

Panaji, 21st February, 2026 (Phalgun 2, 1947)

SERIES III No. 47

OFFICIAL GAZETTE

GOVERNMENT OF GOA

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

EXTRAORDINARY

GOVERNMENT OF GOA

Department of Revenue

Office of the Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional Officer, Bicholim Sub-Division, Bicholim

Order

No. DCB/BICH/Kelbai-Devasthan/2026/666

Date : 21-Feb-2026

(Issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023)

Whereas, the Kalash Utsav and connected Jatrotsav festivities of Shri Maya Kelbai Devasthan, Mayem, Bicholim are scheduled to commence on 21-02-2026, and the said festival attracts a large congregation of devotees and stakeholders;

And whereas, the Mamlatdar & Administrator of Devalayas, Bicholim Taluka vide letter No. MAM/BICH/Devasthan/2026-27/803 dated 20-02-2026 has submitted that a continuing dispute persists among stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the Parab Gaonkars/Porobo Gaocar group, Naik Gaonkar group, Karbotkar group, Gawas and Gosavi groups, and the Managing Committee of Shri Maya Kelbai Devasthan, particularly in relation to control of rituals, sequencing of ceremonies, access to temple premises and performance of Kalash festivities;

And whereas, the Police Inspector, Bicholim Police Station vide letter No. PI/BICH/1759/2026 dated 20-02-2026 has reported that during the festival period in the year 2023, multiple FIRs were registered in connection with disputes arising at the temple premises, involving offences of unlawful assembly, rioting, wrongful restraint, mischief, criminal intimidation, causing hurt and breach of public peace and acts prejudicial to the safety and protection of children, thereby demonstrating a recurring pattern of confrontation and disturbance during the conduct of the festival;

And whereas, meetings convened on 09-02-2026, 17-02-2026 and again on 20-02-2026 for arriving at an amicable settlement among the stakeholders failed to result in any consensus and the apprehension of confrontation on the festival day has been specifically reported by the Administrator;

And whereas, adequate opportunity for amicable resolution of the dispute was afforded to all stakeholder groups and their representatives continuously up to the penultimate hour preceding the time fixed for commencement of the Kalash Utsav at 4:00 p.m. on 21-02-2026, yet no consensus or mutually acceptable arrangement could be arrived at;

And whereas, the dispute has historical roots, prior administrative interventions were necessitated in March, 2019, when directions for status quo were issued due to apprehended law and order issues, and again in April, 2023, when a show cause notice and subsequent regulatory directions were issued in connection with disputes regarding closure of temple access and festival management;

And whereas, the unresolved dispute among rival groups and the past history of offences involving rioting and breach of peace, creates a credible, proximate and immediate likelihood of disturbance of public order, obstruction to devotees, confrontation between groups and potential violence at and around the temple premises and along the procession routes;

And whereas, it is necessary to take immediate preventive and regulatory measures to ensure peaceful conduct of the festival, protect public safety and prevent any breach of peace;

And whereas, in view of the urgency of the situation and the imminence of the festival, it is not practicable to serve individual notices in advance and the circumstances warrant immediate preventive action;

Now, therefore, I, Shubham Naik, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Bicholim, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and being satisfied that such directions are necessary for prevention of disturbance of public order and breach of peace, hereby issue the following order:

1. The Managing Committee and members of the Parab Gaonkars (Porobo Gaocar) group and any persons acting on their behalf, shall suspend all activities pertaining to the conduct, organisation, management or assertion of control over the Kalash Utsav rituals, including any attempt to enforce exclusive rights, until further orders of this office.
2. All other stakeholder groups, including the Naik Gaonkar group, Karbotkar group, Gawas and Gosavi groups or any persons acting on their behalf, shall likewise refrain from asserting any rights, claims, control or ceremonial precedence in relation to the Kalash Utsav rituals during the subsistence of this order.
3. No gathering of four (4) or more persons shall be permitted within a radius of 100 metres around Shri Maya Kelbai Temple, Mayem; Shri Mahamaya Temple, Gaonkarwada; and Shri Sateri Temple, Kumbharwada except:
 - o bona fide devotees entering in an orderly manner for darshan,
 - o police and magistracy officials deployed for law and order duty, and
 - o authorised temple functionaries performing routine religious functions strictly under supervision of the administration.
4. The Police Inspector, Bicholim Police Station shall ensure strict enforcement of this order, including regulation of entry, dispersal of unlawful gatherings, identification of likely trouble-makers and initiation of preventive proceedings as may be required under law.
5. The Police shall also ensure adequate deployment at the temple premises, access routes and surrounding area to prevent obstruction, confrontation or disturbance of public order.
6. Any person found contravening this order shall be liable for action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and other applicable provisions of law.

This order shall come into force with immediate effect and shall remain in operation till 28th February, 2026 or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Given under my hand and seal on this 21st day of February, 2026.

Shubham Naik, Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

Bicholim.