

ANY BID TO AMEND LANGUAGE ACT WILL DIVIDE GOANS: LINGUISTS

Claim the issue was settled nearly 38 years ago; say there cannot be two languages for the State; urge Goans not to fall prey to Velingkar's divisive tactics

Team Herald

PANJIM: The recent demand to make Marathi as the official language of the State along with Konkani appears to be politically motivated as the issue was settled nearly 38 years ago. However, the protagonists of both the languages feared that any attempt to amend the Official Language Act would lead to a controversy and create rift among the communities.

O Herald spoke to some of the protagonists of both the languages to gauge their perspectives.

Former Assembly Speaker Tomazinho Cardozo said, "If you read the Official Language Act, it is clear that the Konkani in Devanagari and the Marathi have got the same benefits. The Act states that Konkani will be the official language and Marathi will be used for all official purposes. Therefore, there is no problem for Marathi lovers. But the loss is for Konkani in Roman script lovers."

Cardozo, who was one of the leaders of the Konkani Porjecho Awaz, under whose banner Konkani language agitation was fought, claimed that 95 per cent followers of Roman Konkani protagonists fought the bat-

There cannot be two languages for the State. If the Goa Official Language Act has to be amended then it should be amended making Konkani in both, Devanagari and Roman scripts as the official language of Goa. What Subhash Velingkar is doing is trying to create division among the Goan society and I appeal to people of Goa not to fall prey to his game

— **Tomazinho Cardozo, Former Assembly Speaker**

Raking up the Marathi issue by Subhash Velingkar is yet another attempt by him to remain in limelight by hook or crook. If one sees his stance over the years Velingkar has raised communal or controversial issues and has tried to gather attention more towards him than the issue and hence he could not take any of his issues to their logical conclusion

— **Prashant Naik, Konkani Bhasha Mandal's former president**

RAKING UP A NON-ISSUE

■ The Official Language Act already benefits both Konkani in Devanagari and Marathi. Amending it should include Konkani in Roman script as an official language too

■ The Act designates Konkani as the official language and allows Marathi for official purposes. The government should maximise the Act's use, and current

agitators should push for its implementation

■ The official language issue is settled. Some individuals are using it for political gain as elections approach. Goans should not fall for these tactics

■ Subhash Velingkar's revival of the Marathi issue seems like a publicity stunt

tle but ultimately they were betrayed by not giving any place for Konkani in Roman script. Stating that there cannot be two languages for the State, Cardozo said that if the Goa Official Language Act has to be amended then it should be amended making Konkani in both, Devanagari and Roman scripts as the official language of Goa.

"What Subhash Velingkar is doing is trying to create division among the Goan society and I appeal to people of Goa not to fall prey to his game," he said.

Former Union Minister Ramakant Khalap said, "We had succeeded in passing the Official Language Act making Konkani as the offi-

cial language provided Marathi language will be used for all official purposes. The question comes regarding granting equal status to Marathi."

"When the Act was passed in 1987, Goa was Union Territory and the Act stated that Konkani will be the official language for all or any of the official purposes provided Marathi will be used for all or any of the official purposes in Goa and in case of Daman and Diu, the Gujarati language will be used for all or any of the official purposes. The government should make optimum use of the Act for its official purposes. Also those, who are agitating

now, are part of the government and they should put pressure on the government to use the Official Language Act for all official purposes," Khalap added.

Headmaster Anant Agni said, "The Official Language issue has been resolved once and forever long back. It's clear that some individuals have a hidden political agenda and raise the language issue to gain the attention of people as the Assembly elections are approaching in a couple of years. The Goans are wise and will definitely not fall prey to such gimmicks. The same old faces are found demanding the official language status to Marathi. The younger gen-

eration has been convinced with the rights and interests arising out of the Official Language Act."

Agni said, "The government now has to ensure the effective implementation of the Official Language Act to protect the culture and tradition of Goa and more importantly the economic interests of Goans. Konkani is our identity, and no other language can undermine its significance. Most of those who demand official language status to Marathi have their roots in Maharashtra. These are the same people who supported Goa's merger in Maharashtra in 1967."

He said, "Konkani is the

Teacher suspended for assaulting student in Curchorem school

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Education Department suspended a physical education teacher from a reputed high school in Curchorem for allegedly assaulting a minor student from Class 9 for creating ruckus in the classroom. The student reportedly suffered severe neck injuries.



The student reportedly suffered severe neck injuries

Reports indicate that similar incidents involving the teacher had occurred in many other schools previously due to which he was transferred on multiple occasions.

The child's mother then filed a complaint at the Curchorem police station against the teacher.

Speaking to **O Herald**, the mother said she filed the complaint as the teacher assaulted her son.

"My son was waiting for

the English class when the teacher entered the classroom and slapped him for no rhyme or reason. He roughed up my son, caught his collar due to which the child started feeling uneasy. The teacher then hit my son on the neck," the mother narrated.

The incident has raised concerns regarding the safety of students and calls for stricter measures to ensure such incidents do not occur in the future.

Road digging for gas pipelines causing congestion in Margao



Team Herald

MARGAO: Road digging for sewerage and gas pipelines across Salcete is causing significant traffic congestion in Margao areas due to heavy vehicles like JCBs, trucks, bulldozers, and excavators with the residents facing dust-related issues due to the ongoing works.

Currently, road digging and drainage work in areas, including Margao, are heavily congested with vehicles, leading to severe traffic issues. Increased traffic volume and minor accidents have prompted citizens to demand immediate action from traffic authorities. Concerns have also been raised about the absence of home guards or traffic police at these sites to manage traffic flow.

Despite the ban on heavy

vehicles entering the town, including multi-axle vehicles, containers, trailers, and bulkers with more than 10 wheels, these vehicles continue to enter the main areas at all hours. Ideally, heavy vehicle drivers should adhere strictly to designated routes.

Raymond Souza, prominent citizen noted that the ongoing drainage and roadworks are causing traffic and dust issues, and that water tankers are not deployed to mitigate dust problems, nor are police or supervisors present to regulate traffic.

Mangaldas Raiker another citizen highlighted the increase in traffic volume and minor accidents due to the road digging, which has been ongoing for six to seven months for laying sewerage and gas pipelines.

Chicalim school Class IX students engage in Kaavi art at Adpai

Team Herald

PONDA: Kaavi, the oldest traditional painting art of Goa is now being introduced to school students. Two teachers, along with 40 Class IX students from Vidya Mandir School in Chicalim, visited Sagar Naik Mule's art gallery at Adpai to learn about Kaavi art.

It is pertinent to note that the Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education has included Kaavi Art in the Fine Art subject for the Class IX curriculum, starting in the upcoming academic year through the New Education Policy.

Kaavi artist Mule, who was praised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Mann Ki Baat programme,

guided and trained the students and teachers.

The students spent about three hours engaging in the activity and were welcomed with a mound of clay from which Kaavi artworks were created. The students created some artworks after being given demonstrations on the art at the nearby Mahalaxmi Temple.

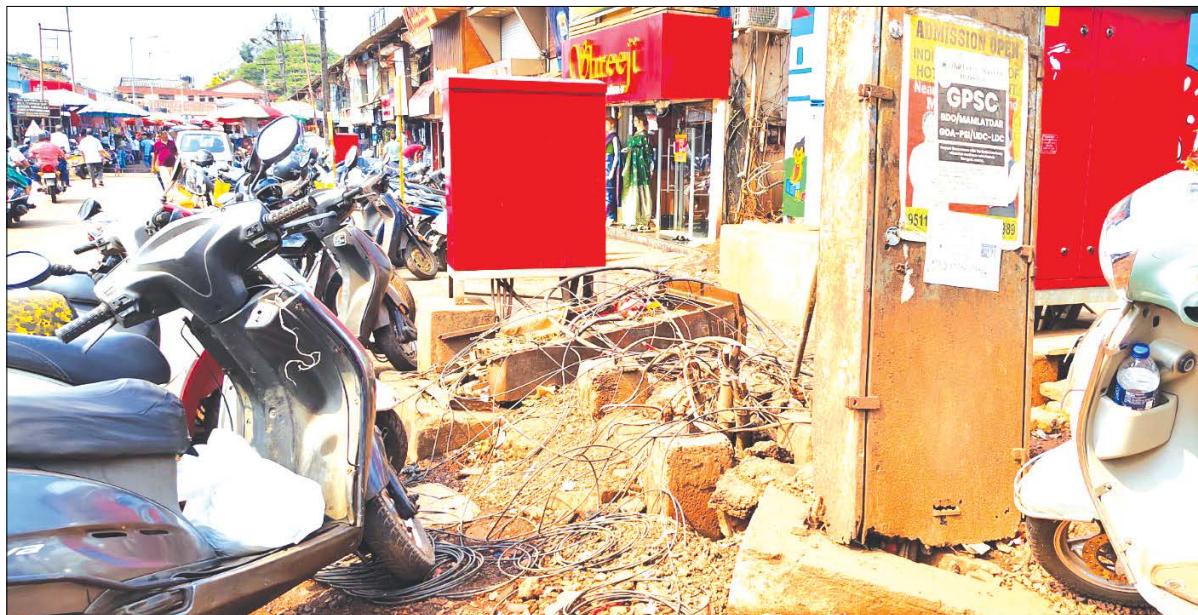
Stating that new artists from various schools will enrich the art, Mule said "Kaavi is an elite art which has a direct relationship with the soil. There is no greater joy than introducing it to new students through the school curriculum."

A similar field trip will be organised for the students of Damodar High School in Margao on April 12.

SANTOSH NAIK



DANGER ZONE



Telephone box lies on ground as live wires remain exposed at the entrance of Mapusa market even as the authorities turn a blind eye

JOSEPH FERNANDES

Encroachments on footpaths: Old Goa locals seek action against VP secy

Team Herald

PANJIM: The residents of Vailankanni Apartments and Carl Centre, Old Goa have written to the Goa Human Rights Commission (GHRC) seeking action against the Se Old Goa village panchayat secretary and a panch member for failing to implement its order to remove encroachments on footpaths and

contempt of order.

Taking note of stalls on footpaths, the Commission in February this year, had recommended that the Se Old Goa village panchayat forthwith take steps to clear footpaths of stalls causing obstructions in front of the Vailankanni Apartments and Carl Centre.

The Commission had also asked the Old Goa police station to provide necessary

protection to the panchayat to remove stalls and both the respondents were also directed to submit action taken report to the Commission on March 21.

On March 21, the secretary told the Commission that the panchayat had cleared the footpath, and matter was disposed.

But the residents of Vailankanni Apartments and Carl Centre have

now complained that the panchayat secretary did not clear the footpath, and that the stalls were removed from the footpath by the persons who were running their business in the midnight on March 18 and brought and placed their stalls in the government property bearing survey number 117 at Old Goa.

According to the residents, the panchayat secre-

tary did bother to act, and sent a letter to the residents to verify the footpath and when the complainants forwarded a reply, he allegedly threatened to take them to court.

Thereby on March 21 the matter was disposed as the panchayat secretary gave in writing that the footpath was cleared. but two days later, all the illegal stalls were back on footpath

which clears the picture of the panchayat secretary, the residents said alleging that one panch member was supporting illegal encroachments on footpaths.

The residents of Vailankanni Apartments and Carl Centre have now appealed to the GHRC to take appropriate action for the remiss in duty by the panchayat secretary and the one of the panchayat members.

Fair price shop owners push for draft scheme

Seek CM's mediation to release Rs 1 crore incurred in form of transport & labour charges

Team Herald

PANJIM: All Goa Fair Price Shop Owners Association has written to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant demanding that the recommendations of the committee constituted to study the functioning of fair price shops be implemented.

The committee had last year formulated a draft scheme for enhancing viability of FPS dealers by proposing withdrawal of POS (Point of Sale) rent which is Rs 0.10 per kg as a rent, to pay Rs 105 per tonne as incentive for sale of ePoS device, payment of a fixed

KEY PROPOSALS

■ Eliminating the POS (Point of Sale) rent of Rs 0.10 per kg.

■ Providing an incentive of Rs 105 per tonne for the sale of ePoS devices.

■ Paying a fixed amount of Rs 9,500 to each FPS to cover operating expenses such as labour wages, electricity, rentals, and municipal or panchayat taxes.



■ Increasing the margin by Rs 0.35 per kg on APL rice if the selling price of APL increases from Rs 12.50 to Rs 16.50.

amount of Rs 9,500 for FPS for operating expenses such as wages to labours, electricity charges, rentals,

municipality or panchayat taxes, etc. The scheme has also proposed to enhance the margin at the rate of

Rs 0.35 per kg on APL rice and in case the selling price of APL from Rs 12.50 to Rs 16.50.

In a letter, Joaquim Fernandes, Chairman, All Goa Consumer Cooperative Society and Fair Price Shop Owners Association has also demanded that the Chief Minister should intervene to see that over Rs one crore incurred in form of transport and labour charges, which are pending for several years, are released at the earliest.

Stating that there are several hiccups in transport or labour management, the association has also pointed out that the basic decisions taken and the same having been informed at two public meet-

ings at Panjim and Margao have not been implemented till date.

"At the time of introduction of POS (Point of Sale) machines, we were asked to pay the cost of Rs 25,000. However, as we were unable to buy them, the department introduced a rent of 10 paise per bill and gave us necessary paper rolls. However, soon thereafter the giving of paper rolls discontinued and we ended up paying lakhs of rupees as rent. Therefore, this too ought to be stopped with immediate effect," the association stated.

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