

# Now, Cong effort to save casinos

Panaji: The Congress party will urge the government to safeguard the interests of Goan youth who are employed on casinos, in view of the demand from some organisations that casinos in Goa be closed.

Addressing mediapersons on Wednesday, in the presence of a group of employees of the Maharaja casino, the party's spokesperson, Vishnu Wagh, said, „90% of casino employees are Goan youth. They have approached the Congress party apprehending that if the casinos were closed due to pressure from some organisations in Goa, they would lose their jobs and would not be able to look after their families.“

Wagh added that there are about 1,500 Goan youth, aged between 18 and 30, working as dealers, cashiers, floor managers, slot managers, computer graphic designers and in the departments of food and beverage, housekeeping etc.

There is an insistent demand from some organisations in Goa to close all casinos in the state. No one is aware of the fact that casinos provide jobs and good salaries to Goan youth. If the casinos are closed in Goa, they will go elsewhere but Goan youth, who are qualified and earning their livelihood in these casinos, will be the losers. Their families will suffer as a result, Wagh said.

All the aggrieved youth present at the press conference were employees of the casino Maharaja that is yet to start operations. The casino was sealed on Tuesday by the mamlatdar on orders of the Goa state pollution control board.

Wagh and the casino employees however did not address the legal issues facing the casinos. For example, the casinos are locked in a legal battle with the government over the

government's directive to them to shift operations to the Aguada bay and the GSPCB has ordered their closure due to non-compliance with pollution rules.

Wagh said these issues are for the casinos' owners and companies to address. „The Congress party is only concerned with the humane issue of jobs to Goan youth and would urge the government to safeguard their interests in whatever way possible,“ Wagh said.