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Herald

GOA: RAINS LASH MANY PARTS OF THE STATE | INDIA: NRI MILLIONAIRE IN US ON TRIAL FOR KEEPING INDIAN AS 'SLAVE'; NITISH KATARA'S BROTHER ATTACKED | WORLD: OSAMA'S SON-IN-LAW ARRESTED



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ONE YEAR ON...

This term I will prove myself, says Parrikar

Devika Sequeira/Glenn Costa

If you have not been face to face with Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar since his election campaign and the victory that followed it last year, you would be struck by the change. Gone is the edgy, political persona driven by the need to get back to power. Here is a calm, focused, leaner and trimmer man who puts in as many as 16 hours of work a day and is where he wants to be ~ in the driver's seat, steering the destiny of Goa ~ after course correction to set right the damage, he believes, has been inflicted by the deliberate incompetence of his political

predecessors. His critics say that he has disappointed on many fronts ~ the mining issue and regional plan, not to mention law & order and tourism ~ while his supporters say expectations were sky high when he took over and work is in progress and will be complete by the end of his term. For now, however, and agree with him or disagree, the chief minister is in complete command and in no mood to brook dissent, as this wide-ranging interview with Herald on his completion of one year in office shows. Excerpts:

You waited seven years to return to power. What has changed in the last year for you to say publicly that you wouldn't contest another election? You, of course, withdrew that statement later.

No I didn't withdraw it. That statement was misunderstood. Maybe, I wasn't able to put it across properly. Personally, I feel that I'm not cut out for politics in that sense. I'm not very comfortable in politics. I'm a very emotional person, and once I take on something I take it to a logical conclusion. It's in my nature. I don't want to carry the burden of the next election on this tenure. The decision of whether I will continue in politics will come at the appropriate time.

But you are also not excluding continuing after these five years...

I don't know what'll happen after five years. My feeling is I won't be in politics all my life. Some people, till they die, they are politicians. I don't want to do that. This term, I will prove myself. Then let destiny take over.

Should politicians have a retirement age?

Obviously. I'm probably built for this hard work. Even at 57 I'm able to put in 16-18 hours ~ maybe the same level I was doing 12 years ago. You can't do the same at 65-70. While experience might be good for decision-making, too much experience can make you over-cautious. Sometimes you have to take bold, quick decisions. That ability comes down with age.

What would you list as the highs and lows of your government in this last year? What do you feel you've achieved and what have you not?

I think I've achieved a lot. To be frank, maybe my own expectations and parameters were quite high. I do my part, honestly, efficiently within 24 hours. The person who has to carry out the instructions may not have the same efficiency. When I look back from my own parameters, I've achieved 75 per cent. But for the public, it may be 80-90 per cent.

Do you consult with your Cabinet colleagues on important matters? One of the criticisms against you is that

The question of me interfering in a minister's department does not arise, unless s/he wants the intervention...



Because of Shah, maybe legal mining has also stopped, but illegal definitely stopped

Maybe my own expectations and parameters were quite high... My feeling is I won't be in politics all my life



there is too much concentration of power in your hands and very little consultation with other ministers.

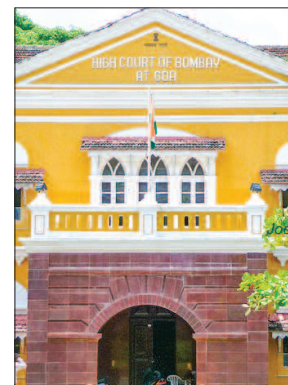
The question of me interfering in someone else's department does not arise, unless he wants the intervention. So far, I've not called for a single file myself. Of course, there are cases where multi-departmental issues come into the picture; obviously the chief minister is supposed to do that. Secondly, we have to understand the Westminster model. In Westminster model final authority is the chief minister and the other ministers are there to assist him.

The first year of your term has been almost entirely dominated by the mining issue. You even failed to finalise the Regional Plan 2021 because of it. You said the government was in no position to handle two serious, sensitive issues at the same time.

When I decided that I will take care of the Regional Plan, the mining issue was not on the platter. Mining did create

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Women judges must in sexual assault cases: HC



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PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay has directed that all sexual assault cases be assigned to a court presided over by women judicial officers from Women's Day ~March 8 onwards. This will be applicable to the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court as well.

In a circular released on March 7, Chief Justice Mohit Shah has directed that staff members including bench clerks, stenographer, interpreter, typist-cum-clerk, havildar/peons should be women, to avoid embarrassing situations.

"It is a settled law that cases involving sexual assault against women are required to be dealt with greater sensitivity. In these cases, women are the victims of crime and for the purpose of enabling victims to give their evidence in a stress-free atmosphere and without any fear or embarrassment, it is desirable that all staff members...are women," reads an extract from the circular signed by High Court Registrar General S B Shukre.

The track record of solving cases of sexual assaults in Goa and bringing the perpetrators to book has been poor, especially those involving victims of other nationalities.

To deal with offences against minors, the State has the Children's Court presided by women Judge Anuja Prabhudesai, but she holds additional charge.

CM: Mindset of males must change

TEAM HERALD

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PORVORIM: Claiming that perpetrators of crimes against women should not be allowed to go scot free, Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar on Friday stated that the culprits should be punished by the judiciary as well as by society.

Addressing the state-level function in Mapusa to mark International Women's Day, Parrikar said he has directed the police department to register each and every crime committed against women.

"The police will conduct investigations impartially so that the culprit can be punished," said Parrikar.

The state-level function was organized by the Directorate of Women and Child Development of Goa in association with Goa State Commission for Women.

"Unless the mindsets of the males are changed, crimes against women will not decrease. Some males in the society treat women as sex objects, due to which crimes against women are

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Several other cases against women of above 18 years are pending in designated courts. It may also be recalled that Goa government during the winter session of the Assembly had announced that the High Court of Bombay at Goa had directed district and session courts to transfer all cases of atrocities against women to fast track courts for speedy trial.

The decision came close on the heels of the Vasco and Delhi rape incidents to facilitate speedy trials.

CBI denies media reports on Wanchoo's role in chopper deal

TEAM HERALD

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NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of India (CBI) on Friday night denied some TV media reports that Goa Governor Bharat Vir Wanchoo is under scanner for his role in the

VVIP helicopter deal during his earlier tenure as chief of the Special Protection Group (SPG).

"Indian Air Force Air Chief Marshal (retired) S P Tyagi is an accused and we can't start probing against everyone just because the

accused makes allegations to save his skin," a senior CBI official said, pointing out that the governor enjoys immunity against any investigation in view of the constitutional status he enjoys.

He said the agency did not find

any weight in Tyagi's allegation to approach the president of India to investigate Wanchoo's role in the case as no probe can be mounted against a governor without the president's approval. Wanchoo, a 1976 West Bengal cadre IPS officer,

was the SPG chief from 2004 to 2011.

During his interrogation the former Indian Air Force chief denied that he changed the tender conditions to accommodate entry of

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Inside

Another feather in the cap for Goa

PANJIM: On the heels of Agonda getting top marks in the top Asia beaches, Goa got the top honours as the Best Beach Destination at the travel and tourism exhibition - ITB Berlin.

The award given by Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) was received by Tourism Minister, Dilip Parulekar. -- Pg 6

WEATHER REPORT

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