

## **HISTORIC BEGINNING OF THE RESTORATION OF SHREE SAPTAKOTESHWAR AND KOTITEERTH**

Panaji: September 3, 2026

The restoration of Shree Saptakoteswar and Kotiteerth, symbols of the ancient religious, cultural and historical heritage of Gomantak will commence on September 4, 2026. As part of the 'Kotiteerth Corridor Development Project' of the Directorate of Archaeology, a programme comprising Mahabhishek, Udakshanti, Mandovi Panchganga Aarti and a public meeting will be held at 9.00 a.m at Pornem Teerth, Divar.

The programme will be held in the presence of Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant and Union Minister of State Shri Shripad Naik. Goa is not merely a land of natural beauty; since ancient times, it has been a rich land of pilgrimage, learning, trade and culture. In the Puranic tradition, Gomantak has been described as 'Anandvan Kanan' and the land of Parashurama. Dynasties such as the Mauryas, Satavahanas, Bhojas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Kadambas and Vijayanagara contributed to the development of the region. Goa reached the height of its glory particularly during the Kadamba period, and Shree Saptakoteswar was the family deity of the Kadambas.

The temple of Shree Saptanath-Saptakoteswar at Divar was an important testimony to this ancient tradition. Although the temple was destroyed during the invasions, the faith in the deity and its tradition did not perish. The tradition was subsequently carried forward at Narve. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj restored the temple of Shree Saptakoteswar in 1668 CE.

The Divar-Narve region was known as an ancient pilgrimage centre owing to the sacred confluence of the five rivers, the Mandovi and the Zuari. Kotiteerth, with its sacred water tank surrounded by 108 Devakoshtas (niches/shrines), remains a living remnant of this tradition and bears testimony to the ancient religious and architectural heritage of the region.

After the establishment of Portuguese rule in 1510 CE, many temples, pilgrimage centres and religious traditions in Goa suffered a severe setback. The temple of Shree Saptakoteswar at Divar was also destroyed. Nevertheless, the Gokulashtami pilgrimage, devotion and cultural memory did not disappear completely.

The State Government has now announced the restoration of Shree Saptakoteswar Temple and Kotiteerth. This is not merely the restoration

of a temple; it is the revival of the thousands-of-years-old pilgrimage traditions, knowledge traditions and cultural memory of Gomantak. The restoration of this tradition at its original site is of immense significance for the rediscovery of Goa's history.

Goa is not merely the 'Rome of the East'; it is the land of Parashurama, a sacred land of pilgrimage, a land of temples, a centre of Vedic and Sanskrit learning, the land of Kadamba glory, and an ancient centre of maritime trade. Therefore, a more appropriate identity for Goa is "Kashi of India on the Western Coast!"

The Directorate of Archaeology, the Shree Saptakoteshwar-Kotiteerth Restoration Committee appeal to everyone to participate in this historic endeavour of restoring Shree Saptakoteshwar and Kotiteerth and to come in large numbers to support the preservation and revival of the forgotten religious, cultural and historical heritage of Gomantak.

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Government of Goa,  
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