

VILLA RENTAL SCAM BUSTED IN GOA

Over 500 tourists may have been duped; four scammers arrested from Hyderabad and Gwalior for listing ghost properties to deceive tourists

Team Herald

PANJIM: With Goa still reeling under the land grabbing cases, the coastal State has now been hit by a multi-crore villa rental scandal, as revealed by Goa Police, which led to the arrest of four individuals, posing as hotel operators and duped over 500 unsuspecting tourists by exploiting loopholes on renowned booking platforms such as Booking.com.

Three persons from Hyderabad and one from Gwalior have been arrested by the North Goa Police in the scam.

The arrested include Saurabh Duseja, 37 years, from Lakshar, Gwalior, Sayed Ali Mukhtar from Toli-chowki, Hyderabad, Mohd Firoz from Himayat Nagar, Hyderabad and Mohd Azharuddin Saif from Asif Nagar, Hyderabad.

'GHOST' PROPERTY SCAM UNEARTHED

- Four accused - Saurabh Duseja (from Gwalior), Sayed Ali Mukhtar, Mohd Firoz and Mohd Azharuddin Saif (all from Hyderabad) - posed as hotel operators and duped unsuspecting tourists by exploiting loopholes on Booking.com
- All four arrested by the North Goa Police
- The fraudulent operation was active since 2022
- The accused deceived tourists by listing non-existent properties for rent and collected advance payments via multiple bank accounts
- The scam came to light following a complaint by Pankaj Dhiman from Chandigarh, who was defrauded of Rs 20,000 while trying to book a property 'Ruby Villa', Goa, on Booking.com.

According to the police, the fraudulent operation was active since 2022 and the four accused persons deceived tourists by listing non-existent properties for rent and collecting advance payments through multiple bank accounts.

The scam came to light following a complaint by Pankaj Dhiman, a resident of Chandigarh.

Pankaj complained that he was defrauded of Rs 20,000 while trying to book a property 'Ruby Villa', Goa on Booking.com. On his arrival at the location, Dhiman discovered that the villa did not exist. Following his complaint, an FIR u/s 318 (4) of BNS, 2023, was registered at the Anjuna Police Station.

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President-elect Donald Trump takes the oath of office as he is sworn in as president during the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington, on Monday

IMMIGRANTS TREMBLE AS TRUMP CHECKS IN

The golden age of America begins right now, says Trump 2.0; denounces previous admin as 'radical and corrupt establishment'

AFP, WASHINGTON: Donald Trump pronounced the start of a 'golden age' in the US after taking the oath for a historic second term as president on Monday, using his inaugural speech to lash out at what he described as a 'broken' society that he would rescue, even as his threat to deport 'millions and millions' of illegal immigrants provided a peek into the hardline government he was putting in place.

"The golden age of America begins right now. From this day forward our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world," Trump said in the US Capitol, where his inauguration was held indoors due to chilly weather.

While promising renewal, Trump's tone was characteristically dark, denouncing what he said had



Guests including Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Sundar Pichai and Elon Musk at the Presidential Inauguration

been a 'betrayal' of Americans by a "radical and corrupt establishment."

"For many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens, while the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair," he said.

"From this moment on, America's decline is over." The Republican - at 78

now the oldest person ever to take the presidential oath - was set to kickstart his new term with a blitz of immediate orders on immigration and the US culture wars.

"I will declare a national emergency at our southern border" with Mexico, Trump said to loud cheers from supporters.

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Biden pardons family members, Trump foes

AFP, WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden issued preemptive pardons on Monday to former Covid pandemic advisor Anthony Fauci, retired general Mark Milley and close family members to shield them from "politically motivated prosecutions" under the Trump administration.

In an extraordinary move in his last hours in the White House, Biden gave similar pardons to members and staff of the US House committee that investigated the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by Donald Trump's supporters.

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'Betrayed, insulted': Parsekar lashes out at BJP

Ex-CM recalls how party dropped him citing 'winnability' concerns

Team Herald

PANJIM: Former Goa Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar simmering discontent over his political journey came out in the open on Monday, when he accused the BJP of betraying and insulting him just days before the 2022 State elections, despite his long-standing loyalty to the party. Parsekar made

"Something happened against my wishes, and I felt betrayed and insulted by the party just 17 days before the 2022 polls... Initially, I doubted my calculations, but later realised that staying silent would mean the end of my political career... Despite my efforts (as an independent candidate), my opponent, who contested on a party ticket, won by just 2,000 votes

- Laxmikant Parsekar, former CM

these remarks while extending his congratulations to Damu Naik, who was recently appointed



as the new BJP Goa State President.

Speaking to reporters in Mandrem, Parsekar revealed the emotional toll the BJP's actions had on him, stating, "Something happened against my wishes, and I felt betrayed and insulted by the party just 17 days before the 2022 polls."

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R G KAR CASE

Sanjay Roy gets life term till death

PTI, KOLKATA: A Kolkata court on Monday sentenced Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment until death after he was convicted of raping and murdering an on-duty doctor at the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, rejecting demands for the death penalty saying it was not a "rarest of the rare" crime.

Additional District and Sessions Judge in Sealdah, Anirban Das, had on Saturday found Roy guilty of committing the crime against the postgraduate trainee doctor on August 9 last year. The heinous crime triggered nationwide outrage and prolonged protests in West Bengal.

The court also ordered Roy to pay a Rs 50,000 fine and directed the state government to pay compensation of Rs 17 lakh to the family of the deceased doctor.

Judge Das stated that the crime did not fall under the "rarest of the rare" category, which justified the decision to not give the death penalty to the convict.

"The CBI prayed for the death penalty. The defence lawyer prayed that a jail term be given instead of the death penalty... This crime does not fall under the rarest of the rare category," the judge said.

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Paragliding safety is in free fall, shows Pernem tragedy

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PANJIM: The tragic death of two individuals during a paragliding adventure at Keri, Pernem, has exposed the loopholes in the regulation of Goa's adventure sports activities, with different government agencies having overlapping and often poorly defined jurisdiction.

For example, while the Goa government has already put in place a policy for regulating watersports, the guidelines for paragliding are reportedly governed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte emphasized the government's responsibility to address the situation holistically. Speaking to O Herald, he said, "Based on this incident, we are looking at the activities thoroughly. We need to address it responsibly. The government cannot oversee every business, but operators need to be accountable for their actions."

CALLS FOR STRICT REGULATIONS

"The government cannot oversee every business, but operators need to be accountable for their actions... The Civil Aviation Ministry has laid down guidelines for every adventure activity including paragliding

- Rohan Khaunte, Tourism Minister

"We have 800 pilots who have come together to form the association. A pilot must be physically fit and must be able to read, write, and speak English. The most important factor is the pilot's air time. If anything goes wrong, it's because the pilot was not well trained

- Badari Duddupudi, Vice President of Paragliding Association of India

WHAT IS THE TANDEM PILOT HANDBOOK?

The Paragliding Association of India (PAI) has published a detailed Tandem Pilot Handbook, a 113-page guide designed to ensure the safety of both pilots and passengers involved in tandem paragliding. The handbook outlines the necessary training and experience required for pilots to ensure safety standards are met

KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR TANDEM PILOTS:

50 Solo Flights: Pilots must first complete 50 solo flights before they can proceed to tandem flying

200 Tandem Flights with a Co-Pilot: Pilots are required to fly with a co-pilot for a minimum of 200 flights to gain the necessary experience

Certification Process: After meeting these requirements, pilots are certified by their training school to fly with passengers



istry has laid down guidelines for every adventure activity, including paragliding," Khaunte added.

Ryan Pinto, a Goan who owns and pilots power

paragliders, emphasized the importance of safety and proper training in the sport.

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Pernem paragliding co owner arrested

PERNEM: Shekhar Raizada, owner of the Hike 'N' Fly paragliding company, was arrested on Monday in connection with the deaths of a 26-year-old tourist from Pune, Shivani Dable, and a 25-year-old paragliding pilot. Raizada has been remanded in police custody for five days as investigations continue.

The Department of Tourism clarified that it had not authorised paragliding activities on the Keri plateau and warned of strict action against those responsible for the unauthorised operation. Three individuals had registered with the department to operate paragliding activities in the area.

Raizada, a resident of Paliem, Pernem, has submitted documents, including a certificate for pilot Soman Nepali from Nepal, who was working with the company. The certificate, issued in Nepal, is being verified to determine its validity in India.

The post-mortem examination of Shivani Dable was conducted at the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC) on Monday, with her body being sent to Pune for final rites.

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85th Birthday
Greetings to our Dearest **Dad**
SEBASTIAO DA COSTA

Life should be measured not by the number of years but rather by the love shared, the memories made, the joy given and the blessings received

Best Wishes From
Loving wife: Late Mellaquia Dolly Terry Da Costa
Your Loving Children:- Valencia, Selzer, Lineth / Freddy, Zaria / Newton, Zurika / Vito, Mackfil / Mario, Brezhnil / Sheldon, Shelma, Sharnifa / Elvis, Menino / Luiza, Bhelnick / Unice, Gleason, Branicks.
Grandchildren:- Neanna, Jaylen, Nelinho, Zaniel, Shaneika, Brienna, Roselyn, Kinjel, Kay, Kora, Elisha, Enrique, Uel & Brielle.