

Indigenous innovation ignored?

Wednesday's train mishap at Mathura, when the Goa Sampark Kranti Express rammed into the stationary Mewar Express, killed 23 passengers and left as many wounded, could have been avoided, says former Konkarn Railway Managing Director S Rajaram. In fact, he says, most train accidents (the Indian Railways has at least a dozen or more a year) can be averted. The problem is that red tape in the Railway Board has deliberately sabotaged the implementation of a successfully tested anti-collision device (ACD) designed by the former Konkarn Railway chief and validated over 10 years ago, during his tenure with the Konkarn Railways. He has since retired.

Mr Rajaram has no personal interest in the device, except that he pioneered its development while he was still the head of the Konkarn Railway Corporation, which now holds the entire intellectual property rights for the device. However, he is deeply pained that full implementation of the indigenous ACD project has been deliberately held back. He says this has been done to benefit foreign companies that want to sell their own accident prevention systems to the Railways, at much higher prices.

The former MD has alleged that some people in the Railway Board and in the Railways Ministry seem to be anxious to help foreign companies. As a result, even though installation of the devices, after due testing and validation, has been already sanctioned in three Zonal Railways, the decision is yet to be implemented, even though the Railways itself, as well as the travelling passengers, suffer huge losses each year on account of accidents that are entirely preventable.

The only Railway that has installed the indigenous ACD, predictably, is the Konkarn Railway. Mr Rajaram says it is working with 99.9 per cent efficiency. The device has been certified to be of international standards by the Lucknow-based Research Design and Standards Organisation, as also by Lloyds of the UK. Had it been fitted on railway engines, it would have saved hundreds of lives over the past 10 years. In fact, in 2004, the Railway Board testified that it was an efficient system before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, and said it would be implemented in other parts of the country.

But, as in so many things, kickbacks are often more important to certain bureaucrats than public property or even people's lives. Though he has consciously refrained from raising this point, Mr Rajaram's letter to Railways Minister Mamata Bannerjee complains that big multinational corporations (MNCs) feel threatened by the Konkarn Railway ACD, which is more accurate than their systems, and are using their "friends" in the Railways Ministry to put roadblocks in its implementation.

He says that in 2007, the Railways announced a pilot project to fit ACDs on train engines on the rugged and remote 1736-km Northeast Frontier Railway, which he alleges was deliberately chosen to prove that the technology would not work in adverse conditions. But, against all odds, it passed the test with flying colours. Even after this, he laments, efforts are on to rope in the MNCs, in the name of 'competition'.

It's not just this device. During Mr Rajaram's tenure, the Konkarn Railway had developed an efficient but extremely low-cost technology called the 'Raksha Dhaga', to warn trains in advance about landslides along the route during the monsoon. But once he retired, the system was abandoned. Even the Sky Bus project is unable to take off, merely because the Railway Safety Board is refusing to certify it, saying that since it is not strictly a 'railway' (which it is, actually), it is outside its jurisdiction. When will we learn to value indigenous innovation?

Ms Banerjee had herself travelled in an engine fitted with the prototype of the ACD in Goa in 1999, during her first stint as Railways Minister. She was so impressed that she approved its implementation in the Konkarn Railway in January 2000, ignoring objections by the Railway Board. Hopefully, she will now set things right and prevent more accidents.

Goa Jesuits: 250 Years Ago and Since

The Society of Jesus has helped many in India face the oppressions and challenges of history, says TEOTONIO R DE SOUZA

The Jesuits made their maiden entry in Goa on 6 May 1542 with Francis Xavier as their high-profile representative. Since then, hundreds and thousands of Jesuits arrived in Goa or passed through Goa on their way to other missionary regions of their activity in Asia and East Africa. In 1967 the late Swiss-born Jesuit historian Josef Wicki published a list of all the *Jesuiten Indienfahrer* during the period 1541-1758, which gives an average of 10 to 15 per year. Quite often the great majority of the Jesuits were non-Portuguese, such as Italians, Spanish, Flemish, Germans and even Croatians. In 1583, for instance, there was only one Portuguese among the India-bound Jesuits.

In 1759, or 250 years ago, Jesuits from different houses in Old Goa and Salcete were rounded up on the night of 26th and dawn of 27th September and detained at their new St Paul's, in the vicinity of the present-day ruins of St Augustine. They were permitted to celebrate mass in groups of seven, and were escorted by troops at all times. However, despite all official pressures, at least 60 Jesuits remained in the regions outside Portuguese control. In Kanara missions, the native rulers of Kittur, Sunda, Raichur and Mysore refused to hand them over. Also, the Jesuit bishops in Cochín and Granganore refused to obey orders to leave their jurisdiction by appealing to urgent needs of their subjects. There were also some in Madural mission.

Since the great concentration of the Jesuits was in Salcete, which was their privileged turf from the very start, 25 of them were rounded up from different parishes and locked up at Rachol seminary along with the other regular inmates, before being transferred to the new St Paul's at Old Goa. They were huddled on its third floor under the supervision of Franciscans, while some were transferred to houses of other religious orders, like the Dominicans and the Augustinians. They were not allowed to say goodbye to St Francis Xavier as they wished, and on 19 December 1760 (just around the other fateful date two centuries later) were placed on two ships bound for Lisbon with hardly sufficient space to receive 127 Jesuits. Only 103 arrived alive in Lisbon on May 20, 1761. Of these some foreigners were expelled, while most spent 16 years in the dungeons in Portugal.

Following the Portuguese initiative, the Society of Jesus was banned by other Bourbon monarchs in Europe, but it survived in Russian where Catherine



HISTORICAL EXPLORATIONS

the Great refused to apply the Papal Bull of suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. Interestingly, it would be from Russia that the Society of Jesus would return when Pope Pius VII decided to restore the Society of Jesus as part of the process initiated by the Congress of Vienna, seeking to undo the changes effected by the French Revolution and Napoleon.

Following the restoration of the Society of Jesus in France in 1815, the French Jesuits were the first to return to India in 1838 and Pope Gregory XVI entrusted to them the former Jesuit Madural Mission. Among them was a Goan Jesuit, António Pereira, who may be considered the second native Goan Jesuit ever since Andre Vaz, in the early days of the Society of Jesus in India. While other white religious orders had admitted some natives into their ranks, the Jesuits did not, excepting the aforementioned Andre Vaz, till the suppression of the Order. We could conclude that during the first 250 years there were really no Goan Jesuits, but only Jesuits in Goa.

Just at the time when the Society was being restored, Portugal saw the rise of liberal politics, which extended the hostility against the Jesuits to all religious orders which were formally banned in

Portuguese territories in 1832-34. The Portuguese Jesuits had to go into exile and in India they operated from mission bases in Belgium, and from Allepey and Kotagiri in the South. This situation continued under the Portuguese republican regime and was mitigated only after Salazar's coming to power in 1926.

It took nearly 200 years for the Jesuits to return to Goa after the suppression. They did it from their outpost in Belgium. St Paul's in Belgium was frequented by Goans seeking job opportunities and English education, and became the main operational and early recruitment base for the Jesuit return to Goa. The candidates were sent for formation to Allepey and to Kurseong. Interesting bits of information can be drawn from the newsletter entitled *Ecos da Província de Portugal* that coordinated the news of the Portuguese Jesuits in exile and was published from Tuy, on the border between Portugal and Spain.

While the pre-suppression Jesuits were loyal (though the loyalty of the non-Portuguese Jesuits was at times doubted) to the Portuguese Padroado, the post-restoration Jesuits were loyal to Propaganda Fide, and became a thorn in the flesh

of the shrinking Padroado. However, despite this conflict the Portuguese Jesuits continued in touch with the Portuguese bishops in the Padroado dioceses, including those of Goa, Meliapore, Granganore and Kochi. It would be the Bishop of Meliapore, D Teotónio Vieira de Castro, when appointed archbishop-patriarch of Goa, who invited Pe António Bernardo Gonçalves to be spiritual father of the Rachol Seminary in 1931, to fill in the vacuum left by the saintly Fr Agnelo de Sousa.

It served as a starting point for the creation of the Goa Section of the Jesuit Province of Portugal in 1934, and Fr Gonçalves was named its Delegate, a post he retained till 1953. Fr Gonçalves used well his base at Rachol Seminary to recruit many of his first Goan candidates for the Society of Jesus.

Some of his recruits are still active or alive in Goa-Pune region, while others I have known personally and remember fondly during my own 25 years in the Society of Jesus include António Cruz, Massillon Fernandes, Carlos Andrade, Peter de Sá, Carlos de Melo (later Delegate of the Goa Section), Mário Santa Rita Vaz, Mário Meireles, António Pereira, Lino de Sousa, Arnaldo Pinto, Edwin de Souza, João da Veiga Coutinho (author of *A Kind of Absence*), Vasco do Rego and Brother Cana.

In 1931 Archbishop-Patriarch D Theotónio Manuel Vieira de Castro had bought the Union School in Margão and renamed it St Theotónio Union High School. In February 1944 the Archbishop-Patriarch D José da Costa Nunes handed it over to the Jesuits and it took its actual name of Loyola High School.

In 1956 the Jesuits were invited to return to Bom Jesus, and Fr Walter Mathias occupied the room left vacant by Canon John Rebelo. Fr Emanuel Pires, SJ, was already serving as military chaplain in Old Goa and kept him company. The rest is more recent history for which one could find useful inputs in the *Goa Section: A Jesuit News Bulletin*, first published in April 1956.

I shall conclude with my own remarks elsewhere and which Fr John Correia-Afonso, SJ, saw fit to make his own in his farewell book on *The Jesuits in India* (1997): "Whatever may have been the compulsions of history, the Society of Jesus has played a prominent role in helping many in India, as elsewhere, to rise and face more adequately the oppressions and challenges of history, through their pastoral and educational activities."

Tongue in Cheek

Recently Goa won the Best Small State award for citizens' security at the IBN Diamond State Award presentation ceremony, organised by IBN7- Outlook. Ironically, this award has come at a time when the state has seen a spate of robberies. Houses in Benaolim, Nuvem, Colva and Margao have been burgled. The worst-hit were the jewellery shops in the commercial capital. A jeweller was even waylaid and robbed of valuables and cash. Then there was the bomb blast in Margao which, because of divine intervention, did not end in a major cataclysm, though it had the potential of causing damage of catastrophic proportions.

As a matter of fact, it was reported that Goa won six of the eight awards up for grabs. These included awards in the category of health care and environment among others. It was reported that at Cansaulim patients were advised not to stay in the hospital at night because the toilets were not functioning. As regards the environment, the Goa Government seems unable to find a solution to the garbage problem which is raising a stink.

This brings us to a very important question. How did Goa get these awards? Well, my guess is as good as yours. This was probably possible because there was absolutely no competition in the small state category. By the way, how many states fall in this bracket? Was Goa the only state in this category? Probably.

Award Mania

Be that as it may, Goa should not lose heart, given that an international figure also got an award which many felt was one award too big, too early. US President Barack Hussein Obama won the Nobel Prize for Peace for the year 2009. This startled not only the world but Obama himself.

But there is a positive side to winning awards you do not deserve. The award lays down a standard which the recipient will be forced to live up to. So the Goa Government will have to pull up its socks as far as citizens' security, health care, environment, etc, is concerned. Whether those in power will do it is the multi-billion-rupee question.

Awards are always welcome. An award could be in cash or by way of a trophy. This is invariably accompanied by a certificate. Many may consider a certificate more important than the award itself. Armed with a certificate of excellence, it always easier to get that prestigious job placement. We have been receiving awards right from our school days, be it in academics or sports. It is a prestigious thing to win an award. Many homes display the awards their children have won in the showcase in the living room. Awards are not meant to be kept hidden. There are meant for people to see. The print and the electronic media has joined in the bandwagon by announcing awards in various fields. We have

awards in the field of entertainment, science and technology, and business among others.

But then, like everything else in life, there is a darker side to awards. Choosing a deserving candidate can be very tricky. Several factors could have an influence while choosing a candidate. Having godfathers in the right places can help in 'achieving' an award. Money power also plays an important role. It could be said that some awards come with a price tag. In such a situation, undeserving candidates hog the limelight, while deserving candidates are left to lick their wounds.

Here are some awards which the state of Goa would well deserve: 1. An award for the politically most unstable state in the country. We have lost count of how many Chief Ministers we have had over the past decade. Politics in our civic bodies is a game of merry-go-round (more the merrier) as there is rotation of chairpersons after every six months. Even then a chairperson could be shown the door even before his six months in office are over. 2. Goa is a deserving candidate for road infrastructure. Our roads can at best be described as more of dirt and less of road. 3. Goa could well get an award for building bridges which do not last for more than a decade. I'd better stop here, as the list seems endless.

Letters to the Editor

Instant justice

Jerry Fernandes, Saligao

It is shocking to see Goa witnessing a spate of murders in recent years committed by young misguided youth who do not like hard work and want to become rich instantly. They fail to understand the consequences of their evil designs. Innocent lives are taken for momentary gain, putting the families of the deceased in dire straits.

The guilty should be dealt severely as per law without dragging on the case unnecessarily. We should take the example of Arab countries where justice is given instantly and there is fear in the minds of people even to think of committing such acts. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Parents need to keep a watchful eye on their children and their children's friends.

Otherwise, Goa will witness more turbulent days in the near future. I would advise the ladies not to accept lifts from strangers, even if there are ladies sitting in the vehicles.

Get rid of casinos

S Kamat, Alto Betim

The suspicion that most Goans had with regard to the casinos being only an invitation to prostitution, crime and drugs was proven when a senior official of the Mint casino was reportedly caught with a woman at a Dona Paula hotel in not very moral circumstances.

No amount of condemnation of the above incident by the casino association in Goa or denial by the employees who work on board these casinos can hide the truth. Our decision to allow casinos could be for minor reasons like employment and the revenue that they bring to the government. But if they continue, society may be progressively criminalised. The existence of casinos will entrap our youth in the web of sex, crime and drugs and more Goan ladies will be attacked by visitors.

We should continue with the protests to remove casinos from Goa to put an end to this menace.

Government job scam?

Reuben Sequeira, Chicalim

The delay in recruiting 52 Grade I teachers on the recommendations of the Goa Public Service Commission (GPSQ) has left the students in a lurch, as correct procedures were not followed for selection. 50% of the candidates were selected through promotion of assistant teachers and the rest by fresh appointments. The government's recommendation of having no subject-wise seniority lists makes it difficult to promote an eligible candidate in the first place.

The government needs to issue appointment letters to the selected candidates immediately so as to reassure Goenkar that the education sector is corruption-free. Amendments should also be made to ensure that appointments to Grade I are based on promotions. Let us show our solidarity to our eminently qualified teachers on a hunger strike, as a mark of respect to this noble

Letter of the Day

BJP lotus wilting

Sandeep Heble, Taleigao

The Bharatiya Janata Party, the nation's principal opposition party, had yet another setback after it suffered a miserable defeat in all three states that went to the polls recently. The Congress, despite its shoddy governance, won. So what exactly went wrong for the BJP? Why is the BJP lotus wilting?

The writing was clear on the wall during the last parliamentary elections when the BJP plummeted to its worst tally since its meteoric rise about a decade back, but the bigwigs in the Party just refused to read the writing on the wall. While the BJP moved from one crisis to another, Advani, the 'Bhishma Pitamah' of the party, continued to stay stuck to his throne, unwilling to resign on moral considerations.

Today, there is a huge disconnect between the youth and the BJP. Searching for young faces in the BJP who can capture the imagination of the youth is akin to searching for a needle in a haystack. The Congress has Rahul and Priyanka, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Sachin Pilot, Milind Deora, and so many others who are suave, dynamic, articulate and intelligent, and whom the youth can look up to. Who does the BJP have? Rahul Mahajan and Varun Gandhi? Yikes!

While the world is surging ahead at a rapid pace, the BJP is still caught in its Hindutva ideology, an ideology that wishes to drag India back into the dark ages. For the party, Hindutva is not about opening the temple doors to the backward castes, it is not about eliminating the caste divisions in the society, it is not about giving pride of place to women in our society. Hindutva to the BJP is all about banning films and books, smashing and vandalizing art galleries, driving artists like Hussain into exile, banning supposedly vulgar forms of music, oppressing minorities and their cultural practices, and acting like moral policemen on anything and everything under the sun.

The choice before the party is pretty clear. Either it can grow by re-inventing itself on modern secular liberal principles or it must perish. There is no third alternative.

profession.

Goa, we cry!

Edgar Martins, Chinchinim

There were no crimes, murders, rapes and bombs, corruption and religious issues in Goa during Portuguese rule and after liberation under the rule of Dayanand Bhandarkar. One wonders as to what the current ruling and opposition parties are doing, when we see these things in Goa on a massive scale. Instead of garbage disposal plants, we see IFFI. A new airport is proposed instead of starting some factories to gainfully employ Goans. Good jobs are meant not for the sons of the soil but for outsiders. Instead of looking into the problem of potholes on roads, they want to im-

pose high security number plates.

The prime intention of the ministers is to make money without bothering about the development of Goans. They are only concerned about the betterment of their own families.

Love thy neighbour

Willie Severes, Majorda

This is with reference to Joao Jose Fernandes's letter titled 'We need the land' (*Herald*, 19 Oct). When the Catholic community has the benefit of a cemetery in each village, they should not object to the building of a *kabrastan* for Muslims. Muslims should not be denied their constitutional rights.

We have been repeatedly told in the Bible

to love our neighbours. Jesus Christ never taught us to discriminate. Goan Christians need to take the teachings of our Lord seriously.

Relief ruckus

Stephen Dias, Dona Paula

The widespread misappropriation of government funds for the flood relief beneficiaries of Canacona was seen when the nodal officer N D Agarwal opened a Pandora's box and expressed the need for a resurvey of the flood-relief claims.

Our politicians comes forward for such relief operations primarily for their own interests or to use a part of these funds for their selfish motives. The Chief Minister needs to devise a foolproof system so that any form of assistance reaches the affected people in time.

Sombre scenario

Newton Mendonca, Aldona

The recent floods as well as the infamous bomb blast which shook Goa have created a very sombre situation.

The catastrophic floods had little to do with any human mischief. But the bomb blast has clearly established that even Goans are fed up with each other. We see this from the unhealthy cut-throat competition right from a young age, which is setting bad precedent among the youth by causing rivalry which easily festers into hatred. Our culture was 'susegad', but did any of us, Hindus, Christians, or Muslims, lack anything?

The bonds of friendship and harmony need to be revived if we are going to once again thrive in our land. Otherwise there is always disaster waiting at our doorstep.

Portuguese IDs

Agnelo Jose Tomas Baracho, Kuwait

During my recent vacations in Goa in late September 2009, I was given to understand that the Portuguese Consulate had processed a large number of Goan applicants for the Portuguese ID. But is it legal to have such an ID when I hold an Indian passport?

Paths of Wisdom



The Mystic

Angels have talked with him, and showed him thrones:

Ye knew him not; he was not one of ye,
Ye scorned him with an undiscerning scorn:
Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,
The still serene abstraction: he hath felt
The vanities of after and before;
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
The stern experiences of converse lives,
The linked woes of many a fiery change
Had purified, and chastened, and made free. . .

For him the silent congregated hours,
Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath
Severe and youthful brows, with shining eyes

Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light
Of earliest youth pierced through and through
with all
Keen knowledges of low-embowed eld)
Upheld, and ever low aloft the cloud
Which droops low-hung on either gate of life,

Both birth and death: he in the centre fixt,
Saw far on each side through the grated gates

Most pale and clear and lovely distances.
He often lying broad awake, and yet
Remaining from the body, and apart
In intellect and power and will, hath heard
Time flowing in the middle of the night,
And all things creeping to a day of doom.
How could ye know him? Ye were yet with-

in
The narrower circle: he had wellnigh reached

The last, which with a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

(Alfred, Lord Tennyson)