

What price disruption?

Exactly what did the unrelenting disruption of the Legislative Assembly by the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs achieve? On Thursday, the Assembly approved the Appropriation Bill and passed the Budget amidst shouting of slogans by the opposition benches. After unruly scenes that forced Speaker Pratapsingh Rane to adjourn the House for the third consecutive day, when it resumed he called upon Chief Minister Digambar Kamat to present the demands and Bill for a vote. Opposition members moved around the table of the secretariat staff shouting slogans, but the House approved the demands and the Bill, without a word of discussion.

How has this episode of disruption of the Legislative Assembly served the ends of democracy? It has resulted in the passing of the Budget without any discussion. The Opposition BJP itself lost an opportunity to expose the government. The public lost the benefit of a proper discussion on the Budget proposals. Except for Aldona MLA Dayanand Narvekar, a majority of ruling Congress MLAs chose to be mute spectators for the third consecutive day, even as the functioning of the House collapsed. That is because the disruption actually came as a relief for many of the ministers, particularly to Home Minister Ravi Naik, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane and PWD Minister Churchill Alemao, who were specifically targeted by the Opposition during this session.

The sole exception was Aldona MLA Dayanand Narvekar. He flayed both the ruling as well as Opposition MLAs for depriving him of his right as an MLA to raise issues of importance before the House. The Aldona MLA lamented that the Legislative Assembly had lost three days during which no discussions were held, but demands for grants were nevertheless passed. He pointed out that probably for the very first time in the history of the Goa Assembly, the Appropriation Bill would be passed without any discussion.

He raised a very valid point. Can the House be held to ransom over the errors of commission or omission of one individual? "One minister is not Goa," he declared, complaining that he had been robbed of an opportunity to raise important issues in the House. Mr Narvekar is right. This could be the last assembly session for this term; mid-term elections are very likely to happen later this year.

During the last Assembly session, Leader of the Opposition Manohar Parrikar made an issue about the fact that the number of days of sitting of the Goa Legislative Assembly had been reducing year after year, with legislators getting fewer opportunities to perform the duties they were elected to do. He was absolutely right. But now, he himself is responsible for blocking the House proceedings for days on end, and making a mockery of an entire Assembly session.

Freedom's price

When corruption has colonised the administration — from our elected representatives to the powerful Indian Administrative Services (IAS) cadre, right down to Lower Divisional Clerks and Peons who move files from one desk to the next — can we ever expect these people to make laws against themselves? That was the importance of Anna Hazare's fast. Those who call it "black-mail" or "fascist" seem to have forgotten the Mahatma's methods.

It is only because the Congress needs to keep itself relatively clean for Rahul Gandhi to lead it in the next election that the Lokpal Bill will become reality. This battle has brought corruption to the centre of the national debate. It is only fights like this and institutions like the Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas that can keep the corrupt under pressure.

parents complained that their child was unable to read the scriptures in the Church, because it was in Roman script and Devnagri script have puzzled and made it difficult for the children to understand or read in Church.

That means it is an indirect tactic to deprive one to even read the Bible in future, in English, or Roman Script. If this is not tantamount to being labeled as communal, what do you call this?

Why learn in Konkani?

Ashley J Fernandes, Margao

With reference to reports that the MGP and the BJP, along with Shashikala Kakodkar, Fr Mousinho Athaide, Baba Ramdev and a few other visionless individuals are against including English as one of the languages to be used as a Medium of Instruction, all I have to say that the MGP and the BJP are indirectly against the interest of the Goan masses and the overall development of the state. While a majority of Goans opted for English as the Medium of Instruction for

By Smitha Bhandare Kamat



Goa: Port of Call and Strangers at Home

The Portuguese were the last batch of strangers who sought to make Goa their home, says TEOTÓNIO R DE SOUZA

The King's College in London organised an international seminar on 26-27 March last, calling upon a group of scholars to discuss the European ports of Asia since the early modern period till recent times. I chose to present the case of Goa, which since times immemorial attracted the attention of strangers as a strategic port of call, meaning an intermediate stop, where ships picked up supplies, fuel, etc., a sort of base for maintenance facilities for shipping, storage of imported goods, and as redistribution centre. It needed obviously an administrative set-up to ensure efficient and smoothly running services, earning the confidence of all interested parties and making all feel safe and at home. That is what Goa had been under various pre-Portuguese rulers. Under the Kadambas and Vijayanagara Gove is mentioned as the capital of the Banavasi and other neighbouring regions, including across Ghats in the Deccan. The Portuguese were the last batch of strangers that sought to make Goa their home, but had to leave at the end of 1961.

It cannot be forgotten that the life of a maritime trading port is vitally dependent upon the supply lines, not just by sea, but also from the hinterland. Most of the studies of the colonial cities, including Goa, either touch the issue of land dependence very superficially, or ignore it altogether as of little consequence. Very little serious attention has been paid, for instance, to various cases of local rebellions in Goa as manifestations of the native dissatisfaction with the colonial policies. The murder of half a dozen of Jesuits in Cuncoim in 1583, was one such early and serious case. It has been presented generally as Hindu reaction to the violent Jesuit conversion drive in Salcete.

As I pointed out elsewhere in my publications, Cuncoim was one of the rare villages that lived on more than agriculture of subsistence. It even had a petty home industry, including gun-manufacturing capacity. In the letters of Afonso de Albuquerque one reads that guns of good quality were manufactured in Cuncoim, and he finds them comparable to those which the Portuguese brought from Bohemia. The anger of local elite that murdered the Jesuits was provoked by the destruction of their local temple that was located at crossroads of trade routes that linked Goa with

is the port frequented by the people of India, great ships arrive there from Cambar, Tana, Kaulam, Calicut, Fanderina, Shaliyat, Manjarir, Fakaur, Hanaur, Sandabur, et cetera."—*Ibn Batuta*, ii. 177.

c. 1343-4.—"Three days after setting sail we arrived at the island of Sandabur, within which there are 36 villages. It is surrounded by an inlet, and at the time of ebb the water of this is fresh and pleasant, whilst at flow it is salt and bitter. There are in the island two cities, one ancient, built by the pagans; the second built by the Muslims when they conquered the island the first time. We left this island behind us and anchored at a small island near the mainland, where we found a temple, a grove, and a tank of water."—*Ibid.* iv. 61-62.

1550, 1575.—In the Medicean and the Catalan maps of those dates we find on the coast of India Dintabor and Chintabor respectively, on the west coast of India.

c. 1554.—"24th Voyage: from Guvab-Sindabur to Aden. If you start from Guvab-Sindabur at the end of the season, take care not to fall on the Cape Fil." &c.—*Mohit*, in *J.A.S.B.* v. 564.

The last quotation shows that Goa was known even in the middle of the 16th century to Oriental seamen as Goa-Sindabur, whatever Indian name the last part represented; probably from the use of the word by the earlier Arab writers, and from the

It leads them to notice the curious and obscure fact of the introduction of Chinese influence in Ceylon during the 15th century.

1552.—"That the Chinese (*Chius*) were masters of the Chorumandel Coast, of part of Malabar, and of this island of Ceylon, we have not only the assertion of the Vedists of the latter, but also evidence in the buildings, names, and language that they left in it. . . and because they were in the vicinity of this Cape Galle, the other people who lived from the middle of the island upwards called those dwelling about there *Chingalla*, and their language the same, as much as to say the language, or the people of the Chins of Galle."—*Barras*, III. ii. 1.

1583.—(The Cauchin Chinese) "are of the race of the Chingalays, which they say are the best kind of all the Malabars."—*Fitch*, in *Hakl*, ii. 397.

1598.—" . . . inhabited with people called Cingalas."—*Linacoten*, 24; [*Hakl*, Soc. i. 77; in i. 81, Cingalas].

c. 1610.—"Ils tiennent donc que . . . les premiers qui y allerent, et qui les peuplerent (les Maldives) furent . . . les Cingalles de l'ile de Ceylan."—*Port de Lorient*, i. 185; [*Hakl*, Soc. i. 105, and see i. 266].

1612.—Conto, after giving the same explanation of the word as *Barras*, says: "And as they say from the China, who are the falsest heathens of the East . . . so are they

HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

the hinterland through the ghat passes. The trade fairs held during the temple feasts were vital for their economic activity.

I have also analysed in my *Medieval Goa* (Panaji, Goa 1556, 2009) how the Portuguese had been sufficiently content with their maritime trade during most of the 16th century, without needing to interfere with the agriculture-based economy of the local inhabitants. This situation started to change early in the seventeenth century. The threats posed by the arrival of the Dutch and the Englishmen led to the building of the new fortifications at the entrance of the Mandovi river, but resulted simultaneously in an increasingly frequent investment by the *casados* in the rural lands, violating the assurances given to the natives in the *Foral* of Afonso Mexia in 1526. During this process the white parish priests posed themselves as protectors of the native interests against the intrusion of the lay white settlers. In reality, the religious orders were upset in their unrivalled white domination of the rural areas until then.

In addition to the violation of the exclusive land proprietary rights of the Goan natives in their village communities, there were complaints

about coconuts being taken forcibly by the captains of the Aguada and Reis Magos forts that defended the bay entry to the capital city. The natives were paid only one-third of the market price. The native labour was also regularly recruited for digging trenches of the Tivy fortifications and to watch the coast line against any enemy intruders. The village communities were made to pay the cost.

A representation of the village communities of Salcete province to the King in 1643 discloses how the Viceroy Pero da Silva had ordered warships to be built in Goa and the contractors were allowed to cut down jackfruit trees and other fruit bearing trees for timber without paying just compensation to the native owners. The note makes it a point to suggest sabotage by stating that the galleons caught fire and were burnt when they entered the bay.

As a net result of the violent conversion drive, the arrests and punishments of the Inquisition, and the repeated forced levies from the village communities to cover the war costs against the neighbouring rulers, a sizable number of Goan inhabitants, both Hindus and Christians had moved

Learning how to forgive

By Arlette Azavedo

It is easy to say to forgive someone but it is quite hard to actually do it. Forgiveness is not a state of mind; it is a state of the heart. We need to ponder and change as we need to forgive and to be forgiven every day. Yet why don't we forgive readily? Because before we forgive we want to hear from the other person that we were right after all. Then we want to hear apology after apology. We also want to hear excuses. Finally, we want to be praised for being a forgiving person. For this reason, we are reluctant to ask for forgiveness from others for fear that such demands will be asked from us.

But there is no such demand from God. God teaches us to be forgiving every time, but do we pay heed to Him, then? During Lent, we have the opportunity to be different, to be transformed. Perhaps there is someone that you should seek forgiveness from during this time. Perhaps there is someone that you can offer forgiveness to. Perhaps Lent can be a time that you return to the loving embrace of God. We wonder how we can love others when we do not want to forgive.

It is difficult to forgive and we often think of forgiveness as something that someone who has done us wrong, must ask of us. Why don't we look the other way? Why don't we focus on offering forgiveness than waiting to be forgiven?

If forgiving someone brings relief to you, then do it, as now is the best time. We seek forgiveness when our life depends on it, but how about when it doesn't? When we seek forgiveness from God, God does not require anything from us other than the request to be forgiven. God is just happy to see us home again.

I wonder why it is so hard for some of us to forgive, while others do it instinctively. Why do some choose to hold grudges and refuse to forgive, while others do it so easily? Perhaps nothing destroys a good friendship more effectively than the inability to forgive. Disagreements and misunderstandings happen. Even best friends will have their trying times. Without forgiveness, pride takes over. All too soon, a small argument may build and fester into something that no one really wants: the end of the friendship. I wonder how often we should forgive others. Jesus teaches us we should forgive not seven times; but seventy times seven times. This means 'indefinite and unending.'

This is a big task and it appears huge to us, but we can do it. If we have the grace of God, then it becomes easy and for this we have to pray hard so that we can forgive others. I believe that when we forgive each other, we get the taste of God's own unconditional love.

The greatest misconception about forgiveness is the belief that

forgiving the offence means that you condone it. Not true. In fact, we can only forgive what we know to be wrong. Forgiveness does not mean that you have to reconcile with someone who treated you badly. I believe that to withhold forgiveness is to choose to continue to remain the victim. Remember, you always have a choice. Always remember that we are human, therefore to err is human, isn't it? Sometimes people do and say hurtful things.

Forgiveness is the most important single process that brings peace to our soul and harmony to our life. All of us, at some point in our lives, have been hurt and wounded by the actions or words of another. Sometimes the grievances have been so great we thought, "no way, this I cannot forgive!" Sometimes forgiving becomes very difficult.

We feel we have a right to our resentment. However, living from resentment takes so much effort. It creates a tremendous void in and around us. All the toxic feelings of hatred and resentment stay bottled up inside and eventually seep into all the areas of our life with the result that we become bitter, angry, unhappy and frustrated.

So many times we have sinned and turned away from God? And yet, God forgives us and is always reaching out to embrace us. After all, God is our ultimate and a forgiving friend we have.

Letters to the Editor

Introspect first on corruption

Loretta Joyce Pinto, Siridao

It is our responsibility to join the nationwide protest against corruption, but we need to introspect on where it really begins. In a society, where everyone is involved in some form of corruption or the other, be it paying a bribe in government offices or to get government jobs, it would be wrong to blame politicians and bureaucrats alone. We must accept that corruption begins with us and unless we take corrective measures to root it out, it would be difficult to eradicate this evil.

So if Anna Hazare's movement is to succeed, then the fight should be within each and every citizen of our nation.

Medium of Instruction

Clereto Fernandes, Nuvem

We need to point out that English must be used as MoI, because there is a big flaw awaiting us all. Just the other day, some

Letter of the Day

The big leap

Hasiba Amin, via email

Friday was a historic day for our nation. We saw a unity in the masses. The citizens of the entire country were on to the streets joining in the fight against corruption irrespective of age, religion, caste, state, or colour. It was an overwhelming moment in the history of India. This is just the beginning.

Anna Hazare has gotten all of us together. Let us not allow our efforts to go in vain. In our first step, we have taken a big leap. However, we must not take a step backward. We must go forward in our pursuit of a corrupt-free country. Let us keep the anti-corruption movement going till there is justice everywhere.

I think it is the youth of today that can bring about a lot of changes for the betterment of society. In this society, we all have a role to play, and must play it positively. We have to keep "anti-corruption" as our main motto. Every single man and woman has to contribute to make this into a reality. It is time like minded responsible citizens of Goa get together and make the difference.

the primary school, along with Konkani as a compulsory subject, it meant the masses had opted for a change.

Lokpal Bill and beyond

M Kumar, New Delhi

It is a good sign that the whole nation has stood up to thwart the cancer of corruption which is rooted in every sphere of life. How far the Lokpal Bill (Act) will succeed will depend on its implementation and honest intentions, which is rare in the present corrupt society! Will this Bill (Act) bring all corrupt politicians and other citizens under its ambit, who will be handed out a severe punishment, so as to set an example that no one ever dares to be corrupt?

The next step

S N D Pojary, Miramar

The Central government has finally come its senses that the will of the people will prevail when there is visible malfunctioning of democracy. The mass movement initiated by the venerable Anna Hazare needs to be continued to the next step.

Any charge-sheeted person should be debarred from contesting an election till his name is cleared. An MLA or an MP should hold office only for two terms: two terms as MLA or two terms as MP or one

term as MLA and one term as MP. Raj Bhavans should not be turned into old-age homes.

He is no sports lover

Gregory E D'Souza, Siolim

Sports minister Babu Azgaonkar has been rightly pulled up by the opposition party for his wrong doings. One issue is regarding the leasing of the village Panchayat school playground in Salcete to one senior team. In Siolim, the village Panchayat playground school file was in its final stage for payment and Babu de-notified and cancelled the acquisition process.

He denied school students and villagers of a playground. The village Panchayat Child committee of Siolim has been organising vacation camps but each time the Sports department hasn't deputed coaches to the Siolim panchayat.

However, one must appreciate MLA Dayanand Narvekar in his efforts to promote cricket.

Grants for English too

C Fernandes, Panch of Chinchinim

This is with reference to the meeting conducted by BBSM, which demanded that the current grant in-aid policy for primary schools from Std I to IV should continue

permanently without any change.

The mother tongue of Goa is Konkani, but Konkani is supported out of frustration, and also to give a back door entry to Marathi, Urdu, Kannada, etc.

We are not fighting to stop grants for these languages but in addition we demand grants for English too because it is for the future of our kids. Just like the government has a policy for reservation for women, ST, OBC, etc., this is our just right.

Demand apology

Duane P Coutinho, Fatorda

The Central Board of Film Certification should review the movie "Dum Maaro Dum" slated for release on 24 April and cut off insulting statements that ruins Goa's image.

This does not mean true facts about the recent drug cartels involving police officials and other incidents should be deleted.

"Liquor is cheap and Goan girls are cheaper"—I would like to question Rohan Sippy, as to why such a statement is included in the script. Savio Rodrigues should file defamation charges against the producer.

The movie should be released showing the true facts about Goa.

Demanding a ban will not change anything, as the movie will be shown elsewhere across the country.

Feigning ignorance

Michael Vaz, Mercas

The detention of Goa's Education Minister by the Customs department for carrying foreign currency beyond the permissible limits or the accusation by the opposition leader that foreign exchange has been smuggled abroad, is yet another episode of Goa's political degradation.

What was shocking is the statement made by the said minister, that he was not aware of a law that forbids carrying such vast amounts of money.

Such a statement is unbecoming of a legislator.

All of us are supposed to know the law of the land and feigning ignorance is no excuse.

Grant aid to all mediums

Joel Morais, Cuncoim

The rally by Shashikala Kakodkar and Co. at the Azad Maidan, Panaji to protect the mother tongue was massive but did Shashikala support Konkani during the Konkani agitation? If grants are given to Marathi medium schools, there should be no problem in providing aid to the English medium schools.

BJP's ulterior motives

Stephen Dias, Dona Paula

The BJP staging a protest in the Goa Assembly recently against the conduct of the Education Minister, Atanasio Monserrate for disrupting the proceeding of the House for the fourth day and also protesting in an unique gagging their mouths, gives us an impression that the proceedings for discussion in the House are not in the interest of public. This appeared to be a planned exercise by the BJP, and had all the trappings of a drama.

The personal attacks made by the BJP smack of their ulterior motives.

Wrong practice followed

Ramesh Naik, Margao

Kudos to Willie Severes for his letter 'Tiatrists & politicians' (*Herald*, 24 March) and Freddy A Fernandes in his letter 'Politicians & Tiatrist' (*Herald*, 26 March) in pointing out a very wrong practice followed by tiatrists. Amateur tiatrists try to be superstars in just one dawn.

They try to produce their own tiatr. They confidently knock on politicians' doors to ask for financial help. So, it is obvious that the politician, who helps, will be the chief guest.

Being a medium to convey a message to the masses, politicians grab the opportunity and talk about their dedication towards our mother tongue Konkani and Tiatr. Try getting veterans tiatrist who are still alive as chief guests. They have given their life for the love of Konkani stage.

The generation will realise who their people are and that tiatr has come a long way and definitely did not spring up in just one dawn.