

Educationists, parents oppose govt's rushed decision on new academic calendar

Say key stakeholders should have been taken into confidence, claim decision not in consonance with the National Education Policy

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government's decision notifying draft rules to commence the academic year from April and giving five days to submit suggestions has not gone down well with the educationists and parents, who have opined that adequate time be given.

However, Director of Education Shailesh Zingde has defended the government's move saying that it will be five working days to submit suggestions.

O Herald spoke to some of the educationists and parents to know what they had to say.

Former principal and educationist Prabhakar Timble said, "Change of academic year departing from the long established practice is a major and material departure. Such changes should be made in consultation with the key stakeholders. It seems the State government is under pressure from the Union Ministry and hence the tearing hurry and last minute interventions."

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ment are suspect as the decision is taken first and the rules are formulated later calling for comments, objections and inputs from stakeholders. This is in the nature of putting "the cart before the horse," he said.

According to principal Timble, the time of five days provided to respond before final publication of the rules is an eye-wash to show that the government has followed the required procedures. Probably, this is to satisfy the High

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Court and puncture the argument of the petitioners that the government has violated the procedures governing the publication of the rules. It is for the Courts to read into this game of the government, he said.

Educationist Prof Pandurang Nadkarni said, "In fact the government should have given more time for the parents, teachers and others to submit their suggestions since there was a three-day long weekend including a public

In fact the government should have given more time for the parents, teachers and others to submit their suggestions since there was a three-day long weekend including a public holiday for Holi. But it is up to the government to decide because I am unaware of the legal provisions of giving time. I feel that the government should have started this exercise early so that the people could get ample time to submit their suggestions. It now appears to be after-thought because parents are opposing the decision and have approached the High Court

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Former headmaster Filastro Cardozo of Varca said, "The

draft rules to commence the academic year from April have been notified without proper application of mind and without understanding the ground realities. The decision is not in consonance with the National Education Policy (NEP) and done in haste for reasons best known to the concerned. The draft rules have been imposed without taking stakeholders into confidence and it is done irrespective of rational application of mind."

Social activist granted interim relief from arrest

Team Herald

PANJIM: The District and Sessions Court, Panjim on Saturday granted interim relief from arrest to social activist Rama Kankonkar in the hurting of religious sentiments case filed against him at the Panjim police station.

Kankonkar had filed an anticipatory bail application after the police registered a case against him. While granting interim bail, the Sessions Court said that in case of his arrest before the next hearing, he be released on a personal bond of Rs 50,000.

The matter was later adjourned to Monday, March 17.

The Panjim police had registered the case against Kankonkar following a complaint by

Shyam Paraband others from Dulapi, Corlim, Tiswadi, that Kankonkar from Molemhat, Curca, Tiswadi deliberately and with malicious acts, intentionally outraged the religious feelings of the complainant and other followers of His

Holiness Padmashri awarded Puja Sadguru Brahmeshanand acharya Swami Maharaj by insulting him saying that Puja Swamiji was asking for Lok Sabha candidature from North Goa and further promoting enmity between the people on grounds of religion and on the context of shifting of Dev Kaphreshwar Temple of Porvorim.

A similar case also been lodged against another Social activist Xencor Polgi for hurting religious sentiments by the Mormugao police.

The complaint claimed that Polgi intentionally outraged religious sentiments by making derogatory remarks against Swamiji, accusing him of supporting political leaders and promoting enmity on religious grounds. It is also alleged that Polgi circulated these statements on social media, potentially disturbing public harmony.

Both the cases have been registered under Sections 299, 196, 353(2) and 356(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

CREATIVITY UNVEILED!



A sculpture on display at the State Art Exhibition (Student Category) underway at the Kala Academy, Panjim

Turf war: Bardez taxi owners oppose app-based aggregators

Cabbies claim app rates are unfeasible; urge govt to find a solution

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Taxi operators from Calangute, Candolim, and other coastal areas of Bardez have expressed strong opposition to joining app-based taxi aggregators, arguing that the proposed rates are not financially viable for them.

Following a meeting with the Deputy Director of the Transport Department in Mapusa on Friday, taxi union leaders stated that while the department had scheduled a meeting with taxi owners in Calangute, it was later postponed.

"We asked about the purpose of the meeting and were told that it was to inform us about joining taxi aggregators. But these meetings have already been held in Benaulim and other places," a representative said.

The government itself has notified point-to-point taxi rates, which are displayed in hotels, and we charge those rates. If more aggregator apps are introduced, most local taxi businesses will be forced to shut down as large companies will bring in their own fleet," they argued.

— Taxi owners

The taxi operators questioned whether their business could survive under the aggregator model. "According to the Transport Department, we are in the 21st century and technology is the future. But we asked them whether the taxi business will survive with this technology. People say taxi owners don't want aggregators because we will not be able to overcharge. We are ready to discuss that aspect. However, when the government introduced GoaMiles, we said

that the app rates were not feasible for us. In Goa, the taxi issue has always been about the rates."

The cabbies further pointed out that most local taxi owners and drivers have not joined app-based services. "The government itself has notified point-to-point taxi rates, which are displayed in hotels, and we charge those rates. If more aggregator apps are introduced, most local taxi businesses will be forced to shut down as large companies will bring in their own

fleet," they argued. The drivers also raised concerns about conflicts between app-based taxis and local taxi operators. "Local drivers will never join these apps because it negatively affects cabbies in other locations. This has led to frequent clashes between app-based taxis and local drivers. The government must find a solution because it is their responsibility. This issue has been ongoing for five years," they stated.

Earlier Calangute MLA Micheal Lobo had taken a strong stance against aggregator services and had called for an immediate solution to the issue.

"The tourist taxi industry has traditionally been the domain of local operators and should remain that way, emphasised the MLA.

HC rap on land conversions: Oppn wants TCP Min to quit

Team Herald

PANJIM: In light of the High Court of Bombay at Goa judgment striking down rules and guidelines of Section 17 (2) of Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act, the opposition Congress Party and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday demanded the immediate resignation of TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane, who they alleged, had completely failed in his duty to protect Goa's land and instead acted as a facilitator for land conversion scams.

Speaking to media persons, Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) general secretary Vijay Bhike, said, "We demand that the BJP government immediately stop tampering with land laws and respect the aspirations of Goans, who are determined to protect their land, environment, and her-

itage. The High Court judgment reinforces our belief that the people's voice cannot be silenced, and justice will always prevail."

Bhike alleged that the BJP government had consistently worked against the interests of Goans by allowing large-scale land conversions, hill cuttings, and backdoor legal manoeuvres to facilitate massive real estate projects. Their repeated attempts to dilute laws that safeguard Goa's environment and identity have been exposed once again. The High Court's refusal to entertain their sinister moves proves that the law cannot be bent to serve the interests of a few at the cost of Goa's future, he said.

It is now clear that the BJP is not interested in planned and sustainable development but is focused on appeasing crony capitalists by opening the flood-

gates for rampant destruction. The people of Goa must stay vigilant and united to stop these anti-Goan policies. The Congress party remains committed to fighting every such attempt and will continue to expose the BJP's corrupt and destructive agenda.

The AAP Goa unit too demanded the TCP Minister's resignation and reiterated party's demand to formulate a new Regional Plan for Goa by engaging consultative process.

AAP vice president Valmiki Naik opposed the government utilising public money to appeal against the judgment in Supreme Court. TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane has no right to hold the TCP portfolio, he said.

Naik said that it was clear that the section 17 (2) of TCP Act was illegal and was brought with ulterior motives. "Don't misuse tax pay-

ers money to defend your illegalities," he demanded.

AAP State president Adv Amit Palekar said that the BJP had brought national shame to Goa. He recalled that the BJP along with people had opposed the land conversions and had assured the people that it would prepare a comprehensive Regional Plan after coming back to power.

"Regional Plan 2021 expired four years ago. I don't know why the government is shying away from formulating a new RP for Goa. Does the government want to indulge in illegal conversions?" he asked.

"In Morjim, lakhs of square metres of land has been converted under the garb of corrections/rectifications and it has to be investigated. The State government is spending crores of rupees to fight judicial cases," Palekar added.

Xelvona resident dies due to drowning

Team Herald

CURCHOREM: A 44-year-old man from Xelvona, Curchorem who had gone for a picnic with family and friends, died due to drowning.

The deceased has been identified as Vinay Dessai from Xelvona. The tragedy occurred on Friday afternoon when the family was celebrating Holi.

Dessai along with his family had gone for a swim after a Holi party in Zuari river at Baga-Xelvona and was reported missing. The body was found a few kilometres away from the picnic spot at Kapshe, after Sanvordem, on Saturday morning.

The body was removed by the personnel of Fire and Emergency Services, Curchorem. Dessai was a plumber by profession, informed Curchorem police, who later conducted the panchanama and sent the body to the Hospicio South Goa District Hospital, Margao, for post-mortem examination.

Konkani Tiatr festival at Curchorem from Mar 19

Team Herald

CURCHOREM: The Tiatr Academy of Goa (TAG), in collaboration with the Ravindra Bhavan Curchorem, will organise a popular Konkani Tiatr Festival to promote Goa's rich tiatr culture from March 19 to 21.

The festival will feature a total of eight tiatrs, with three performances at Curchorem and five in Vasco. The entry for tiatrs will be free at both the venues, providing an opportunity for the public to enjoy traditional Konkani theatre.

Addressing a press conference, TAG president Anthony Barbosa said that the initiative aims to

preserve and promote Konkani tiatr, ensuring that more people especially the younger generation engage with this important aspect of Goa's cultural heritage.

He said that three tiatrs 'Mukutt Sorgincho' by Pascoal D'Costa, 'Zonvar' Josevon and 'Rogot' by Menino de Bandar. All the tiatrs will be staged at 4 pm.

Similarly five tiatrs will be staged at Ravindra Bhavan, Baina, dates of which will be announced shortly.

TAG general secretary William Fernandes, General Council member Jesus Antao and Ravindra Bhavan, Curchorem board member Leslie Pereira were also present.

Massive sand mining in Mandovi & Zuari could devastate Goa's rivers, warns NFF

Team Herald

VASCO: National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) general secretary Olenio Simoes has stated that Goa's 12 zones of Mandovi and Zuari rivers in which over 30 lakh million tonnes and more than 60 lakh million tonnes of sand is likely to be mined, and that this could prove detrimental to the already polluted rivers of the State and displace several thousand inland fishers and destroy the rich marine ecology, wild life protected marine species and mangroves.

Simoes stated this at the ongoing four-day global youth exchange and political leadership training programme organised by the World

Forum for Fishers People (WFFP) at Negambo, Sri Lanka.

Speaking further, he pointed to the destruction done in Mannar in Sri Lanka, where the entire coastline and community got displaced. Mrunmayi Vatkare, a youth from Maharashtra is the second representative participating in the programme.

The event, organised by the World Forum for Fishers People (WFFP), saw participation from youth across 17 Asia-Pacific countries and was based on resolutions passed at the WFFP's eighth General Assembly in Brazil.

According to Simoes, the primary focus of the exchange was to raise awareness among youth about ocean grabbing and the strug-

gles faced by fishing communities worldwide. The discussions highlighted violations of human rights-based approaches, the impact of large-scale ocean exploitation, and concerns surrounding the blue economy model.

In his address, Simoes criticised the Government of India's decision to permit offshore mining along the Kerala coast, which was opposed by the Kerala Assembly through unanimous resolution. The government had invited tenders to exploit 342 square km of sea sand and placer deposits in Kollam, estimated to contain 302 million tons of sand, including provisions for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Simoes argued that this move

contradicts India's commitments to marine conservation and climate resilience, violating international agreements like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAO guidelines for small-scale fishers, and the Paris Agreement.

Simoes also emphasised the urgent need for stricter marine resource management in Goa, as fish stocks are depleting rapidly due to destructive fishing gears and overfishing. He called on Fisheries Minister Nilkanth Halarnkar to introduce amendments to the Goa, Daman, and Diu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1980, and Rules, 1982 in the upcoming three-day budget session starting from March 24.

Heavy Rush "BIG DISCOUNT SHOPPING FESTIVAL", LIFESTYLE SHOPPING EXHIBITION AT SGPDA MARGAO



MARGAO, Mar 14: BIG DISCOUNT SHOPPING FESTIVAL, the Life Style Shopping Exhibition at SGPDA GROUND in MARGAO is seen crowded for past 2 days. There are lot of Furniture stalls in the exhibition where people rushed to the stall as they were offering good discounts. Other stalls like : Pratik Motors, Prestige, Paramount Marketing, Usha International Ltd, Nuetech Solar Systems Pvt Ltd., AG Furniture Studio, RGS Kitchen Ware, Afgan Dry Fruits, Harsh Enterprises, Smith Furniture, Gujarat Namkeen, Jijee Jewellery, Sankul Food, Laxmi Enterprises, SS Furniture, Rajastan

Papad, Samra Furniture, Kitchenware, Home Products, Sofa Sets & Home Furniture, Imported Curtains, Shower Curtains, Lazy World Bean Bags, Money Counting Machine, Ladies Fashion, Toys, Garments, Imported Watches, Magic Mop, Ladies & Gents Shoes, Children Clothes, Imported Jewellery, Bedsheets, Herbal Products, Children Furnitures, Educational Cd's, DoorMats, Bombay Halwa, Mens Wear, Health care Products & many more The exhibition is come after a long time and is open for the public from 10.30 a.m. To 9.00 p.m. So don't Miss