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18 Goa Congressmen Quit Party

CHOICE OF NOMINEES FOR POLL RESENTED

"The Times of India" News Service

PANJIM, November 5.

EIGHTEEN Congressmen, including the vice-president and secretary of the Goa Congress and six members of the Pradesh Congress Committee, resigned from the Congress organisation today as a protest against the distributions of Congress tickets for the forthcoming elections, announced by the Central Parliamentary Board last week.

The resignation caused a major crisis on the eve of the elections in the Congress organisation in Goa and dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the ruling party.

The signatories to the resignation letter said: "The situation as it stands today only ensures the failure of the Congress in the coming elections with total loss of prestige and makes the battle easier for established reactionaries and anti-national forces."

TWO NOMINEES ALSO QUIT

Those who have resigned include two members who have been given Congress tickets—Mr. Anthony D'Souza, secretary of the Pradesh Congress, and Dr. Rama Hegde.

Among the others are Mr. M. Gaonkar, vice-president, Mr. Madhav Bir, member of the election committee, Mr. V. N. Lawande and Mr. Madhav Talanlicar and Mr. N. D. Prabhakar Angle (president and vice-president of the Goa Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Zotic D'Souza, Mr. Narayan Naik, Mr. P. Achrekar, Mr. Dattaram Desai, Mr. Bhagwan Naik and Mr. M. S. Prabhu.

Five of those who resigned are members of the informal Consultative Council and two are members of the Government-appointed Land Reforms Commission.

RESIGNATIONS DEPLORED

The Goa Congress president, Mr. Purushottam Kakodkar, deplored the resignations. He felt that the list of candidates finalised by the Central Parliamentary Board was "quite fair and binding on all Congressmen."

He discounted the possibility of a revision and said any decision in this regard rests with the High Command.

The resignations followed a decision of the dissident Congressmen, who held a 11-hour session today.

The resignation letter said the selection of candidates and allocation of constituencies betrayed the basic aspirations of the people and local Congressmen and ran counter to the recommendations of the pradesh election committee, bypassing the pledge of socialism and merger with Maharashtra.

PTI adds: A spokesman on behalf of those who have resigned said that the resignations were to express the "reaction to the allocation of constituencies and selection of candidates for the general elections."