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An artist performs 'Kandanar Kelan Theyyam' as part of the 'Kaliyatta Mahotsavam' at Sri Vayanattu Kulavan Temple, in Kannur, Kerala

GST evasion racket busted in Thane; 1 held
THANE: Authorities have busted a Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion racket involving a fraudulent input tax credit (ITC) scam of Rs 26.92 crore and arrested its "mastermind" in Maharashtra's Thane district, officials said. The accused, Kapadiya Mahamad Sultan, orchestrated the fraud by setting up 18 fictitious entities which were used to generate fake invoices and claim ITC without any actual supply of goods or services, CGST Joint Commissioner Amit Kumar Singh said in a release issued on Tuesday. Sultan, resident of Mira Road area in Thane, was arrested on Monday, the official said. Investigations suggested that Sultan exploited the Aadhaar, PAN and other KYC documents of various people, who were paid in exchange for their personal information.

Thane couple booked for forcing teenage daughter into begging

THANE: Police have registered a case against a couple for allegedly forcing their 17-year-old daughter into begging at Thane railway station in Maharashtra, an official said on Wednesday. Members of a child welfare team found the teenager begging on a platform at the station on Monday night and approached police. The couple, who lived in Kalwa area, allegedly made their daughter beg at the station and lived on her earnings, Thane Government Railway Police's senior inspector Archana Dhusane said. The accused also forced the girl to consume an intoxicating drink, as per police. The girl has been sent to a rescue home and a case registered against her parents under provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, the police added.

Fog delays departure of Ten flights from Kolkata airport

KOLKATA: The departure of at least 10 flights, scheduled to take off from Kolkata airport, was delayed due to dense fog on Wednesday. Airports Authority of India (AAI) officials said. However, there was no delay in the arrival of flights as the aircraft landed during low visibility procedures (LVP), they said. LVP was implemented from 3.40 am to 7.40 am, an AAI spokesperson said. The ATC declares LVP when visibility falls below 800 metres, after which 'follow-me' vehicles guide aircraft to their stands, a top Airports Authority of India (AAI) official in Kolkata said. The LVP is also activated when the cloud ceiling is below 200 feet. The procedure involves coordination among the airport operator, air traffic control (ATC), and pilots to manage flights safely and minimise disruptions.

Two hand grenades found near residence of former Manipur MLA

IMPHAL: Unidentified miscreants left two hand grenades near the residence of former MLA Bijoy Kojiam in Imphal West district on Wednesday morning, police said. Family members discovered one grenade lying on the ground near the gate and informed the police. During a search of the area, the police found another one. Police said that the grenades were later taken to a safe place at a dumping site at Lango and detonated. Police registered a case in this connection.

Odisha increases remuneration of junior teachers by Rs 5,000

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government on Wednesday increased the monthly remuneration of junior teachers working in the state's elementary schools under the 'Samagra Sikshya' programme. According to a resolution issued by the school and mass education department, the monthly remuneration of junior teachers (under various schemes) has been increased from Rs 11,000 to Rs 16,000 per month. "The revised rate of remuneration will be effective from the date of issue of the resolution," the department said. On January 17, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi approved a proposal in this regard. Besides the monthly remuneration hike, their EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) contribution will be increased from Rs 1,443 to Rs 1,950 per month. At present, around 13,740 junior teachers (under the Samagra Sikshya scheme) are employed in the state.

UP: Infant's partially-eaten body found dumped in Lalitpur hospital

JALAUN (UP): The body of an infant, allegedly partially eaten by dogs, was found dumped with garbage at the district women's hospital in Lalitpur, officials said on Wednesday. Medical superintendent Meenakshi Devi said Sangeeta, a resident of Bahadurpur village in the Madawara block, had been admitted to the hospital with labour pain on February 9. "She gave birth to a premature baby at 6:50 pm that day. Due to an underdeveloped brain and skull, the infant was shifted to the Special Newborn Care Unit. The baby died at 7:30 pm on the same day," she said. "The hospital then handed over the body to the family," she added.

No guarantee you will come back: SC denies Indrani Mukerjea plea to travel abroad

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed the plea of Indrani Mukerjea, accused of killing her daughter Sheena Bora, against a ruling denying her permission to travel abroad.

A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal directed the trial court to conduct the proceedings in the case within a year and upheld the Bombay High Court order refusing her plea.

"There is no guarantee that you will come back. Trial is at an advanced stage. Taking into consideration the fact that the trial is ongoing, we are not inclined to consider the request at this stage. We direct the trial court to expedite the hearing and conclude within a year," it said.

The bench gave liberty to Mukerjea to approach the trial court.

Opposing the permission, the CBI counsel said it was a sensitive matter and the trial had reached half-way with the examination of 96 witnesses.

The counsel for Muker-

“There is no guarantee that you will come back. Trial is at an advanced stage. Taking into consideration the fact that the trial is ongoing, we are not inclined to consider the request at this stage. We direct the trial court to expedite the hearing and conclude within a year — supreme court



jea, a former media executive, submitted she was given bail by the top court and 92 witnesses still remained to be examined in the case.

She said the trial court was vacant for the last four months and the proceedings could take a long time to conclude.

The travel restriction

FROM PAGE 1

MY SECOND VIRAL VIDEO WAS 'FAKE', RECORDED AT GUNPOINT: SIDDIQUI

It is pertinent to note that the video went viral after police rearrested him and brought him back to Goa on December 23 last year.

The Special Investigating Team (Land Grabbing) police are seeking his custody in a land grabbing case reported at Mapusa in 2022, while the Anjuna Police also want Suleman in a murder case reported in 2014 where he was alleged to be one of the conspirators.

Representing the State, Public Prosecutor N Kalangutkar sought four days police custody of Suleman to complete the investigation.

However, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant maintained silence on the allegations made by Suleman Khan.

Suleman was earlier remanded in six days police custody and before he could be produced for further remand, he escaped from the Crime Branch custody on the night of December 12 last year.

Arguing on behalf of Suleman, Adv Salman K Pathan brought to the notice of the Court that the JMFC, Mapusa, had already granted him bail since he had completed 15 days in police custody.

The SIT (Land Grabbing) had filed a criminal revision application challenging the order of the JMFC, Mapusa.

After hearing the arguments, Principal District and Sessions Judge Irshad Agha reserved the order at 10 am on February 24.

According to the Anjuna police, Suleman and five others allegedly hatched a conspiracy and killed a 74-year-old woman at Bamonwado, Anjuna in July 2014 after the latter refused to execute a sale deed of a land belonging to the victim. Though Suleman was arrested in 2018, he was released on bail and did not appear for trial following the chargesheet. A proclamation was issued against him to appear in the Court.

Suleman was also arrested by the Mapusa police in 2018 on the charge of assaulting a Mapusa-based lawyer Dynaneshwar Kalangutkar in his office with a syringe, in September 2016. He was later released on bail.

Currently, Suleman is facing three cases related to land grabbing including two reported at the Mapusa Police Station, and one case registered at the Valpoli police station.

Reacting to the allegations made by Suleman Khan, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) State president Adv Amit Palekar on Wednesday demanded that the investigations be handed over to the CBI or a Judicial Commission be constituted to inquire into the allegations.

Adv Palekar said, "Whether Suleman is right or wrong, he has made allegations that the second video was made at gunpoint. This has to be investigated as it is clear that police are used to nail political opponents of BJP. Suleman had made allegations against SP and DySP of the Crime Branch and they should have been placed under suspension and investigations should have been handed over to different officers. The officers who have accused cannot probe the case because there will be certain bias. The government cannot take it lightly and it should have ordered an inquiry into the allegations

Last week Adv Palekar had claimed Suleman had told the Bicholim Court that he was forced at gunpoint to make a second video.

“Suleman had made allegations against SP and DySP of the Crime Branch and they should have been placed under suspension and investigations should have been handed over to different officers. The officers who have accused cannot probe the case because there will be certain bias. The government cannot take it lightly and it should have ordered an inquiry into the allegations -Adv Amit Palekar, Aam Aadmi Party State president

OUTRAGE IN VELSÃO AS COLLECTOR REVOKES RAILWAYS STOP WORK ORDER

He asked: "Didn't the report not mention as to who was responsible for the dumping of mud and construction material in land, which the Railways has no land title?"

The resumption of work has particularly affected several families including the Coelho's, who arrived on vacation only to find their heritage home's access completely blocked by mud dumping.

The other locals gathered at the site said: "The Coelho's were shocked when they arrived to reside at their home where the mud has been dumped right in front of their heritage home!"

The situation on the ground remains tense, with work proceeding under Goa Police protection, with the Railway Protection Force remaining absent.

Incidentally, when locals confronted RVNL officials about land ownership, specifically asking if they had the relevant title documents to the land in question, the officials were unable to provide this information.

It may be noted however that RVNL's response to the Collector, which led to the withdrawal of the stop work order, included several supporting documents: their contract

agreement with Surya Construction Private Limited, letters of award and acceptance, a letter from the Deputy Director of Mines, and a copy of a High Court order from October 2022. They cited Section 11 of the Railways Act, claiming it grants them power to execute railway-related works without requiring approvals under State or local laws.

However, locals have challenged this interpretation, pointing to two upcoming legal hearings on February 17, 2025. The first is scheduled in the Inspector of Survey and Land Records (ISLR) court in Margao, where SWR faces the Velsao Panchayat and 45 others. The second is a civil suit at the District Court, Margao, filed by Francisco Gouveia and five others against SWR, RVNL, and Surya Construction.

Despite the locals showing documentation to the police about the sub-judice nature of the matter, construction activities continued unabated. "Goa Police personnel are just acting as bystanders, instead of protecting the villagers' rights," said a frustrated resident.

Another resident asked "Is the Railways thinking that it is a law unto them, to bulldoze through land which is legally owned by the villagers and has been used by them for over 200 years?"

As both court hearings approach, the Primeiro Vaddo residents remain in limbo, watching helplessly as construction continues on land whose ownership is still under legal dispute. "Helpless, everyone moved away leaving it all to RVNL to do as they please. Sad reality," lamented an affected resident, adding that the locals are feeling cornered with no tangible solutions in sight.

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH: VELSÃO VP FIRM ON RAILWAYS STOP WORK ORDER

They pointed out that the ownership of the land in question is currently under adjudication in the court of the Inspector of Survey and Land Records (ISLR), Record of Rights-Margao, making any construction potentially damaging and premature.

Furthermore, the panchayat accused RVNL of violating various provisions of the Code for the Engineering Department issued by the Railway Board. They specifically cited a Railway Board directive from January 30, 2020, which mandates Railways and related bodies to consult local urban bodies and statutory authorities while approving plans, ensuring development on railway land harmonises with surrounding areas.

The panchayat's response also referred to the long-standing conflict, with the body noting that it has been raising grievances since January 2021, all of which have reportedly gone unaddressed. "In the face of these harsh realities, we are unable to rescind the stop work notice as requested," stated Gouveia in the letter.

The panchayat has ensured wide circulation of its response, copying it to various officials including the South Goa District Collector, Additional Director of Panchayats-II, relevant high-ranking national Railway officials, and the local Verna PI.

The dispute began when the panchayat issued a stop work order on January 29, 2025, following complaints from residents about blocked roads, private properties, and waterways due to soil dumping from the railway construction work. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) had responded by asking the panchayat to withdraw the order, claiming that local bodies lack jurisdiction over railway projects and citing Section 11 of the Railways Act, 1989, which exempts them from requiring local body permissions.

ARE WE NOT CREATING A CLASS OF PARASITES? SC ON 'FREEBIES' PROMISED BEFORE POLLS

The judge said, "You must be having only one-sided knowledge. I come from an agricultural family. Because of the freebies in Maharashtra which they just announced prior to elections, agriculturists are not getting labourers." The court, however, said it did not want to debate.

It said everybody, including attorney general R Venkataramani, was on the same page that providing shelter to the homeless merited due attention.

The bench asked: "But at the same time, should it not be balanced?"

Venkataramani said the Centre was in the process of finalising the urban poverty alleviation mission, which would address various issues, including the provision of shelter for the urban homeless.

The bench asked him to verify from the Centre the time frame within which the scheme would be applicable and also place on record the aspects covered by it.

"In the meantime, the attorney general is also requested to take instructions as to whether till the implementation of the said scheme, the Union of India would continue with the National Urban Livelihoods Mission," it said.

The bench further asked the Centre to collate information from all States for the consideration of the issue on a pan-India basis. One of the petitioners during the hearing said it was unfortunate that the cause of the homeless was not being addressed as it was last on the

3 MLAs submit private members bills seeking liquor ban in J&K

PTI, SRINAGAR: There is a growing clamour for declaring Jammu and Kashmir a dry state as at least three MLAs have submitted private members' bills for banning alcohol in the Union Territory.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) MLA from Kupwara Mir Mohammad Fayaz, Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) legislator from Langate Sheikh Khurshed Ahmad and ruling National Conference (NC) MLA from Lal Chowk Ahsan Pardesi have submitted separate private members' bills for a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

The bills will be tabled in the forthcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which will meet in Jammu for the budget session from March 3.

"Alcohol consumption is ravaging lives across Jammu and Kashmir and presents a grave threat to the very fabric of our society. Since 2019 the issue has been compounded by its easy availability because of the mushrooming of liquor stores. Kudos to PDP MLA @MirMohdFayaz for introducing a private (member's) bill seeking a ban on alcohol consumption. Much needed," PDP leader Iltija Mufti said in a post on X.

"Liquor has no place in our spiritually rich society. A land known as 'Reshwa'el' (the land of saints) should not be tainted by alcohol trade. Since 2009 Er Rashid has been fighting against this menace and AIP remains steadfast in its mission to declare Jammu and Kashmir a dry state," a spokesperson of the party, led by Sheikh Abdul Rashid or Engineer Rashid, said in a post on X.

He said the AIP is also spearheading a move to ban online gaming, which has led to financial and emotional ruin for countless families.

priority.

The bench was irked when he claimed the authorities showed compassion only for the rich, not the poor.

"Don't make a speech of Ramlila Maidan in this court," said Justice Gavai, "and don't make unnecessary allegations. Don't make a political speech here. We won't permit our court-rooms to be converted into a (place of) political battle."

The judge went on to add, "How do you say compassion is shown only for the rich? Even for the government, how can you say this?" Painting a picture that the government did not do anything or show concern for the poor was not in a good taste, the court added.

SANCOALE COMUNIDADE CHIEF DISMISSED FOR 'ILLEGAL' LAND HOLDING

"The president has acted in the manner prejudicial to the interest of comunidade and in exercise of the powers conferred upon him under Article 125 (13) of the Code of Comunidades," the Administrator of Comunidades (South) Zone said.

In his order, the minister has said that the Administrator of Comunidades, South Zone, shall complete the inquiry of all other encroachments alleged by Narayan Datta before the High Court against Mardolkar and his family members and take it to logical and complete enquiry within six months from date of the order.

The administrator shall file a detailed report on action taken after lapse of six months and Collector (South) will monitor the progress.

The minister has asked the Collector (South) to conduct fresh inquiry into alleged usurpation and sale of property of Comunidade of Sancoale, which was acquired for rehabilitation of persons affected by expansion of National Highway and examine if any illegalities are involved in the transaction. He has asked the Administrator of Comunidades (South) to check other encroachments done on Comunidade of Sancoale and take the matter to its logical end.

ECO-SENSITIVE ZONE SPARED AS TRANCE FESTIVAL 'TURNS TURTLE' AT DREAM BEACH

Pereira said, "At least I am not aware. I will meet with our attorney Saby D'Souza and go and inspect to see if the equipment has been moved to our land and if so, we will file a complaint with the police."

Origens Jungle Club is on Anjuna Comunidade land and during the last Annual General Body Meeting held on October 27, 2024, the resolution 19 stated: "Application from Gauncars of Anjuna Comunidade to organise weekend party seasonally. It is unanimously resolved by the extraordinary general body meeting that as per the Code of Comunidades, this application cannot be considered as the applicants are Gauncars of Anjuna Comunidade who are against the Code of Comunidades."

Despite tickets still being sold on the website and the change of venue being spread discreetly, home stays have been receiving room cancellations since this afternoon.

"I had three cancellations this afternoon. My guests were from Kerala and they called to cancel as they have been intimated of a change in venue," said a home stay owner on the condition of anonymity.

"Their New Year Eve party was stopped at around 10 pm by a strong police force led by senior police officers from Panjim. The customers were then shifted to various small clubs," the owner added.

"Wow," said Ingram from Sweden as she walked along the beach. "We never expected them to react so quickly, but it is nice to know that newspapers have a voice here," she added.

"I have been told that the party has been shifted to one corner of the Vagator Hill far away from the turtle nesting site. That is okay," she added.

"Initially, it was baffling how anyone could think of having a six-day rave party on the beach where turtles come to nest, that too without any permission. People from the world over respect vulnerable species and it is nice that their voice was raised through the press that has been with us," said Wayne Pereira.

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