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## Consultant to help draw up Mapusa town plan

PANAJI: The North Goa planning and development authority (NGPDA) on Thursday decided to call for expressions of interest (EOI) from consultants to prepare the ambitious Mapusa town planning scheme involving over 15 lakhsq m of land.

The authority also decided to appoint an advisor for the preparation of the Mapusa town planning scheme in two phases. While the government has already made a provision of 50 lakh towards appointments and preparation of the scheme, the NGPDA has decided to request the government to immediately sanction 10 lakh as the first installment.

This is the first time the state government wants to acquire land for development under Section 56 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1974. The decision was approved by the state cabinet on July 31 this year.

Under the scheme, the government plans to build projects such as Kala Mandir, Bodgešwar plaza, interstate bus-stand, warehousing facilities, exhibition ground, football ground, infrastructure to move schools out of Mapusa, etc. In phase one, the scheme will develop downtown Mapusa around the Bodgešwar temple (about 11.24 lakh sq m) and in the second

phase, the scheme will develop the areas of Camarkhazan and Gaunsavaddo (about 5.87 sq m).

NGPDA chairperson Michael Lobo told TOI that the authority will send a delegation led by urban development minister Francis D'Souza to Gujarat to see how a town planning scheme works. D'Souza, besides being the MLA of Mapusa, is also a member of the NGPDA.

The special feature of this scheme is that the government will not take over the land under the Land Acquisition Act, which is very time-consuming. Instead, the government will take over the land under the town planning scheme, which is much quicker. D'Souza is so confident of the plan that he hopes to lay the foundation stone for the Mapusa Kala Mandir on December 19 this year.