

## Gaude, CM share stage even as tribal leaders flex their support

Minister calls CM his 'good friend'; but UTAA meeting declares 'no one can silence tribals'

Team Herald

PONDA/PANJIM: The political thriller that debuted on Sunday with Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude making allegations of corruption in the tribal welfare department – which was interpreted as a swipe at Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who holds the portfolio – seemed to be reaching its closure on Friday.

Gaude was seen seated next to the CM at the Goa Statehood Day programme held at Kala Academy, Panjim, during the day and told O Herald later that the two were 'good friends' and insisted that 'vested interests' were out to break their friendship.

The significance of this won't be lost, because Sawant had branded Gaude's outburst 'irresponsible' and promised 'necessary action'. State BJP President Damu Naik, too, had confirmed that the central leadership had asked about the reasons behind

“He was vocal about the pending demands of the ST communities... These demands have been pending for the last 22 years. Should we stay silent? Two ST youths lost their lives during earlier agitations. No one has the moral right to blame Gaude, who is merely voicing the concerns of the ST community”

– Prakash Velip, UTAA president

Gaude's public allegations. He is supposed to meet the Art and Culture Minister on Monday. In this backdrop, Gaude's sharing the stage with the CM would be a strategic move to defuse the tension.

Interestingly, a majority of tribal community leaders who had gathered in Farmagudi for a United Tribal Association Alliance (UTAA) meeting, asserted that while a cabinet reshuffle is the prerogative of the Chief Minister, no one can silence the voice of the State's tribal population.

Gaude was strategically absent from the meeting, but this show of solidarity would go a long way to underscore his ground-level

el support and vote bank, something the BJP leadership is well aware of. But then, this timely reminder wouldn't hurt at this point.

At the meeting, former minister and UTAA president Prakash Velip said that Gaude's brief speech during Purna Din at Ponda last Sunday had been blown out of proportion. “He only spoke for a few seconds, but that video has now become a huge talking point. He was vocal about the pending demands of the ST communities. He made no objectionable remarks against the CM or the government. The CM is free to take any decision, but no one can silence the voice of the tribals,” Velip warned.

Velip added that a charter of demands had been submitted to the government six months ago. “These demands have been pending for the last 22 years. Should we stay silent? Two ST youths lost their lives during earlier agitations. No one has the moral right to blame Gaude, who is merely voicing the concerns of the ST community.”

Velip also expressed gratitude to the government for granting ST status to the Gawda, Velip, and Kumbi communities, but stressed the importance of the UTAA platform. “If we can't speak at a UTAA event, where will tribal leaders raise their voices against injustice? When will we get political reservation, and how long must we wait for it?” he asked.

Another leader, Vishwas Gaude, added that the Art and Culture Minister was being targeted for fighting for the rights of the ST community.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## MARCHING INTO HISTORY



The first batch of women cadets during a passing out parade of 148th course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) in Pune, Maharashtra. In a first, 17 women cadets graduated alongside 322 male counterparts from the NDA, on Friday

## Lens on GCZMA over shack approval violating its own order

Colva forum slams coastal authority for 'illegal permission' to set up temporary restaurant at Betalbatim sand dune site

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Colva Civic and Consumer Forum (CCCF) has sharply criticised the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) for allegedly granting 'illegal permission' to set up a temporary restaurant and wooden bio-fencing on sand dunes at Betalbatim, in violation of Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders.

The forum expressed shock that GCZMA had approved the project during its 452nd meeting held on May 22, despite previous directives ordering the complete restoration of the dune ecosystem. The GCZMA authorities have,

### FIGHT TO SAVE SAND DUNES

July 3, 2019: GCZMA orders landowner to demolish illegal structures and restore the sand dune  
June 29, 2021: National Green Tribunal (NGT) Principal Bench, New Delhi, dismisses landowner's appeal against the 2019 order  
November 10, 2023: Supreme Court upholds the NGT's decision  
January 28, 2025: GCZMA conducts site inspection with the Goa

State Biodiversity Board to assess restoration  
April 2, 2025: GCZMA conducts a follow-up site inspection before confirming if the restoration work is complete  
May 22, 2025: In its 452nd meeting, GCZMA grants permission for a temporary restaurant/shack and wooden bio-fencing on the same site, drawing criticism from the Colva Civic and Consumer Forum

however, defended their action.

The Supreme Court and the NGT had both upheld

an earlier GCZMA order dated July 3, 2019, which required the landowner to demolish all unauthorised

structures and restore the sand dunes in coordination with the Goa State Biodiversity Board.

The NGT Principal Bench in New Delhi and the Supreme Court had previously dismissed civil appeals by the landowner on June 29, 2021, and November 10, 2023, respectively, reinforcing the requirement for full ecological restoration of the site.

“The GCZMA, which was expected to follow up on its own directions to have the sand dune restored to its original condition, had instead illegally granted fresh approvals,” said CCCF president Judith Almeida.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Engineer hurls cash out of window during vigilance raid

PTI, BHUBANESWAR: Vigilance sleuths in Odisha on Friday recovered over Rs 2 crore in cash and valuable assets from the possession of a government engineer, which are suspected to be disproportionate to his income, officials said.

The search operation at the residences and the office of the engineer is underway, they said.

“The anti-corruption wing of the Odisha Police raided the residences and the office of Baikuntha Nath Sarangi, Chief Engineer, Plan Roads, RW Division, Odisha, Bhubaneswar,” a statement said.

Around Rs 1 crore in cash was recovered from his Bhubaneswar flat, and Rs 1.1 crore was found at Sarangi's residence at Angul, one of the officials said.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Beautify Colva – but clean the creek first, say locals

Colvekars demand core issues be fixed before cosmetic patch jobs; want to be consulted too

Team Herald

MARGAO: Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte's recent announcement that Colva beach will be developed under the Union government's Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme as part of the Coastal Tourism Circuit has drawn sharp criticism from concerned citizens and activists. They argue that despite the grand plans, persistent environmental and civic issues – most notably the long-standing pollution of the Colva creek – remain unaddressed.

While welcoming the government's focus on tourism and infrastructure, locals voiced frustration that core problems have been consistently ignored, even as large-scale beautification projects are being lined up.

Once a scenic and eco-

“It's ironic that while we talk about attracting tourists and beautifying beaches, the creek right next to it remains in a neglected and toxic state. We are not against development, but the government must first clean up what already exists. Otherwise, it's just putting a new coat of paint on a crumbling wall”

– Simao Rodrigues, local

logically important water body, the Colva creek is now plagued by untreated sewage, garbage dumping, and years of neglect. Citizens have also flagged related issues such as ineffective waste management, stray dog menace, potholed roads, and a poorly maintained public garden.

Repeated appeals to authorities have fallen on deaf ears, say residents.

“It's ironic that while we talk about attracting tourists and beautifying beaches, the creek right next to it remains in a neglected and toxic state,” said Simao Rodrigues, a Colva resident.

Rodrigues added that official talk of beautifying Colva Beach means little when the area's basic problems continue to fester.

“We are not against development, but the government must first clean up what already exists. Otherwise, it's just putting a new coat of paint on a crumbling wall,” he said.

Residents also called for transparency and public participation in the planning process.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Trump tariffs stay in place for now after court reprieve

AFP, WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump celebrated a temporary legal win as a court preserved his aggressive tariffs, triggering mixed reactions Friday across jittery financial markets.

The short-term relief will allow the appeals process to proceed after the US Court of International Trade barred most of the tariffs announced since Trump took office, ruling on Wednesday that he had overstepped his authority.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

## Twist in SC: Govt gets TCP Act hearing deferred

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa government, which had gone to the Supreme Court to challenge the High Court of Bombay at Goa's March 13 judgment that read down Section 17(2) of the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act, on Friday surprisingly asked for the matter to be deferred, citing the unavailability of its arguing counsel.

The apex court subsequently adjourned the hearing of two appeals in the matter filed by the Goa government and fixed July 21 as the next date of hearing. The Goa government has filed two separate Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) – one under the

name of the Chief Secretary and another under the TCP Department – reportedly to allow representation by two senior counsels, signalling the high stakes of the case.

Director of the Goa Foundation, Claude Alvares, who is associated with the petitioners, criticised the last-minute request.

“When the appeals were called out, lawyers appearing for the State informed the court that their counsel was not available! They did not mention the name of Adv Rohatgi as the counsel not available, since he was much in the building though not in the court. They said the Solicitor-General of the Union of India would be appearing in the matters,”

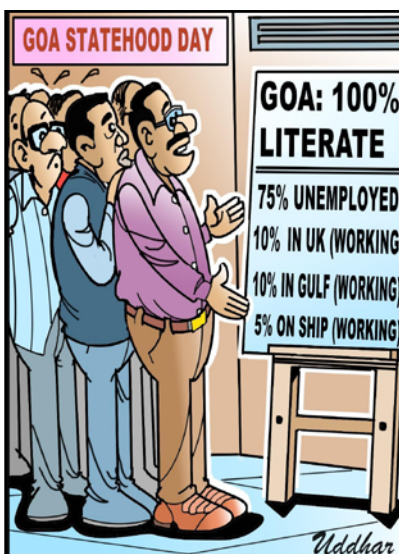
Alvares said.

Originally scheduled for urgent hearing based on a letter submitted by the Goa government on May 28, the appeals were taken up by a three-judge vacation bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Kumar, and newly sworn-in Justice N V Anjaria before being adjourned.

The petitioners in the High Court – Goa Foundation, Khazan Society of Goa, and Goa Bachao Abhiyan – had argued that the use of Section 17(2) of the TCP Act, which permits zone changes, largely benefited the real estate sector at the cost of ecologically sensitive zones protected under the Regional Plan 2021.

MAX. TEMP 29.6 °C  
MIN. TEMP 26.4 °C

idharudhar



Sir, here's the breakdown of our 100% literate population.

