

GROUNDNED: Night ore transportation in Pilgao

Vedanta admits in HC that it has deviated from approved route for trucks; court orders company to stick to route given in Environmental Clearance

Team Herald

PANJIM: Night-time ore transportation – the source of anger and frustration for the long-suffering villagers of Pilgao – will no longer happen from the Vedanta mines. The State government informed the High Court of Bombay at Goa about this on Monday, with Advocate General Devadas Pangam confirming in court that ore will now be transported only till 5.45 pm, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) established by the Directorate of Mines and Geology.

The government's announcement came during the hearing on a miscellaneous civil application filed by Anil Salelkar, a resident of Pilgao, who raised concerns about the ongoing transportation of ore at night, which he claimed violated environmental and regulatory guidelines. Salelkar, the petitioner, had previously brought to the court's attention that trucks were transporting ore both day and night, often using a route not approved under



VILLAGERS, MINING CO BATTLE IT OUT IN COURT
■ Govt confirms in court that ore will now be transported only till 5.45 pm
■ Vedanta says it is using alternative path for ore transportation as it is facing obstructions on the approved route
■ Court asks for details of specific obstacles by next Monday, but orders company to stick to the EC-approved route
■ Advocate representing the villagers claims the State government's admission that the ore transportation route passes through tenanted land at Sarmanas, Bicholim, marked a significant victory for the local community

the Environmental Clearance (EC) conditions.

In response, the counsel for Vedanta Limited explained that the company had been facing obstructions on the approved route, which led them to use an alternative path. The court, however, instructed the company to file a petition detailing

the specific obstacles they encountered by next Monday and reiterated that the company must adhere to the EC-approved route for ore transportation.

After the hearing, Advocate Ajay Prabhugaonkar, who is representing the villagers, addressed the media, claiming that the State government's admis-

sion that the ore transportation route passes through tenanted land at Sarmanas, Bicholim, marked a significant victory for the local community. Prabhugaonkar also noted that Vedanta had deviated from the approved route and lacked a dedicated path for transporting ore, raising concerns over safety and environmental impact.

During the proceedings, the petitioner submitted photographic evidence showing trucks loaded with mining ore passing through Pilgao village well after 11 pm, in violation of the SOP. The new transportation route, which runs from Mineral Block-I in Shirgao to Sarmanas Jetty, reportedly passes through residential areas, creating dust pollution and posing safety risks to villagers.

Salelkar emphasised that the unsanctioned route not only caused noise and dust pollution but also lacked monitoring by the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB), further exacerbating the environmental concerns.

1.6 cr take Kumbh dip on Day 1

PICS: PTI



(Left) Devotees arrive at Sangam and (right) a sadhu takes a dip on the first day of Maha Kumbh Mela, in Prayagraj, on Monday

PTI, MAHAKUMBH NAGAR (UP): The fog was thick, the cold intense and the waters freezing as the Maha Kumbh, the world's largest gathering, began on Monday with over 1.65 crore people taking a dip in the Sangam in their quest for 'moksha' and the belief it will wash away their sins.

Spirituality and astrology, culture and religion, tradition and modern-day technology, it all fused into one in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati in Prayagraj.

More than 40 crore people, many from abroad, are expected over 45 days in the mela being held after

MAHA KUMBH'S MAHA NUMBERS

- 1.65 crore pilgrims took dip on the first day (Paush Purnima)
- 40 crore total visitors expected over 45 days
- 1 crore estimated number of devotees accommodated at any given time
- 10,000 acres of Maha-kumbh Nagar makes it the world's largest temporary city
- 55 police stations established
- 45,000 police personnel deployed
- 30 pontoon bridges built

12 years. Besides, seers claim the celestial permutations and combinations for the event are taking place after 144 years, making the occasion even more

auspicious for the faithful. And so it was that a sea of people converged in Prayagraj for the fabled Maha Kumbh. Ash smeared sadhus from their abode

in the Himalayas, the religious from across the country and abroad and those just curious to take in the sights and sounds of the biggest religious spectacle of all, the Maha Kumbh beckoned them all. Director Information Shishir told PTI that more than 1.65 crore pilgrims took bath on Paush Purnima. "Devotees are still taking holy dip and bathing is still going on, and there is a long queue of devotees measuring approximately two kilometres at the Hanuman temple waiting to have a darshan," he said.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

ANJUNA-VAGATOR SOUND DEMON

Noise flouters broke laws, and everyone just watched

PCB flagged Salud, Thalasa, Hilltop violations late; cops did not crack down, claim locals

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

PORVORIM: It is common knowledge that many party spots in Anjuna-Vagator regularly flout noise pollution norms, caring two hoots about legal restrictions and a police crackdown. This was proven in the high court on Monday, when the state Pollution Control Board submitted details of how three establishments – Salud, Thalasa and Hilltop – flouted decibel restrictions in the festive season.

What's more, GSPCB Secretary Shamila Monteiro had sent an email to the Anjuna Police and the District Collector of North Goa on January 9, 2025, alerting them about the violations with a detailed report, and requested action on this.



“Sending emails days after noise barriers have been broken makes no sense. The judges had made it clear that action should be swift, not delayed by nine days or more – Desmond Alvares, petitioner in the case

The news has sparked frustration among local residents, who are calling for more immediate action to address the ongoing noise pollution. “The idea of live monitoring systems is to alert the police immediately so corrective actions can be taken quickly, so we can

“The idea of live monitoring systems is to alert the police immediately so corrective actions can be taken quickly, so we can get back our sleep,” said Desmond D'Souza, a local resident, after the hearing for case CP 12 of 2023 was postponed to Wednesday. “But the noise continued through the festive season and nothing happened.”

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Another quake hits Tibet with magnitude 5.0

PTI, BEIJING: A 5.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Dingri County in Xigaze of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China on Monday night. Officials said no casualties were reported so far.

The quake shook the area around the holy town of Xigaze at 8.58 pm local time, according to the China Earthquake Networks Centre (CENC).

No casualties have been reported so far, said Tashi Dondrup, the county head of Dingri, adding that further investigation was underway.

The same area was hit by a 6.8-magnitude quake on January 7, in which 126 people were killed and 188 others injured. China has launched massive relief and rescue operations in the area.

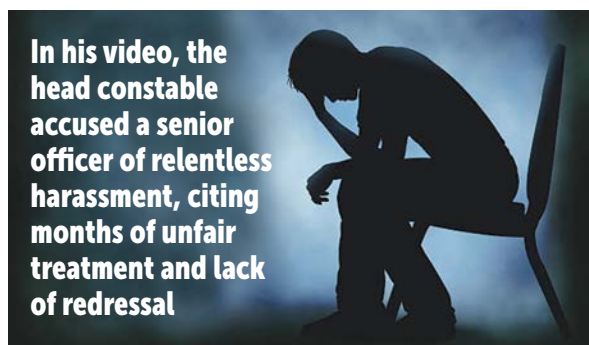
Monday's quake struck at a depth of 10 km, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, quoting CENC. The earthquake was also felt in Nepal's capital Kathmandu.

Harassed by senior, ignored by dept, constable found on the brink

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a disturbing turn of events, a head constable attached to Mapusa police station was found in a distressed state near the Atal Setu Bridge – his silent anguish speaking volumes. Alleging unrelenting harassment by a senior officer, the man had posted a desperate video online, claiming frustration and a sense of betrayal as his pleas to higher authorities went unanswered.

Shockingly, despite written assurances of confidentiality, the police department reportedly leaked the name



operation. Hours later, the cop was located at the Atal Setu Bridge, on the edge of despair. He was immediately rushed to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim, where he received medical care

and counseling. This is not the first time that the head constable has reached a breaking point. In an earlier episode, he reportedly attempted to end his life by slashing his veins.

In his video, the head constable accused a senior officer of relentless harassment, citing months of unfair treatment and lack of redressal. He alleged being confined to Porvorim's reserve lines for months on end, a violation of clear guidelines that mandate rotational postings.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

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