

O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

Is this the Goa, freedom fighters imagined?

Goa recently celebrated the Goa Revolution Day, a day on which the flame for the final “push” was given for Goa’s freedom struggle by the freedom fighters.

Our freedom fighters sacrificed their livelihoods, education, careers, and even their families to liberate Goa from Portuguese colonial rule—a period longer than the combined rule of the Mughals and the British in India. Notably, the flame of freedom in Goa was lit long before India’s broader independence movement began.

In retrospect, a pertinent question arises for all of us: Is this the Goa our freedom fighters envisioned and sacrificed for? Did they endure the brutal Portuguese regime’s lathis, prison sentences, and ultimately sacrifice their lives for the Goa we see today?

Veteran freedom fighter and president of the Goa Freedom Fighters Association Rohidas Dessai is alarmed at the collapse of law and order today. He said he has urged the chief minister to take urgent steps to control things from getting out of hand. He urged the CM to curb the “menace.” In his speech, he highlighted the daily murders, assaults, accident and complete collapse of law and order. Dessai also underlined the rapes and drugs which are growing in leaps and bounds in Goa.

“We cannot ignore this. Every Goan is under threat, it can happen to anyone. We have to unite and protect each other,” the outspoken freedom fighter who is affectionately known as “Daad” said. It implies this is certainly not the Goa that he as a young freedom fighter imagined.

Centenarian Libia Lobo Sardesai who is 101-years-old and participated in Goa’s Liberation struggle was awarded the Padma Shri this year for her yeomen sacrifices. Padma Shri Libia laments that Goans themselves are stagnating. The youngsters are going abroad. “You can do what you want, you have to develop this place,” she appeals to youth

In 1954-55, the Portuguese attacked and killed several Satyagrahis who had peacefully entered the Goan borders, demanding the end of colonial rule in Goa. Following this, India closed its borders with Goa, imposing an economic blockade, thus reducing free movement and trade. Libby Lobo, Vaman Sardesai and Nicolau Menezes, a Goan independence activist who had been living in hiding in Bombay, came together to form a team. Using two wireless radio sets, which were confiscated the Portuguese, were converted into a radio transmitter. This became the Voice of Freedom radio station, through which Lobo, Sardesai and Menezes would transmit news and important information to Goans.

Libia Lobo Sardesai is seriously concerned about the rampant immigration, the exodus of Goans to Europe, the destruction of Goa, the lopsided development and the stagnation in Goa to fight issues till the very end. She says there should be a continuous struggle and we should not give up.

Even today, the slogan should be (just as we told the Portuguese to go away), “I’m telling those who have come here and not benefitting Goa to go home,” Sardesai said. Recalling the Golden Goa, she says that Goa was emerald with its lush green fields, the sea was blue and the beaches were white. This was the Golden Goa we imagined. “But today it does not continue as a gem. People who have come now do not know this. They do their own things to the detriment of Goa. Goans too do not appreciate what we have.”

Padma Shri Libia laments that Goans themselves are stagnating. The youngsters are going abroad. “You can do what you want, you have to develop this place,” she appeals to youth.

As most Goans perceive, we are having (government sponsored) development but it is not the development which is to our taste. So what do we do then? Sardesai says, “We have to change it and not leave Goa. Outsiders after a month, do not want to leave Goa. We should not destroy Goa.”

Sardesai also lamented the concretisation and flooding of Goa which was unheard of earlier. She also cautioned the policy makers not to imitate the rest of India. “This is not fair, that we have what the rest of India has. We have to continue remaining unique. That can happen only if we stay here. We have to be active, be vocal and be united.”

Showing the way forward, Libby suggests we are not jumping onto issues enough. We have to take up issues and never give up. We should continuously keep up the struggle. What is freedom after all? she asks.

Rohidas “Daad” Dessai and Centenarian and Padma Shree Libia Lobo Sardesai are two of the most senior surviving freedom fighters. It is high time our policy makers and government of the day heed these genuinely committed and concerned voices of the freedom struggle which yearned for a Golden Goa.

Can the present generations put out its chest and proudly say that we preserved and treasured Goa as the freedom fighters imagined and lived and died for? Do we have to continue the revolution started by our freedom fighters that Goa survives for the future generations. Or will freedom fighter Libia Lobo Sardesai’s fears that “all that is happening may not be good for the future of Goa, such that Goa may even disappear become a reality one day.” Let us resolve to unite and fight for Goa, with our sweat and blood, just as the freedom fighters did, to save Goa.

comment



AMITA KANEKAR

Those in power, all the way up to Delhi, foster this feudal and kingly manner of functioning. It can be different, though, if one starts at the bottom



Not surprisingly, the doctor fraternity of Goa received tremendous support when they decided to go on strike in protest. But their demands were very limited, related only to the public humiliation of one of their members. And the withdrawal of the protest after an apology, not by the concerned minister and not to the concerned doctor,

Kings versus Gods?

Let me clarify at the outset, in case the title of this article sounds like a cricket match, that what is being referred to, is the recent clash between Goa’s Health Minister and Goa’s doctors.

The Health Minister caused widespread shock, across Goa and outside, with his public tongue-lashing and humiliation of a doctor, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at the Goa Medical College (GMC), for apparently only following the hospital’s own rules. But there was actually little to be surprised about. Because there was nothing new in the Minister’s behaviour or attitude. Who can forget him once asking a member of the public “Talk properly – do you think I am a labourer?” In other words, according to him, it’s fine if people are rude to labourers. This is what our government is made of. Ministers who imagine themselves as kings, or at least feudal lords – and expecting slavish respect from citizens – rather than the public servants and people’s representatives that they are supposed to be.

But people do not seem to have a problem with this kind of arrogance in the past. In fact, the whole horror over the recent incident seemed to be, not because he was rude and insulting, but because he was rude and insulting to a doctor. How could he treat a doctor like that, I heard people asking. Or, to tweak his own words: “Talk properly – you are talking to a doctor!”

But by various doctors to ‘the CMO’s chair’, was – to put it mildly – bizarre. Finally, there was their lack of response to the gushing declarations from various persons, including the BJP’s state president, that doctors are “Gods” (Dev). What all of this clearly and ironically reveals is another side of the same problem of extreme elitism, witnessed with the Minister’s behaviour.

The belief that respect is only due to certain persons, not all, is an old but still strong idea in caste society. And this respect is based on the caste location of the person and, also to the caste location of the various professions in the world. So, a doctor (earlier always a member of the dominant castes, though this is changing today) will be respected MUCH more than a nurse (most often a member of the middle castes), and the latter MUCH more than a member of the cleaning staff (most often a member of the castes considered low). How then could the Minister – even if still operating like a feudal lord – have publicly insulted a doctor? But wait, perhaps his vituperation was based on the fact that this particular doctor was not of the dominant castes? While his friend, the journalist, who started the fracas (by complaining that he was refused special treatment by this CMO), was? And could these caste locations also explain why the demanded apology was to a chair, and not by the Minister nor to the doctor in question?

The clash between the minister and the doctors saw a great many anecdotes about how honest doctors struggle to survive in government employment, how they are harassed by the authorities, viz. Goa’s health ministry, which prefers to employ people who turn a blind eye to the rampant corruption that prevails all around. There is no question that there are many excellent and selfless doctors in Goa, who indeed suffer precisely because of their sincerity and commitment to their profession. But there are also many excellent and selfless nurses, technicians, helpers, cleaning staff, etc. Yet, we only hear the expression “selfless doctor”, and never selfless nurse or selfless sweeper or cleaner. Can a medical establishment

survive for a day without cleaning staff? Then why is a sincere doctor celebrated so much, even referred to dev, and never others in the medical world, though they are all as vital for the successful functioning of their workplace?

My family has been the beneficiary of excellent medical care by GMC doctors and other staff. But I have also seen some doctors – and nurses – refusing to help even in situations when patients and their attendants are desperately in need of a hand – because it’s not “their” job. I have seen doctors and nurses shouting “Servant!” while summoning the multitasking staff (MTS) because it’s “their” job, and then continuing to ignore the problem, even when the MTS does not show up. I do know that doctors, nurses, paramedics, and MTS have a specific role to play in a hospital set-up and they cannot be leaving their designated roles to take up others. But surely, when you are free, when you are chatting, when the problem is right in front of you, isn’t it possible to just lend a helping hand?

No. For many, it just isn’t possible. Because ingrained is the casteist idea of superiority and inferiority in positions and jobs. If the doctors were really bothered about respect as a right of all, they would not use the term “servant” to address MTS staffers who, as fellow government employees, are actually their colleagues. If everybody employed in the GMC is a government servant, why should only the MTS be addressed as “servant”?

We can’t expect change to come from the top. Not with ministers like these, lacking even basic manners despite belonging to a relatively urbane environment like Goa’s. Those in power, all the way up to Delhi, foster this feudal and kingly manner of functioning. It can be different, though, if one starts at the bottom. And it is the responsibility of the people in the medical profession to change this offensively casteist and hierarchical way of functioning. Especially the doctors, since they are at the top of the hierarchy.

(Amita Kanekar is an architectural Historian and Novelist)

people’sedit

YOGA FOR SELF AND SOCIETY

ALVARINHO LUIS

The International Day of Yoga is celebrated on June 21 each year, highlighting yoga’s physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. This date coincides with the summer solstice—the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere—symbolising light, energy, and balance.

Yoga, rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, dates back over 5,000 years, with references in the Rigveda and Upanishads. Around 200 BCE, Patanjali systematised it in the Yoga Sutras, presenting the eightfold path (Ashtanga Yoga), which includes ethical principles, physical postures, breath control, and meditation. Over time, yoga evolved into various schools and styles, blending tradition with modern practice to support overall well-being.

Today, yoga is practiced not only by sages in the Himalayas but also by politicians, students, athletes, and celebrities around the world. It has become a global wellness tool, promoting health, focus, and inner balance across all walks of life.

Yoga is a holistic practice that combines physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, and ethical values to create harmony (ekagrata) between body, mind, and spirit. It fosters a deep connection with oneself, the universe, and nature. With its wide range of styles—from the dynamic flow of Vinyasa to the calming stillness of restorative yoga—this ancient discipline offers something for everyone, regardless of age, fitness level, or background. Its inclusive nature makes yoga not just a form of exercise, but a lifelong journey toward balance, awareness, and inner peace.

According to Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, yoga is a complete path made up of eight interconnected limbs that guide a person toward self-realization, inner peace, and spiritual growth. The first limb, Yama, outlines moral values: non-violence (Ahimsa), truthfulness (Satya), non-stealing (Asteya), self-control (Brahmacharya), and non-possessiveness (Aparigraha). The second, Niyama, focuses on self-discipline: purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender to the divine.

Asana (postures) builds strength and flexibility, while Pranayama (breath control) manages life energy and calms the mind. Pratyahara (sense withdrawal) prepares for deeper focus. The final three limbs—Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (spiritual absorption)—together lead to inner stillness and enlightenment. These eight steps offer a practical guide to balanced living, mental clarity, and union with the higher self.

Samyama unites concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhyana), and absorption (Samadhi) to help transcend ego and negative thought patterns. Mastering Samyama leads to deep mental calm, physical relaxation, and relief from stress-related issues like anxiety, depression, or chronic pain. It also helps overcome inner obstacles (Kleshas) such as ignorance, ego, and fear, while potentially awakening spiritual insights (Siddhis) like intuition or clarity. Regular practice fosters inner peace, focus, and connection, aligning with the 2025 theme: Yoga for Self and Society.

According to published research, Yoga improves flexibility, strength, and endurance. An 8-week Hatha program increased flexibility by 14–35% and enhanced muscle strength. Ashtanga Yoga boosts heart health and mental clarity through breath and movement. Pranayama lowers blood pressure, improves lung function in asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and supports heart health. Yoga also eases chronic pain, reduces cortisol, and enhances emotional well-being in children.

Yoga is generally safe and beneficial, but should be adapted for conditions like pregnancy, injuries, or chronic illness, with beginners practicing under trained instructors to prevent injury.

RoRo ferries could charge uniformly

The River Navigation Department (RND) has sent a file to the government for approval that from next month fares may be introduced on the two RoRo ferries. The ferries would ply from July 1 between Ribandar and Chorao route. Tourists will not have a free ride, anymore. The charges will be Rs 300 per rental car, Rs 100 for each rental bike and Rs 50 per pedestrian tourist. The locals will pay Rs 30 and Rs 10, respectively for cars and two-wheelers and pedestrians will travel free. A monthly pass will have half-rates for cars and two-wheelers. There is no mention of charges for 3-wheelers such as autorickshaws and goods carrier. The fares would help the RND to rake in some profit for for operation and maintenance of the ferries.

The moot point is: How will the tourists be identified if they are driving private vehicles with registration plates of Goa? Or those who have settled/staying in Goa but have vehicles registered in other States? This question would arise because the RND mentions “rented vehicles,” to be charged. How will tourist and local pedestrians be identified and ticketed since not everyone would be having or carrying identity cards? It is possible that out-station vendors and service providers might use the RoRo ferries for business purposes. Will they be considered as “tourists?” To avoid such confusions and confrontations between passengers and ferry staff, there could be uniform and nominal charges from locals and

letterstotheeditor

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tourists. The fares could be: Rs 10 for pedestrians, Rs 15-20 for 2/3-wheelers, Rs 25 for cars and Rs 50 for SUVs.

Sridhar D'Iyer, Caranzalem

Meter readers face danger from dogs

The Electricity Department has reportedly estimated that close to forty thousand electricity meters of domestic consumers are located inside their homes and inaccessible to its staff deputed to note down power consumption readings for billing purposes. It needs to be noted that most of the old houses have their electricity meters installed inside their homes. If the inmates of the houses are not present at the time, the meter reader arrives then the staff will probably have to make another round someday later. This puts an extra burden on the electricity staff. It is learnt that the consumers have been given a November 28 deadline to relocate meters outside their homes or face disconnection. Be that as it may, it is observed that the electricity meter reader may also have to face a hostile pet dog even if the meter is located outside the house. This puts the life of the electricity staff in peril. There have been instances when the meter readers have been attacked by ferocious pet dogs. Such a problem is also faced by water-meter readers.

Even though the water-meter is located outside the house, the pet dog could be let loose with-

in the compound of the house.

It is of utmost importance for citizens to see to it that the pet dog is tied to a leash whenever a meter reader visits their home. There is every possibility that the meter-reader will return back without taking the reading if a ferocious dog is let loose and barks incessantly.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Why are Goans refusing jobs in private sector?

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant while addressing reporters at Mantralaya after chairing a high-level meeting with key industry stakeholders on Wednesday has called on Goans to actively seek private sector jobs, warning that a continued reluctance could result in greater migration of workers from other states into Goa.

The reason why Goans are seen refusing to take up jobs in the private sector is because there’s no job security as most of these private companies/firms believe in ‘hire and fire at will’ policy. Plus, these private companies/firms are well-known for exploiting people and paying peanut salaries under some pretext or the other for years and in the bargain spoiling their future in the long run in Goa.

It is therefore due to the above reasons that most Goans are seen not taking up jobs in the private sector but looking out only for government jobs. Because they

know that today even a simple SSC-passed peon, driver and a sweeper, employed as a fixed staff in any govt department goes to get a decent salary, plus perks, incentives and a huge pension too after retirement unlike people working in the private sector in Goa.

The Chief Minister should instruct the proprietors of all the private sector companies to first offer descent salaries for people who are already working in their firms with guaranteed perks and with pension after retirement to run their families smoothly and then expect Goans to seek private sector jobs to stop the migration of workers from other states into Goa.

Jerry Fernandes, Saligao

Time is ripe to defang Israel

War is never a solution, and that perpetrator of endless conflict and misery. Israel is really not compatible with a civilised world. We have no clue how they will fix that. Even if Iran bombs it to dust, while they have nukes, the moment US funds their next batch of weapons, they’ll be back in business attacking some place or the other, killing people - this is guaranteed.

We just cannot keep bombing Israel till it shuts up. At best, this is an emergency response. Global leaders need to act like they are leaders and remove Israel’s nuclear arsenal or we’ll keep coming right back here. Israel has

enough nuclear godfathers that if it ever needs a nuke for survival, it will definitely get it. It is time to defang Israel.

Rekha Sarin Trehan, Benaulim

Avoiding future tragedy

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has released new draft rules to tighten control over structures erected within a specified area around airports that poses risks to aircraft safety. The Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions caused by Buildings and Trees etc) Rules, 2025 comes around a week after the Air India’s Boeing 787 Dreamliner that crashed on June 12, killing 240 people, including passengers. The draft rules directed the authorities to report any buildings or trees present within a specified areas around airports and to issue notices to their owners regarding the violation. The draft rules will come into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette. Goa needs to immediately enforce these laws the moment they are notified.

There are many buildings around the Dabolim airport which are bang in the middle of the funnel zone of landing / taking off aircraft and whose heights exceed extant laws for such structures. The flyover being constructed @ 2 kms. from the airport is also a cause for concern though apparently the NHAI has agreed to reduce the pillar heights as per requirements of the Navy and Airports Authority of India . Why is it that only after a tragedy does the government opens it’s eyes. We only wish that the laws are enforced strictly countrywide rather than in breach.

Vinay Dwivedi, Benaulim