

HC ORDER A HAMMER BLOW TO UNCHECKED LAND CONVERSION

Court strikes down two govt orders implementing Outline Development Plans for five North Goa villages

Team Herald

PANJIM/ CALANGUTE: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Monday quashed and set aside both a circular dated December 15, 2022, and an executive order dated August 22, 2024, that had brought into operation two Outline Development Plans (ODPs) for the villages of Calangute, Candolim, Parra, Arpora and Nagoa.

The court directed that all development permissions in these five villages must now adhere strictly to the Regional Plan 2021, effectively restoring the earlier planning framework.

The order will for now address rising concerns about large-scale conversion of land, particularly of hill slopes and eco-sensitive zones, which had been reclassified as settlement areas, for real estate development in these villages. Additionally, critics cited the sanctioning of a high Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 200 in already congested zones as another point of

THUMBS DOWN FOR UNCHECKED CONSTRUCTION

- The High Court directed that all development permissions in the villages of Calangute, Candolim, Parra, Arpora and Nagoa must now adhere to the Regional Plan 2021.
- The judgment came in response to PILs filed by the Goa Foundation, Calangute Village Panchayat and the Calangute Constituency Forum. They had challenged the legality of continuing construction activities based on the defunct ODPs

The HC granted a four-week stay on the operation of its order, giving the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department time to seek relief from the Supreme Court.

The court has ordered status quo be maintained during this period, giving cheer to those protesting against large-scale conversion of land, particularly of hill slopes and eco-sensitive zones, which had been reclassified as settlement areas

concern.

The judgment came in response to public interest litigation (PIL) writ petitions filed by the Goa Foundation, Calangute Village Panchayat and the Calan-

gute Constituency Forum, who had challenged the legality of continuing construction activities based on the defunct ODPs.

While allowing the petitions, the High Court grant-

ed a four-week stay on the operation of its order, giving the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department time to seek relief from the Supreme Court. However, it firmly instructed that the status quo be maintained during this interim period.

Earlier in December 2024, the petitioners had moved the High Court seeking a halt to construction in the five villages after the TCP department was found issuing permissions under the withdrawn ODPs. In an order dated January 23, 2025, the High Court upheld their plea, stating that the Supreme Court's previous directions made it clear that there should be no changes on the ground in the affected areas.

Despite this, the State government filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court, challenging the High Court's restraint on construction. The Apex Court dismissed the SLP on February 6, 2025.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

THAT SINKING FEELING



The ferry 'Betim' seen partially submerged and listing to one side at Chorao island on Monday, after a leak in one of its tanks was left unattended. While no casualties were reported, three submerged motorcycles were later recovered

Report on Pg 3>>

Damu, Vijai face-off in Fatorda

BJP's Damu Naik dares GFP's Vijai Sardesai to a debate on constituency progress; Sardesai fires back, calls him a 'nobody' in Fatorda

Team Herald

PANJIM: A political slugfest has erupted between BJP State president Damodar 'Damu' Naik and Goa Forward Party (GFP) president and Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai over development in the Fatorda constituency.

The latest round of exchanges began after Naik, while addressing BJP workers last week, threw down the gauntlet to Sardesai, challenging him to a public debate on development and 'signature projects' in the constituency. "Show me one signature project undertaken in Fatorda constituency. The underground power cabling and laying of sewerage lines were started during my tenure. I am ready for debate on Fatorda development," said Damu, a two-time former MLA from Fatorda.

He further added that the BJP would decide "at the appropriate time" who would contest the Fatorda seat in the 2027 Assembly elections. "It could be me or someone else," Naik said, adding that the decision would be made collectively by the party leadership.

Naik also attributed his 2012 electoral defeat to changes brought by the delimitation of Assembly constituencies. Respond-

Show me one signature project undertaken in Fatorda constituency. The underground power cabling and laying of sewerage lines were started during my tenure. I am ready for debate on Fatorda development – Damodar 'Damu' Naik, BJP State president

I am not debating with Damu because he is a nobody in Fatorda. If he had lost the Assembly election in 2012 because of delimitation, then why did he contest the 2017 polls? Why did he again lose in the 2022 elections? Damu should debate with his BJP workers why he is continuing to contest even after so many debacles – Vijai Sardesai, GFP president and Fatorda MLA

ing sharply to Naik's remarks, Sardesai said, "I am not debating with Damu because he is a nobody in Fatorda. If he had lost the Assembly election in 2012 because of delimitation, then why did he contest the 2017 polls? Why did he again lose in the 2022 elections? Damu should debate with his BJP workers why he is continuing to contest even after so many debacles."

On the subject of signature projects, Sardesai alleged that Naik's only major 'initiative' was an alliance with Margao MLA Digambar Kamat to acquire 1.37 lakh square metres of farmland at Madel for a proposed truck terminus. "It would have created social tensions and goondagiri. We agitated

against it and stopped it," he said.

Sardesai added, "After I became a minister, within two months I got Rs 300 crore sanctioned for the sewerage lines from Arlem to Shirvodem by replacing the old lines. This I did as part of the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). The old sewerage lines were leaking and causing a major health hazard."

He pointed out that he has been elected from Fatorda three consecutive times due to such developmental works.

"He (Damu) should introspect and give a reply. If he has guts, he should take disciplinary action against his party MLA Govind Gaude, who called him an irresponsible politician," Sardesai said.

Iran launches missile attacks on US bases in Qatar, Iraq

AP, DUBAI: Iran launched missile attacks Monday on US military bases in Qatar and Iraq, retaliating for the American bombing of its nuclear sites and escalating tensions in the region.

Qatar condemned the attack on Al Udeid Air Base attack, but said it successfully intercepted the missiles and no casualties were reported. It said its airspace was now safe.

Iran said the attack in Qatar matched the number of bombs dropped by the United States on its nuclear sites this weekend, signalling its likely desire to de-escalate.

Iran also said it targeted the base because it was outside of populated areas.

Iran announced the attack on state television as martial music played. A caption on screen called it "a mighty and successful response" to "America's aggression."

The Ain al-Assad base housing US troops in western Iraq was also targeted, an Iraqi security official who was not authorised to comment publicly said on condition of anonymity.

It wasn't immediately clear if there was damage to the Iraq base or any injuries.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry said the attack by Iran's Revolutionary Guards was "a flagrant violation of Qatar's sovereignty, its airspace, and international law."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Train passenger thrashed for refusing seat to BJP MLA

AGENCY, NEW DELHI: A video showing a passenger being thrashed aboard the New Delhi-Bhopal Vande Bharat Express has gone viral, sparking political outrage and prompting disciplinary action against BJP MLA Rajeev Singh. The footage shows the man, seated at the front of a coach, being beaten by several individuals — allegedly supporters of the legislator — after reportedly refusing to switch seats.

Congress leader Supriya Shrinete, sharing the clip on social media, wrote, "BJP MLA @rajeevsinghmla got a passenger beaten up by his goons for not giving him a window seat in the train. MLA ji is said to be close to Prime Minister Modi and Shah Saheb."

Another video circulating online shows the victim with blood stains on his T-shirt, wiping his nose while still seated on the train.

The incident occurred last Thursday evening and reportedly escalated at Jhansi station. According to the Government Railway Police (GRP), the altercation arose over switching seats and what was described as an objectionable sitting posture.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Cong wins Nilambur; AAP retains 1 seat each in Punjab, Gujarat

PTI, NEW DELHI: AAP's Gopal Italia on Monday won from Gujarat's Visavadar assembly constituency and his party also retained Punjab's Ludhiana West seat while the Congress-led UDF wrested Nilambur from the ruling LDF in Kerala, according to results of assembly by-polls in four states.

The ruling BJP in Gujarat retained the Kadi seat, while the Trinamool Congress maintained its hold on the Kali-ganj assembly seat in West Bengal's Nadia district.

The bypolls in the five constituencies were held on June 19.

Italia, the former president of the Gujarat unit of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), defeated his nearest rival, BJP candidate Kirit Patel, in Visavadar seat of Junagadh district by a margin of 17,554 votes, according to data shared by the Election Commission.

Despite its near-total dominance in the state, the BJP has not won the Visavadar seat since 2007. The seat fell vacant in December 2023 after the then AAP legislator Bhupendra Bhayani resigned and joined the ruling BJP.

Punjab's ruling AAP retained the Ludhiana West Assembly seat with its candidate Sanjeev Arora defeating his nearest rival and Congress candidate Bharat Bhushan Ashu by a margin of 10,637 votes.

Arora secured 35,179 votes while Ashu got 24,542 votes, according to the Election Commission data. BJP's Jiwan Gupta polled 20,323 votes while the Shiromani Akali Dal's nominee Parupkar Singh Ghuman got 8,203 votes.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

DGCA rejected Navy survey, but Dabolim high-rises under lens after air tragedy

Navy had highlighted multiple buildings posing danger to flights, but DGCA rejected the findings

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

DABOLIM: In the aftermath of the Ahmedabad air crash, the central government issued draft rules to regulate and remove obstructions around airports, but a Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) 'final order' from 2023 shows that it had rejected a detailed Indian Navy survey that highlighted buildings flouting height norms around Dabolim airport.

This inaction on the part of DGCA could be leaving both aircraft and buildings that fall within the crucial funnel zone of the airport in danger — something that should be of grave concern after the Ahmedabad disaster.

What has renewed concerns is one crucial argument behind DGCA's rejection of the Navy

BUILDINGS WITHOUT NOC AROUND DABOLIM AIRPORT					
Sr	Building Name	Coordinates	Floor number	Approximate distance from boundary wall	Approximate Location
1	Casa Royale II	15°23'24"N 73°51'10"E	G+4 (under construction)	80m	North East direction near Casa Royale
2	Prime Virgo	15°23'14"N 73°50'54"E	G+4 (under construction)	48m	North East direction near Casa Royale
3	Umiya Quarters (Quinto Apartments) G+6	15°23'24"N 73°50'54"E	G+6 (under construction)	150m	In North direction (opposite side of House Airport Gate)
4	Umiya Quarters (Quinto Apartments) G+6	15°23'24"N 73°50'54"E	G+6 (under construction)	110m	In North direction (opposite side of House Airport Gate)
5	Mr. Kama Prasad Yashvi	15°23'10"N 73°51'15"E	G+7	150m	North East direction near Dabolim Railway Station
6	White Goa	15°23'10"N 73°51'15"E	G+7	170m	North East direction near Dabolim Railway Station
7	ESSEN Silver Oaks	15°23'10"N 73°50'41"E	(under construction)	20,020m	North East direction near Dabolim Railway Station
8	Saline Residency (A)	15°23'10"N 73°51'15"E	G+4 (under construction)	201,080m	North East direction near Dabolim Railway Station
9	Saline Residency (B)	15°23'10"N 73°51'15"E	G+4 (under construction)	209,230m	South East direction near Dabolim Railway Station

List of buildings without NOC around Dabolim airport shared by the Indian Navy

survey — that homeowners were not present when the inspections were conducted. Navy officials have argued that notices were duly sent to homeowners to be present during the survey,

and their absence should not invalidate the findings.

In DGCA's final order dated August 11, 2023, addressed to the commanding officer of INS Hansa, Dabolim Airport, the



A ground +7 building just 20 metres away from the airport boundary at Dabolim with no NOC

DGCA pointed out a mismatch in the official obstacle survey, and that the method used to identify them was unsatisfactory.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Indore flat owner where Sonam stayed arrested

PTI, SHILLONG: The Meghalaya Police on Monday arrested the owner of a flat where Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused in the murder of her husband during their honeymoon, stayed in Indore after fleeing the northeastern state following the crime last month, an officer said.

With this, the total number of arrested persons has increased to eight including Sonam, her boyfriend Raj Kushwaha and three hitmen.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed to probe into the murder of Indore business Raja Raghuvanshi, went to Madhya Pradesh a few days ago.

"We arrested one more person today for his involvement in the murder

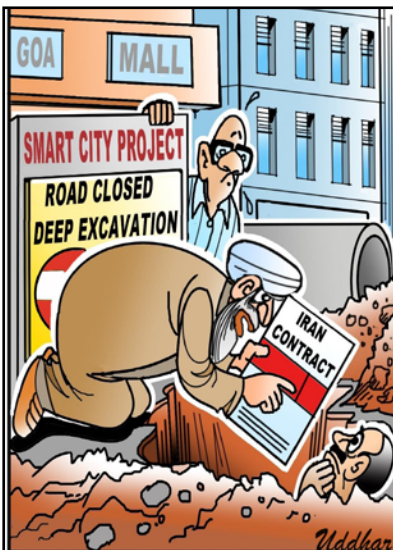
of Raja Raghuvanshi. He is identified as Lokendra Singh Tomar of Gwalior. He owns the flat where Sonam stayed in Indore after she fled Sohra," East Khasi Hills district Superintendent of Police V Syiem told PTI.

He said Tomar was wanted in connection with the destruction and concealment of evidence which are vital to the case.

Two persons - a property dealer and a security guard - were arrested by the SIT on Saturday and early Sunday in Indore.

Raghuvanshi married Sonam on May 11 in Indore, and the couple went to Meghalaya for their honeymoon on May 20.

Cont on Pg 11 >>



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