

O HERALDO

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The Musk-Trump feud is not so much fun after all

Vladimir Putin is on a call with Xi Jinping, and as both of them smile and snigger, the former gets another call - and on the other end of the line is Kim Jong Un, who also has a devilish grin on his face. And what's making them so buoyant? The stuff happening in America of course! This cartoon doing the rounds is a trenchant take on the spectacular fallout between US President Donald Trump and tech mogul Elon Musk, but it also captures how the public pow-wow between two of the most powerful men in the world is sending reverberations across the world - and even in outer space.

What began as a tense disagreement over Trump's sweeping "One Big Beautiful Bill" has devolved into an all-out feud, complete with threats, insults, and retaliatory measures. Musk has lambasted Trump's fiscal agenda as a "disgusting abomination," accused the President of being indebted to him for electoral victory, and even flirted with torpedoing NASA's access to the International Space Station. Trump, in turn, has publicly declared their relationship over, threatened to terminate Musk's federal contracts, and warned of "serious consequences" should Musk back Democratic candidates.

The implications of this power struggle go far beyond Washington and Silicon Valley. The conflict underscores how deeply entwined private influence has become with public governance.

The economic implications are already visible. Following Trump's threat to cut off Musk's contracts, Tesla's stock plummeted by 14%, rattling investors and sparking fears of a broader tech downturn.

SpaceX, which plays a critical role in NASA operations, now finds itself in a precarious position, caught between the ambitions of a president and the volatility of its CEO. Musk, too, is not backing down lightly. His threats to support Trump's political opponents could sow chaos within the Republican Party

Musk, once lauded for his entrepreneurial vision, served for over four months as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), wielding the kind of authority few unelected figures have ever held. His brief tenure saw sweeping cuts across US agencies - moves heralded by Trump as bold efficiency but criticised by experts as body blows to vital institutions.

Now that Musk is out and turning on his former political ally, the dark underbelly of such informal alliances have been exposed. Trump's threat to sever SpaceX and Tesla from federal contracts isn't just a personal jab; it risks derailing essential partnerships, including space missions and renewable energy transitions. Democracies are supposed to function on laws, not grudges. When two of the most powerful men in the world use federal policy and national resources as pawns in a personal feud, the framework of democratic accountability is under threat.

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Meanwhile, governments across Europe, Asia, and the Global South - many of whom have partnerships with Musk's companies or closely monitor US political trends - are being forced to re-evaluate their own dependencies. If American governance is at the mercy of ego-driven feuds, why should other nations tie their fortunes to its tech giants? Germany's new Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, witnessed the chaos first-hand during an Oval Office meeting where Trump, instead of discussing policy, aired his grievances about Musk. What confidence can allies retain when policy meetings devolve into personal diatribes?

Beyond the policy fallout, this spectacle offers a grim glimpse into the power dynamics of modern oligarchy. That a single billionaire can provoke and threaten a sitting President says more about the state of global capitalism than either man might realise. And while Musk may imagine himself a political outsider or a disruptor, the reality is far more sobering. He entered politics on his own terms, using immense wealth to buy access, influence legislation, and help steer national priorities. Now, having fallen out of favour, he risks becoming a cautionary tale for both business and democracy.

If there is one truth to emerge from this debacle, it is that when ego eclipses institutions, the public always loses. While Trump courts his base and Musk appeals to his followers on X, Americans are left watching a dangerous soap opera play out in real time. The consequences - from economic volatility to diplomatic uncertainty - could stretch far into the future. Democracy depends on transparency, consistency, and stability. Right now, it is being tested by a public brawl between two men who wield outsized influence and appear unwilling to compromise. Musk may have 40 more years in him, as he boasts. But democracy cannot survive another four years of government by spectacle.

comment



ROBIN ROY

Arambai Tenggol's attempts to profile residents which had led to attacks and despite the outfit's "involvement in violence and witness testimonies", the administration's reported silence and non-condemnation of the outfit or taking actions against them also remains to be surprising

Protests broke out in parts of Imphal on Saturday night after reports claimed that a leader of the Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol was apprehended. In a viral video, which could not be independently verified by news agency PTI, BJP's Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba was seen on the street, speaking to security personnel.

"We tried very hard to bring peace. If you do such a thing, how will peace come? You arrest me along with the MLA I am here with," he was heard saying in the purported video.

Questions arise as to why there are widespread protests following the arrest and why prominent figures are saying such things?

Arambai Tenggol

Founded way back in 2020 as a cultural outfit, Arambai Tenggol made a swift change into a radical organisation, becoming one of two headline Meitei groups suspected of involvement in the Meitei-Kuki clashes of May 2023. Alongside Meitei Leepun, Arambai Tenggol armoured itself during the conflict and thus earned taint from Kuki groups and security establishments for having played a lead role in the unrest and violence.

The Arambai Tenggol proclaimed to have championed the interests of the Meitei, predominant ethnic group in Manipur.

Even the group's Facebook page clearly displays images of members interacting with prominent politicians which also highlighted the symbiotic "relationship" between Arambai Tenggol and the political establishment.



Moreover, the "mobilization" of Meitei youths, boosted by a campaign against the Kuki community automatically leads to questions about Arambai Tenggol being used for an agenda?

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Manipur again on the boil

tion of the outfit or taking actions against them also remains to be surprising.

To add to the script, Arambai Tenggol faced allegations of targeting the Naga community... and also a suspected role in a gunfight with Assam Rifles before Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Manipur in June 2023 adds to the outfit's highly questionable activities.

The arrest of Asem Kanan Singh by the CBI has triggered a major political uproar in Manipur. On Sunday, at least 20 Meitei MLAs, including members of both the BJP and Congress, rushed to meet Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, demanding the immediate release of Singh, a suspended head constable now alleged to be the "army chief" of the influential Meitei militia Arambai Tenggol.

Following their meeting with Governor Bhalla, BJP MLA K. Ibomcha voiced the legislators' concerns. "When we asked about the case in which Kanan was arrested, the authorities concerned said it was not known to them," Ibomcha said adding, "The four others were arrested by the state police for allegedly being associated with Kanan. They did not have any CBI-related cases. They will be screened if they were involved in any other illegal activities." Now, isn't this statement enough to reveal a shift and lack of clarity and coordination between the central and state agencies as far as the arrests are concerned.

The CBI, empowered by the Supreme Court to probe 38 cases related to the Manipur violence, views Singh's arrest as a major breakthrough. However, the immediate backlash from political circles and the demands for his release may be enough to derail public trust. The agency's efforts may expose how deeply groups like Arambai Tenggol have "infiltrated" into state structures—and how quickly political forces will rally behind them for their protection.

Singh's arrest has triggered calls for the arrest of the group's Commander-in-Chief, Korounganba Khuman. Khuman faces far graver charges and these include leading armed assaults on security forces, orchestrating large-scale looting of state armories, and his involvement in directing ethnic violence against Kuki-Zo communities. Several videos reportedly show Khuman heavily

armed, camping alongside hundreds of Arambai Tenggol cadres wielding AK-47s and other sophisticated weapons.

He is also accused of leading ethnic violence against Kuki-Zo settlements—burning homes, churches, schools and allegedly ordering killings, rape, and torture. For example, a January 2024 incident in Moreh "witnessed" Arambai Tenggol members torch eight homes, two churches, and three schools under his command.

Moreover, in a reported act of political coercion on January 24, 2024, Khuman convened 37 Meitei MLAs and two MPs at Kangla Fort, coercing them into endorsing a six-point charter against the Kukis.

The recent arrest of Kanan Singh has renewed the focus on the NIA's ongoing crackdown on influential militia groups.

Meanwhile, protesters burnt tyres on roads at Uripok and Koirengi in Imphal West district and Khurai in Imphal East, defying the prohibitory orders, they said.

Prohibitory orders have been clamped in Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Bishnupur and Kakching districts, while internet and mobile data services, including VSAT and VPN facilities, have been suspended in these valley areas since Saturday night after violent protests erupted over the arrests of leaders of the Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Sunday held a security review meeting with senior officials in the wake of the demonstrations across the state.

A Raj Bhavan statement said the governor also met a delegation of MLAs who apprised Bhalla of the current law and order situation in the northeastern state.

"Today, a group of MLAs called on Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, at Raj Bhavan during which the MLAs apprised the governor of the current law and order situation in the state and requested his intervention to help find an amicable solution," the Raj Bhavan statement said.

Internet services have also been suspended in the five valley districts for five days from 11.45 pm on Saturday.

(Writer is Senior Journalist and Former Senior Associate Editor, O Herald, Goa)

people's edit

THE MORAL DILEMMA OF TEMPLE THEFTS

RAGHAV GADGIL

News reports and social media are inundated with reports of temple donation box robberies. Some happen in broad daylight while others are restricted to the dead of the night. This activity goes against our taught moral ethics: How can someone rob money donated to a deity or the divine? Societal norms are imprinted in our subconscious throughout our lives, and we are given lessons in morality, what is wrong and right and how to differentiate between the two. The submission to the divine power is another chapter in itself, for teaching us to live with humility. All of us, rich or poor, go through this schooling that controls our decisions in life. But desecrating the sacred in the temple goes opposite to this line of discipline, and we tend to recoil in moral horror, but it exposes deep fractures in our shared sense of right and wrong.

Here, the 'context' of why a common person has turned into a robber is dismissed. Decades of psychological research demonstrate that ordinary people can commit extraordinary moral transgressions when placed under pressure. In Philip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment, college students assigned the "guards" role began abusing their fellow friends who played the "prisoners" within days, illustrating how context and perceived authority can override personal ethics. Similarly, Stanley Milgram's obedience studies (1960) revealed that over 60% of participants were willing to administer what they believed were lethal electric shocks when instructed by an authority figure. These landmark experiments suggest that the line between "good" and "evil" often hinges not solely on immutable character traits but on situational forces—stress, social roles, and perceived permission.

Temples are meant to be havens of the divine, yet they, too, require earthly safeguards. Neglecting security may overestimate the deterrent power of moral and religious injunctions. When basic human needs—food, shelter, dignity—go unmet, even the fear of divine retribution can be muted by the pressing pangs of hunger. In such desperation, the mind rationalises away sacred prohibitions. Someone who is convinced that legitimate avenues for survival are barred may view stealing from an institutional "vault" as a lesser moral evil.

Cultural norms further shape what individuals consider right and wrong. Moral relativism holds that people derive their authority from social consensus. In a country where people turn fugitives without paying the bank loan and go unpunished, small-scale thefts by people living hand to mouth may seem a corrective measure, and pass off as a 'minor' mistake eligible for whitewash in terms of morality. Though this perspective does not excuse the act, it helps explain why some might devalue the sacred trust of a temple's offerings. Could this act be the divine's attempt at the redistribution of money?

Such 'opportunistic resource acquisitions' have roots in our evolutionary instincts. Our primate ancestors lived in small, interdependent groups where competition for scarce resources was fierce. Deceptive tactics and stealing food conferred survival advantages. In moments of crisis, these primordial impulses can resurface, tempting even law-abiding individuals to seize the opportunity. A human is capable of cooperation one moment and calculated self-interest the next.

Does all this mean that such acts must go unpunished? No. The police act, and in situations, the culprits are nabbed across state borders, bringing them to the judiciary. But does this restrain others from committing the crime? The frame of mind at the time of the crime does not think of future repercussions, and believes in 'what ifs', what if I am not caught?

Theft violates social trust, undermines communal solidarity, and inflicts real harm on worshippers who believe their offerings reach the divine. The law must hold perpetrators accountable. Yet we cannot limit our response to punishment alone.

A more robust moral framework would pair enforcement with empathy, recognising that moral transgressions often arise not from inherent wickedness but from acute desperation. We must fortify social safety nets so that no one feels compelled to override sacred injunctions for survival. Investment in education, healthcare, and job creation can ensure that all individuals have genuine pathways to upward mobility.

Waste collection is the task of civic bodies

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, it is learnt that the Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC) will reportedly take over the door-to-door garbage collection in Mapusa town, which obviously is the task of the Mapusa Municipal Council (MMC). The decision comes in the wake of severe criticism of the civic body's failure to manage waste collection which has led to unsightly heaps of garbage across the town over the past two months.

Piles of uncollected garbage were seen dumped along roadsides, open spaces and residential areas, raising serious health and sanitation concerns. It is learnt that GWMC will monitor the entire collection process, while existing municipal staff and garbage trucks will be placed at their disposal. Municipal bodies are responsible for managing waste collection, which includes tasks like establishing collection schedules, ensuring hygienic storage facilities, and transporting waste to processing or disposal sites.

They also play a crucial role in promoting waste segregation and reducing the burden on landfills through various strategies. The role of GWMC is typically

limited to waste processing and treatment at facilities like Salgao waste plant. This is the first time that the corporation is directly stepping into urban garbage collection. It could set a precedent wherein other municipal bodies could be seeking such intervention for garbage collection in their respective cities. Is such a move signalling a shift in the state government's approach in addressing municipal level garbage issues by involving GWMC? If so, what will be the role of the civic bodies which collect taxes from the citizens?

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Portugal day and tribute to Camoes

Today 10th June is the Portugal National Day as well as the death anniversary of Portugal's greatest bard Luis de Camoes who died in 1580 as also day of Portuguese communities. It is celebrated with great pomp with a parade presided over by the Portuguese president. Luis de Camoes wrote the famous magnum opus, Os Lusíadas, which is

a poem consisting of 8,816 lines, one of the longest poems ever written.

The Portuguese government bestowed upon Goans the entitlement of obtaining Portuguese nationality which has been a huge advantage for Goans to avail of this facility and thus to obtain lucrative jobs especially in the United Kingdom. Portuguese is also spoken by about 265 million people all over the world and thus it is a day to be proud of. Coincidentally, Portugal won the UEFA League of Nations football finals against Spain 2-2 (5-3) on penalties which came as a gift by the Portuguese football team on this auspicious occasion. Goans should mark this day with fond memories.

Elvidio Miranda, Panjim

Equality before the law

The matter appears resolved with a public apology of the Minister and CM assuring that the CMO will not be suspended. The moot point is that the law is not applied equally to all and VIP

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.

Walk for a better life

Walking is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to live longer and healthier. While countless products promise to slow aging and boost vitality, science is now proving what Hippocrates said over 2,400 years ago: "Walking is man's best medicine." People who walk more than 8,000 steps a day cut their risk of early death by half compared to those who walk less than 5,000 steps.

Recent studies highlight that how fast you walk matters, especially for aging and heart health. Brisk walking — about 100 steps per minute — can reduce heart disease risk by 14% compared to a slow stroll. Research on over 450,000 adults in the UK found that a lifetime of brisk walking can lower biological age by up to 16 years. Even starting walks late in life can add extra years; a 60-year-old inactive person might gain an additional year of life just by walking briskly for 10 minutes a day.

Walking isn't just good for the body, it's great for the brain too. It doubles creative thinking and activates the same brain areas involved in memory and imagination. So what are you waiting for...go walk.

Rekha Sarin Trehan, Benaulim