

O HERALDO

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Gaude's half-in, half-out war

On the surface, the Marcel meeting on Sunday looked like just another exercise in political damage control. But former minister Govind Gaude's dramatic display; bowing before his constituents and affirming loyalty to the BJP, was anything but ordinary.

It was political theatre at its finest. Behind the performance, however, lay a deep fracture within Goa's ruling party and a glaring question: Is Govind Gaude preparing for political martyrdom or positioning himself for a resurrection outside the BJP?

Let's be blunt. Gaude's posturing was not that of a man expressing loyalty. It was that of a man screaming betrayal. His open criticism of the tribal welfare department, barbed remarks about Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and sly digs at state BJP president Damu Naik were not mere outbursts. They were carefully chosen grenades lobbed into the BJP camp. Gaude may not have officially left the party, but on Sunday, his soul already did.

This is not just about a disgruntled minister nursing a bruised ego after losing his cabinet berth on June 18. This is about a larger political tension. One that threatens to unravel the BJP's hold over a significant vote bank in Goa: the tribal communities. Gaude has long positioned himself as a representative of the ST population in Ponda taluka, which holds nearly 35,000 tribal votes across four constituencies with Priol alone

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having 12,000. His growing discontent is not merely personal; it's a symptom of simmering disillusionment among tribal voters who feel ignored and discarded. Gaude knows this. He weaponises it well. When he said that he was denied access to central BJP leaders for three years, it wasn't just a grievance. It was a message to his community: "They didn't just silence me, they silenced us."

And that is why Gaude's speech was not an emotional rant. It was a calculated strike. Every paragraph, every anecdote. Including the reading from 'An Extraordinary Life', the biography of Parrikar was tailored to remind Goans of the price Gaude claims to have paid for BJP's current leadership to rise. His retelling of Parrikar's dying wish to make Sudin Dhavalikar the Chief Minister, allegedly blocked by Gaude and others was a bold reminder of his political weight in the past.

But here's the real question: Will this strategy work? Gaude is walking a tightrope. His current plan seems to be to remain in the BJP, bide his time, and position himself as a victim wronged by the party. Wronged despite loyalty, wronged despite electoral strength, wronged despite community backing. But there's a limit to how long this martyr narrative can hold. The BJP high command is not known for tolerating public defiance. Sooner or later, an ultimatum will come.

If Gaude is expelled or forced to quit, he may use that as a political badge of honour, portraying himself as a voice of dissent crushed by an intolerant party. He may even float his own platform on one factor: the ST vote. Let us not forget: his track record is not spotless. The Kala Academy controversy, in which Rs 60 crore were spent with allegedly poor results, continues to haunt him. Artists publicly condemned him. Gaude may blame the PWD for the shoddy work, but in the public eye, the responsibility rests with the man who wouldn't stop talking about it.

So is Govind Gaude a threat to the BJP? Yes. But is he a threat the BJP cannot contain? That remains to be seen. His critics within the party and there are many now prefer a "wait and watch" approach. They are betting that Gaude will talk himself into irrelevance or trigger disciplinary action that justifies his ouster.

In the end, Gaude's political future depends on whether he can turn community grievance into a movement. He has the script, the stage presence, and the sympathy. But does he have the machinery and strategy to convert that into electoral success in 2027?

If not, Govind Gaude may go down not as a hero of the tribal cause, but as just another actor who mistook the spotlight for lasting power.

comment



RADHARAO F. GRACIAS

Petrichor and I

The heat is unbearable; the humidity indescribable, sweat trickles down as if the Gangotri glacier has surrendered to global warming. The sun fans out over the paddy lands with the coco-palms casting long shadows that shrink as the sun progresses above the eastern horizon, only to draw long silhouettes of the palms in the opposite direction, as dusk dawdles in.

Dust and litter swirl as the hot winds twirl. Doors closed, windows shut, AC on, I remain inside awaiting the night to creep in. Damn it, before dawn breaks, the power goes off; I open the window.

A cool wind ruffles my sparse hair; petrichor sails into my nostrils. Confined to my room, I would totally miss the season's first shower, had there been power. I remember my mother would console us when misfortune visited by proclaiming, 'sometimes bad things do happen for the better'. Indeed they do, I am reminded by the delighted cackling of the white breasted swamp hens regaling themselves in the rains, beyond the bushes. I relax and listen to the rhythm of the falling rain, telling me just what a fool I have been, to shut myself within.

The dry and slumbering soil has been awakened by the pre-monsoon showers inducing it to release petrichor trapped underneath. A fresh fragrance saturates the air



The sun rises; I hear the sound of far away thunder warming up for a sparkling and deafening display of light and sound, in the hours ahead. As the day advances, the sky is gradually engulfed in a mourning shroud of grey clouds. The dry and slumbering soil has been awakened by the pre-monsoon showers inducing it to release petrichor trapped underneath. A fresh fragrance saturates the air.

The term, petrichor, coined by Australian scientists Isabel Joy Bear and Richard Thomas in 1964, is derived from the Greek words "petra" (rock)

and "ichor" (blood of the gods). But the phenomenon is nearly as ancient as Earth itself, having a symbiotic relationship with rain: no rain no; no petrichor. It cannot be evoked by trifling words but may be effortlessly sniffed by the nose.

To appreciate it, one must be bucolic with a love for the rustic. For me, petrichor is a signal to go for a walk to my childhood purlieu through coconut grooves, over the margins of paddy fields, carefully stepping over decaying leaf litter. Creatures as afraid of me, as I am of them, slither away. Loose sand pressed down by the rain invites me to walk without raising dust or sinking deep. If you are a senior citizen please revisit your childhood; nostalgia will pile up. If you are young, there are reasons why you must go for it; you may not get the experience in later years; the countryside is disappearing quicker than you are growing!

I have taken a few steps and I see men women and children toiling in the fields, digging, ploughing, weeding, fishing in the flowing gullies, picking snails, catching frogs and filling gunny bags slung over the shoulders; the frogs continue to struggle inside. But as I reach the periphery I see fields overgrown with weeds, unploughed and unloved. Not a man or woman in sight, till the coconut groves on the other side; my mind was only reimagining my younger days!

The ponds lining the edge of the fields are glistening as of old, reminding me of days when I accompanied my father on his walks. Here in my village, a little pond is called "fondaro or hondaro", a larger one a "fond or hond". Quizzed about the origin of the names, my father who usually had a quick answer to my every query, found himself up a stump, but descended quickly enough to recollect it was an adaptation of the Spanish word "Honduras" according to some priest.

The explanation remained buried in the folds of my memory for some six decades until I went surfing the net looking for information on Central America. When I reached Honduras, its etymology stared me in the face: "The literal meaning of the term "Honduras" is "depths" in Spanish. The name could

refer either to the bay of Trujillo as an anchorage, fondura in the Leonese dialect of Spain, or to Columbus's alleged quote that 'Gracias a Dios que hemos salido de esas honduras' (Thank God, we have departed from those depths)" So Honduras does mean a "hondaro" as in my part of Goa; the information relayed by my father turned out to be accurate. I wonder if Columbus had a prescience that a "Gracias" would quote him centuries later!

As I look up to the darkening sky I can see a swarm of agile little birds flit across in erratic loops, acrobatically turning, zooming or swooping seemingly without method. A closer look and it is evident the birds with mouths wide open are effectively trawling through a swarm of insects to swallow them in flight, which actually gives them their name! There visibly is a method in their flight mode!

We have all heard that 'A swallow does not a summer make'. Well, that's in England. However, in Goa, everyday is summer, for the swallows! My father would call them 'andorinhas', their name in Portuguese.

The rumble of thunder is getting nearer. It's time to walk back. I miss the billowing smoke accompanying the nutty and tangy aroma of roasting cashew nuts, which in days of yore, would overpower petrichor by the evening of the first shower. Now, no more are there cashew trees nor anyone to roast the nuts. No more are there toddy tappers or palm trees to tap; the 'feni' still lies still. They have all fled to Europe clutching their Portuguese passports, to seek pastures new.

I hurry home; a drizzle drums softly on the roof. Before long, the gentle breeze transforms into a strong gust, the light drizzles into a heavy downpour and the slow beat of the 'mando' into the quick beat of the 'dulpod', on the roof. The monsoon is in full flow. Petrichor has gone back to sleep, to reawaken (with the frogs!) next season, as always.

(Radharao F. Gracias is a senior Trial Court Advocate, a former Independent MLA, a political activist, with a reputation for oratory and interests in history and ornithology)

people's edit

THE BEAUTY OF SIMPLICITY

JOHN MALVINO ALFONSO

Reshma supported her family through farming. She did her best to educate her children and lived peacefully with them for many years. Life was simple and without much worry—until her children grew older. Slowly, things began to change. The basic needs remained, but the children's outlook changed completely. Reshma continued her simple life, but her children began to move away from the values she lived by.

Despite her quiet efforts to guide them through her example, the children were influenced by their friends and the world around them. "Who wants this poor and simple life? Who cares about values anymore?" they asked, rejecting the very foundation their mother had built.

Today, those children have chosen a different path—one driven by the pursuit of money but lacking in moral direction. In this situation, the old saying, "All that glitters is not gold" feels very true. In the race for material success, simplicity has become something strange—even laughed at.

Still, we are invited to reflect. A simple life is not a weak or useless life. People who live simply often fall into two groups. One group accepts their situation with peace, preparing their minds to live happily with what they have. The other group includes people who have wealth and education but choose to use it for the good of others. For them, wealth is not everything—values matter more.

Many people today don't agree. They say, "If we live simply, people take advantage of us." But this is not true. Simplicity must go hand in hand with wisdom. Living simply doesn't mean letting others walk over us. It means living honestly, without pretending to be someone we are not.

Simplicity is natural. It leaves no space for lies or acting. It gives life a clear and honest purpose. People who live simply don't keep worrying about the past or fear the future. They live in the present, making the most of it by accepting what life brings.

We can learn a lot about this way of life from our own culture. Simplicity teaches us humility, care for others, and satisfaction with what we have. It helps us use our skills to serve others. It encourages kindness, tolerance, and finding joy in small things. It teaches us to see the inner beauty of ourselves and others.

A simple life leads us to look within. It makes us ask: "Do I really need this?" This kind of honest question helps us know the difference between what is necessary and what is not. People who live simple life, often show this even in the way they dress, speak, and behave.

Simplicity adds beauty to life. It brings peace and healing. So why do we forget it when it has so much to offer? One reason is that we want everything quickly. But virtues like simplicity take time to bear fruit. That doesn't make them any less valuable.

Let us not turn away from simplicity just because its rewards are not instant. Let us rediscover its quiet strength—and through it, find a life full of peace, purpose, and grace. In a world filled with noise, competition, and constant comparisons, simplicity offers clarity. It helps us focus on what truly matters and nurtures a heart open to gratitude.

Discussion, debate and accountability missing

Is it democracy of, by and for the people? Is it meant just for elections? Hasn't rule of law and our Constitution kept us so far with unity in spite of our great diversity? Why is our democracy in doldrums?

We have political parties with different ideologies and we take the trouble with great expense from the exchequer to elect our representatives whose salaries and perks we pay. But thereafter they lose their moral compass, engineer defections and jump ship to acquire another ideology to remain in power.

From their own declarations we see an increase in their assets and wealth! They are lawmakers and a law unto themselves. In fact, the way some of them behave, they think they are the law! Right from the oldest democratic USA where Trump thinks he need not get approval from Congress for militarily attacking another country to our Parliament where the majority cobbled ruling party bulldozes laws, rules and Acts with hardly any discussion or debate!

All the statutory authorities are managed watch dogs become lap dogs and the national media their loudspeaker. The EC will not investigate irregularities brought to their notice. There has been no intelligent discussion or debate on the important planned caste census! In Goa we have the High Court quashing the illegal ODPs for Calangute, Candolim, Parra, Arpora and Nagoa. There is rampant illegal hill cutting, cutting of trees, land conversion and so on forcing people to go to court and the way development is done with resulting

accidents and inconvenience to people seems to carry on with no accountability shown by the authorities!

If we claim to be a democracy, it is high time the people and stakeholders are consulted there is proper debate in the House and accountability lawfully enforced with equitable justice!

John Eric Gomes, Porvorim

Introduce Ro-Ro ferries on all routes

A ferry boat stationed at the Chora Island ramp partially submerged early Monday morning after water reportedly flooded one of its air tanks which helps keep the vessel afloat.

No casualties were reported. However if the incident had to take place when the ferry was midstream and full of passengers and vehicles, it would have resulted in a tragedy.

Whether it is an operational fault or maintenance issue, the lives of the commuters cannot be put at risk. It is pertinent to note that after much delay the first Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry recently did a trial run on the Chora-Ribandar route. These ferries are larger than traditional ones and can carry vehicles, including cars and two-wheelers, along with passengers. The Ro-Ro ferries are equipped with features like dual passages for entry and exit on both sides. It will benefit daily commuters, office-goers and students. The service will also boost tourism in a big way. When the diesel buses of the Kadamba Transport Corpo-

letterstotheeditor

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ration (KTC) are being replaced by electric buses, the outdated ferries on all the routes in the State also need to be replaced by Ro-Ro ferries. Goa has a long history of using ferries to cross rivers and estuaries, with popular routes including Old Goa to Divar Island and Panjim to Betim. The Ro-Ro ferry will be a game-changer for river commuting. The government needs to promote the State's diverse river routes as alternate means of transportation to reduce the growing traffic on roads by introducing Ro-Ro ferries on all routes.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

The era of aerial warfare

The India-Pakistan and the Israel-Iran wars have proved that the army and navy are not as important a component of the defence trioka as the air force, it's undeniably the era of aerial warfare.

One of the reasons for the recent annihilation of Iran at the hands of Israel was because the former had no air force to speak off to carry out precise bombing raids, random un-co-ordinated missile strikes don't count for much except for the optics. Armed to the teeth modern fighter jets, drones, UAVs, loitering munitions and air to air/air to ground missiles are required to gain an upper hand in any military conflict now. India has only one battle proven semi-indigenous missile, the Brahmos which is manufactured with Russian collaboration. We are attempting to make the Tejas jet in large

numbers but procuring engines from the US and France for the aircraft is proving to be an uphill task, moreover there have been teething troubles flagged by the IAF in the initial batch of planes delivered.

Also countries supplying warplanes to India are refusing to share the software source code which would help in customising the weapon delivery platforms and make them more potent. Defence research in India is also a non-starter despite the brouhaha of 'Atma Nirbharta', what to talk of manufacturing. Time for India to quickly scale up to a powerful multiplatform air arm given our very hostile neighbourhood.

Rekha Sarin Trehan, Benaulum

Are we following St John's preachings?

St John the Baptist is the one who introduced Our Lord Jesus to the World of Christianity, he was the one who preached mankind to change their life by following the right path.

Are we really following his preachings?

We are living in the 21st century with information technology that can answer any of our questions without having to consult anyone.

The main focus that really bothers me is misusing the name of St John the Baptist who was a simple person that our Father chose to Baptise Lord Jesus, there is no evidence that he introduced the mischief of drinking and jumping in wells out of

utter pleasure.

We are now much educated and we cannot do something that is not supporting the reflection of the life of St John the Baptist.

St John the Baptist never went house to house asking for the patoli (Goan Sweet) so why are we still singing songs that were sung by our ancestors without the correct information.

St John the Baptist was a person who loved Jesus and wanted the World to follow him as per his teachings.

We can enjoy the festivities, but we have to pay attention to what exactly we are celebrating, we cannot enjoy as and how we want pointing to a Saint who was never in the activities we are practicing.

Enjoy having fun, but please stop involving the saints who never practiced the activities which they were never involved in.

Savio D'Costa, by email

Reduce burden of school bags

The new school academic year, 2025-2026 has already begun and I would like to appeal to all school managements to reduce the load of school bags on the children.

Heavy school bags are hazardous to children's health. According to health experts, if children lug bags weighing above 12 kg, there are high chances they will develop back pain and spine-related ailments. There is an urgent need for school management and parents to acknowledge that the physical and emotional cost of overloaded school bags is enormous. We need to act now!

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai

Twitter World

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We face a stark choice amid the escalation in the Middle East. One way leads to wider war, deeper suffering & serious damage to the international order. The other leads to de-escalation, diplomacy & dialogue. We know which way is right.