

Parents, pupils protest outside Edu Dept as schools reopen in sweltering heat

Hold placards with messages 'Democracy is dying, children are crying', 'No school in April', & 'Start schools in June'

Team Herald

PANJIM: Despite the sweltering summer heat, students returned to classrooms even as some parents, accompanied by their wards, staged a silent protest on Monday at the Directorate of Education in Porvorim, voicing their opposition to the reopening of schools from April 7.

Schools across the State reopened for Classes VI to X and XII on April 7 under the new academic calendar marking a major change in the education system much to the annoyance of many parents.

However as students returned to the classrooms despite the scorching summer, a group of convened parents and some students staged a protest holding placards bearing messages such as 'Democracy is dying, children are crying', 'No school in April', and 'Start schools in June', expressing concern over the decision to advance the academic calendar.

Cecille Rodrigues, a parent leading the protest, stated, "Around 390 headmasters of government-aided schools submitted their objections to the proposal. There was also resistance



We are not against the National Education Policy (NEP), but the way it has been implemented is alarming

— Cecille Rodrigues, parent leading the protest

from the teachers' association, which includes between 7,000 to 8,000 teachers. Despite this, not a single meeting was held to discuss the issue, even though Education Secretary Prasad Loliyekar had assured parents that consultations would be arranged.

"We are not against the National Education Pol-

icy (NEP), but the way it has been implemented is alarming," she added. "April and May are extremely hot months, which is why objections were raised in the first place. There are multiple discrepancies in the current system, and if changes aren't made now, they never will be."

Another parent, Pras-

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— Savio Norvin Menzes, petitioner

ad Harmalkar, pointed out that education falls under the concurrent list of the Constitution, stating, "The state government cannot simply claim that the decision is because of the NEP. We don't have to follow what suits others—we can stick to the traditional academic calendar from June to March."

He further commented, "We're not opposing the NEP itself, just how it's being rolled out. The government postponed Class X exams last year due to heat. If Class X students struggled, imagine what Class VI students will face."

Savio Norvin Menzes, who has filed a writ petition in the High Court of

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— Prasad Harmalkar, concerned parent

Bombay at Goa against the school reopening date, said, "We were told the academic year was shifted three years ago, yet as parents, we were never informed. I believe the High Court's decision has gone against us because of such assumptions."

The protest underscores growing dissatisfaction among stakeholders over what they describe as a lack of transparency and disregard for environmental and health concerns in the educational policy rollout.

The academic year will now begin from April 7 with a one-week break between the old and new academic years. The students will get a summer break in May, aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL: STUDENTS FIND IT HARD TO BEAT THE HEAT

Team Herald

PANJIM: Students found it difficult to beat the heat as schools affiliated to the Goa Board officially commenced the 2025–26 academic year on Monday, April 7—marking a significant shift from the traditional June start to an April beginning for the first time in the State's educational history. In view of the scorching summer, most schools have scheduled shorter sessions, requiring students from Classes VI to X and Class XII to report from 7.55 am to 11.30 am until April 30.

The decision has been met with mixed reactions with many students voicing concerns over the soaring temperatures. A student commented,

"The weather is very hot, it would have been better if there was a holiday." Echoing similar sentiments, Christy, another student,

said, "Even sitting under a fan, it's very hot."

A student, choosing to remain anonymous, remarked, "It was a bad decision to open schools in April. Despite a brief spell of rain, the heat is unbearable. We can't study properly. Fans work, but there are also power cuts—there was load shedding today as well." "They should either cancel school or improve facilities," the student added.

Meanwhile, Prasad Loliyekar, Secretary of Education and Higher Education said, "Today, we inspected five schools. Attendance was above 90% in most, and the feedback was positive." "April was never officially a vacation month. Annual exams are already being held in February or March because competitive exams are scheduled in May," he explained, justifying the calendar change.

Sada resident crushed under forklift machine

Team Herald

VASCO: In a tragic mishap, a 53-year-old resident of Headland-Sada, died in an accident at Berth No. 11 of the Mormugao Port on Sunday night.

Supervisor Dyanesh Harmalkar came under the tyres of forklift machine operated by one Mohammad Furakan Khan at Berth No. 11 of the Mormugao Port and died on the spot.

According to the Mormugao police, the incident occurred at around 10 pm when on Sunday when Mohammad Khan, a native of Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, was operating a forklift. While reversing the machine, Khan allegedly drove in a negligent manner and struck Harmalkar, causing serious injuries to his chest and shoulder.

The injured was rushed

to the Sub-District Hospital, Chicalim, where he later succumbed to his injuries. The police later sent the body the Hospicio South Goa District Hospital, Margao, for post-mortem examination, which confirmed the cause of death was due to "damage to the chest caused by blunt force impact," which proved fatal.

The police later handed over the body to the relatives for last rites.

The Mormugao Police have registered a case against Khan under Sections 281 and 106 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and Sections 134(a)(b) of the Motor Vehicles Act.

PSI Yeshwant Raikar is conducting investigations under the guidance of Mormugao PI Dheeraj Devidas and overall guidance of Mormugao DySP Gurudas Kadam.

MARCH OF THE SAINTS



Statues of various saints being taken out in a procession on the occasion of Santanchem Purnasav at Goa Velha on Monday

Canacona PSI shunted for 'assaulting' AAP leader

AAP wants cop dismissed, arrested immediately

Team Herald

MARGAO: Following allegations of assault on Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sandesh Talekar on Sunday, the Goa Police department transferred PSI Rajashekar Reddy from his post at the Canacona Police Station on Monday.

An inquiry, led by Quepem DySP Sagar Ekoskar, has been initiated to investigate the incident's facts and circumstances.

According to SO Tikam Singh's official statement, "An inquiry has been initiated under DySP Sagar Ekoskar, GPS, regarding the matter of PSI Rajashekar Reddy of Canacona PS, to find the facts and circumstances." PSI Reddy has been

attached to the Reserve Line.

Talekar, a former policeman, was discharged from Hospicio South Goa District Hospital, Margao, on Monday evening.

AAP State president has condemned the incident, stating that most PSIs recruited in the last two years lack fear of authorities due to allegations of paying bribes to ministers for their positions.

Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has demanded the immediate dismissal and arrest of Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) Raj Shekar Reddy, describing the alleged assault on their leader, Sandesh Talekar, as a "brazen act of violence" and accusing him of abusing his power and threatening citizens' safety.

A delegation led by Beaulim MLA Venzy Viegas, along with other party members, visited the South Goa Police Headquarters on Monday to submit a memorandum demanding action against PSI Reddy. The memorandum condemned the alleged assault and emphasised the need for swift action to restore public trust in the police force.

The memorandum stated, "We demand immediate action against PSI Shekar Reddy, including his dismissal from service and arrest for the offence. This incident raises serious questions about the accountability and professionalism of the police, and it is crucial that steps are taken to uphold public safety."

14 officials summoned for failing to enforce HC order

Team Herald

PANJIM: 14 government officials who served in the Bardez taluka from 2021 till date including Deputy Collectors, Mamlatdars, Joint Mamlatdars, and Executive Engineers have been summoned by Secretary (Revenue) Sandip Jacques in connection with delays in executing a High Court-directed demolition and restoration of government land.

The summons follows an order dated April 23, 2024, by the High Court of Bombay at Goa. The court had earlier, on September 15, 2021, directed authorities to carry out demolition and restore land in compliance with a directive issued by the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) in November 2020. The High Court had noted a nearly two-year delay in executing its order, with authorities failing to provide any explanation.

The summoned officials have now been directed to appear in person at the Secretariat in Porvorim to explain the delay and clarify any lapses in compliance of the order.

ANC sleuths seek CBI help to get info on Israeli drug lord

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) police on Monday visited the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) office to seek details of Israeli drug lord Yaniv Benaim, alias Atala, who was arrested on Saturday for possessing narcotics worth Rs 8.70 lakh.

The CBI, which was probing a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act due to his alleged links with the police, had extradited Atala from Peru in 2011. He had then been remanded in judicial custody for three months.

ANC officials sought to confirm whether Atala had valid passport and visa documents at the time of his extradition. In 2011, Atala had reportedly escaped to Israel via Nepal and was brought back to India after the CBI issued a Red Corner Notice against him.

The ANC has also filed a complaint against Atala at the Anjuna Police Station for overstaying in the country without valid passport and visa documentation.

Although Atala has told the police he holds an Israeli passport, it has now emerged that he was also issued an

Aadhar card by the Government of India. The Aadhaar card was issued to him in August 2021, and he had listed a Chapora address where he was residing in a rented room. The police are now investigating the legality of how the foreign national managed to obtain the document.

It is learnt that Atala had been using his Aadhaar card, and it has come to light that the owner who provided him accommodation at his hotel did not file the mandatory C-Form. Atala had given a photocopy of his Aadhar card to the owner. He had reportedly been staying in the hotel at Siolim for the last five months, until his arrest by ANC police on April 5.

Atala had previously attempted to flee the country in 2019 after Anjuna Police registered an attempt to murder case against him. However, he was apprehended by immigration officials of the Uttarakhand Police while trying to cross into Nepal via Champawat district. The Banbasa Police registered a case against him, and he was convicted for six months in Uttarakhand.

CM: Sand mining delayed due to CRZ clearances

Says 28 laterite projects await environmental clearances

Team Herald

PANJIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday stated that legal sand mining in the State has been delayed due to pending Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances. Additionally, environmental clearances (ECs) for 28 laterite mining projects are still pending, he added.

The Chief Minister made these remarks after chairing a review meeting in Porvorim to discuss the current status of mining activity in the State. He directed the Directorate of Mines and Geology to follow up on the matters and ensure timely resolution.

It was also noted that certain issues regarding major mineral blocks had been resolved, facilitating further progress in the mining sector. The government, he said, is focusing on addressing regulatory hurdles to ensure the smooth continuation of mining activities in the State.

Chief Secretary Dr V Candavelou, Advocate General Devidas Pangam, both District Collectors, Director of Mines and Geology Narayan Gad, and other officials were present at the meeting.

Sawant reviewed various aspects related to the mining sector and instructed officials to enhance coordination to

promote 'Ease of Doing Business' within the sector. He directed departments — from the Collectorate to the Environment Department — to streamline processes and resolve concerns raised by mining block leaseholder companies.

The Chief Minister further revealed that the government is considering the introduction of a single-window clearance system for laterite mining through the Directorate of Mines. At present, 28 applications for laterite mining are awaiting environmental clearance. The Deputy Director of Mines has been instructed to expedite follow-up on these cases, he said.

'Water supply stable for next 2 months'

Team Herald

PANJIM: Goa's water supply situation is stable, with improved water levels in major dams compared to previous reports.

Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar has assured the public that the water levels in Tillari, Anjunem, Maisal and Salaulim dams are better

than before, ensuring a steady supply for the next two months.

"There is enough water to last for the next two months, and there will be no scarcity," said Shirodkar, adding that the State's water resources are sufficient for everyone's needs. The Minister emphasized that there is no cause for concern regarding water availability in the State.

Mhadei Bachao Abhiyan demands aerial survey of diversion work

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Mhadei Bachao Abhiyan (MBA) on Monday demanded that the State government carry out an aerial survey of the works undertaken by the Karnataka government at Kankumbhi, near the Goa border, to divert Mhadei waters.

Addressing a press conference, former Minister and MBA convenor Nirmala Sawant demanded that the government also conduct a ground inspection of the work carried out by Karnataka without obtaining mandatory clearances, and ascertain the facts. She claimed that the Karnataka government had altered a three-kilometre stretch of the river's profile, warning that any attempt to divert water could spell doom for the State.

Sawant further demanded that the government engage a senior counsel from Delhi to represent Goa in the Supreme Court, and take steps to expedite hearings. "The matter keeps getting adjourned while the government is spending lakhs of rupees on the

legal team monitoring the Mhadei cases in Delhi, and they are not serious about protecting the interests of the State," she said.

Referring to the government's plans to construct barrages across the Kushawati, Mirabag and Sal rivers, Sawant expressed concern that the construction of a six-metre high barrage across the Ganjem river could negatively impact the Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary.

"There are several capable Goan engineers in the WRD who can handle this responsibility, but the government is favouring engineers from Karnataka, whose integrity is questionable. We have engineering colleges in the State — and if you cannot produce capable engineers, then shut them," Sawant remarked.

Environmentalist and MBA secretary Rajendra Kerkar stated that the Karnataka government had already completed the Kalasa Nalla diversion work and had now begun land acquisition for the construction of the Bhadrada Nalla, again without securing mandatory clearances.