

MP threatens hunger strike over Playboy

PANAJI, INDIA: An Indian lawmaker has threatened to go on hunger strike if a Playboy nightclub is allowed to open in Goa, claiming it would promote prostitution in the tourist hub.



Michael Lobo, a state legislator in India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is opposing a club proposed on Candolim beach, the first of dozens of Playboy outlets planned across the country.

"I will resort to hunger strike until death if the Playboy club is allowed in Goa," Lobo told reporters in the south-western state.

"Playboy will project Goa as international destination for prostitution, which is a worrying sign for the tourism industry," he claimed

Despite assurances of no nudity in the clubs, Lobo said it was "obvious" nobody would pay for membership "just to sit and eat groundnuts. They will try to get value for money".

"Government will not be able to control the happenings inside the club once it is granted permission," he added.

PB Lifestyle, the Indian franchisee of the Playboy brand, announced plans in November to open 120 clubs, hotels, fashion cafes and shops in India over the next 10 years.

Goa's Tourism Minister Dilip Parulekar says the application for the first such club is under consideration, but reiterated warnings that they would "never allow vulgarity".

In a bid to appease the country's conservative values, Playboy has unveiled a new-look costume for the "bunny girl" waitresses in Indian outlets.

The traditional skimpy corset has been replaced with a sari-inspired two-piece costume, comprising a one-shoulder top, a bare midriff and a sheer, full-length skirt with a split. The ears, bow-ties and fluffy tails remain.

"If they wear a transparent sari then we won't allow it. If the fears raised by Lobo are true, the club will not be allowed," Parulekar told AFP.

Playboy magazine remains banned in India, along with a host of other foreign "adult" publications, owing to obscenity laws banning material deemed "lascivious or appealing to prurient interests".

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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