

Now, SCERT school textbooks for Classes I-IV in short supply

Several private schools across Goa have adopted the more-affordable SCERT textbooks this year, creating unexpected demand; most book stores are out of stock

Team Herald

MARGAO: A sudden shortage of textbooks prescribed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has been reported in several parts of Goa, following an unexpected rise in demand from private schools. The shortage primarily affects textbooks for Classes I to IV, which have traditionally been supplied only to government and aided schools. Last week, shops reported a shortage of higher secondary text books for Classes IX to XII. In recent times, several private schools across Goa have begun adopting the SCERT textbooks, leading to increased pressure on the existing supply system. While SCERT has ensured the distribu-



tion of textbooks to government and aided institutions as per the usual procedure, the body does not directly supply books to private schools. Instead, these institutions are expected to source them from the open market through local book sellers. A book seller from Margao, who requested anonymity, said, "The demand from private schools has gone up significantly this academic year, but there's not enough stock available to meet the re-

quirement." According to him, many stores are currently out of stock, leaving parents and schools scrambling to find the necessary textbooks. Reacting to the issue, SCERT Chairperson Meghana Shetgaonkar confirmed that the council has been receiving increasing requests from book sellers regarding the shortage. "We have completed the distribution to government and aided schools as per the schedule. How-

ever, we are now seeing demand from private schools. Since SCERT does not supply directly to them, the books must be purchased from the market," Shetgaonkar said. She also clarified that SCERT is prepared to address the shortfall. "We have asked sellers and private schools to communicate their requirements. Once we receive those, we are ready to print additional copies to fulfill the demand," she added. The shift by private schools towards using SCERT textbooks is seen by some educators as a move to align with state-approved curriculum and to reduce the cost burden on parents, as SCERT books are more affordable than those from private publishers.

Sardesai rejects Margao Draft Plan, calls for community-led alternative

Team Herald

MARGAO: Goa Forward Party President and Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai launched a scathing attack on the draft Margao Masterplan 2041, calling it a top-down scheme that lacks public consultation and fails to reflect the aspirations of the local community. Sardesai described the plan as a "Master's Plan, not a People's Plan," following a presentation by the Margao Municipal Council's appointed consultant to Fatorda councillors and stakeholders. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Sardesai alleged that the draft proposes converting large portions of actively cultivated agricultural fields in Fatorda into urban design features such as "sponge parks" under public-private partnership (PPP) models. "This is a deliberate attempt to convert fertile fields into commercial projects. Even though GSUDA acquired these lands 15 years ago, farmers have continued cultivating them. Now the 'Master' is eyeing them again," he said. While welcoming certain features of the plan—such as proposals for electric shuttle services and

PAIN POINTS
Fatorda MLA flagged the following issues with the draft Masterplan
Top-down planning: Draft plan prepared without real public consultation—"Master's Plan, not a People's Plan."
Fields under threat: Actively cultivated farmland in Fatorda proposed

heritage conservation—Sardesai questioned the government's capacity to implement them. "These are good ideas on paper, but who will fund them? Under what scheme? The consultant had no answers, and the government remained silent. This is clearly a hastily-prepared plan," he claimed. With municipal elections scheduled for 2026, Sardesai urged residents of Fatorda and Margao to reject the current draft and instead push for a "People's Plan" developed with community involvement. "This is our mission—to bring forth a plan that reflects what the people want, not what is imposed on them," he said. In a strongly worded appeal, Sardesai also reiterated his demand to restore the sacred Dambab

to be converted into commercial "sponge parks."
No funds, no clarity: Good ideas like e-shuttles and heritage zones, but no answers on how they'll be funded or implemented.
Sacred site in private hands: Dambab Talli water body is still under private control—devotees need 'permission' to pray

Talli water body in Fatorda to public hands. The site, which lies in front of a local shrine, is currently in the possession of private entity Chowgule. "All water bodies in Goa are vested with the Water Resources Department. Our Gramdev cannot be anyone's mundkar," he said, referring to tenant rights under Goan land law. Sardesai expressed dismay that keys had to be obtained from the private owner even during the recent visit by the Governor of Goa. The Fatorda MLA said he would take up the issue in the upcoming Assembly session and submit a formal request to the Governor. "Devotees should never need permission to perform rituals at a sacred site. The Dambab Talli must be returned to the people," he declared.

Goan Jesuit to join global Church planning team in Rome

Team Herald

MARGAO: Jesuit priest Fr Joseph Cardozo SJ, who currently serves as Socius to the Provincial of the Goa Jesuit Province, has been appointed to a key role at the Jesuit Curia in Rome. Starting September 2025, he will join the Office of Discernment and Apostolic Planning for a Synodal Church, which supports the Society of Jesus' contribution to the global Church's synodal journey. The appointment forms part of the Jesuit response



to the late Pope Francis' call for religious orders to help the Church deepen its practice of synodality. Speaking to a catholic media organisation, Fr Cardozo explained that the Society's

leadership had identified "Discernment in Common" as one of its most valuable offerings to this process. "Discernment in Common" is a process where individuals come together to collectively seek the best course of action," he said. "In religious contexts, it is viewed as a way to discover God's will as a group." Fr Cardozo will work closely with Fr John Dardis SJ, General Counsellor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning, as well as Mr Germán Muñoz, Assistant for Special Projects, and an in-

tern from Università Sacro Cuore in Milan. His responsibilities will include participating in global planning meetings, reviewing and offering feedback on provincial renewal plans, helping conduct workshops, expanding the Magis Digital platform across South Asia, and contributing to the October 2025 meeting of Jesuit Superiors General. He will also support the development of key performance indicators tied to the Society's Universal Apostolic Preferences.

Cabbies petition Guv to scrap taxi app plan

MARGAO: In a show of growing discontent among local taxi operators, the Benaulum Taxi Drivers' Association submitted a formal memorandum to Goa Governor P. S. Sreedharan Pillai, voicing strong opposition to app-based taxi aggregators operating in the state. The memorandum was handed over by Association President Clide during the Governor's recent visit to Varca Church. The submission took place in the presence of Benaulum MLA Venzy Viegas, who has been actively engaging with the concerns of his constituents. The taxi drivers argue that the growing presence of aggregator platforms is threatening their traditional livelihoods, with many local operators struggling to compete against the pricing and policies of larger companies. President Clide highlighted the hardships faced by independent taxi operators who, he said, have invested years into building their businesses. "We are not against technology, but the current model of taxi aggregators is unfair and unsustainable for local drivers," he stated. MLA Viegas reiterated his support for the local taxi community and assured them that their concerns would be taken seriously.

Citizens urge govt to honour unsung freedom fighter Dr Juliao Menezes

Team Herald

MARGAO: On Goa's Revolutionary Day observed on Wednesday, the call to give due recognition to Dr Juliao Menezes — a prominent figure in Goa's freedom struggle — has gathered momentum, with local leaders, historians, and activists urging the government to honour his legacy by preserving his home in Assolna as a museum. Velim MLA Cruz Silva emphasised Dr. Menezes' significant contributions to Goa's liberation movement, stating that the historical village of Assolna played a vital role in the freedom struggle. "Dr. Juliao Menezes' con-

On 18 June 1946, freedom fighters Dr Ram Manohar Lohia and Dr Julião Menezes evaded Portuguese police to address a mass public meeting in Margão. Defying colonial restrictions, they were welcomed by a crowd of 600–700 people chanting slogans of freedom. The Portuguese authorities later detained them, but the gathering marked a turning point in Goa's liberation movement



tribution cannot be overlooked. I will raise the issue in the upcoming monsoon session of the Goa Legislative Assembly to ensure he is honoured appropriately," Silva stated. Governor of Goa, P. S. Sreedharan Pillai, visited Dr. Menezes' ances-

tral home on Wednesday, where he was briefed about the late freedom fighter's efforts and sacrifices. The visit added weight to growing demands for the state to formally recognise Dr. Menezes' contributions. Oscar Martins, President

of the Cuncolim Chieftain Memorial Trust, expressed disappointment over the government's inaction in preserving the legacy of one of Goa's most respected freedom fighters. "We demand that the government observe a day in his name. His room should be maintained and preserved as a museum for future generations," Martins said. Environmentalist and historian Rajendra Kerkar, who was also present at the gathering, echoed the sentiment. "The house of Dr. Menezes is one of historical importance. It must be preserved, and his contributions should be formally recognised by the state," he urged.

Cavelossim p'yat blocks vehicle access to beach



Team Herald

MARGAO: As the monsoon picks up and domestic tourist arrivals increase, the Cavelossim Village Panchayat has taken preventive steps to protect their tranquil beach by restricting vehicle access to the shoreline. Warning signs have been installed at various entry points, informing visitors that driving vehicles onto the beach is strictly prohibited. This annual measure is aimed at preserving the natural beauty of the beach and ensuring safety, especially during the monsoon

when the terrain becomes more fragile. Speaking to the media, Cavelossim Sarpanch Dixon Vaz said, "We take this action every year to stop people from driving vehicles on the beach. Unfortunately, some Indian tourists tend to violate these rules, so we have to take extra precautions." Vaz emphasised the panchayat's commitment to preserving the cleanliness and tranquillity of the area. "Cavelossim is known for its beautiful and peaceful beaches. The monsoon season is a wonderful time to experience their sereni-

ty, and we want everyone to enjoy that without harming the environment," he said. The panchayat has also urged tourists and locals to cooperate with the guidelines and respect the coastal ecosystem. Driving on the beach not only damages the sand and vegetation but also poses a risk to marine life and public safety. Vaz added that the panchayat will remain vigilant throughout the season and will work with local authorities to prevent violations. Any vehicles found on the beach will be reported and appropriate action will be taken.

Govt to roll out 26-episode web series to bring history alive for youth

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a bid to educate the younger generation about Goa's rich history, the state government will soon launch a web series focused on Goa's historical journey and important events. The announcement was made by Minister Subhash Phaldesai during the Revolutionary Day function held at Lohia Maidan, Margao. Speaking at the event, Phaldesai said that the Department of Archives is in the process of creating a 26-episode web series specifically designed to reach out to students and make them aware of Goa's historical legacy. "The web series will serve as an engaging medium for the student community to connect with Goa's past, including key historical moments and cultural developments," Phaldesai stated. He added that the initiative is part of a broader strategy to instill histori-

GOA TO SET UP 'HERITAGE POLICE' UNIT TO PROTECT MONUMENTS

In addition to the web series, Phaldesai announced the formation of a dedicated Heritage Police unit. This unit will be responsible for protecting and preserving the state's historical monuments and heritage sites, including Lohia Maidan. "A comprehensive heritage policy is being formulated to ensure proper care, maintenance, and conservation of Goa's historical sites," he said. "We are also forming a committee to study the preservation needs of these heritage locations, and stakeholders will be consulted to ensure a collaborative approach."

cal awareness among the youth. Phaldesai also highlighted significant historical topics such as the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa, urging students to understand the state's complex past and the importance of preserving its identity. The Revolutionary Day event was attended by several dignitaries, including Margao MLA Digambar Kamat, Navelim MLA Ulhas

Tuenkar, South Goa District Collector Asvin Chandru Cleetus, and Margao Municipal Council Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar. The gathering primarily consisted of students from various schools and colleges across the region. Later in the day, Governor of Goa P.S. Sreedharan Pillai visited Lohia Maidan to pay tribute to the martyrs and participated in the commemorative activities.

Electricity dept officials take stock of power issues faced by Velim locals

Team Herald

MARGAO: Addressing complaints about electricity issues in Velim constituency, Chief Electrical Engineer Stephan Fernandes, along with his team of engineers and staff, visited the office of local MLA Cruz Silva to meet stakeholders and conduct a comprehensive review of the area's power supply challenges. The meeting focused on identifying recurring problems faced by residents and formulating a strategic plan to enhance power reliability and infrastructure. Following the review, a roadmap was finalised outlining short, medium, and long-term solutions. Immediate actions will include repairs to faulty lines and critical maintenance. Medium-term plans aim to upgrade transformers and improve load distribution, while long-term strategies involve infrastructure

modernisation and capacity building. MLA Cruz Silva welcomed the department's response and emphasized the importance of timely execution. "The residents of Velim have long suffered due to frequent power outages and inconsistent supply. I'm thankful to Chief Engineer Shri Stephan Fernandes and his team for visiting us and taking this issue seriously. This is a much-needed step, and we will ensure that these solutions are implemented effectively to bring lasting relief to the people," said Silva. The Electricity Department will continue to monitor developments and coordinate with the MLA's office for smooth execution of the outlined measures. Regular follow-ups and community engagement will form part of the implementation process to ensure transparency and accountability.

