

Muslims to boycott 'surya namaskar' in MP

The controversy over reciting Vande Mataram in schools has come alive in Madhya Pradesh again, this time over the government's move to make 'surya namaskar' (saluting the sun) compulsory in schools and colleges.

The government had asked the state's schools and colleges to organise mass surya namaskar Jan 25 when it would unveil its yoga policy to spread the benefits of yoga among masses, officials said.

Many Muslim leaders have termed the move anti-Islamic and even said that if the government does not cancel the programme, they will not send their children to schools and colleges on that day because Islam does not permit bowing before anyone except Allah.

A final decision would be taken only after a meeting of All India Muslim Personal Law Board Jan 11.

'By making 'surya namaskar' compulsory, the BJP-led government is encroaching on our right to religious freedom,' said Noorullah Yusuf, Jamiat-e-Ulema's state unit spokesman.

'It was yet another attempt by the government to hurt our religious sentiments. We are not going to abide by it under any circumstances, ' said Mufti Shahar Syed Babar Hussain of Darul Ifta, a Muslim religious body.

State School Education Minister Narottan Mishra was quick to react, saying that the hue and cry over a programme aimed at inspiring the youth to know about yoga and its benefits has no meaning.

'Since 'surya namaskar' is not mandatory, there is no question of forcing any particular religious community to practice it,' Mishra added.

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