

Duties & rights

In an otherwise revenue-neutral Union Budget, the central government has, for reasons known only to itself, chosen to hit two of Goa's three main industries – iron ore mining and tourism.

The government has raised export duty on iron ore (both lumps and fines) to 20 per cent of its selling price in the recent Union Budget. Earlier, this tax was at 5 per cent for fines and 15 per cent for lumps. Goa's iron ore exporters, who export 100 per cent of the ore they extract, all of which are fines, now face the prospect of an incredible 400 per cent increase in the export duties they pay.

The rationale behind the increase in duty is that ore mined in India should be available to Indian steel producers at reasonable prices. But as constructed, the increase in duties will hardly serve this purpose. Those who export high-grade lumpy ore will only pay 5 per cent more than they are paying now. This will not really slow down exports; it will only reduce their profit margins.

It is those who export low-grade fine ores that will have the problem. Their taxes have been quadrupled from present levels. This will hit their margins hard or, worse, make export of fine ore unviable. The irony is, this ore has no customers in India. Indian steel producers exclusively use high-grade lumps, and no fines. It is only the Chinese and Japanese steel producers that use low-grade fine ores. If Goa's ore can't be exported, it goes waste.

Iron ore mining in Goa is not greatly popular with the people. But it is the illegal miners who do far more damage than the legal miners. The problem with this duty hike is that it will hit the legal miners much harder than the illegal ones. And, like it or not, the mining companies provide a great deal of livelihoods in our villages. And we do not want a sudden crisis there.

As for tourism, it is being hit by its inclusion in the service tax bracket. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee's proposals place a 10 per cent service tax (discounted by 5 per cent) on hotels with a room tariff of Rs1,000 per night or higher, and a 10 per cent service tax (discounted by 7 per cent) on air-conditioned restaurants that serve liquor (which includes most mid-scale Goan restaurants).

Why do we say 10 per cent and state the discount instead of 5 per cent and 3 per cent for these taxes respectively? That's because the discounts can be removed at any time and the full tax imposed.

And why do we say it is unjust? That's because hotels are already paying 12.5 per cent value-added tax (VAT), and this would raise taxes to 17.5 per cent. A/c restaurants are already paying 12.5 per cent VAT on food and 20 per cent VAT on liquor, and this would raise it to 17.5 per cent and 23 per cent respectively, hardly reasonable levels of taxation.

When VAT was brought in, it was to be a single tax to replace all others. Now that Service Tax is being imposed will the VAT be withdrawn? It is unlikely, because that would hurt the revenues of the Goa state government. Then why is this one business being singled out to pay two types of taxes? It will hurt Goa's tourism industry.

Taxes are not imposed overnight. They are lobbied for and against in the corridors of power at New Delhi. Goa has two Lok Sabha MPs and a Rajya Sabha MP. It is their duty to lobby for their state. They should lose no time now to convince the powers-that-be of the unreasonableness of these two levies.

Colonial past and its transition

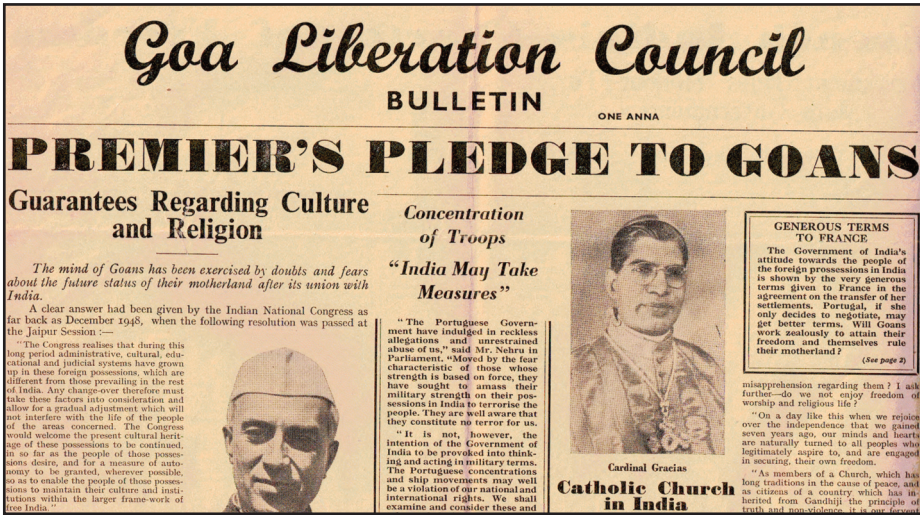
Cardinal Gracias's choice of India's first cardinal, had the approval of Nehru, says TEOTÓNIO R DE SOUZA

Valerian Cardinal Gracias wrote in a Foreword to the second edition (1968) of John Correia Afonso's well-known book *Jesuit Letters and Indian History*: "Historical studies make a signal contribution to bringing men to see things in their changeable and evolutionary aspects." It seems to sum up Cardinal's perception of the link between Church, Culture and History. He was drawing from Vatican II in its Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It is very likely that the Cardinal defended this mission of history faced with the difficulties he had experienced from the colonial past and the transition to Independent India or to Liberated Goa.

As part of the commemorations of 50 years of Goa's liberation it would do credit to Goan scholarship to remember all those who helped Goa reach its political freedom. The Goan community in Bombay was broken asunder over the issue, and there were as many fighters for integration of Goa into independent India as those who preferred to retain Goa as a holiday home where they could return, from time to time, to taste foreign drinks and other goodies.

Tristão Bragança-Cunha's *Denationalization of Goans* and other anti-colonial political activities earned for him a jail term of 8 years and 15 years of deprivation of political rights from the Military Court in Goa. He had denounced that the Goans were reduced to mental subservience through the services of the Church, threats of the Inquisition and the dictatorial regime of Salazar. He did not live to see liberated Goa, but he earned the consensus of all Goan freedom-fighters to choose him as their symbolic representative when the monument for the freedom fighters was erected at Azad Maidan.

Alongside the politically conscious T B Cunha, Bombay saw several Goan doctors as mayors, like Acácio Viegas, J A Colaço, Alban D'Souza and Leo D'Souza (father and son) Ubald Mascarenhas, J N Heredia, Simon Fernandes. There were other prominent Goan personalities, like Gerson da Cunha, J N da Fonseca, and others who were either indifferent to Goa's liberation, or practised political games that allowed them the best of the two worlds, living in Bombay with honourable status and summer-holidaying in Goa. Francisco Correia Afonso earned a papal award for his deft slogan "Rome Rule is Home Rule". Mariano Saldaña, then based in Lisbon, described it caustically as "*saber aliar beatice à vaidade*" (ability to combine piety with vanity).



HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

Heredia clan patronised the *Instituto Luso-Indiano*, run by the Goan emigrants under supervision of the Goa Government that had sanctioned an annual subsidy of 75,000 rupees since 1929. Curiously, J N Heredia also acted as Vice-President of the Goa Liberation Council. Simon Fernandes kept up a sustained campaign through *Goa Times* in defence of Goan Portuguese identity, but with a mix of freedom discourse thrown in for a good measure.

Leo Lawrence was fiercely critical of Cardinal Gracias for defending Nehru's decision to occupy Goa. His book *Nehru Seizes Goa* (1963), published in New York, needs to be read in the context of his involvement as a practising advocate appointed by the Portuguese authorities in Goa to defend the *Instituto Luso Indiano*. That brought him under Indian surveillance. In 1959 Leo left for Goa where he was recruited as Deputy Director in the Department of Information and Tourism under Martires Lopes, described by T B Cunha in not very laudatory terms. I direct the curious to the source (*Free Goa*, 25-12-54).

Just prior to the Indian conquest of Goa, Leo was assigned to brief foreign reporters who were called in to supervise the *satyagraha* movement. Immediately after the conquest of Goa, Leo attached himself to an American reporter, proceeded to Delhi and before end December 1961, with the assistance of the Brazilian Embassy, he left

for Lisbon, where he joined the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served for almost two decades in the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations.

Leo Lawrence refers to what he calls Cardinal's *Manifesto*. Leo gives an estimated total of one hundred thousand Goans in Bombay, from whom only ninety-six signed Cardinal's document, and of these, he states that two-thirds were coerced into toeing the line under various threats. Leo Lawrence does not hesitate to mention how the pro-Portuguese press in Bombay ridiculed the Eminence and how some Goans arranged to send to him a saffron robe of the Hindu *Sadhu* as a token of his betrayal of the Christian cause in India.

For Leo Lawrence, the failure of the Cardinal to soften the Goans at Nehru's bidding led to the creation of a special section of "Goa affairs" at the Bombay Police Headquarters to screen and punish the pro-Portuguese elements. It is obvious that the Indian authorities would not permit a Portuguese-run institution in Bombay to influence against the integration of Goa into independent India. Interestingly, none of the dire prophecies of Leo Lawrence have come true, including what he predicted about Portuguese African colonies. The choice of Valerian Cardinal Gracias as first cardinal of India was possible largely due to the role played by the Jesuit archbishop of Bombay,

T D Roberts, and by Nehru himself who ensured peaceful relations with the Vatican that was worried about how the new nation would orient its religious policies.

As for the Cardinal's influence with Jawaharlal Nehru, his distinguished personality and position were sufficient, but the hostile Portuguese response to his choice as Archbishop of Bombay in 1947 and his later appointment as first Cardinal of India also weighed in his favour. All this needs to be viewed in the context of Salazar's policy of alliance with the Church from 1940 onwards through a Missionary Accord. It came as a relief to the Vatican after three decades of anti-clericalism by the republican regime since 1910.

D José da Costa Nunes had arrived in Goa from Macau, as archbishop-patriarch of Goa few months after the signing of the Missionary Accord. He showed much zeal in advising Goan clergy to remain faithful to the Portuguese regime against the winds of freedom blowing in Goa.

T B Cunha accused the Cardinal of timidity in defending the political freedom of his countrymen as compared with the Portuguese church dignitaries (*Free Goa*, 25-7-56). He voiced his grievance in the context of the Nyogi report and Cardinal's intervention favouring continued entry of foreign missionaries to train seminary staff.

To conclude, much useful information can be gathered in the book *O Estado Novo e a Igreja Católica* (Lisboa, 1998) by Dr Manuel Braga da Cruz, presently the first layman heading the Catholic University of Portugal, about the conflict between Portugal and Vatican over the appointment of Valerian Gracias as Cardinal, the tantrums of the archbishop-patriarch D José da Costa Nunes and his resignation, the efforts of Salazar to create for him a posting of doubtful significance as *vice-camerlengo* in the Roman curia, and finally the indignation expressed by Portugal over Pope Paul's participation in the Eucharistic Congress in Bombay in 1964. It was viewed by Salazar as a tacit approval by Vatican of the Indian occupation of Goa. Something that few might know, there was a proposal to shift the casket of S. Francis Xavier to Bombay, so as to avoid an initial interest of the Pope in visiting the tomb in Goa.

The Pope did not visit either Goa or New Delhi to focus upon exclusively religious nature of his visit. The Pope sought to compensate for any political fall-out by sending in 1965 a Golden Rose to the Basilica of Fatima in Portugal.

Wise Counsel

We should always give others as well as ourselves – the benefit of the doubt as we really do not know who is more beloved in the eyes of God. We don't know who is the better person. It is difficult as also we can't judge someone "unless we've arrived in his or her place." And since we can never be in exactly the same place and life circumstance as another person, we are never allowed to judge anyone. But this doesn't mean we should be so open-minded that we blindly accept anyone or anything. We can't judge a person, but we can judge actions. Even when people make mistakes, we can still see the best in them, love them, and care for them in spite of their mistakes. We do see this with our children. Who knows the flaws of our children better than we do, then? Yet, we choose to love them. In fact, it is only God who can truly judge a person, and His judgment is unique to the individual, not based on any formula. When we make a mistake, stop, clear it up, and get back on track. Don't let one mistake diminish the good person that we know that we are,

Why judge others?

and the greatness that God knows, that we can achieve. We look at a person and rush to judge them.

There's pain there, and all we can see is the other person as the cause of the conflict, that we feel. The truth is all we stand in judgment of the image of that person we have unconsciously formed in ourself. The right way to interact with others is to be aware of one another. Only such awareness allows us to see without judging. We can never judge the lives of others, because each person knows only their own pain and renunciation. It's one thing to feel that you are on the right path, but it's another to think that yours is the only path. We need to remember that judgments and criticism are as hurtful to oneself as they are to others. People judge others for various reasons. Some have been raised in critical or demanding families. Some people judge others as a projection of their own self-judgments; they see in others what they don't like in themselves. Some use arrogance and belittle others as a way to temporarily feel better or more important.

In the end, none of these tactics help a person to truly feel better

as they carry the negativity with them. The only way to find peace and happiness with others is to love and accept them as they are. Commence with love and accepting oneself. Mother Theresa rightly said that if we judge people, we have no time to love them. This is so very true. In order to stop judging others, stop judging yourself. Become mindful of self judgments and criticism and choose to let these go. No one is perfect, we all have imperfections. Each person has their set of weakness and faults, just like the skills and strengths they possess.

This combination makes humans unique. It is often said that it is far easier to judge than to understand. Be braver than the rest. Judge not others and seek to understand. When you judge others, you're not actually judging them, you're judging yourself. If the Bible teaches us not to judge others, lest we be judged ourselves, then why judge others? It doesn't feel good to judge or to be judged so put an end to it right now, especially during the Lenten Season, let's work on this issue and have a fruitful and blessed Lenten season.

By Arlette Azavedo

Brochures at CCP election

S N D Poojary, Miramar

The Collins English dictionary defines a brochure thus, 'A brochure is a magazine or a thin book with pictures that gives you information about a product or a service.' For a welcome change, the campaign to the election to the Panjim Municipal Corporation has gone high tech. The candidates have meticulously prepared brochures listing their past achievements and future visions.

The brochures have the appearance of high-value business deals: Photos, drawings, CDs, all in colour. They are neat, decorative and impressive. Gone are the days of the black and white cousins! We hope that whichever group wins, its performance would be as impressive as the brochures it has circulated. Of course, these impressive handouts would cost a lot of money, but the election is not the time to count money. Is it?

Tsunami technology?

Gregory Fernandes, Mumbai

Over thousand people were feared dead with many missing in the massive tsunami triggered by the latest Japan's most pow-

erful earthquake. It is a timely reminder that despite the tragedies of the past especially the 2004 disaster, modern technology has not been able to predict the reaction of the oceans in the aftermath, nor track the turbulent waters under the surface.

People living near coastal areas tend to take the tsunami concept as one of those things that rarely happens. Advanced nations, including India, have done little to further their research and create a system that offers enough advance warning of the lurking dangers. Japan's experience has shown that even with preparation, loss to life and property is inevitable.

Bardez Mamlatdar's office

Francis Rodrigues, Aldona

I had the misfortune of going to the Bardez Mamlatdar office in Mapusa of late. I had been warned prior by my lawyers that the Mamlatdar allegedly delays the clearance files, and makes the common man to run from pillar to post. He is hardly available. But if you are ready to shell out money (there are fixed rates for every work), then your work is done at an astonishing speed. Recently, the advocates in South Goa

Letter of the Day

Vouching for a better Goa

Freddy Agnelo Fernandes, Dubai

Ervell Menezes has, indeed, depicted Goa, the sleaze and destruction encumbered Goa, along with the apathy of Goans for quality governance, in a nut shell in the Opinion column of *Herald* dated 10 March 2011.

A lot of people will say – we have heard it all before and seen it all too, but can we change it? Or who will change it?

In this context, we need to support the GRA on 15 March for a change in Goa. Yes, they could be the ones to bring about the change, so let's give them a chance.

joined hands and demanded from the au-

thorities that mamlatdars should be taken to task if files are not cleared within a certain time frame. Why don't the lawyers of Bardez learn from their southern counterparts and do likewise?

Deussua lake

Diogo Furtado, Chinchinim

It was a dream of late Emanuel Rebello to beautify the lake 13 years ago. It is after long 13 years that our Deussua lake is seeing the fruits of our efforts. Our MLA Philip Neri Rodrigues and also the President of Commumidade of Deussua, Carmelito Ferrao, should be congratulated for the efforts taken to do this work. I am sure the work will be completed before the onset of monsoons.

Incorrect attitude

Ashley Vales, Alto-Dabolim

Last Sunday I happened to take my son to a drawing competition organised by Vasco carnival committee. Among the participants in the sub junior category were two siblings, a girl and her brother younger to her. The girl seemed to be a fairly good artist and finished her drawing within a short time and then began helping her brother complete his. All this happened with the encouragement of their parents who were standing close by and "cheering" the daughter.

I began to wonder what were the parents trying to inculcate in the young minds? Knowingly or unknowingly they were trying to get their child to the top. But, at what

cost? But with this type of attitude amongst some parents how can we expect children to be respectable citizens of society?

Full-day school timings

S Kamat, Alto-Betim

This is with regard to the plan for full day school and the timings thereof. It is understood that the Education Dept has proposed it from 10am to 5pm which is incorrect since it will clash with office timings. This will create a nuisance for traffic near some of the big schools, resulting in more traffic jams than usual.

Schools should start as per the current timings, i.e., till 3:30 or 4pm. Further, our education administrators and teachers should be aware that all over India, schools and offices have staggered timings. This should be the case in Goa too.

CCP elections: Vote count

J M de Almeida, Panjim

The Goa police seems to have lost confidence in the maintenance of law and order, and have asked the State Election Commissioner to postpone the counting of votes on the same day the elections are held. The reasons given by the police are not at all convincing. Actually, the whole exercise would have got over within an hour.

Forex machines!

James Moraes, Cuncoim

Indian seafarers are similar to a foreign ex-

change producing machine to the government of India. Indian seafarers are sufferers in all ways, the pirates capture them to obtain ransom amounts, the bureaucrats use their finances to make investments at their ease.

The government of India along with corrupt politicians keeps no proper check and allows licensing of fake placement companies. Now their woes will be added in the form of the direct tax code, which will squeeze them of their hard earned money.

Fool-proof promises

Marcos Alemao by email

The status of Kamat's tall promise on education park (*Herald*, 11 March) is the fool-proof testimony of the Congress government in Goa. In laying foundation stones, they have spent lakhs of rupees and have looted government treasury.

As the election are fast approaching, the Kamat government has already started to fool the voters with empty promises. Kamat and his cabinet ministers have converted the Carnival Parade at Fatorda ground into a political meeting with all the same old promises. Instead of celebrating carnival, they canvassed for votes at the Fatorda constituency. The issue of seafarers woes has also come up after long five years to raise the monthly pension from Rs200 to Rs1500. These are nothing but empty promises to win the elections and nothing else.

Reconcile during Lent

Cajetan Peter D'Souza, Mumbai

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent invites us to surrender ourselves to God and to reconcile in his love.

Our penance should be to reach out to people and touch their lives by regularly visiting the sick and the disabled. Let us abstain from speaking rudely to people and avoid abusive language. This Lent, let us first reconcile with ourselves, and ask for God's pardon.

Influence plays key role

Efgenio Dias, Colva

At present, the situation is worsening, day

by day, and the government staff is taking advantage and is harassing the affected public. Most of the government offices and staff are controlled by politicians and their henchmen, which jeopardises the normal functioning of public offices. It is very difficult to get justice without political or other influence, including corruption. The public has lost faith in the administration section or other government departments. If some affected persons approach higher authorities, they also do not show any concern. The progress of Goa, as well as those of individuals, is very much affected.

Assembly elections

Newton Mendonca, Aldona

Time is approaching for another assembly election. There will be poaching of votes using money power. Goans are disgusted with the sorry state of affairs.

I, therefore, feel that we must seek President's rule in Goa at least for 5 years, with greater participation of the public. The choice for a Governor's post should rest with someone of the stature of Dr Kiran Bedi, Julio Ribeiro or anyone else. But do Goans at all want a true change?

Sheher Sabha for Panjimites

Bevinda Collaco, Panjim

The city and, indeed, all municipalities in Goa, should have something akin to a gram sabha. Maybe a Sheher Sabha would do fine, where every alternate Sunday, citizens meet with all the elected representatives to review decisions and make new ones. Voting on issues could also take place. If there is no space within the CCP premises, the Panjim garden is ideal for the purpose.

This will keep the council on its toes, and will make their politician bosses think twice before filling his pocket with our money. Most importantly, it will give the residents an opportunity to lend their expertise to the city's betterment and people. The Sheher Sabha could be held along with a cultural programme to boot. Upcoming dramatic and musical talent can find encouragement and recognition here. This is a participatory process that would work.