

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1297
ANSWERED ON 08.12.2025

PROTECTION OF TEMPLES AND HERITAGE STRUCTURES

1297. SHRI CAPTAIN VIRIATO FERNANDES:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Central and State Governments conducted heritage impact assessments before approving road projects near sacred sites in light of the Dev Khapreshwar temple's demolition and century-old banyan uprooting—without heritage safeguards, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government has mandated event-based waste management protocols, enforceable by local bodies, with penalties for sacrilege-level pollution in view of the plastic pollution left at Bodgeshwar Temple after religious gatherings;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to explore alternate alignments or bypasses for infrastructure projects that risk damaging religious structures and enforce heritage compliance in view of the repeated threats to temples at village Bhoma and temples like Sateri and Mahadev due to highway expansion, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government is likely to fund geo-mapping, protect sacred groves under Forest Rights Act (FRA)/Forest Conservation Acts and institute community-led guardianship backed by surveillance and legal safeguards sacred groves like Nagvechi Rai are disappearing due to encroachment and idol theft?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) The Dev Khapreshwar temple is neither declared a Monument of National Importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958, nor notified as a State-protected monument under the applicable State legislation. Since the monument does not fall under the protection framework of either the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) or the State Archaeology Department, the statutory requirement for conducting Heritage Impact Assessments is not attracted.
- (b)& (c) Event-based waste management norms are being enforced through local bodies, including restrictions on single-use plastics. For the BogdeshwarJatra at Mapusa, the Temple Committee, in coordination with the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB), issued strict instructions prohibiting single-use plastics, displayed Dos and Don'ts on site, and imposed fines on violators. GSPCB also distributed upcycled cloth bags to vendors to reduce plastic use.
- (d) The most suitable road alignment was approved after considering all relevant factors, including the safety of nearby religious structures. Wherever feasible, bypass options are also examined and taken up to minimise any impact on temples such as those at Bhoma, including the Sateri and Mahadev temples by Public works Department of Goa Government.
- (e) Currently, there is no such proposal under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 regarding protection of sacred grooves.
