

CM meets Guv, Cabinet rejig a matter of time?

Reorganisation of ministries could happen as soon as Parliament session ends, Delilah among the hopefuls

Team Herald

PANJIM: With Chief Minister Pramod Sawant meeting Governor PS Shreedharan Pillai at Raj Bhavan on Thursday morning, the Cabinet reshuffle now seems to be a matter of 'when' rather than 'if'.

While the official reason for the CM-Governor meeting was the relocation of the four government-run professional colleges on the University campus – Goa College of Architecture, Goa College of Pharmacy, Goa College of Arts and Goa College of Music in the University campus – sources suggested that the reshuffle could happen as soon this weekend, when the current Parliament session ends, or early next week.

The CM himself addressed the question of the much-talked-about reshuffle last week, when he said that the reorganisation of his council of ministers would be done due to political compulsions, keeping an eye on the 2027 Assembly elections, and after discussions with the Central leadership. He hinted at dropping "one or two" ministers, but said that all of them were



CM Pramod Sawant



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performing well. Among the names of ministerial hopefuls generating the strongest buzz was Delilah Lobo, the Solim MLA and wife of Calangute MLA Michael Lobo. Significantly, the CM had addressed BJP workers in Calangute last week, saying that Lobo would be rewarded in "due course" and crediting him for the development in his constituency.

In Solim, a flurry of activity could be seen outside the office of Delilah,

with many workers in a joyful mood after news started spreading of their legislator being a frontrunner for a ministerial berth. While **O Herald** got in touch with her, she smiled and said that she was not aware of any such political development, but other well-placed sources confirmed that her induction into the ministry was an open-and-shut case.

According to sources, the other strong contender for joining the Cabinet is the

old warhorse Digambar Kamat. The former Chief Minister is one of the eight MLAs who moved from Congress to BJP after the 2022 Assembly elections, and his seniority and hold over the important seat of Margao may swing things in his favour, the grapevine suggested.

Although a minor one, the last reshuffle happened in December 2023, when Nilesh Cabral was dropped and Aleixo Sequeira was brought in as a Cabinet Minister. Sequeira's name is doing the rounds as one of those who might be moved out of the Cabinet.

Goa's summer air is heavy with anticipation and multiple other MLAs' names have cropped up, but the Chief Minister and the party leadership have remained tight-lipped about the Cabinet reshuffle and whether it will happen soon. BJP State president Damodar 'Damu' Naik told **O Herald**, "CM and I have discussed the Cabinet reshuffle with the party high command. The envelope is sealed and the reshuffle will happen at the right time."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Resolution on Prez rule in Manipur moved at 2 am

Adding insult to injury: Cong on govt bulldozing resolution in LS

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha early Thursday adopted a Statutory Resolution confirming the imposition of President's rule in Manipur with the Opposition supporting the decision, but slamming the Centre for the situation in the State.

Replying to a short debate, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the government has taken all possible steps to bring back normalcy in the restive north-eastern State.

He said there has been no violence in Manipur in the last four months, adding that talks were on with both Meitei and Kuki communities for a peaceful solution.

"By and large the situation is peaceful. As long as people are in camps, I would not say the situation is satisfactory. The govt is taking all possible steps to restore peace in Manipur," he said.

The Home Minister said the ethnic violence in Manipur had started following an order of the State's High Court.

"The day the order came, we sent the central forces by air. There was no delay on our part (in taking action)," he said.

He said, so far, 260 people have died in the violence that started in May 2023 and 80 per cent of

them lost their lives within the first month.

Meanwhile, the Congress accused the government of

"bulldozing" in the Lok Sabha the statutory resolution confirming the imposition of President's rule in Mani-

pur, and said this was "adding insult to injury".

Cont on Pg 11 >>

SC annuls appointment of 25,000 WB school teachers

PTI, NEW DELHI: In a major blow to the West Bengal government, the Supreme Court on Thursday invalidated the appointment of 25,753 teachers and staffers in the State-run and aided schools, calling the entire selection process "vitiated and tainted".

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar upheld a Calcutta High Court verdict of April 22, 2024, annulling the appointments and said the tainted candidates should refund their "salaries/payments received".

"This is a case wherein the entire selection process has been vitiated and tainted beyond resolution. Manipulations and frauds on a large scale, coupled with the attempted cover-up, have dented the selection process beyond repair and partial redemption. The credibility and legitimacy of the selection are denuded," said the 41-page judgement authored by the CJI.

The verdict went on, "We find no valid ground or reason to interfere with the direction of the high court that the services of tainted candidates, where appointed, must be terminated, and they should be required to refund any salaries/payments received. Since their appointments were the result of fraud, this amounts to cheating. Therefore, we see no justification to alter this direction."

For candidates, who were untainted, it said the selection process was rightly declared null and void due to the "egregious violations and illegalities" as it violated Articles 14 (equality before the law) and 16 (equality of opportunity in matters of public employment) of the Constitution.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

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