

Schizophrenic visa system

This tourist season, we are told, has been exceptionally good. Goa received its highest number of charter flights ever, with total inflow of both domestic and international tourists aggregating at an estimated 23 lakh. The May rush of domestic tourists will probably take the tourist inflow to around 27 lakh, says Director of Tourism Swapnil Naik.

But despite the optimism, the fact is that tourist arrivals from Goa's most faithful foreign visitors, the British, are dropping. This last year has apparently shown some recovery, but though the British economy has stopped deteriorating, the arrival of British tourists hasn't improved. In 2007-08, Goa received 365 charter flights from the UK carrying 100,664 tourists. In 2008-09, this figure dropped to 287 flights with 77,500 tourists. This was partly owing to the economic slowdown, but that was only part of the reason.

The main reason was the 26/11 attack on Mumbai and the drastic changes in visa rules that followed. It became very difficult to get a visa for India. Long term vacationers, Goa's greatest foreign tourist asset, were put to indescribable hardship by a baffling rule – still in operation – that once a tourist leaves India, (s)he cannot re-enter the country for two months.

This, and the needless crackdown on British retirees owning property in Goa has damaged Goa's image in Britain. And if these quixotic rules are not changed, it could result in this state going off the favorite destination list in the UK. The tourist industry may not be too concerned, since Russians have been coming in ever greater numbers to this state, but the comfort levels of the people in the tourist trade is much higher with English-speaking tourists.

In 2007-2008, the number of Russian tourists was around 42,690 with 159 flights. In 2010-11, it has jumped to 70,053. Even as it has become so much harder for the British to come to Goa, it is ridiculously easy for the Russians to do the same. Russians who live in Yekaterinburg and St Petersburg, cities that – unlike Moscow – do not have an Indian consulate can get a 14-day Temporary Landing Permit (TLP) on arrival at Dabolim Airport. That is like a visa on arrival. It is this TLP that Goa's tourism trade now wants opened up to all tourists. It's perfectly reasonable. If a tourist from St Petersburg can get a 14-day visa on arrival, why not one from London?

Besides, it would open out Goa for opportunities, such as when Tahrir square in Egypt was under occupation, and thousands of Britishers booked for the beach resort town of Sharm el Shaikh were stranded. Goa could have reaped a bonanza then.

But it still would not help Goa's oldest friends; the long-term tourists. For them, our MPs must continue to lobby in New Delhi to reverse that senseless stipulation requiring a two-month 'cooling period' after a tourist leaves India to re-enter. What sort of schizophrenic policy allows visas-on-arrival to some and puts endless obstacles in the way of others?

VIPs vs aam admi

Why does Health Minister Vishwajeet Rane need 21 policemen to guard him? Maybe, given that mysterious people offer 'supari' to gangsters for his head, Home Minister Ravi Naik may need the 17 policemen he is entitled to. But if Luizinho Faleiro and Dayanand Narvekar can manage with two policemen each, most other VIPs should be able to make do with less, so that the unpoliced streets of the state can be guarded better.

Pedro Feytor Pinto headed the Department of Information Services (SEIT) in the government of Marcello Caetano who replaced Antonio Oliveira Salazar in 1968 as the head of the Portuguese government. Feytor Pinto has just released a book entitled *Na Sombra do Poder* (In the Shadow of Power) [Lisboa, D. Quixote, 2011, pp. 402]. Not wishing to classify it as history or memoirs, yet hoping that historians may find it useful, the author chooses to narrate events as he experienced them from his vantage point in the shadow of power, during the years ending with the Carnation Revolt of 25 April 1974, which put an end to half a century of dictatorship, known as Estado Novo.

Born at Castelo Branco in 1936, the author provides interesting details about his early education at Coimbra, before moving on to Lisbon for higher studies in Law. We are told about the family network and linkages with many influential personalities of the Portuguese public life and of the Church in Portugal. It reveals his early connections with Opus Dei and also why he decided to delink from it, without losing his admiration for that institution and its contribution to the society. He admits having benefitted much from Opus Dei links in the promotion of his later career at home and overseas.

The years in Lisbon (1955-1969) were occupied as Law student and by the start of a professional career. First as secretary of the minister Prof Adriano Moreira, and soon thereafter, as a low-ranking official in the Overseas Ministry in Lisbon in charge of the Political Affairs. He had as colleague João Mesquitella, who had been secretary of the last Governor-General of Portuguese India. Through him Feytor Pinto had come to know more details about the loss of Goa. These details he could later confirm through his contacts with Felix Naggar, the correspondent of France Press in India in 1961, and later posted in Lisbon.

In an interesting reflection the author comments upon the nature of the political leadership that characterised the Salazar administration of Portugal. He sees it as predominantly legal-minded cadre rooted in legalism and institutionalism that failed to take into account the dominant post-World War democratic concepts and political

In the shadow of power

Pedro Feytor Pinto's book narrates events from his vantage point during the years before the revolt, says TEOTÓNIO R DE SOUZA



HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

trends which checkmated many of the juridical decisions in practice.

The author presents as illustrations the case of the Right of Passage and the proceedings of the Security Council and the General Assembly of UN against the occupation of Goa by the Indian armed forces. The political stance adopted by USA and UK in those occasions revealed how the interests of big powers prevailed over the international rights of small nations. The capture of the merchant vessel *Santa Maria* by a Portuguese dissident Henrique Galvão and the political asylum he received from Brazil is presented as yet another instance of international politics against international law, and once again unfavourable to the Portuguese interests.

With reference to the fall of Portuguese India, Feytor Pinto describes it as the end of a cycle that had begun at Ceuta (North Africa) on August 14, 1415. The Goa case is mentioned because of the many financial difficulties that several of his Goan student colleagues at the Lisbon University faced as regard the payment of fees, because they had ceased to receive the usual monthly remittances from their families in Goa. As a member of the Students' Association he proposed measures to find a solution to the situation, but the response

was lukewarm as the case was seen as political. Even so, the author mentions his efforts at presenting it as a humanitarian case and his decision to abandon the Association and seek other ways of finding assistance.

It refers to a silent march the author helped organising on 18 December 1961 to the Se Cathedral of Lisbon carrying the relics of St Francis Xavier and a national banner in procession. The group managed to contact business groups such as CUF, and some influential ladies connected with the National Women's Movement (Movimento Nacional Feminino), such as Cecília Supico Pinto. Feytor Pinto pays his homage to Goans who excelled in Portugal as diplomats, lawyers and judges. He believes that the timely help may have permitted the achievements of those Goan colleagues. Feytor Pinto moved to Geneva in 1969 with a privileged Portuguese scholarship of the *Instituto para a Alta Cultura* to study at the Hautes Études Internationales (HEL), a meeting point for students from Portuguese Africa with anti-colonial tendencies. These found patronage in the Swiss protestant Church institutions. Feytor Pinto manifests his satisfaction for this opportunity to get to know personally some of the future leaders of the Angola and Mozambique. But it also mentions among his close friends in Switzer-

land, a Goan, Alexandre de Faria, married to an Iranian lady Guita Emami. It describes Alexandre de Faria as UK-educated and very reserved in his social dealings.

Feytor Pinto returned from Switzerland to Lisbon in August 1970 on suggestion from Marcello Caetano and took charge as director of the Department of Information, including the section of the Foreign Press accredited in Portugal. This latter section was supervised by the Goa-born Portuguese ambassador Bonifácio de Miranda. He has been described as a Goan of high calibre who represented Portugal in several meetings of the General Assembly of United Nations.

Feytor Pinto reveals several other issues that makes his book particularly interesting for the Goan public. Directly connected with the contents of my last column (Adrian Hastings, Scourge of the Portuguese, *Herald*, 25 April) Feytor Pinto corroborates the consequences that Adrian Hasting's denunciation of the «Wiriya massacrés» had for the official visit of Marcello Caetano to London in July 1973, almost causing its cancellation. Feytor Pinto was involved in the preparation of the visit and had to face the international press and anti-Portugal manifestations, in which Dr Mário Soares, then in exile, is mentioned as having taken part.

Interestingly, Prof Marcello Caetano admitted ignorance of the massacres, but we are told that an inquiry entrusted to Jorge Jardim, a maverick entrepreneur-cum-diplomat who had gained the attention and appreciation of Salazar in the case of Goa, confirmed the military atrocities in Mozambique. Incidentally, it was Jorge Jardim who carried a cyanide capsule for the Governor Vassalo Silva and tried unsuccessfully on 10 May 1962 to kill the military governor Candeth, during his planned visit to Mormugão municipality. The bombs exploded two hours earlier! Following the admission, the governor and military commander of the Tete province of Mozambique were dismissed from office. The author further admits that this case affected deeply the morale of the Portuguese armed forces and also intensified the discontent of the younger generation in Portugal influenced by the post-Vatican teachings about social justice.

Wise Counsel

Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of us is lacking in wisdom, we need to ask God, who gives to us all so generously and ungrudgingly. But we need to ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, tossed by winds. If we doubt in every way, we cannot expect to receive anything from the Lord. Often trials potentially lead to faith, which leads to perseverance, maturity, wisdom, and stability. Integrity or uprightness is something that we all yearn for but always it does not happen so as we all cut corners one time or the other and take the easy way out, hide little misbehaviors and tell white lies. So what's the big deal? We feel "ripped off" in so many ways that we feel justified in letting integrity slide in return.

Recently, a friend of mine shared with me how a man risked everything to tell the truth because he knew it was the right thing to do. How often are we faced with the option of speaking truth or backing down and "being a nice person of value? Integrity can mean many things, but at its root, integrity means the quality of being complete or unbroken wholeness. Sometimes we are forced to struggle between telling the truth, a truth that could save some-

one. In such an apparent no-win scenario, we often decide to honour our integrity and tell the truth no matter what the consequences are. Many people go through their daily lives and are faced with honouring themselves or someone else they think rules their lives. When given this choice, ask yourself "What's the right thing to do in this situation?" The right thing done is that when we go to sleep at night we can say to ourself "I did the right thing."

There's an old quotation which says: "Learn to be free of the good opinion of others." Let's learn to be free of the good opinion of our own ego. Are you willing to listen to your heart and intuition and be true to yourself, even when it hurts, and you know the truth? Are you willing to do the unpopular thing especially when it's needed? Every seed we sow grows, so we need to be aware fully conscious of what we are planting in our own minds and the minds of those who you influence.

Do hypocrites have any integrity in themselves? I believe that hypocrites have no integrity whatsoever. As if we define hypocrites as those who believe in some ideal which they cannot possibly fulfill, if so, then we are all hypocrites. Yes, we all fail to live up to our highest aspirations. We all fail to achieve our full potential. During our lifetime, there will always be a gap between what we

are and what we can become. For each one of us, there is an ongoing struggle to narrow this gap. However, integrity comes in when we acknowledge our failures, accept our limitations, and honestly strive to make amends and achieve our ideals. Hypocrites without integrity are those who would go to any length to cover up their dishonesty and faults in order to protect their facade and grip on power. Therefore, we find out the complex reasons why honesty is such a rare commodity in today's world. We tell lies when we are afraid, afraid of what we don't know, afraid of what others will think, afraid of what will be found out about us. But every time we tell a lie, the thing that we fear grows stronger and we lose our honour.

As you go about your daily life, listen to your heart; remember that honesty means the state of being complete, connected to your own self. Honesty and integrity are absolutely essential to our survival.

Finally, an apt quote from Proverbs 6:12-15 – "A scoundrel and villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart—he always stirs up dissension. Therefore, disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy."

Letter of the Day

English for poor children

James Fernandes, President Goynche Niz Mogi

Bembre Bab, your thought as expressed in your article "Look at thy neighbour please" (*Herald*, 2 May) are sadly bitter and dysfunctional.

The Christian community and their leaders have made the single largest contribution to the development of the nation. Their institutions of learning, have been producing men and women of excellence in various fields.

Your examples resemble that of submitting precedence in support of an argument. The babies and children are changing the world in leaps and bounds. Spoken English has changed to 'Hinglish'. Various countries that depended on Indian IT graduates, do not need them as their citizens are also being educated in English.

Free education in English must be made compulsory for the children of the poor, the SC, ST, and Konkani language must be supported so that it walks hand in hand with English. The rich can educate their children in the language of their choice.

We are sincere to our profession and never turned out to be chamchas of the people in power, so that they could succeed in life.

For the information of Bhatikar, we are not demanding English as a medium of Instruction, but we are fighting for our right. Goa had the best education system in our country circa 1989 and English was the medium of education. The choice between Konkani, Marathi, French etc and Hindi was mandatory. But some fanatics, who are now trying to stage a comeback, ruined the system in the name of grants at the time of the PDF government headed by Dr Luis Proto Barbosa. We know what is best for our children. These fanatics can get their English medium schools converted to Konkani medium and take care of all and sundry.

Navelim road broadening

Selwyn Vaz, Navelim

This is with regard to the broadening of NH17 from Navelim Church to the Margao flyover. Some glaring mistakes need urgent rectification. On both sides of the lane, a small drain channel has been made, but wherever there is an opening on the footpath, hotmix material is dumped on this drain to facilitate vehicle access. This will block flow of water during monsoons. A 3

inch pipe could have been laid prior to this. Secondly, the storm water drains on both sides are filled with large stones, grit and mud that need to be cleaned. The drain in front of Kudchadkers hospital already serves as a sewage conduit. The width of the two lanes is neither uniform nor is the width of the lanes on the Church side in similarity with that of the width on the flyover side. These queries have to be answered before it is made operational.

Advice to youth

Orlando SA Da Silva, Carmona

This is in reply to the letter by Maria Fernandes 'Enthusiastic youth' (*Herald*, 6 May). The choice we make today will usually affect tomorrow. I have witnesses where volunteers of some politicians have approached the youth with money and promises, to get enrolled themselves in the Benaulim youth Congress. Since no one approached Maria, she may have been left out and taken for granted. I advise the youth is to be cautious rather than follow a blind ideology.

Baseless claim

Savio Rodrigues, Varca

This has reference to the letter 'Constructive

Letters to the Editor

Denigrating English

Dr Joe D'Souza, Panjim

It is a well-known phenomena wherein Catholic names are used by certain bigots to profess hatred towards English and express pseudo concerns for Konkani. A month ago, these cowards used the name of Dr Rita Paes to denigrate English based education. However, Dr Paes read and realised that her name was misused to confuse Catholics against empowerment through English and submitted a rejoinder to this effect. Similarly, the letter of Michael de Souza 'Moi: Konkani only' (*Herald*, 4 May) is yet another attempt to project Catholics as Portuguese passport seekers, while in fact, substantial Hindus too have benefitted through Portuguese passport and education from Catholic schools.

Pakistan's double speak

Nelson Lopes, Chinchinim

In spite of posturing by Pakistan, USA has had another drone attack notwithstanding their claim of national sovereignty. USA

has reserved its right to pursue any target, anywhere, to achieve its objective. It will not be cowed down by any threats. The question of cutting aid to Pakistan is the million dollar question. It needs Pakistan to fight terror in Afghanistan, Iraq etc. USA has long relations and co-operation with Pakistan in spite of knowing its double game all the time. The harbouring of Osama has created a deficit trust, and Pakistan is at pains to redeem itself from this embarrassment. Pakistan is now known to be a terror state, exporting, training, and sponsoring terrorism as its lucrative trade. Pakistan will continue to play deception and USA will look the other way, as it is a mutually beneficial relationship.

Ugly fanatics

Joel Morais, Cuncolim

The recent statement by Aravind Bhatikar, who I believe, is running an English medium school in Goa that those demanding English as a medium of education, are doing so to become ayahs, butlers, cooks, and drivers. This is does not hurt but it reveals his class.

Smile with Smitha

By Smitha Bhandare Kamat

