

Wizards of Oz wilt in the heat

As the era of overwhelming dominance of the Australian cricket team, which began in the late 1990s with players like Steve Waugh, Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Justin Langer, come to an end?

Though the Australian cricketing media has been quick to suggest that their team's 2-0 defeat at the hands of India in the recent test series represents the end of the golden age for Australian cricket, it's much too soon to write off the greatest cricketing side the world has seen in recent decades.

Nearly all the great players that built the Aussie reputation for invincibility are now retired. The new Australian side has only four players - Michael Clarke, Brett Lee, Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden - who have played more than 30 Test matches. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are struggling on sub-continental tracks against a resurgent Indian team that has a rich mix of experienced campaigners and hungry youngsters.

It is true that during the recent series, the Australian side lacked the bowling firepower to get the Indian batsmen all-out. In the first test, even after dominating most of the match and taking a first innings lead, they allowed the struggling Indians to force a draw.

The second Test saw the Indians bat their way into an almost unbeatable position in the first innings, before bowling the Aussies out twice to win by a huge margin of 320 runs. A lifeless wicket in the third Test saw the Indian side score 613 and the Australians reply with 577, making a draw all but inevitable.

But it was the fourth and final Test that separated the men from the boys. Forced to look for a win to square the series, Ricky Ponting committed a major tactical error on the penultimate day, calling off his strike bowlers to increase the over rate, and letting the Indians off the hook.

That is when the Aussies must surely have realised that given their present shape, they are no longer the world's best cricketing side. That title now lies with the Indian team, at least for the time being.

Greg Chappell has to be the world's unluckiest coach. His credentials - as a player in his time and as a coach - are impeccable. But he failed with this Aussie side, just as he failed with the Indian team earlier.

Called to give the young Aussie team a good grounding - thanks to his deep knowledge of the Indian players - the master conducted a pre-series camp in India for his country's new-look side, but apart from the first Test, the results of the exercise completely failed to meet expectations.

Now, in order to kick start a new generation of Australian success, Chappell says a fresh blueprint must be constructed for Australian cricket to find its old glory days again. "We need to sit down as we did 20-odd years ago and look at the types of cricketers we want to rebuild Australian cricket," Chappell said in the wake of the Australian defeat.

That's the kind of thinking the Indian cricket establishment should adopt, if it wants this latest success not to be a flash in the pan.

Cops need to pull up socks

When the victim of a robbery refuses to file a complaint because he thinks it is of little or no use, then it is time for the police to do some serious soul searching. The owner of a Margao showroom, which was burgled on Sunday night, told the police he will not file a complaint, as it is a waste of time. His establishment was burgled thrice earlier, but the cops are yet to trace the culprits.

When the police fail to register an accident case for three days, because a police jeep was involved in the mishap that claimed the life of a motorcyclist, then something is seriously wrong. If the citizenry loses faith in the police, Goa, as a society, is heading for trouble.

Dishonouring Our Freedom Fighters

The tendency to minimise or even despise the role played by the freedom fighters is a sin against history, says TEOTONIO R DE SOUZA

I have been reading in various types of the media, both printed and electronic, in recent days, in India and abroad, varied reactions of the public about the protest of the Association of Goa's Freedom Fighters against the so-called 'Semana de Cultura Portuguesa'. One such write-up minimises the role of the freedom fighters, affirming that they were helped by the Indian army to achieve their goal of liberating Goa from Portuguese colonialism. This is certainly not a serious way of looking at the past as it unfolded itself.

Who was interested in seeing more action of the Azad Gomantak Dal? The Portuguese chief of police in Goa from 1954 till 1961, General Carlos de Azeredo, now retired after a brilliant military career till recently, has publicly acknowledged with great respect the guerrilla skills of the Goan freedom fighters as compared to even their most ferocious counterparts in Portuguese Africa where he served, in a published article available on the Internet, as well as in his recently published memoirs *Trabalhos e Dias de Um Soldado do Império* (2004).

I am aware of two volumes published by the Goa Gazetteer Department entitled *Who's Who of Goa's Freedom Fighters*, wherein anyone interested in separating the grain from the chaff can learn about those who displayed their courage of conviction and paid dearly for it. These volumes have culled archival documentation to substantiate the information. Unfortunately, there were cases of pretensions which generated the tendency in some sectors of Goan society and among earlier colonialists to minimise or even despise the role played by the freedom fighters. We should consider such an attitude as a sin against history.

A Goan who served as head of the Information Department during the last phase of the Portuguese regime, but scouted in time to the safety of Portugal, was declaring in a press conference in Lisbon in 1956: "I do not know if the word *satyagraha* is masculine or feminine. For me it is neuter, considering its results. For the Portuguese



The Rane of Sanquelim and the King of Sonda with Portuguese Minister of Colonies Comdt Sarmiento Rodrigues and Patriarch D José Costa Nunes at the See Cathedral of Goa, in April 1952.

a *satyagrahi* is a defaulter in school, someone with a precarious job, or someone moving aimlessly on road with a suspicious face and carrying a cloth bag. I even heard my daughter denouncing her younger brother as *satyagrahi* for having stolen her sweets from the cupboard." To paraphrase another statement of the same gentleman during a public session in Lourenço Marques in 1973: "Goa is in captivity, but the Indo-Portuguese culture will never fade or die." This is just one sample of the upstarts who take the past for granted, or create their selective past, while caring much about leaving their own glories to the benefit of posterity!

I had a one-time opportunity of bringing together most of the leaders of the various freedom movements, including the late Vishwanath Lawande, for a seminar on 'Oral History of Goa's Freedom Struggle' in 1986, at the time of the commemoration of the silver jubilee of Goa's Liberation. One concrete result of that seminar was the publication by the Xavier Centre of Historical Research of the memoirs of James Fernandes, entitled *In Quest of Free-*

dom (Delhi, Concept, 1989) illustrating his dedication to Goa's freedom as a *satyagrahi*.

However, along with these more positive aspects of the commemorations, I also had a sad experience. The recently established Goa University decided to join in the celebrations with a book entitled *Goa Wins Freedom*, edited by then Vice-Chancellor and my good historian-friend, Professor Sheikh Ali. I was asked to contribute an article. My choice fell on the re-assessment of the Rane family's contribution to Goa's freedom. To my bad luck, Mr Rane was holding one of his many terms as CM at that time. The Vice-Chancellor developed cold feet and suggested to me discreetly that the article was too critical of the role of the Ranes to be included in the proposed volume of 'floral tributes'.

Fortunately, democracy opens more than one window of opportunity. Mr Vaman Sardesai was bringing out the last issue of *Goa Today* (March 1987) just before relinquishing its editorship and taking up the job as ambassador of India in Angola, where he had been a prisoner as a freedom fighter. With

his true spirit of a freedom fighter, he published my article: 'Feudal Lords Unmasked: The Ranes of Sanquelim'.

It is known to some privy to the issue and who are still alive that after an initial sharp reaction of seeking the opinion of the Director of the Goa Archives at that time to check the possibilities of a defamation case, Mr Rane was very gracious to admit the scholarly quality of the article as he personally mentioned to me a fortnight later when we met at the inauguration of a new wing of the Archives building. The historical revelations about the Ranes having served as military guardians of the Portuguese borders of north Goa and as far as Ceylon in the seventeenth century, or the fact that Rane revolts in the late nineteenth till the early twentieth century were mostly about defending the feudal interests against the state and private encroachments upon their rights, by no means denied the personal contributions of Mr Rane during the past four decades to the growth of free Goa with his political acumen and dedication.

Those who resent the freedom of Goa's freedom fighters to voice their convictions display their own lack of preparedness for democratic tolerance. There are some who believe that to remain soured and speak with bitterness goes counter to the democratic spirit. Does it? Democracy denies anyone the right to own and express one's deep feelings, particularly if they are sour? Such discourse can only come from someone who had the good luck of making hay at all times and under whatever regime. None of the many petty beneficiaries of Goa's freedom who still display intellectual subservience and prefer to serve their own personal agendas have the right to cast slurs upon the sincerity of those who risked their lives for the cause of Goa's freedom despite their many human frailties. The great difference I see between genuine freedom fighters and politicians is that the freedom fighters are prepared to die for their cause. The politicians will never do it. They would rather be prepared to kill.

Cheers Dears

Evy Sippy at the Barbershop

By Augusto Pinto

In Goa the barbershop is one of the best places to pick up gossip. People who come from far and wide often have to wait their turn for a haircut or a shave, whereupon they begin to speak out about the goings-on in their neighbourhoods, even with people they don't know from Adam.

One such shop is located at the building of the new Camara or Municipal Council building, and is run by a nice young man from Andhra Pradesh, who rents it from a member of the Camara named C P Sippy. How did Sippy manage to acquire this shop? Well all councillors are born lucky, which is why God keeps blessing them with the good things in life.

Sippysaab, as he is now called, is an interesting chap. He came to Goa just before Liberation, to work a 'bhoyo' (which was how Goans mispronounced the word 'Bhaiya') - the people who came from North India to work at Marmagao Harbour. In order to supplement his income, Sippy started to steal people's chickens, but unfortunately for him, he once got caught by the Portuguese police and was bunged into jail.

This proved to be a stroke of luck for him later, for after Goa was liberated, he was able to get a pension from the government claiming that he was locked up because he was a freedom fighter. Not that Sippy really needed the money from the freedom fighter's pension: he had the wits to earn a fortune any day, swindling someone or the other. But he could now

proudly say, "I am a Freedom Fighter! Not a Chicken Thief!"

After he got out of jail, he became a contractor and real estate broker when people had not yet caught on to the racket, and prices of land in Goa were quite cheap. He made a killing by gulling Comunidade members of various Goan villages to foolishly sign away the properties of their common lands to his company, Land Marg Constructions, named after his village Marg in North India. Although the poor Comunidade saps made fools of themselves by getting implicated in his shady deals without getting much of the loot themselves, Sippy himself remained in the clear. His money bought him a Councilors post in the Camara.

Over time he became, one could say, a pucca Goenkar, especially after his son married a Goan girl from Moira named Evy, who was a friend of mine. But lately Sippysaab was in the eye of a storm because of a speech at a freedom fighters' forum where he said that the Portuguese liked to rape Goan women and so all contacts with them should cease. Now there is nothing more inflammatory in the macho man's world of Goa than to be told that our women were raped by someone. Hence a furore erupted. Still I was surprised, for as far as I knew, all that Sippy cared for was money, and not such controversies.

As luck would have it, when I went to the Camara Barbershop for a shave, I met Evy Sippy, who had brought her son for a haircut. Evy said, "Hello

Gusto, how are you?" I replied, "Very well, thank you, Evy. Tell me something, why is Sippysaab so worked up about the Portuguese nowadays?" "Oh it's nothing, he's just following Party orders," I said, "Party orders?"

Evy said, "Yes. You see, the elections will be coming sooner than later, so preparations have to be made. Daddy will be standing. The Party said people must be polarised on Hindu versus Christian lines. He's just following orders."

I said, "Maybe. But how do the Portuguese come into the picture? They left Goa 47 years ago." "Well Gusto, in Goa it's inappropriate to directly antagonise Christians. Banging the Portuguese is a way of bugging Christians by proxy."

"But Evy, in the bad old days there were many Hindus who benefited from Portuguese rule too, and even now many are associated with Portugal and Portuguese culture. Why do only Christians get annoyed when the Portuguese people are targeted?"

"I have no clue," said Evy, "but just read the papers - most who criticise the Portuguese are Hindu; their defenders are mostly Christians. But you mustn't take all this too seriously, Gusto. Politics is just a game."

It was time for my shave so I shut my mouth and pondered over what Evy Sippy had said.

Letters to the Editor

Letter of the Day

Learning from US elections

Urvee Phaladesai, Poinguinim

As we applaud the world's oldest democracy, we are compelled to draw an allusion between their electoral system and our own. Inevitably we will have to conclude that we ought to learn a great deal from the US elections. While we envy Americans, as they could give their verdict so clearly by choosing Barack Obama as their president, we can consider ourselves unfortunate as we had no say in offering a visionary like Dr A P J Abdul Kalam as President of India for a second term. No consensus could be arrived at, even for a person who was above party politics.

A two-party system as espoused by Dr Kalam is the answer to our political woes. Else we will perpetually be the victims of coalition governments. For our democracy to flourish we ought to know the candidates we elect, as they do in the US. See how long the US campaign goes on, giving the electorate an opportunity to know the candidates. Even the personal lives of their leaders are on a public display, unlike in India, where we are oblivious to what is happening in the lives of our representatives and the outcome is that we elect criminals.

As Shashi Tharoor rightly pointed out in one of his articles, in our country the standard of behaviour expected from our own family is not expected from our leaders. So we would not like a criminal in our own family but it is normal to have criminals in the family of politicians/leaders. It is high time we change our expectations.

Whereas most US leaders are graduates from Harvard and the like, ours are illiterates or poorly educated (barring a few). In his campaign Obama never made a reference to his race or ethnicity, but focused on real issues confronting Americans. On the contrary our leaders garner votes on all kinds of issues like caste, religion, language etc. Our opposition members, whether from Congress or BJP, need to learn from Senator John McCain's concession speech how he gracefully accepted the verdict and asked fellow Americans to offer their cooperation to his erstwhile opponent.

Our politicians are the pits and we of the younger generations are in despair. Many questions gnaw at us. Will our dying faith in democracy be revived? Will the world ever raise a toast to the largest democracy? Will there be a change for us too?

Spare the Army!

Pachu Menon, Margao

The Indian Army has been unique in the sense that despite functioning in a democracy where it follows the dictates of a popularly elected civil government, it has been able to maintain a distinctive identity all of its own. In keeping with

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their standards, hardly have the uniformed gentry in the country ever crossed swords with the government, preferring to have the bureaucrats in the Ministry of Defence sort out their differences amicably. Evolving a culture that encompasses a multitude of communities, cutting across all lines of language, religion, caste and creed, the armed forces have been able to inculcate a sense of oneness and belonging amongst its brethren.

The alleged involvement of a serving Army officer in the Malegaon blasts is indeed a matter of serious concern. Disturbed over events that he envisages as a threat to his community, or sympathising with a cause that he holds close to his heart, if every soldier is to encourage subversive activities by imparting training to militant organisations, before long we will have an array of defence personnel pursuing their own religious crusades. An immediate exercise to identify these elements within the forces and negate their nefarious plans should be undertaken on a war footing.

Give us our daily pau!

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

Bread, or 'pau' as it is locally known, happens to be one of the important food items on the Goan table, be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner. In fact the popular pau happens to be a staple food for the poor people, as it is priced at an affordable Rs 2 per piece.

But now there is a demand to increase the price to Rs 3 per piece, the reason being that the increase in the price of the raw materials that go into its making.

It must be said that when the price was last increased the bread was larger. Though the consumer does not weigh the bread each time he buys it, the size of the bread has kept on decreasing ever since. If those involved in the business find it difficult to sustain it, why doesn't the Goa government take over and sell it as a packaged product through various outlets? The expertise of the bakers in the state could be utilised in making these breads.

This could be done the same way the government packages and supplies the 'Goa Dairy' milk through the Goa State Co-op Milk Producers Union. This way Goans could even get their daily bread at the earlier price of Re 1 per piece as they used to earlier.

Words of Wisdom

The Buddha and God

The Buddha always avoided discussion on metaphysical issues like the existence or non-existence of God. The story of Malunkya putta explains why.

As Malunkya putta meditated the thought arose: "The Buddha is omniscient but has left unexplained many things - whether the world is eternal or not, whether the world is finite or not, whether there is a Creator or not, etc. If the Lord does not explain to me, I will give up and return to a worldly life." When Malunkya putta approached the Buddha with his questions, the Buddha replied: "Now did I, Malunkya putta, ever say to you, 'Come, Malunkya putta, lead a religious life with me, and I will explain all this to you?'" "You did not, reverend sir."

"Anyone, Malunkya putta, who should say 'I will not lead a religious life with the Lord, until the Lord explains all this to me, that person would die without its being explained. It is as if a man had been wounded by an arrow, and his friends were to get a surgeon to heal him, and he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow pulled out, until I know by what man I was wounded, whether he is of warrior caste, or a Brahmin, or of the agricultural, or of low caste, etc. If the person who was shot were to seek the answers to all these questions, definitely he would be dead before he found the answers."

"So, Malunkya putta, it's not that I know the answers to these questions and I'm not telling you, or that I don't know the answers. It's just that I know for sure that speculating on such metaphysical issues does not help to live the life of Dharma. But I have not been silent. Suffering I have explained, the cause of suffering, the destruction of suffering and the path that leads to the destruction of suffering. For this is useful, this is concerned with the principle of a religious life; this conduces to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, tranquility, supernatural faculty, perfect knowledge, Nirvana, and therefore have I explained it. Therefore consider as unexplained what I have not explained and consider as explained what I have explained."

Konkani training

Sidonio Mendes, Chandor

We have news again of Konkani training to government employees, with ministerial staff first. More than ten years ago during the PDF dispensation, the stalwarts in the Front had pompously initiated similar training, amusingly enough when they themselves were not knowing proper Konkani, either to speak or write.

So as to acquaint myself with the Devanagari script I joined that training in the twilight of my service career and have the certificate issued. However I wondered how it would be possible to translate volumes of books to make the language genuinely official, when not even a small piece of legislation was translated into Konkani till then. The major outcome in this respect was that our instructors, well-known Konkani protagonists, provided us a translated specimen of how to apply for casual leave, the contents of

which were hardly sufficient for an octavo sheet. This time around I hope they will provide the translation at least of 'Application for Earned Leave', which requires a foolscap-size sheet.

Konkani uloi, boroi!

Lucas Fernandes, Colva

The slogan 'Uloi Konkani, Buroi Konkani ani Sarkar Chhobi' was a song composed and sung on the stage by our famous triartist late Kamat de Asolna. I hope this will come into reality once our mother tongue Konkani will be the only official language of Goa with the Roman script, used since so long.

In *Herald*, 1 Nov, it is mentioned that Roman script is being used in seven Indian states. Why then should there be any obstacle in Roman script for Konkani?

The bane of regionalism

Michael Vaz, Mercers

Raj Thackeray and his MNS supporters in Maharashtra seemed to be in Wonderland, with all their wishful thinking of driving out the North Indians from that state. This publicity stunt is nothing new for the predecessor of this movement, Bal Thackeray, and his Shiv Sena workers who did the same thing in the 1960s, though the attack then was on South Indians at that time.

The apex court has clearly expressed its views on such ideas, stating that the country cannot be divided on regional passions.

Moreover do such politicians feel that there are no Maharashtrians in other states earning their livelihoods there? It is sad that the irrational acts of a few is backfiring on some innocent people elsewhere. In Chandigarh, for instance, a couple from Maharashtra is warned to leave that place or face the consequences.

A Union Home Minister who himself hails from Maharashtra has gone on record stating that people seeking preferential treatment within a state are narrow-minded and has further remarked that such attitudes tend to weaken and divide the country.

Remo lets Goans down

Peldin Fernandes, by email

In Remo's interview on NDTV News, telecast live on 10 Nov, Remo has let down all Goans by publicly saying that Goa has been raped and no long-

er a safe place for honest citizens to stay. He has gone to the extent of maligning Goa's tourism potential by saying he does not understand why tourists spend money to come to Goa.

Remo's outburst can be understood but he should have been a little responsible since he was an ambassador for Goan citizens in this particular interview. By saying that he has plans in the near future to migrate out of Goa, Remo has shown himself as selfish as the corrupt MLAs running our state. Being a celebrity and a well-known figure in Goa, Remo could have instead used the platform to be a crusader and lead in giving a clarion call to all Goans to unitedly reject the current MLAs and their kin in the next assembly elections and elect new faces.

Did Remo not believe that the 16 lakh ordinary Goans would support him in his crusade?

100 Years Ago

Herald

12 November 1908

French airmen defeated

The French airmen were defeated in the Air Championship organized at Berlin for the coveted Gordon Bennett Cup.

Soldier deported

A soldier from the Artillery Company involved in breaking a safe was yesterday sentenced for 15 years deportation to the African Coast.

Death of soldier

A soldier of the 5th Company of the Coast-guard, who was coming from Sanguem to the city to be admitted in the hospital, expired aboard the launch during the journey.

Battleship launched

The battleship *Collingwood*, which is the sixth of the Dreadnought class, was launched yesterday at Devonport.