

HC scraps Goa civil service seniority list

Panaji: In a major setback to the state government, the high court of Bombay at Goa on Friday quashed and set aside a controversial Goa civil service seniority list released by the government in 2015.

Separate petitions were filed by senior officials, inspector general, prisons, Elvis Gomes, officer without posting, Melvyn Vaz, as he is under suspension for over eight months for alleged involvement in the assault of jail inmates of central jail, Colvale, South Goa collector, Swapnil Naik and excise commissioner, Menino D'Souza, challenging the 2015 seniority list.

All four petitions were tagged together by the high court. In accordance with the seniority list, Goa civil service officials Sandip Jacques and Arun Dessai have already been inducted into the Indian administrative service (IAS). Dessai and Jacques have been posted in Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar, respectively. Gomes first challenged the seniority list in 2012 before the high court, but his petition was disposed on the basis of an assurance given by the state government to the high court that the list in question would be corrected.

The final seniority list came in 2015, following which Gomes filed the petition in April 2015 before the vacation bench of the high court sensing that the seniority list would be sent to Union public service commission (UPSC), and sought interim relief seeking a stay on the finalized list. Though he was not granted any relief, the high court had observed that the decision of the government on the basis of the list would be subject to the court's decision.

The petitioners claimed that since their joining the Goa public service post in 1997-98, updated seniority lists released from time to time, till 2010, were flawless. None of the officers whose names appeared in the seniority list had any complaints, the petitioners pointed out. The petitioners alleged that the seniority list released at the end of 2012 was tweaked allegedly to favour two officials, disturbing seniority of the petitioners and consequently their induction into the IAS.

While in the earlier seniority list the ranking of petitioners Gomes and Naik was above that of Jacques and Dessai, the 2015 seniority list allegedly changed their ranking, placing them below Jacques and Dessai.

Naik has already been inducted into IAS and is awaiting posting.