing to make their way into the stadium leading to a stampede like situation.

A compensation of 10 lakhs to the families of the deceased, puts the authorities in a very poor light when the BCCI coffers are swelling if not overflowing slush with funds, could have been more generous.

Apparently many heads are going to roll as it normally happens, and the authorities should conduct a high level inquiry led by a retired judge so that such type of incidents are not repeated or reoccur in the future.

Lucas D'Souza, Verna

Have we become totally heartless?

The heartbreaking loss of 11 lives during what should have been a joyous celebration at Bengaluru in connection with RCB's maiden IPL title triumph, is a stark reminder of the critical importance of meticulous planning, empathy, and safety in public gatherings.

While the spirit of victory unites communities, it must never come at the cost of human life. The most important question that continues to

haunt us is why the celebrations continued despite the stampede taking place. When sirens were blaring outside the Chinnaswamy stadium, how and why the celebrations were allowed to carry on and who will take the responsibility for this crassitude? While it was wholly meant for fans, some of those fans lost their lives, and yet the celebrations went on! Do human lives really matter or have we become totally heartless? What happened in Bengaluru should be a life lesson for all of us. As we honour RCB's remarkable achievement, equally we must ask ourselves: how can Bengaluru or India as a whole build safer, more inclusive spaces for public joy that protect every individual.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai

Blame game will go on

This has reference to the report 'Bengaluru stampede...' (Herald June 6, 2025).

Very unfortunate incident leaving 11 dead and many injured. Sadly, such is the frenzy of cricket fans in our country. Now,

people'sedit

EID-UL-ADHA – THE FESTIVAL OF SACRIFICE

FAREENA HUSSAINI

All over the world, Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Adha in the 12th month of the Islamic year. It is the second major Islamic celebration after Eid-ul-Fitr and it marks the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, known as Hajj. This day commemorates the story of the great sacrifice by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and is also known as the Greater Eid.

But what does sacrifice truly mean? In daily life, we often give up certain things to achieve greater goals like missing a hobby for a work meeting, or avoiding unhealthy food for better health. These everyday sacrifices help us grow. Similarly, Eid-ul-Adha teaches us about a much deeper, spiritual kind of sacrifice.

According to the Holy Qur'an, Prophet Abraham (pbuh) saw a dream where he was sacrificing his beloved son, Ishmael (pbuh). When Ishmael was old enough to understand, Abraham shared the dream with him. Ishmael courageously replied:

"O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, among the patient." Holy Qur'an 37:102

As Abraham prepared to fulfil this divine vision, God stopped him and revealed that the real meaning of the dream was not a command for physical sacrifice. Instead, it was a test of faith, obedience and inner surrender. God asked him to sacrifice a ram instead, as a symbol of spiritual sacrifice.

This story shows us that God never demanded human sacrifice. The deeper lesson was to teach us the importance of sacrificing the inner self, our ego, pride, desires, and worldly attachment for a higher spiritual purpose. This is the real sacrifice God wants from us.

On Eid-ul-Adha, Muslims around the world sacrifice animals such as goats or sheep. This act is not merely a ritual, it serves as a powerful reminder of Prophet Abraham's inner sacrifice. It symbolises the importance of being willing to give up what we love most for a higher spiritual purpose.

The slaughtering of animals during Eid-ul-Adha is symbolic. It reminds us to purify our hearts and to live a life of devotion, compassion, and service to God and humanity.

The Holy Qur'an beautifully summarises this idea:

"Say, 'My prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'" (6:162)

This Eid reminds us to live with faith, selflessness, and compassion, just like Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon them) did.

Eid-ul-Adha teaches that being a true servant of God requires a willingness to give up anything and everything for His sake. It's about offering not just animals, but our effort, time, energy and love to please God and to serve others.

This is why Eid-ul-Adha is called the Greater Eid. It is not just a celebration—it is a reminder of the ultimate sacrifice, the kind made by Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon them) and one that every believer is encouraged to reflect upon in their own life.

is anybody willing to own up responsibility for this catastrophe? The blame game may go on. This was probably an avoidable incident, a needless catastrophe. If only the organizers and the security personnel had applied their mind.

In the meanwhile, we need to get over this euphoria of winning cricket matches whether it is the World Cup or even IPL.

Precious lives have been lost. And, Lives lost cannot be brought back but certainly lessons must be drawn from this catastrophe for the future.

Melville X. D'Souza, Mumbai

Good job done by FDA

The Food and Drugs Administration team should be congratulated for conducting their surprise raids in different parts of the state on some reputed restaurants and for severely penalising those for violating food safety and hygiene norms in Goa.

Well, today the owners of some restaurants are indeed seen casually allowing their non-Goan cooks to prepare different food items in their kitchens under unhygienic conditions.

The FDA team is currently doing a marvellous job but I hope they will continue doing so and not stop abruptly.

Jerry Fernandes, Saligao