

ST leaders begin fast for political reservation in Assembly

Accuse govt of again trying to fool ST community by giving hollow assurances; vow to continue hunger strike till final notification for reservation of seats is issued

Team Herald

PANJIM: Scheduled Tribes (ST) group leaders on Wednesday started their chain hunger strike at Azad Maidan in the capital city demanding political reservation in the State Legislative Assembly.

The leaders on Sunday last had asked the State government to issue a notification with regards to reserving four seats for ST communities in Goa Assembly within 48 hours or face hunger strike.

As no action was initiated by the government in this direction, the group started their chain hunger strike.

Speaking to reporters, GAKUVED Federation general secretary Rupesh Velip said, "Two days back through a press conference we made it clear that if notification is not issued within 48 hours then we will sit on a hunger strike. As there is no sign of the notification, we sat on the hunger strike. The delegation, which had gone to Delhi last month, was assured that a decision will be taken in the cabinet meeting. Two cabinet meetings have taken place but there is no announcement yet."

Velip said the government has been fooling the ST community people for the last 10 years and is again trying to do the same by giving hollow



ST members on a chain hunger strike at Azad Maidan, Panjim, on Wednesday

assurances. He said the hunger strike will continue till the final notification for reservation of seats is issued.

ST leader Rama Kankonkar said the political reservation will provide strength to the people belonging to the ST communities and help in solving issues faced by them.

"A domination kind of thing will be created through the MLAs and our voice will be heard. Those who think that they have been meted out injustice should come forward and support the cause," he said.

Kankonkar said if the government requires votes of 1.8 lakh voters belonging to the ST communities then it must issue the notifica-

tion for reservation of seats before the Code of Conduct for the Lok Sabha elections is announced.

"We are afraid that those who fooled us in 2014 and 2019 elections, will do the same this time as well," he said.

However, North Goa MP and Union Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik met the agitating leaders at Azad Maidan and urged them to withdraw their chain hunger strike.

"Government has not said no to the reservation. I will speak to the Chief Minister in this regard," he said.

Stating that the process may get delayed, Naik said the protestors should understand the problem of the government.

Shripad faces 'humiliation'; ST members tell him: "Your own party (the BJP) is not paying much attention to you"

North Goa Member of Parliament assures to discuss the matter with Union Home Minister

Team Herald

PANJIM: BJP's Lok Sabha candidate Shripad Naik on Wednesday faced humiliation when the ST community members sitting on a chain hunger strike at Azad Maidan, demanding political reservation for the community, questioned the MP as to how he could pay attention to their demands when his own party (the BJP) is not paying much attention to him.

The protestors later spoke in a 'harsh' tone and told the five-time North Goa MP to give the community political reservation before Code of Conduct is enforced instead of giving them hollow promises.

Later, Naik assured the protestors that he would discuss the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

They also reminded Naik of his seniority in the BJP and that he was ignored by the saffron party.

Doubting Naik's capacity, they asked him: "How can you pay attention to our demands when your own party is not paying much attention to you. We have been fighting for the reservations since 2013 and hitting the streets protesting for the past two years. The government is only giving us hollow promises. You are the leader of Bahujan Samaj and so, you need to take us, Scheduled Tribes, with you and get us the notification regarding the reservation. We do not want to hear any other excuses," said one of the protestors to Naik.

Rama Kankonkar, a protestor asked, "Do you still think ST community will keep quiet and do nothing

only to end up voting at the end? Do you still think the ST community will vote solely on the basis of Hindutva? Do you still think that the ST community will vote on the basis of Ram Mandir? Should we keep doing only this as if we do not have other issues?"

Responding to the barrage of questions from the protestors, the MP assured them that he would discuss the matter with the Union Home Minister on Wednesday itself and reiterated that the government is willing to grant the political reservation to ST community.

"I do agree that there has been a delay in granting reservation to ST community but I do not want to speak on the political stance taken by the community members," Naik told mediapersons.

STAYING HYDRATED



To beat the scorching heat, a woman takes a break by quenching her thirst as her co-workers lay the rubble for constructing a jetty at Ribandar on Wednesday

Panjim resident booked for rash driving

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Old Goa Police have booked a Panjim resident for allegedly driving his two-wheeler in a rash and negligent manner which resulted into an Odisha native sustaining serious injuries.

According to the police, Aqeeb Sayyad, resident of Boca de Vaca, Panjim, was proceeding towards Panjim from Old Goa on his two-wheeler. When he reached near Sai Baba Temple, he acted negligently and hit another two-wheeler, which was coming in the opposite direction.

In the accident, Bijan Mandal (25), a native of Odisha, sustained serious injuries. He was rushed to the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Bambolim.

The incident occurred on March 3, 2024. The Old Goa Police have registered a case under sections 279 and 338 of IPC and Section 4 and 180 of Motor Vehicle Act.

The case is being investigated by Head Constable Samir Naik.

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Taleigao man gets conditional bail in rape case

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Tuesday granted conditional bail to Lakhan Kapshekar of Taleigao in the alleged rape case.

Hearing a criminal application bail filed by Kapshekar, the Court ordered that in case of his arrest, he be released on a personal

bond of Rs 25,000 with one solvent surety in the like amount to the satisfaction of the Sessions Court. The accused has been asked to attend the concerned Panjim Women's Police Station at 11 am everyday till the date of filling of charge sheet and as and when required.

He has also been asked to render full cooperation in

the investigation.

The accused has been asked not in any manner tamper with the prosecution witnesses and not to leave the State without permission of the Court.

Additional Public Prosecutor Adv S Karpe told the Court that charge sheet against the accused will be filed latest by March 7.

Rehabilitation scheme for survivors of domestic violence on the anvil

GSCW to recommend govt to appoint lady BDOs, CDPOs or dedicated women officers as protection officers to handle domestic violence cases under provisions of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act

Team Herald

PANJIM: Goa State Commission for Women (GSCW) chairperson Ranjita Pai on Wednesday said that the State government is planning to launch a scheme for rehabilitation of domestic violence survivors.

Speaking at a programme organised by NGO ARZ, she said the initiative will be taken up jointly by the State Commission for Women and India International University of Legal Education and Research (IIULER). Pai pointed out that the Commission handles around two to three cases of domestic violence in a fortnight.

She said it is a big concern that domestic violence victims are not getting justice on time. "Laws related to domestic violence cases are very good,

The initiative will be taken up jointly by the State Commission for Women and India International University of Legal Education and Research (IIULER). The Commission handles around two to three cases of domestic violence in a fortnight
—Ranjita Pai, Goa State Commission for Women chairperson

but there is a need of their implementation. Those laws are not being implemented properly and that is why victims are facing problem. Attitude of police personnel too are sometimes not good," Pai said.

Pai said the Commission will recommend the government to appoint lady Block Development Officers (BDOs), Child Development Project Officer (CDPOs) or dedicated women officers as protection officers to handle domestic violence cases in Goa under the provisions of

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

PI Mira D'Silva e Pednekar said women should muster courage and report any incident of violence.

"If you see anything happening wrong with you, report it immediately. Do not ignore it. Your ignorance emboldens culprits, which make them commit bigger crimes in future," she said.

The police officer also advised students to know self defence techniques and not to develop friendships with

strangers on social media.

"Girl students should avoid mingling with strangers on social media and must share problems, if any they face, with their parents or family members," she said.

Judge Vijaya Ambre, Member Secretary of State Legal Services Authority (SLSA), said, "It must be remembered that our safety is in our hand. We must make ourselves strong. Women need to identify their power. They need to be alert. Incidents take place because we do not pay attention to what is happening in our vicinity."

Director of ARZ Arun Pandey urged the govt to undertake a statistical survey of domestic violence cases in the State to understand the magnitude of the problem and devise policies to tackle the problem.

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