

## WAS 2<sup>ND</sup> SIDDIQUI VIDEO DONE AT GUNPOINT?

### Sensational claim by AAP leader refuels scrutiny of case; calls for CBI inquiry grow louder

**BASURI DESAI**

PANJIM: Why did Siddiqui alias Suleman Khan, the undertrial who escaped from Crime Branch custody on December 13, change his statements in the two videos he released during the nine days he was on the run? Fueled by the discrepancies and the doubts raised by his rearrest, it's a question that has been doing the rounds for weeks even as the police have clammed up and tried to deflect all queries about the investigation.

DECEMBER 25, 2024

### 1 MAN, 2 VIDEOS, MANY QUESTIONS

Why did Siddiqui change his stance in second video? Was this video shot while he was in custody? Was he under pressure to drop names taken in first video?

DECEMBER 16, 2024

### Siddiqui surfaces in video, claims he was escorted out of Goa by two police teams

Accused Deputy Speaker Justice D'Souza, SP (Crime Branch) Rajni Gupta and others of accused being taken in custody; all likely to surrender if case is closed

DECEMBER 20, 2024

### Whose lockup did Siddiqui flee from? No one ready to answer

The facility where the key land-grabbing accused was detained is not a registered prison under either SIT or Crime Branch; it may belong to Panjim Coastal Police Station

### THE CASE OF SIDDIQUI'S TWO VIDEOS

Siddiqui released two videos while on the run. In the first, he alleged that he had not escaped but was dropped off in Hubballi by the Goa Police. The first video was reportedly handed over to Congress vice-president Sunil Kawthankar by AAP leader Amit Palekar

In the second video, he accused Palekar of instructing him to record the first video and implicate politicians and police officers who had allegedly assisted in his escape. The origins of the second video remains unclear

was made at gunpoint. This was in the open court. Based on his statement, Valpoi Police should file an FIR. It was made in the public and the court took cognisance of it."

Cont on Pg 13 >>

### HERALD ASKS THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Have the authorities verified the authenticity of the two videos? What measures have been taken to investigate the serious allegations made by Siddiqui in the videos? Siddiqui's escape was allegedly facilitated by dismissed police constable Amit Naik. What actions have been taken against other Police officer named by Siddiqui in the viral video? Has there been an internal review to identify any systemic issues or other personnel involved?

Reports suggest the presence of a Deputy Speaker in the SP's office during critical moments of the investigation. What was the nature and purpose of this presence? Has this angle been thoroughly examined to rule out any undue influence or interference? CCTV footage from the Crime Branch lock-up reportedly shows Siddiqui being assisted in his escape. Have all relevant CCTV recordings been collected and analysed? What insights have been gained regarding the escape, and how are they being used to prevent future incidents?

However, the controversy flared up once more on Friday, with AAP Goa chief Amit Palekar claiming on Friday that he had relia-

ble information that Siddiqui had recently told the Bicholim Court that he was held at gunpoint and forced to make the second video.

Adv Palekar said, "I am not sure, but I have been told that Suleman Khan has categorically stated in Bicholim court that the second video

### ROYAL RIDE



President Droupadi Murmu arrives at the Parliament House complex to address the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament signalling the start for the Budget session, in New Delhi, on Friday

## Day before Budget, Eco Survey lowers growth forecast to 6.3-6.8%

### Survey indicates India's world-beating growth is moderating; says much needs to be done to achieve targeted 8% annual rate

AGENCIES, NEW DELHI: India's economy is projected to grow at a reduced rate of 6.3-6.8% in 2025-26, marking a slowdown from the 8.2% growth recorded in 2023-24. The Economic Survey 2024-25, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, warns that India must achieve 8% annual GDP growth for the next two decades to reach its Viksit Bharat 2047 goal of becoming a developed nation. The slowdown

is attributed to weak investment rates, global uncertainties, and regulatory bottlenecks. The investment rate needs to rise from 31% to 35% of GDP, while labour and land reforms are critical to unlocking economic potential. Despite strong domestic consumption, rural demand remains sluggish, and geopolitical risks, including Middle East tensions and the Russia-Ukraine war, threaten stability. Inflation contin-

ues to be a major concern. Retail inflation stood at 5.2% in December 2024, with food inflation soaring at 8.39% due to rising vegetable prices. The survey highlights that extreme weather events and global commodity price fluctuations could further disrupt price stability. India's manufacturing and exports are struggling, impacted by slowing global demand. Merchandise exports have shown modest growth, while imports remain high due to domestic consumption.

Cont on Pg 13 >>

## Scrap PAC and PUC, bring in transparency: NGO

### Memorandum to Speaker calls for audit of all committees

Team Herald

JANUARY 29, 2025

### PAC, PUC meet after expiry of term comes under scanner

Tenure of these panels was for 2023-2024

PANJIM: Days after the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Public Undertakings Committee (PUC) came under fire for holding meetings even after the expiry of their terms, the NGO United Goans Foundation (UGF) submitted a memorandum to the Assembly Speaker on Friday, demanding the dissolution of both committees. The UGF also called for an audit of the performance of all committees appointed by the Speaker. In the memorandum, UGF urged the Speaker to review the work of all House Committees, assess their performance, and take appropriate action for non-performance.

They also requested that the performance reports of these committees be published on the Goa Legislative Assembly website for transparency. The UGF further accused the PAC and PUC of holding meetings with government officials without legal authority, citing the expiration of their tenure. They also alleged that these committees were operating in violation of conduct rules. UGF member Dominic Noronha, speaking after submitting the memorandum, said, "We've appealed to the Speaker to dissolve

members to such critical roles."

Noronha criticised some committees for neglecting their responsibilities, labelling them as 'name-sake committees' that have failed to serve the public interest over the past two years. He pointed out that during their tenure, the PAC had not convened a single meeting in 19 months, and the PUC had not met in 15 months. "MLAs are duty-bound to act in the interest of the people and the state, but this responsibility has been lacking," Noronha concluded.

### TRUMP ON FIRE

### US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SPOKE HIS MIND ON VARIOUS TOPICS GIVING CLARITY ON POLICIES, ISSUING WARNINGS AND STIRRING CONTROVERSY

#### On BRICS

The idea that the BRICS countries are trying to move away from the dollar, while we stand by and watch, is OVER. They can go find another sucker nation. There is no chance that BRICS will replace the US dollar in international trade, or anywhere else, and any country that tries should say hello to tariffs, and goodbye to America

#### On Tariffs on Canada & Mexico

I will be putting the tariff of 25% on Canada and, separately, 25% on Mexico. We will really have to do that because we have very big deficits with those countries. Those tariffs may or may not rise with time. We're going to make that determination probably tonight on oil. Because they send us oil... It depends on what the price is. If the oil is properly priced, if they treat us properly, which they don't. We don't need what they have. For us to be subsidising Canada to the tune of \$175 billion a year, and subsidising Mexico to the tune of \$250-\$300 billion a year

#### On Syria

We'll make a determination on that (deploying US troops in Syria). We're not involved in Syria. Syria's its own mess. They got enough messes over there. They don't need us involved with everything.

They're going to do it (Egypt and Jordan taking in Palestinians from the Gaza Strip). We do a lot for them and they're going to do it

#### On Birthright Citizenship

Birthright citizenship was, if you look back when this was passed and made, that was meant for the children of slaves. This was not meant for the whole world to come in and pile into the United States of America. At that level, we're the only country in the world that does this. Everybody coming in, and totally unqualified people with perhaps unqualified children. This wasn't meant for that. I just think that we'll end up winning that in the Supreme Court. I think we're going to win that case. I look forward to winning it



More on Pg 11 >>

### 7 AAP MLAs quit party days ahead of Delhi polls

PTI, NEW DELHI: In a setback to the AAP, seven of its outgoing MLAs resigned from the party on Friday, with only five days to go for the Delhi Assembly polls.

Sources said these MLAs were disgruntled after being denied tickets for the February 5 polls and were in touch with other parties.

Most of the MLAs shared their resignation letters on social media and slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over corruption and other issues.

Madan Lal, the outgoing MLA from Kasturba Nagar, said seven AAP legislators, including him, have quit the party's primary membership.

He said they have also sent their resignation letters to Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel.

MAX. TEMP 33.6 °C  
MIN. TEMP 20.8 °C

idharudhar



I'm the Goan owner, but this outsider runs the shack.

## Stink of govt apathy as dead bodies pile up in morgues for years

### Documents with O Heraldo show that police failed to decide on the bodies despite repeated reminders over the years

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

PANJIM: The stink of government apathy currently emanating from the Goa Medical College (GMC) morgue refuses to go, thanks to the authorities' complete indifference to dead bodies kept there for years, putting a strain on the resources and raising the question - why are officials dragging their feet on this?

The question is important because a directive from the North Goa Collector nearly nine months ago had directed the disposal of 26 bodies that had been lying in the morgue for years.

The most concerning case involves a body that has been in the morgue since June 14, 2000, with no post-mortem conducted, as the required inquest panchanama has not been completed. Meanwhile, 12 other bodies, dating from 2020 to 2023, are also still waiting for proper disposal.

Minutes from a meeting held on May 28, 2024, at the North Goa District Magistrate's office, and obtained by O Heraldo, reveal the gravity of the situation. Dr Andre V Fernandes, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology expert at GMC, stated that "no inquest panchanama, post-mortem, etc, have been undertaken" for the deceased individuals. The meeting further highlighted that despite repeated reminders sent to the Panaji Police Station, no response

One body has been in the GMC morgue since June 14, 2000, with no post-mortem conducted, as the required inquest panchanama has not been completed

12 other bodies, dating from 2020 to 2023, are also waiting for proper disposal now



At the South Goa morgue, one body has been lying there since 2020, two more from 2021 and 2022, while three bodies have been kept there since 2023

had been received regarding the status of the cases. Deputy Collector and SDM Tiswadi, who attended the meeting, confirmed that memorandums were sent on July 20, 2023,

September 12, 2023 and February 9, 2023, but the police had failed to act. The Superintendent of Police for North Goa was urged to take action, but no further developments

Records from a meeting from May 2024 show that despite memorandums being sent on several occasions in 2023, police had failed to decide on the bodies

have been reported. A source from GMC's Toxicology Department, speaking on condition of anonymity, explained that "no post-mortem can be conducted without an inquest panchanama by the police," which has delayed the necessary procedures. DySP Braz Menezes, who admitted to attending the meeting on behalf of the Goa Police, said: "I am not really aware of all the details. I will speak with the doctor once I get to the office to check the pending cases and forward the same for follow up."

Attempts to reach North Goa SP Akshat Kaushal for comment were unsuccessful. Despite numerous calls and a message asking for clarification regarding the lack of action, no response was received. The situation is equally dire in South Goa, where several bodies have been languishing in the morgue. One body has been there since 2020, two from 2021 and 2022, and three from 2023, further highlighting the widespread failure to address the issue.

When contacted, Dr Gitte, the North Goa Collector, was unavailable for comment.

Cont on Pg 13 >>