

# Police arrest cyber fraudster impersonating as company chairman

Faridabad youth duped Goa-based firm's employee of Rs 93.2 lakh through WhatsApp

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** In a major breakthrough, Goa's Cyber Crime Police have arrested a cyber fraudster for impersonating the chairman of a Goa-based private limited company and cheating an employee out of Rs 93.21 lakh.

The accused, identified as Nahim Mukarram Khan, 19, from Faridabad, Haryana, was apprehended following an investigation. Authorities have frozen three bank accounts linked to the fraud, holding a total of Rs 71 lakh.

The case came to light after the Deputy General Manager (Accounts) of the company lodged a complaint stating that between December 3 and 5 last year, an unknown individual used two WhatsApp numbers to impersonate the company's chairman. The accused contacted the complainant via WhatsApp and, by pretending to be in an urgent meeting, convinced him to transfer a total of Rs 93.21 lakh into multiple bank accounts.



Following the money trail, the police identified a primary bank account in the name of Nahim Khan, which had received Rs 35.60 lakh. Through technical surveillance, Khan was traced to Faridabad, Haryana, where he was arrested by a team from the Cyber Crime Police Station.

Khan has been booked under Sections 318(4), 319(2) read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Sections 66-C and 66-D of the Information Technology Act. He has been placed under arrest, and investigations are ongoing.

To recover the defrauded money, Cyber Crime officials managed to freeze Rs 33 lakh in the accused's bank account, along with additional amounts of Rs 31 lakh and Rs 7.57 lakh in other accounts, bringing the total frozen funds to Rs 71 lakh.

Investigations revealed that the victim received WhatsApp messages from a number displaying the chairman's name and picture. The accused, posing as the chairman, instructed the employee to transfer funds to various bank accounts under the pretext of urgent business transactions.

The Cyber Cell has issued a warning to the public, advising them to be cautious of fraudulent messages from individuals impersonating known persons. Officials have urged people to verify the identity of the sender before transferring money and to check the account holder's name.

Residents have been encouraged to report any such incidents to their local police station or the Cyber Crime Police Station in Ribandar immediately.

## CYBER CELL BLOCKS 69 WEBSITES IN JANUARY CRACKDOWN

**PANJIM:** In a determined effort to combat cybercrime, Goa's Cyber Cell has blocked 69 websites, nine social media accounts/links, and 121 mobile numbers in January 2025 alone. Since October 2024, the unit has taken action against a total of 155 websites, 28 social media accounts, 466 mobile numbers, and 138 IMEI numbers linked to fraudulent activities.

These measures were executed under the authorisation letter issued by the Superintendent of Police (Cyber Crime), in accordance with the notification from the Government of Goa under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act. This provision grants law enforcement authorities the power to direct intermediaries, including service providers, to remove or block access to harmful or illegal content.

The crackdown aims to protect online users from cyber threats such as identity theft, phishing scams, and financial fraud. By disabling fraudulent websites and communication channels, authorities seek to curb the growing menace of online scams. Officials have urged citizens to remain vigilant and report any suspicious online activities. The Cyber Cell continues to work closely with central agencies and technology service providers to identify and take down fraudulent platforms.

# Girl seeking job in Bahrain duped of Rs 1.5 lakh online

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** An overseas job seeker was conned by a cyber fraudster out of Rs 1.51 lakh in a well-orchestrated scam.

According to the Cyber Cell, the incident began in December 2024 when the victim (name withheld) was looking for a job, and a friend referred her to a person who was hiring for an automobile company situated in Bahrain. When the victim contacted him, the fraudster informed her that there was a job available as a Sales Consultant, with a salary of Rs 90,000 per month, and that accommodation would be provided by the company, which delighted the victim.

Initially, the victim was asked to pay Rs 80,000 to create a registration bill, CPR card, LRMA registration certificate (Employment Office), and for insurance and medical expenses. The victim first paid Rs 15,000 to create the registration bill with the employing company, which she paid online. After some time, she was asked to pay Rs 6,000 for the CPR card. Subsequently, she paid Rs 30,000 for the LRMA registration certificate (Employment Office), insurance, and medical expenses.

After paying the initial amount of Rs 80,000, the so-called "agent" requested more money from the victim for ticket booking and visa purposes, to which she initially refused. The "agent" informed her that if she refused to pay, all the money she had initially paid would be lost. Fearing this, she paid an

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additional Rs 33,000.

As the scam progressed, the victim was coerced into making further payments, with the fraudster claiming that there was a delay in payment and that due to fluctuations in the Bahraini currency, the amount she had paid was insufficient, necessitating further payment. Although the victim initially refused to pay more, the fraudster convinced her that he would cover half of the additional amount and would ensure the work was completed. Consequently, the victim agreed and paid an additional Rs 38,000, bringing the total amount to Rs 1,51,000.

After all the payments were made, the "agent" stopped responding to her calls. Frightened and devastated, the victim immediately lodged a complaint on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal. The modus operandi, known as the "Overseas Job Offer Scam," is a significant threat in the cybercrime landscape, preying on unsuspecting individuals with the lure of high-paying jobs in foreign countries.

# Cable operators agree to clear all wires hanging on electric poles

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Electricity Department Executive Engineer Kashinath Shetye on Friday said that the cable operators have agreed to clear all the wires hanging on electrical poles within two months.

Shetye said, "We had given them a deadline of February 1 and will meet again on February 3. The cable operators have informed that they will clear all the wires and dues too."

Atul Vernekar, a cable operator, said, "We also know that it is not proper to have those wires hanging from the poles. The IT Department asked us to register with it and so far 99 per cent of the multiple system operators have done so."

However, he pointed out that there is a communication gap between the IT and Electricity Department.

Recently, the High Court of Bombay at Goa had dismissed the plea by the Goa Cable TV Networking and Service Providers Association, seeking to prevent

the Electricity Department from cutting cables until the final petition disposal.

The High Court had said the Electricity Department was free to cut unauthorised internet and TV cables. Rejecting the writ petition filed by the Goa Cable TV Networking and Service Providers Association, the court said rules can't be stayed and court can't be a part of illegality.

The court instructed cable operators to take necessary permission from the Electricity Department.

## KEEPING THE BOND



Children pass their time while their father repairs the cracks in a salt pan at Curca

# PWD Principal Chief Engr gets extension in service for third time

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The State government granted extension in-service to PWD principal chief engineer Uttam Parsekar for another one-year with effect from February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026.

This is the third time the government has granted one-year extension in service to Parsekar, beyond the date of superannuation.

The extension in-service is subject to Vigilance clearance from the Vigilance Department, concurrence of Finance Department and approval of the Council of Ministers.

Meanwhile, a public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition filed by RTI activist Sudip Tamankar challeng-

ing the extension in service granted to several retiring officers will come for hearing before the High Court of Bombay at Goa on Monday, February 3.

Tamankar has challenged the extension in service granted to as many as 16 retiring government employees including Parsekar and Water Resources Dept chief engineer Pramod Badami. The PIL writ petition was filed in January last year and till date some of the extensions given to the retiring employees has ended.

Reacting to the extension given to Parsekar, Tamankar alleged that the government was giving extension to officers on choose and pick basis for reasons best known to it.

# MGP refutes Bhembre's allegations

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) on Saturday refuted the allegations made by former MLA Uday Bhembre that the regional party had caused irreparable loss to the State.

Bhembre had stated that the M G Party which came to power after liberation used money and energy to merge Goa with Maharashtra. Due to this, the development in the State took a back seat. He had also blamed the MGP for causing loss to Konkani language by calling it dialect of Marathi and Goa's identity was at stake. The MGP while in power also failed to take safeguards from the Government of India.

Reacting to it, MGP working president Narayan Sawant said that Goa's first

Ex-MLA Uday Bhembre had stated that the MGP caused irreparable loss to the State. MGP which came to power after liberation used money and energy to merge Goa with Maharashtra

Chief Minister Dayanand 'Bhausahab' Bhandarkar opened schools across the State to educate the people and toiled for the welfare of backward classes. He said that Bhandarkar resigned as Chief Minister before Opinion Poll and gladly accepted the Opinion Poll result. He said that even after the Opinion Poll, the people of Goa reposed their faith in Bhandarkar. The MGP ruled the State for 17 years, he mentioned.

The MGP leaders claimed that it was due to support extended by MGP that Bhembre won the Assembly election in 1984.

# Crime Branch raids yield drugs worth Rs 25 lakh in Jan, four peddlers in police net

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** In a major crackdown on drug trafficking, the Crime Branch has seized narcotics worth Rs 25 lakh in the past month and arrested four peddlers. Among the recent cases, Goa Police made one of its biggest charas seizures in the last year, arresting a Himachal Pradesh native who was allegedly smuggling drugs into Goa from his home state.

This marks the fourth case registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act by the Crime Branch in January 2025.

In the latest operation, a team from the Crime Branch, led by Police Inspector Laxi Amonkar, conducted a narcotics raid on January 31 at Nandu House, Arambol, Pernem.

## BIG 'SHARK' NETTED AT ARAMBOL

» HP based dealer nabbed, 2.198 kgs of charas seized, estimated market value Rs 21.98 lakh

» Would get contraband from Hill State, market in Arambol

» Local police oblivious of dealer operating under their nose

» On the radar of Crime Branch for last 4 months

» Nabbed on January 31 at Nandu House, Arambol

The accused, identified as Yugal Kishor Singh, a resident of Himachal Pradesh, was caught red-handed in possession of 239 pieces of oval-shaped brownish sticky substances suspected to be charas. The total weight of the seized contraband was 2.198 kilograms, with an estimated market value of Rs 21.98 lakh.

Additionally, the police recovered Rs 17,500 and a blue-coloured mobile phone from the accused. The total value of all seized

items, including the narcotics, is estimated at Rs 22.15 lakh. Police sources say that Singh was residing in Arambol for over a couple of years and carried on with his illicit trade by getting large consignments from the Hill State.

"We have been tracking Singh for four months but he was elusive. Known to sell his consignments from door-to-door to some local and foreign tourists, he would also sell his contraband to small peddlers. We had information that

he had come down with 10 kgs of charas but by then he must have sold it to peddlers and customers and we could seize 2.198 kilogram," said a cop on condition of anonymity and added that the seized mobile could spin a lot of beans.

The local police however were 'oblivious' of the dealer operating right under their noses.

Singh has been booked under Section 20(b)(ii)(C) of the NDPS Act, 1985. He was placed under arrest on the same day, and further investigations are underway to trace his supply network.

Authorities have reaffirmed their commitment to curbing drug trafficking in Goa and have urged the public to report any suspicious activities related to narcotics.

# Wild bison runs out of forest space, now roams Ponda streets

Habitat loss forces wildlife into closer proximity with human population, increasing encounters and conflicts

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Residents of Ponda and nearby villages have raised concerns over increasing human-wildlife conflict, as wild animals, particularly bison, have been spotted roaming through residential areas, causing panic among locals.

The recent widening of the four-lane Borim-Bethora bypass, which runs close to the forest along the Margao-Belgaum Highway, has made it difficult for animals to cross safely. However, no corridors or underpasses have been provided for animal crossings along the 4km stretch. The prolonged delay in creating a crucial corridor for wildlife has led to animals ending up in the city.

Frequent sightings of wild bison, particularly at nights, have alarmed residents in Ponda, as well as in Curti-Khandepar and Bethora village panchayats. Locals fear potential attacks, recalling a

## BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL



tragic incident a few months ago in Bondbag, where a woman was killed after mistakenly trying to

drive away a wild bison, believing it to be a buffalo.

To mitigate such conflicts,

“If we receive a proposal for the provision of an animal corridor or underpass on the Bethora-Borim road, we will definitely consider it – NH official, Ponda

“Ponda is close to the forest, and sometimes animals stray into human settlements. We will inform NH authorities about the need for animal corridors to ensure safe crossings – Forest department official, Ponda

forest officials previously dug a one-kilometre trench to prevent wild animals from entering villages near the forest. However, this month alone, wild bison have been spotted twice in Ponda City, freely roaming on main roads and causing public panic. Similar incidents have also been reported in Curti Khandepar. Although no untoward incidents have occurred so far, residents are urging authorities to take preventive

measures.

When contacted, a National Highway (NH) official in Ponda stated, "If we receive a proposal for the provision of an animal corridor or underpass on the Bethora-Borim road, we will definitely consider it."

A Ponda Forest Department official acknowledged the issue, stating, "Ponda is close to the forest, and sometimes animals stray into human settlements. We will inform NH authorities about the need for animal corridors to ensure safe crossings."

Local resident Sandeep Parkar attributed the rising human-wildlife conflict to rapid urbanisation, stating, "No-development zones are being converted into construction sites, disturbing animal habitats."

With growing concerns over public safety, residents are calling for urgent intervention by both forest and highway authorities to prevent further conflicts.

NH officials says they are ready to construct cor-

ridor for animals if they received such proposal.

## LEOPARD ATTACKS PET DOG



**KHANDEPAR:** A pet dog resting was attacked by a leopard in the early hours of Thursday, here. The incident occurred at approximately 4 am when the family members of Devanand Gaude were awakened by the dog's loud cries. They discovered that the dog was missing and later found the injured canine lying on the ground about 50 metres away from the house. Fortunately, the pet managed to escape but sustained injuries to its neck. Locals have raised concerns over leopard sightings in the area and urged the forest department to take necessary action to prevent such attacks in residential zones.