

Mhadei Dispute: Goa's Mishandling Leaves State's Interests in Jeopardy

By **Satyavatinandan Satrekar**

The Mhadei matter pertaining to the damming and diversion of the Kalasa-Bhandura tributaries has been pending for a long time before the Supreme Court. The Goa government has, time and again, failed to protect the interests of the State in this crucial inter-state river water dispute. The casual and improper handling of the issue has caused irreparable damage to Goa's rights and to the livelihoods of people who depend on its rivers.

Despite being fully aware of the sensitivity and legal intricacies involved in the Mhadei inter-state river dispute, the Government chose to appoint senior counsels from Mumbai who, unfortunately, lacked both domain expertise in water laws and the necessary influence before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. When there exists a pool of highly experienced senior advocates in Delhi,

with proven records in handling such cases and an established rapport with the judiciary, why did the Government not appoint them?

These counsels have failed even to get the matter listed for a final hearing, which has now been pending for the last five years. This inaction has given the neighbouring State a free hand to push ahead with the illegal diversion of water through the Kalasa-Bhandura projects. Karnataka has continued these works in violation of both the Tribunal's awards and the Supreme Court's orders, without obtaining approvals from the Central Government authorities.

Even more shocking is the fact that the illegal diversion of the Kalasa Nallah waters to the Malaprabha river has continued uninterrupted since 2018. Yet, our legal team has not succeeded in securing even a stay from the Hon'ble Supreme Court, despite filing two contempt petitions.

On the other hand, the Government continues to spend crores on technical consultants from outside the State. With inexperienced officers now in place, how can we expect these consultants to provide sound and practical advice? No sincere effort has been made by the Chief Engineer and the Secretary (Water Resources) to look into the Kalasa-Bhandura matter with seriousness. They have failed to ensure continuity and proper representation of Goa's case before the concerned authorities and the court.

As the matter remains unheard, Karnataka is expected to follow the same strategy that proved successful in initiating the Kalasa project while undertaking and completing the work of the Bhandura. The continued neglect by Goa's authorities risks allowing Karnataka to advance unchecked, undermining Goa's long-standing fight to protect the Mhadei and the livelihoods that depend upon it.

Main Points

1 Case Pending Before Supreme Court

• The Mhadei matter concerning the Kalasa-Bhandura diversion has been pending for years without a hearing in the Supreme Court.

2 Government's Failure to Protect Goa's Interests

• The Goa government has repeatedly failed to safeguard the State's rights in this inter-state water dispute, causing lasting harm to Goa's interests and the livelihoods of its people.

3 Questionable Appointment of Legal Counsel

• Despite the availability of experienced Delhi-based senior advocates specializing in water laws, the government appointed Mumbai counsels who lacked domain knowledge and influence before the Supreme Court.

4 Five Years Without Progress

• The appointed counsels have failed even to get the matter listed for a final hearing, leading to prolonged inaction.

5 Karnataka's Continued Illegal Diversion

• Karnataka has freely continued illegal diversion of Kalasa-Bhandura waters into the Malaprabha river since 2018, in

violation of Tribunal awards and Supreme Court directions.

6 Failure to Secure Stay Orders

• Despite two contempt petitions, Goa's legal team has not managed to obtain a stay order from the Supreme Court.

7 Misuse of Funds and Poor Technical Advice

• The government has spent crores on external consultants, while inexperienced officers in key posts have failed to ensure proper technical or legal representation.

8 Neglect by Key Officials

• The Chief Engineer and Secretary (Water Resources) have shown a lack of initiative, sincerity, and continuity in pursuing the Mhadei case.

9 Karnataka Set to Replicate Strategy

• With the matter still unheard, Karnataka is likely to replicate the same strategy that succeeded in the Kalasa project for completing the Bhandura works.

10 Goa's Position Growing Weaker

• Continued administrative apathy and legal mismanagement threaten Goa's control over the Mhadei and endanger the river-dependent communities.

Kejriwal vs BJP: Goa's Law and Order Under Fire

Team Goemkarponn

Goa has long enjoyed a reputation as one of India's most peaceful and laid-back states. But in recent weeks, a string of violent crimes has rattled that image — and triggered a fierce political showdown between Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind

Kejriwal and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government. Kejriwal, known for his sharp attacks on governance failures, took to social media to lash out at the Pramod Sawant-led government, claiming that "law and order has completely collapsed" in Goa. His remarks came

after a series of high-profile incidents — from a murder in Saligao to a killing over hill-cutting — that have raised questions about the state's internal security. "Murders, shootings, daylight robberies — what is happening in Goa?" Kejriwal asked in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

"This is a total collapse of law and order under the BJP."

The outburst wasn't just another political jibe. It tapped into growing unease among Goans over rising crime and the sense that the police force has lost control. Over the past month, Goa has reported multiple

cases of assault, land-related violence, and even shootings connected to illegal sand extraction. For a state that thrives on tourism and prides itself on safety, such headlines have stung deeply. Kejriwal's intervention is also politically timed. The Aam Aadmi Party has been steadily trying

Kejriwal Tweets...

"Murders, shootings, daylight robberies — what is happening in Goa?" Kejriwal asked in a post on X (formerly Twitter). "This is a total collapse of law and order under the BJP."

to strengthen its base in Goa since 2017, projecting itself as a clean alternative to both the BJP and the Congress. By targeting the government's handling of law and order, Kejriwal has found an emotive issue that resonates with both locals and the large

► CONTD TO PAGE 04..

Sunday Thought

The Weight of a Word:
Why Manoj Parab's Use of
"Ghanti" Misses the Mark

By Suraj Nandrekar

The word "ghanti," used by Manoj Parab of the Revolutionary Goans Party, has stirred debate in Goa's public sphere. It is not just a matter of language; it is a reflection of how identity and politics intertwine in a society already struggling with tensions over belonging and change. When a public figure employs a term that carries historical baggage, it cannot be dismissed as casual talk. Words used in politics echo loudly, shaping perception and public sentiment long after they are spoken.

In Goa, "ghanti" or "ghati" has often been used to describe non-Goans, particularly those from neighbouring states like Maharashtra or Karnataka. For many, it is a word loaded with contempt. It creates a mental wall between "us" and "them," locals and outsiders. Parab's insistence that the word reflects a common way of speaking, or that it was born out of public frustration, does little to make it acceptable. The intent behind it matters less than its effect. Once spoken by a leader, such language legitimises prejudice.

Goa's social fabric has always been delicate. The state's prosperity depends heavily on tourism, migrant labour, and trade. Its demography has changed quickly, sparking local fears of cultural dilution, rising prices, and loss of land. These are genuine concerns, but when a politician frames them through words like "ghanti," the conversation moves from policy to blame. It replaces complex discussions about regulation, planning, and fairness with an emotional narrative that divides people into insiders and outsiders.

The justification that crime or lawlessness among outsiders led to the term's use is flawed and troubling. Crime has no regional or linguistic identity. It emerges from social and economic conditions that affect everyone, local or migrant. Linking criminality to origin turns governance failure into a cultural argument. It may win

applause from frustrated citizens, but it poisons the public mind. It tells Goans that the problem is "them," not ineffective policing or poor policy enforcement. That kind of thinking is politically convenient, not socially responsible.

For a state that has always prided itself on being open and multicultural, such rhetoric is corrosive. Goa's strength lies in its ability to absorb, adapt, and remain distinctive while being welcoming. When leaders invoke divisive language, they chip away at that identity. Once the political tone turns exclusionary, it filters down into everyday life. People begin to see difference first, humanity later. Over time, what begins as political theatre becomes social hostility.

Protecting Goan identity is not a wrong cause. It is, in fact, a necessary one. But it must be done with thought and vision, not by turning outsiders into villains. Goa needs better regulation of land use, stronger protection of employment rights, and policies that benefit residents without alienating others. Building walls of resentment will not preserve Goan culture; addressing the root causes of displacement and inequality will.

Manoj Parab's use of "ghanti" shows how easily words can turn from symbols of frustration into tools of division. He may claim to speak for Goans, but in doing so, he risks reducing Goan identity to a reaction against others rather than a celebration of itself. That is not leadership—it is a retreat into easy populism. Goa deserves leaders who can speak firmly about its problems without resorting to language that wounds.

In the end, the word "ghanti" is not just a slang term; it is a mirror reflecting what kind of politics Goa wants. If the aim is to protect the Goan way of life, then the fight must be for fairness, not against fellow Indians. Words matter, especially when spoken by those who seek to lead. Parab's choice of this word may rally some, but it divides more. Goa's politics—and its people—deserve better.

Masterstroke

Passing the Buck Won't
Make Goa Safer

By Irfan Iqbal Gheta

We are in 2025. Back in 2012, for the first time, the BJP could form the government in Goa. Ever since, the party has remained in power. The double-engine sarkar is busy working for the development of Goa. The prosperity of every Goemkar is the government's credo.

However, as they say, everything is fair in love and war. Everything is fair in politics, especially when elections are around the corner.

The rising crime graph has been the incumbent government's Achilles heel. The spin doctors have so far struggled to craft a credible narrative to explain away the trend of unexpected crimes that are shocking in nature, to say the least.

Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant has often tried to deflect the question by terming unchecked migration as the root cause of crimes across Goa. In other words, migrants are responsible for the crimes. In the same breath, he has also been generous in showering praise upon the police department for solving cases with speed and professional efficiency.

However, the ruling party's state president, Shri Damu Bab, went one step further and laid the blame for the current state of affairs at the door of the grand old party that has been out of power for over a decade now.

In the backdrop of the recent incidents of public LED screens going kaput by displaying a slogan amounting to treason, Shri Damu Bab floated a simple theory. Whatever is happening today, he claimed, is the result of the seeds sown decades ago when the then party in power encouraged certain elements.

He further elaborated by giving a clean chit to the Sawant-led government for its zero tolerance towards any crime and its record-breaking speed in solving cases. The moment the clip of Shri Damu Bab

blaming Congress for Goa's rising crime graph went out, the spokespersons of the grand old party were at pains to highlight the failures of the incumbent government to control the law and order situation across Goa.

But it no longer matters. The damage is done. The perception likely to gain ground is that the ruling party is busy undoing the mistakes its predecessors committed. Once everything is undone, the law and order situation will dramatically improve, and every Goemkar will be safe, happy, and proud.

Can this backfire? Chances are slim. But what if the strategy of blaming previous governments finds no takers? Goemkars are smart. They can see through certain gimmicks if not all.

They have realised that everyone — from vocal activists to tourists to senior residents — is bearing the brunt of the fury of anti-social elements. It is the incumbent government's duty to show these musclemen who the real boss is. Only this will restore faith and give Goemkars a sigh of relief. It is high time that the Home Minister, Dr. Pramod Sawant, gives a carte blanche to the police force to smoke out all the troublemakers while asking ganglords to leave Goa within 24 hours or face the music. The clock is ticking. Time is running out. Sometimes action must speak louder than words. Isn't it time to restore peace in Goa — our original paradise on earth?



“BJP’s Decisions Are Based on Merit, Not Family Legacy”: Narendra Sawaikar

Former South Goa MP speaks on NRI issues, brain drain, and the road to 2027

Suraj Nandrekar: Mr. Sawaikar, we’ve seen several cases recently where Indians abroad, including Goans, have been detained, even handcuffed, and deported. As the NRI Commissioner of Goa, what role have you played in such cases?

Narendra Sawaikar: Yes, we have encountered such incidents. The NRI Commission functions as a bridge between Goans living abroad and the government back home. Many Goans have been living outside the country for 20, 25, or even 30 years. Some go abroad for employment or studies, while others have settled permanently. When they face legal or administrative difficulties—whether related to employment, property disputes, or immigration issues—the Commission steps in to assist.

We coordinate closely with Indian embassies and local authorities in those countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many Goan seafarers were stranded across the world. The Commission, through the Indian embassies, ensured they were safely repatriated. Similarly, during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, nearly two dozen Goan students were stuck in the region. We immediately established contact with their families and the embassies concerned, providing support until all were safely evacuated.

When it comes to deportation or detention cases, the Commission does not directly interfere with the host country’s laws but acts as a vital facilitator between the families, the Ministry of External Affairs, and Indian missions abroad. If a Goan is detained due to issues such as passport expiry or visa irregularities, we intervene through diplomatic channels to ensure due

In this edition of Just Casual, Editor Suraj Nandrekar engages in a candid conversation with Narendra Sawaikar, former BJP MP from South Goa and the current NRI Commissioner of Goa. Sawaikar opens up about the challenges faced by Goans abroad, the Commission’s growing role in supporting the Goan diaspora, and the issues surrounding OCI cards. He also shares his views on dynastic politics, the upcoming Ponda bypolls, and BJP’s approach ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.



process is followed and that they receive necessary assistance.

Suraj Nandrekar: A lot of Goans are moving abroad or to Indian metros like Bengaluru and Hyderabad for employment, especially in IT and hospitality. Many call it brain drain. Can anything be done to curb this trend?

Narendra Sawaikar: I wouldn’t call it brain drain. It’s more about exploring opportunities. Goans have always been enterprising and adventurous. Historically, they have gone to Africa, the Middle East, or even Europe for work. Today, some of our youth work in Silicon Valley, while others join cruise liners or multinational companies.

This is not a loss—it’s an expansion of opportunity. However, the government must create an environment in Goa that encourages skilled professionals to return and contribute. We can’t stop people from exploring, but we can provide reasons for them to come back. Strengthening Goa’s employment ecosystem, improving ease of doing business, and boosting sectors like tourism, technology, and shipping are part of the solution.

Suraj Nandrekar: Many Goans abroad are facing issues with their OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) cards. How is the NRI Commission handling this?

Narendra Sawaikar:

Yes, OCI card issues are common—especially with documentation and renewal. The NRI Commission takes up such grievances regularly. We liaise with the Home Ministry and local authorities to resolve them. In many cases, the problems arise because people have been abroad for decades, and their old records or property papers in Goa are not updated.

We work with district administrations, embassies, and ministries to find practical solutions. We also assist families in Goa in understanding procedures and documentation. In the UK, for instance, there were some reports of confusion around OCI card validity, and we reached out through the High Commission and clarified the situation.

Suraj Nandrekar: We often see that on social media, many Non-Resident Goans are quite critical of the government. Does the NRI Commission monitor this?

Narendra Sawaikar:

Social media is a free platform. Everyone has a right to express opinions. The NRI Commission does not monitor or police social media commentary. Our role is purely administrative and supportive—to help Goans abroad with their issues, not to restrict their freedom of expression.

Suraj Nandrekar: Let’s shift to politics. The 2027 elections

are not far away. As a former MP, will you be seeking a ticket for the Assembly elections?

Narendra Sawaikar:

I have always been a loyal party worker. As of now, my focus is on strengthening the organization. The party has well-laid procedures for candidate selection, and decisions are taken collectively, keeping in mind the best interests of the people and the party.

Suraj Nandrekar: The immediate political buzz, though, is about the Ponda by-election following the demise of Ravi Naik. Will the BJP give the ticket to his son or bring in new leadership?

Narendra Sawaikar:

The BJP is confident and organized. The loss of Ravi Naik was unfortunate, and the by-election is a natural consequence. The party will decide on the candidate after thorough internal consultations. BJP’s process is democratic and structured. The decision will be based on merit, performance, and the ability to serve people—not on lineage.

Suraj Nandrekar: Still, the question of dynastic politics keeps returning—be it the Lobos, Monserattes, or Ranes. The BJP rose to power in 2012 promising to end family politics. Isn’t the issue resurfacing within your own party?

Narendra Sawaikar:

Dynastic politics is indeed an issue across Indian politics, but the BJP’s philosophy is fundamentally different. In our party, no one gets a position simply because of their family name. Every leader—whether new or experienced—has to prove their worth at the grassroots.

The BJP’s strength lies in its cadre-based structure. Even if someone from a political family joins us, they are expected to work like any other karyakarta (worker). The ultimate decision rests on performance, not parentage. So while legacy may exist, it is not a guarantee of power.

Suraj Nandrekar: You’ve also been a part of debates surrounding the regularization of unauthorized structures and properties in Goa. Critics call it an election gimmick. What’s your take?

Narendra Sawaikar:

Not at all. This is about justice for ordinary Goans. Many families built houses on inherited land under traditional laws such as the Code of Comunidades or the Land Revenue Code, long before modern planning laws existed. When regulations changed, these structures technically became “unauthorized.”

The government’s regularization scheme is not for outsiders or encroachers—it is for Goans who have lived in these houses

for decades. Earlier, under Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, and later under Laxmikant Parsekar, the framework for regularization was laid. It’s now being implemented to give families legal security and peace of mind.

Opposition parties call it propaganda, but those who know the ground reality understand how important this is for Goan families. It’s about dignity, not politics.

Suraj Nandrekar: Lastly, the “non-Goan” issue is again dominating Goan politics. Some groups say non-Goans are changing Goa’s fabric. What’s the BJP’s stand?

Narendra Sawaikar:

Goa has always been inclusive. People from across India have contributed to its growth. At the same time, the BJP is deeply committed to protecting Goa’s identity and culture.

Yes, anyone can make a demand, but no one can break Goa’s social fabric. The BJP works for the welfare of all Goans—whether resident or non-resident. Every policy we make is guided by what benefits Goa and Goans. We are confident the people understand that divisive politics cannot help the state.

Suraj Nandrekar: Thank you, Mr. Sawaikar, for joining us and for addressing these wide-ranging issues—from NRI matters to politics.

Narendra Sawaikar: Thank you, Suraj. It was a pleasure discussing these important subjects.

Closing Note:

From addressing the Goan diaspora’s challenges to defending the BJP’s merit-based politics, Narendra Sawaikar remains steadfast in his belief that Goa’s progress depends on inclusivity, grounded governance, and honest dialogue—not dynasties or division.

Breathing New Life into Goan Theatre and Cinema

Actor, director, writer, and choreographer — Vishal Gawas's artistic odyssey celebrates the timeless spirit of Goa while pushing its creative boundaries

By Mahima Shetkar

In the vibrant world of Goan arts, few names command as much respect and admiration as Vishal Babli Gawas. A true powerhouse of creativity, Gawas has worn many hats with effortless grace — actor, director, choreographer, and writer — each role contributing to his reputation as one of Goa's most versatile and dedicated cultural figures. His journey is a testament to passion, persistence, and an unwavering commitment to keeping Goan art alive and evolving.

Gawas's artistic roots lie in Tiatr, the traditional Konkani musical theatre that forms the heartbeat of Goan cultural expression. With powerful performances in productions such as *Revolution*, *Godmother*, and *The Lion King*, he has earned recognition for his dynamic stage presence and emotional depth. Over the years, he has acted in more than 30 dramas across Konkani, Marathi, and folk traditions, including

Mama Gelo Tel Lait, *Aute de Fe*, and *Devhara*. His contribution to Folk Drama, especially through large-scale productions like *Lok Vedvani*, which featured over 200 folk artists, has been pivotal in preserving Goa's traditional performance art.

But Gawas's talents go far beyond the stage. His work on television and in cinema has helped bridge the gap between Goa's local theatre culture and the wider regional entertainment industry. He has appeared in Hindi and Marathi serials such as *KHATTA MITHA* on Hungama TV and *RANG MAZA VEGLA* on Star Pravah, displaying his adaptability and range. His film appearances, including the Marathi feature *SAKSHI* and the Konkani film *RAANSAVAT* — which was screened at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) — have further solidified his standing as an artist capable of captivating audiences across mediums.

As a director, Gawas has brought fresh vision and storytelling depth to both stage and screen.



His semi-professional and Tiatr productions, including *Bahu-Bali* and *Teen Ful 1 Half*, have enjoyed widespread success, with some plays running for more than 130 shows across Goa. However, it was his short film *CASA DE SA 373* that marked a significant milestone in

his career. The film won two major awards — Best Short Film (2nd Prize) and Best Director (2nd Prize) — at the IFFI Movie Mania Competition. This feat earned him national recognition and showcased the creative potential of Goan cinema.

Beyond entertainment, Gawas uses his art for

awareness and social impact. His direction of Konkani music videos like *Ami Goenkar* and *Sambal Tu Swatak* brought timely messages about unity and Covid-19 safety, while also highlighting the musical richness of Goan culture.

Equally influential as a writer and choreographer, Gawas

has authored successful Konkani dramas such as *Fatingpana Devjana* and *Mama Gelo Tel Lait*, and penned lyrics for the Marathi musical hit *Sparsh Tuza*. His contribution to choreography has been immense — from leading Goa's Yuva Mohotsav performances for nearly two decades to directing large-scale folk musicals like *Bhangaralem Goem*, which showcased the vibrant spirit of Goan traditions across multiple states.

Whether performing on stage, crafting stories for film, or choreographing grand folk spectacles, Vishal Babli Gawas continues to inspire a new generation of Goan artists. His work represents a bridge between tradition and innovation — a reminder that Goa's artistic heritage is not just to be preserved but to be reimaged for the future. Through every performance, direction, and creative endeavor, Gawas embodies the enduring soul of Goan culture — proud, passionate, and perpetually alive.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Kejriwal vs BJP: Goa's Law and Order Under Fire

migrant community that calls Goa home. Incidents Fueling the Storm
The immediate trigger for Kejriwal's remarks was a series of chilling crimes. In one case, a man was reportedly murdered after objecting to illegal hill-cutting activity in his village. In another, a youth was assaulted inside a police station — an incident that drew outrage for the sheer audacity of violence within a place meant for protection. There was also a shooting linked to the sand-mining mafia, exposing how unregulated activities have bred criminal networks in parts of the

state. Perhaps the most disturbing case came from Saligao, where a man was found murdered, his body lying in a pool of blood. The visuals circulated widely on social media, prompting citizens to question whether Goa's once-calm environment was slipping away. Political Fallout
Kejriwal's attack hit where it hurt most — the BJP's self-image as a party of discipline and governance. The Delhi Chief Minister accused the state leadership of complacency, alleging that the police were under political pressure and unable to act against powerful

interests. For the BJP, the allegations couldn't have come at a worse time. With local elections looming in several constituencies and the 2027 Assembly polls already on the horizon, any perception of administrative failure could prove costly. The opposition — including the Congress and smaller regional outfits — quickly seized on Kejriwal's remarks to amplify their own criticism of the government. A senior BJP leader in Panjim dismissed the allegations as "political drama," insisting that isolated incidents were being exaggerated.

"The Chief Minister has already ordered strict action in each of these cases," the leader said. "Goa remains one of the safest states in India, and those trying to malign its image are doing so for electoral gain." Beyond Politics
Yet behind the political sparring lies a deeper issue — a growing disconnect between the people and the state's policing system. Many residents complain that the police response has become sluggish and reactive, rather than preventive. Others argue that development pressures, rising migration, and land conflicts have brought a

new layer of tension to Goan society. Civil rights activists say the government's focus on high-profile tourism events and infrastructure projects has overshadowed community policing and crime prevention. "The problem isn't just about a few crimes," said a former police officer now active in public policy. "It's about whether people still trust that the system will protect them." The Battle Ahead
For Kejriwal, the strategy is clear — frame the BJP as out of touch and ineffective. For the BJP, the challenge is to prove otherwise through swift

law enforcement and visible results. In a state where politics often takes a backseat to beach life, the debate over law and order could become one of the most defining narratives of the coming months. As crime stories continue to dominate headlines, one thing is certain: Goa's image as India's calm coastal paradise has taken a dent. Whether the BJP can restore public confidence — or whether Kejriwal's charge gains further traction — will shape not just the political climate, but also the very sense of security that Goans have long cherished.