

## P'YAT OKAY NOT TAKEN FOR OLD GOA WORK: MINISTER

Team Herald

**PORVORIM:** A day after the Se Old Goa Vilage Panchayat said that it was 'clueless' about the construction work in Old Goa, Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte on Tuesday admitted in Assembly that the file on the project had not been submitted to the panchayat for approval.

MARCH 25, 2025

**P'yat 'clueless', but govt says permissions in place**

Replying to a calling attention motion tabled by MLA Rajesh Faldessai, he said, "We had not submitted the project file to the Se Old Goa Panchayat, but we had given our presentation regarding amenities convenience centre to the gram sabha meeting held on October 29, 2023. If the church authorities tell us not to go ahead with the project, we will not go ahead."

Earlier, in a written reply Khaunte said that the Department of Tourism had obtained permissions from Archaeological Survey of India, National Monuments Authority, Town and Country Planning and Forest Departments for creation of pilgrim convenience facilities and green transport at Old Goa under the Centre's PRASAD scheme.

"Representatives from the Tourism Department made a presentation before the Se Old Goa Gram Sabha during which the Gram Sabha asked the representatives to consider pilgrim centre, extra amenities like laterite stone footpath behind Basilica of Bom Jesus and act on the main road between the Church and the Se Cathedral Church. This has been approved by the Gram Sabha through a resolution," he said.

Khaunte reiterated that after cannon balls were found at the spot, work had been stopped at the spot, as per ASI's directives.

## Protesters demand Master Plan for heritage zone

Allege that 100 trucks had carted off materials from excavated site, call for return of items

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Save Old Goa Action Committee (SOGAC) on Tuesday stood firm on its demand for a comprehensive Master Plan for the Old Goa world heritage site and pressed for the return of the materials that had been carted off from the excavated site last week.

Speaking to the media in the presence of parishioners and committee members, SOGAC coordinator Peter Viegas alleged that the excavation work was carried out within the prohibited area.

Referring to Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte's statement that the department of tourism had obtained necessary permissions, he pointed out that Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister Vishwajit Rane was making a different statement. He questioned why excavated material was taken through another road along the river bank and pointed out that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) did not depute an expert during excavation and allowed



Peter Viegas, Save Old Goa Action Committee coordinator, speaks at the protest site at Old Goa

**Our demand is that the police should find out where the materials, including cannonballs, have been taken and kept. The cannonballs and other materials have been robbed by the contractor from the excavated site**

– Peter Viegas, Save Old Goa Action Committee coordinator

the contractor to destroy the protected area.

Viegas said, "We have filed a police complaint on Saturday. Our demand is that the police should find out where the ma-

terials, including cannonballs, have been taken and kept. The cannonballs and other materials have been robbed by the contractor from the excavated site," he alleged.

He said that since cannonballs have been discovered and ongoing work has been stopped, the government authorities should immediately revoke the permissions.

According to Viegas, nearly 100 trucks had transported the material from the excavated site for four days till it was stopped on Saturday evening.

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## Assembly debate shows casinos owe govt Rs 340 crore

Rs 100 crore dues stuck in litigation; Oppn alleges illegal live gaming in land casinos

Team Herald

**PORVORIM:** The casinos operating in Goa owe the government a whopping Rs 340 crore, of which Rs 100 crore is locked in litigation. This figure came to light in the Assembly on Tuesday, when Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemao lashed out at the government for failing to recover the huge sum from the casino operators and for not stopping live gaming that is allegedly happening at land casinos.

Answering the allegations, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant stressed that the government will recover Rs 240 crore from casino operators by March 31, while Rs 100 crore remains sub judice and will be recovered three months after the cases are resolved. He also warned that land casino licences would be suspended if evidence of live gaming was found.

The Opposition Leader also alleged that illegal live gaming was taking place at four land casinos, an issue that is under investigation.

**Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemao alleged that illegal live gaming was being conducted at some of the 15 land casinos, with four operators facing legal action since August last year, and that such activities were happening within a two-kilometre radius of the Legislative Assembly**

He questioned whether the government had appointed a full-time Gaming Commissioner to regulate casinos or if the GST Commissioner was also acting as the Gaming Commissioner.

Alemao further claimed that illegal live gaming was being conducted at some of the 15 land casinos, with four operators facing legal action since August last year. He stated that such activities were happening within a two-kilometre radius of the Legislative Assembly.

In response to Alemao's

questions, the CM clarified that the government had not granted permission for live gaming and confirmed that proceedings in two of the three cases related to illegal gaming had been concluded, while action was still pending in one case.

Sawant assured that the government was conducting regular inspections of casinos and would suspend licences if any evidence of illegal live gaming or violations of licensing conditions were found. He also confirmed that the GST Commissioner was also functioning as the Gaming Commissioner.

The Chief Minister stated that the government aimed to recover the Rs 240 crore owed by casino operators by March 31, 2025. He also explained that the Rs 100 crore locked in litigation would be recovered three months after the legal cases were resolved.

Sawant revealed that the State had earned Rs 1,418.82 crore from both offshore and onshore casinos over the past five years (between April 2020 and February 2025).

**OPENING TODAY AT 3.30 p.m.**  
**BIG DISCOUNT SHOPPING FESTIVAL**  
Opp. HEALTH OFFICE CHINCHINIM  
26th Mar To 6th Apr  
TIME : 10.30 am To 9.30 pm

**Goa HSSC exam results at 5 pm on March 27**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (GB-SHSE) will announce the HSSC Public Examination March 2025 results on March 27 at 5 pm at its Porvorim office.

A total of 17,686 students, including 9,224 boys and 8,462 girls across Arts (4,068), Commerce (5,085), Science (6,086), and Vocational (2,447) streams, had appeared for the exam.

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## Will not hide under my bed: Kamra

Refuses to apologise; FIR registered against comic

**PTI, MUMBAI/NEW DELHI:** Comedian Kunal Kamra stood his ground and stubbornly refused to apologise for his jokes targeting Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde who reminded him about maintaining decorum and limits to freed speech but asserted he did not support vandalism.

"I will not apologise or hide under the bed waiting for the controversy to die down," a

defiant Kamra asserted in a late Monday night statement as his controversial comments made during a show in Mumbai continued to stir politics in Maharashtra and beyond.

While Shinde said the comments – a parody targeting him – were like 'taking supari (or contract)' to speak against someone, many others weighed in too.

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**There is freedom of speech. We understand satire. But there should be a limit. This is like taking a 'supari' (contract) to speak against someone**

– Eknath Shinde, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister

**This programme contains coarse language, offensive content & is unfit for consumption by those whose feelings and sentiments can be hurt. No one but you are liable for any outrage or hurt that you claim is caused by your voluntary viewership**

– Kunal Kamra, Comedian



President of Allahabad High Court Bar Association Anil Tiwari with other lawyers during an indefinite strike over Justice Yashwant Varma's transfer to the Allahabad High Court in Prayagraj, on Tuesday

## Cash-at-home row: SC's probe panel visits residence of Justice Varma

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The three members of a Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee visited the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma on Tuesday as it commenced its inquiry into allegations of discovery of a cash pile at his residence here.

Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the HC of Punjab and Haryana, Justice G S Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the HC of Himachal Pradesh, and Anu Sivaraman, a judge of the HC of Karnataka, reached Justice Varma's official residence at 30, Tughlak Crescent and were inside for

around 30-35 minutes. The committee is learnt to have inspected the site before leaving in the afternoon, the sources said.

It is not known whether Justice Varma was at his residence when the inquiry panel reached.

The findings of the cru-

cial inquiry will decide the fate of Justice Varma who is facing allegations that "four to five semi-burnt sacks of Indian currency notes" were found in his Lutyens home following a fire incident on March 14.

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## SC takes cognisance of Allahabad HC's attempt-to-rape ruling

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court has taken cognisance on its own of a controversial Allahabad High Court ruling that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the string of a 'pyjama' do not amount to offence of rape.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih is slated to hear the matter on Wednesday.

Legal experts had deplored the observation of the Allahabad High Court on what constitutes a rape charge, calling for a restraint by judges and underlining the drop in public confidence in the judiciary due to such statements.

The high court on March 17 had ruled that mere grabbing of the breast and pulling the 'pyjama' string do not amount to offence of rape but such offence falls under the ambit of assault or use of criminal force against any woman with the intent to disrobe or compel her to be naked.

The order was passed by Justice Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra on a revision petition filed by two persons who moved the court, challenging the order of a Special Judge of Kasganj by which the court had summoned them under Section 376 of IPC apart from other sections.

According to facts of the case, an application was moved before the court of Special Judge, POCSO Act, alleging that around 5:00 pm on November 10, 2021, she (informant) was returning from the home of her sister-in-law (husband's sister) along with her minor daughter aged about 14 years.

Accused Pawan, Akash and Ashok, who were from her village, met her on the way on a muddy road and asked where she was coming from.

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**MAX. TEMP 34.6 °C**  
**MIN. TEMP 25 °C**  
**idharudhar**



Imagine a shopping mall right here, with branded outlets!

## Bhomkars vow to save shrine from highway work

Agitators say they won't allow a repeat of what happened at Khapreshwar temple

Team Herald

**PONDA:** The ripples of how the Khapreshwar shrine was uprooted at Porvorim are being felt in Bhoma, where villagers are gearing up to save the Sati Devi temple from the proposed national highway expansion project.

"We will sacrifice our blood but will not allow our deities to be touched. We will protect our heritage at all costs. The government should not test us," said local leader Sanjay Naik, voicing Bhomkars' fear and panic following a recent survey conducted by government authorities.

This latest salvo from Bhoma residents comes after the survey work was conducted



The Sati Devi temple at Bhoma

on Sunday. Naik claimed that while the survey was officially for the installation of pipelines, the markings and demarcations observed were for road widening. A structure dedicated to Sati Devi reportedly falls within the designated expan-

sion area.

Naik emphasised that while the government may have been confident in clearing the Khapreshwar temple for the highway expansion, the situation in Bhoma would be different. "If our temples or deities are

**The government has ignored the peaceful protests and cries of the devotees. While some politicians claim that no religious sites will be impacted, our concerns remain unaddressed. We are not against development, but we demand that the government consider alternative solutions, particularly the proposed bypass for Bhoma**

– Sanjay Naik, Bhoma agitator

affected in the name of road expansion, we will not hesitate to lay down our lives to protect them," he warned.

The leader further stated that the community's primary demand is a bypass to protect the region's 400-year-old

heritage, which includes an ancient lake at risk due to the proposed expansion. He criticised the State government's approach, particularly the contradiction between its claims of protecting religious structures while simultaneously allowing road widening projects that disregard local sentiments.

"The government has ignored the peaceful protests and cries of the devotees," Naik remarked. "While some politicians claim that no religious sites will be impacted, our concerns remain unaddressed. We are not against development, but we demand that the government consider alternative solutions, particularly the proposed bypass for Bhoma."