

Business Standard

Coconut classification row: Rodricks, green activists meet governor

Rodricks heads a non-governmental organisation Green Goa Works; says can't imagine Goa without coconut trees

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Green activists, led by fashion designer Wendell Rodricks, have requested Goa Governor Mridula Sinha not to give assent to the controversial Bill classifying coconut as a palm and not a tree. "We met the governor with our demand. She assured us that she will take up the matter with Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar," Rodricks told mediapersons after emerging from the Raj Bhawan here last evening.

The fashion designer heads a non-governmental organisation (NGO) Green Goa Works, which along with like-minded groups like Human Rights Law and Network met the governor. During the recently held Legislative Assembly's winter session, the government had amended Goa, Daman and Diu Preservation of Trees Act, classifying coconut as palm and not a tree. This sparked a debate across the state.

Rodricks alleged the amendment to the Bill is aimed to help projects like golf course at Tiracol (North Goa) which needs permission for felling of coconut trees in large numbers. "One can't imagine Goa without coconut trees," said the designer, among the first few to raise voice against the Bill.

"I tried to convince her (governor) citing cultural and religious significance of coconut tree in our life," he said. The green NGOs have decided to continue their agitation against the Bill till it is taken back.