

Will be recruiting over 200 tourist policemen to curb child sexual abuse: Parulekar

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PANAJI: No tourism destinations in the world can deny the existence of child prostitution or child sexual abuse, but in Goa due to the efforts put in by the Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar, child prostitution or child sexual abuse is under control, said the Tourism Minister and Minister for Women and Child Development Dilip Parulekar.

Parulekar was speaking, on the sidelines of the annual report presentation function of Goa State Commission for Protection of Child Rights at the Secretariat on Thursday. He said, "I am not denying child prostitution in tourist destinations, but it is under control in the state," and added that the Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar "is all out to curb child sexual abuse in the state, and the police are doing their job."

Commenting on Nigerians, he said that the problem is everywhere, and added when he had gone to Mumbai, he saw the people there talking about the same issue, and nobody can deny that they are creating problems but there is no law to deport them.

He said that in the past, the state government had written to the central government about those visiting the state and engaging themselves in illegal activities, "but to deport them we need a law in place, so I oppose the proposal of former chief minister Ravi Naik."

While elaborating further, he said that "we cannot discriminate against the foreigners on the basis of caste, creed or colour. Tourists look for safety and security, and visit the place accordingly. Goa is safe for tourists whether they are foreigners or domestic. And, in order to attract monsoon tourists, we have offered rebate and tax concessions to 5-star hotels from June 20 to September."

"We have very less tourist police force. Within next two months we will be recruiting over 200 tourist policemen to curb child sexual abuse and other illegalities in the coastal belt," he added.

He said that after mining industry stopped, tourism industry is the only industry on which the Goan economy is thriving, and "we need to boost tourism. After the introduction of e-visas, arrivals of foreign tourist and charter flights will also increase."

The central scheme – Sagar Mala has been introduced to renovate ramps and commence inland water transport in the state so that the pressure on roads is reduced, he said and added that EDMs will not be permitted during the peak tourist season as the people come to enjoy X'mass season or usher in New Year.

He said that even if the EDMs are given permission, then the dates will not clash, adding it may be held earlier or later but decision will be taken as per the government's policy.

“EDMs need big space and we do not have sufficient space for such programmes in south. See, these are tourism-related activities and needs to held during that time only. The EDMs can be held only in north. I want to see tourism industry growing in leaps and bounds,” he added.