

## Anganwadis should provide education apart from food

The decision to include preschools under the RTE Act should have been taken long time ago. We activists have been demanding this for a long time. We must realise that the age group between 3 and 6 years is very crucial to a child's mental development. A child's brain develops a lot till the age of six. Studies have shown that getting preschool education benefits a child. The argument that this will strain the existing infrastructure is not correct as the nursery schools can be expanded to meet the demand. We need to move towards education for all and promote the concept of neighbourhood school education. The solution is to increase the number of seats in nursery schools. The other proposed change to include children of sex workers, economically disadvantaged, backward classes, minorities is also a welcome move as these children are often deprived of education. Anganwadis are supposed to provide education but they focus only on nutrition.

**ANJALI BAPAT, CONVENER OF PROJECT AKSHARDEEP, SWADHAAR**

## Primary schools must open their own preschools

We have been fighting for a long time for this change and welcome it. Children belonging to deprived sections of society will be at a severe disadvantage if they go to school in standard

I without any preschool education. A child's mental development is rapid between birth and the age of six for which preschool education is required. The children from poor families generally miss out on preschool education as their parents do not understand the need for it. The way to tackle the shortage of nursery seats is that primary schools must open their own preschools. One problem in most nursery schools is that they function in English and not in the mother tongue of a child. The child learns best in his or her mother tongue. So, there is a need for more nursery schools in Indian languages.

**AUDREY FERREIRA, CONSULTANT, INDIA SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE**

## I am sceptical about govt's ability to implement changes

The government has been talking about regulating the preschool education sector for the last 25 years. However, till now, it has not happened. There is definitely a need to regulate this sector but the government does not have the manpower or

wherever to regulate it. There are just too many pre-primary schools for the government to regulate. While I support this move in principle, I am sceptical about the government's ability to actually implement it. It is one thing to bring in a law and another to actually implement it. The spirit of the RTE Act is good but neither the government nor the schools are implementing it properly. The move to amend the Act to include children of sex workers, migrant workers, minorities, physically handicapped and displaced communities is also a good move as these children need education too. As for the argument that there is shortage of teachers and infrastructure in nursery schools, that is the case even in primary schools. So, this argument is not valid.

**MADHAVI KAPUR, TRUSTEE, AMAN SETU SCHOOL**

# TAKING BABY STEPS

## Should preschools be brought under the ambit of RTE Act?

The Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry plans to expand the Right to Education Act (RTE) to cover preschools. Under the plan, children between three and six years of age will be guaranteed preschool facilities. However, the bigger question is that will the government be able to implement the amendments? **Speak Up** finds out



For representational purpose only

A private member's bill of 2011 is likely to come up for discussion in the legislative council next week. The bill is aimed at amending the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act and its application in the state

From including preschool under the ambit of the Act to widening the age limit from the current 6-14 to 3-18 and introducing remedial measures for weak children, the bill widens the scope of the Act

The amendment seeks to redefine the definition of children belonging to a disadvantaged group to include children of educationally backward

classes, minorities, those with physical challenges, children of sex workers, displaced communities and migrant labourers, orphans and homeless, child labourers and children in custody among others

What can be a game changer is the amendment to defining the meaning of a school as any recognised, universally designed preschool centre or school imparting preschool and school education

Lack of regulations has allowed several substandard playschools and preschools to flourish across the country

**THE GAME CHANGER...**

### WRITE IN



Have something to list, an offbeat picture to share, a service to offer, a line drawing, suggestions or feedback? Drop us a short 'n' sweet mail — with a picture, if need be — at [punespeakup@dnaindia.net](mailto:punespeakup@dnaindia.net). **TEAM SPEAK UP:** Vikas Joshi & Pooja Y Shukla **GET IN TOUCH:** Call 39888888 extn 130

# State appoints panel to probe cop assault case

DNA Correspondent ● @DNA

The state has appointed a six-member committee to conduct a free and fair probe into the assault on sub-inspector Sachin Suryavanshi and the suspension of five MLAs involved.

Two MLAs — Ram Kadam of MNS and Kshitij Thakur of Bahujan Vikas Aghadi — were arrested for three days for allegedly assaulting Suryavanshi in Vidhan Bhavan.

State minister for parliamentary affairs Harshvardhan Patil said, "This committee will be headed by MLA Ganpatrao Deshmukh of PWP. Other members are Dilip Sopal, Girish Bapat, Uttamrao Dikale, Sadashivrao Patil and RM Wani.

Assembly speaker Dilip Valse Patil said the committee will study the available CCTV footage. "I will extend my support and help conduct the probe. I'm not here to hide or protect anyone; everything



MLA Kshitij Thakur of Bahujan Vikas Aghadi outside Arthur Road jail after he got bail on Monday — Hemant Padalkar DNA

will be done as per the law," Patil said, adding that the report will be tabled before the House once it is submitted.

Shiv Sena MLA Ashish Jaiswal said they have been facing a "step-motherly treatment" from the state, particularly from the police. "When it comes to the state dealing with

### Khaki VS KHADI

and MLAs is widening," he said. MNS MLA Harshvardhan Jadhav recalled the time when he was allegedly assaulted by the police while blocking the CM's convoy about a year ago. "Why were different law ap-

### PIL seeks inquiry

A social activist has filed a PIL in Bombay high court, seeking that an inquiry be conducted by the state's police chief or any other agency into the alleged assault on sub-inspector Sachin Suryavanshi by a group of five legislators in the state's legislature premises on March 19

The litigation by activist Hemant Patil seeks that the five legislators, who had allegedly assaulted Suryavanshi, be directed to pay damages to the

police, different norms are applied. As a result, the rift between several articles and assaulting me, the home department promoted them," Jadhav said. Jadhav appealed for the state to not be biased. "But it is possible that the state police, who hold power in their hands, are misusing it," he said.

## It is a conspiracy against me: Kadam

Sanjeev Devasia & Manish Pathak ● @SANJEEVDEVASIA

Hours after their release from Arthur Road jail, MLAs Ram Kadam and Kshitij Thakur's father former MLA Hitendra Thakur claimed they had been given a raw deal.

"The whole incident is a conspiracy against me and I will respond to this soon. This is an injustice to me," said Kadam.

On his experience in jail, Kadam said, "This is not the first time I am going to jail. So it is nothing new to me."

While Kshitij Thakur remained unavailable for com-

ment, Hitendra Thakur said he would not support his son if he was wrong. "But these are wild allegations," he said.

"Take a look at the clip recorded at Bandra Worli Sea Link. The traffic policeman's voice is louder than my son's."

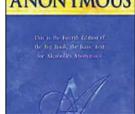
He claimed Kshitij was asleep in the car when it was stopped. "Did he ask any favour from the policeman?"

He paid the charges but when the policeman started speaking loudly and was not saying what the second violation was, the argument started...

Did he commit a mistake by asking him how he would speak to a common man if this is how he spoke to an MLA?"

## Religious Views of AA

### ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



### POSITIVE THINKING

### Alcoholics Anonymous

"Alcoholics Anonymous is natural; it is natural at the point where nature comes closest to the supernatural, namely in humiliations and in consequent humility. There is something spiritual about an art museum or a symphony; there is something spiritual about A.A. too."

"The basis of the technique of Alcoholics Anonymous is the truly Christian principle that a man cannot help himself except by helping others. The A.A. plan is described by the members themselves as 'self-insurance.' This self-insurance has resulted in the restoration of physical, mental and spiritual health and self-respect to hundreds of men and women who would be hopelessly down and out without its unique but effective therapy."

"I think that psychologi-

cally speaking there is a point of advantage in the approach that is being made in this movement that cannot be duplicated."

In India, A.A. Groups are functioning in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and the Union Territory of Delhi as on 1992 and are having Service Offices which provide information about A.A. fellowship.

In Mumbai, India, Alcoholics Anonymous maintains its National Service Centre. The General Service Board of A.A., India (the Trustees) administers A.A. General Service Office and our bi-monthly journal "The Twelfth Step."

If you cannot find A.A. in your locality please write to the General Service Office (India) from where you will get a prompt reply.

(Call 09022 771011 or [emailsoindia@gmail.com](mailto:emailsoindia@gmail.com) for more information or to get a free copy of the Alcoholics Anonymous text)

## Political parties, NGOs condemn tainted MLAs

### Demand footage of assault on cop should be made public

DNA Correspondent

Former minister of state for home Bhai Vaidya, CPM leader Ajit Abhyankar and other leaders of various parties condemned the MLAs Kshitij Thakur and Ram Kadam for attacking a police officer. They also demanded that the footage showing the act should be made public.

A demonstration was staged by various political parties and NGOs at Tilak Chowk near Alka Theatre in this regard on Monday.

Communist Party of India (Marxist), Janata Dal (Secular), Aam Aadmi Party, Socialist Party of India, Rashtra Seva Dal, Bharshtachar Nirmoolan Sangharsh Trust, Pune Janhit Aghadi and other organisations participated in the demonstrations.

Besides Vaidya and Abhyankar, Vidya Bal, Subhash Ware, Maruti Bhapkar, Siddharth Dhende, Vithal Satav, Varsha Gupte, Vinay Hardikar and others led the demonstrations. A memorandum signed by all the leaders and people of Pune will be sent to the speaker of legislative assembly Dilip Walse-Patil in this regard.

"Through their behaviour, the MLAs



Activist Vidya Bal signs the memorandum pressing for suspension of MLAs during a demonstration at Tilak Chowk on Monday

have shown that the laws they legislate are not applicable to them. If all the MLAs across the party lines halt the House for backing these suspended MLAs, we will protest against them," said Vaidya.

Abhyankar said that the suspension of these MLAs should not be lifted at any cost. "On one hand, the government is backing the suspended MLAs and on the other hand, it is moving a

privilege motion against the journalists trying to suppress people's voice. The footage must be made public as it will reveal the true colours of the MLAs," said Abhyankar.

Activist Bal said, "MLAs are elected representatives of the people and are here to serve them. They are not the masters, but the servants of society. They should not terrorise the media by moving privilege motions."

## Preschool education sector in India is not regulated at all

The Section 11 of Right to Education Act clearly empowers the state governments to bring the preschools under the ambit of RTE Act. The state has every right to include the preschools under this Act. The crux of the problem



is that the entire preschool education sector in India is not regulated at all. There are no rules or regulations or standards for this sector. There are a lot of preschools which do not have proper infrastructure or trained teachers. The preschools are the foundation of education and it is imperative that you have good quality preschools. Currently, the bill is still being prepared and it is too early to comment on it till it takes definite shape. The government must frame the norms for preschools that is the number of teachers, infrastructure and the number of non-teaching staff required, etc. before implementing this decision.

**ABEDA INAMDAR, VICE PRESIDENT, ANGLO URDU GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL**

## Number of school dropout is high among poor kids

Presently, the RTE Act covers children between 6-14 age group. The main problem observed is that the number of school dropouts is high among the children of con-



struction workers, beggars, etc. This is because these children spend the first 6 years of their life in an open and free atmosphere which is opposite to the classroom atmosphere. Presently, the schools claim that these children find it difficult to cope up with the classroom atmosphere if they are admitted through the 25% quota. So, if this quota applies right from the time a child begins schooling then they will be more comfortable with other classmates and the overall school atmosphere. Secondly, the future of these children is not assured after standard VIII or 14 years of age. So, this bill will incorporate all the children from the age group of 3-18 years.

**TAPAS SUTRADHAR, CONVENER, ACTION FOR RIGHTS OF CHILD**

## Set up a college that will exclusively train teachers

The main problem for the government will be that most of the preschools in the country are in private hands and not aided by the government in any way.

So, it is an open question as to how the government will actually bring these schools under the ambit of the RTE. While it is a noble idea that the poor children should get the benefit of preschool education, the problem with the preschool sector in India is that it is so huge and diverse that it is difficult to regulate. The benefit of bringing the preschools under the RTE Act is that there will finally be some uniformity in the teaching standards in this sector. One major challenge will be the shortage of trained teachers in preschools. The government of Maharashtra can set up a training college exclusively for producing nursery school teachers.

**JAS JOHARI, PROPRIETOR, CHILDREN'S LIBRARY**

### ALMANAC

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

Shri Vikram Samvat 2069, Sake Era 1935, Sun Utrayan, Uttar Gole, Basant Ritu, Phalgun Shukla Paksha Chaturdashi till 4.27 pm, Nakshatra Purvaphalguni till 10.45 am, Yoga Gand till 6.58 pm, Karan Vanij till 4.27 pm and after that Bhadra till 3.43 am. Then Bav starts.

Rahu Kala: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

Yam Ganda: 9 am to 10.30 am

Best Period: 10.30 am to noon & 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm

### YOUR CITY—YOUR DAY

For listings, please mail at [puneevent@dna@gmail.com](mailto:puneevent@dna@gmail.com)



Kitsch, the all-day dining restaurant at O Hotel, will bring for its patrons, lavish Rajasthani vegetarian and non-vegetarian delicacies

**When:** Till April 10, Lunch (Noon to 3 pm), Dinner (7 pm to 11 pm)

**Where:** Kitsch, O Hotel, Koregaon Park

**What:** This Holi, Puneites can indulge in traditional Indian treats at MoMo Café, which will bring together popular cuisines from all across the country under one roof for all the food aficionados. So go ahead and treat yourself with a delectable menu and experience the authentic dishes like *pooran poli*, *Gujarati kadi*, *macher jho*, *appam & stew*, *pitla*, *bhakri*, *ghewar* and more

**When:** March 25-29, All through the day

**Where:** Courtyard by Marriott, Hinjewadi

### Artists' galore

**What:** All art enthusiasts are in for a treat as a group of Pune's well-known artists present the second annual exhibition of watercolour paintings. The exhibition, Kalashree, was inaugurated by renowned artist Ravi Rao (Sanskar Bharati and Rashtriya Mantri Puraskar awardee)

**When:** 11 am to 8 pm

**Where:** Darpan Art Gallery, Kala Chaya Campus, Patrakarnagar Lane, Off Senapati Bapat Road

### Drink and be merry

**What:** Puneites are in for a great time as Manchester United Cafe Bar is now making it special for all with its "Extended Weekend" celebrations. On "Fabulous Tuesdays", all patrons will get unlimited drinks at just Rs750 while "Wednesday Buzz" will offer all (IMFL) drinks at Rs99 at any time during the day

**When:** 8 pm-11 pm

**Where:** Manchester United Cafe, Amanora Town Centre, Hadapsar

### Gastronomic delight

**What:** With just a few days left for Holi, the O Hotel warmly welcomes Puneites to relish and savour the rich and colourful cuisine of the desert state of India — Rajasthan.

**What:** Indulge in an assortment of veg, meat & sea food plates at 'BBQ & Grill Fest' by Citrus Hotels, which start at just Rs399

**When:** Till April 2, 7 pm to 10 pm

**Where:** BISO & 60ML Citrus Hotels, Opp PCMC, Old Mumbai-Pune Highway Road

**What:** Explore Maharashtra through a culinary route at Shakahari, JW Marriott Pune. The restaurant celebrates an ode to local cuisine with the Maharashtra Food Fest

**When:** Till March 30, 7 pm to 11.30 pm

**Where:** Shakahari, JW Marriott Pune, SB Road

**Contact:** (020) 266883333