

Tourism Department cracks down on subletting of shacks

108 establishments sublet in North Goa; notices issued to 38 till date

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Department of Tourism has issued show cause notices to 38 shack owners for subletting shacks to others even as 108 shacks in the coastal belt of North Goa have been found to have sublet their shacks.

The incident of subletting shacks had come to light following the killing of an Arambol youth at Arambol beach on January 26. Following this, the Department of Tourism officials carried a survey of all the shacks which were permitted for the current tourism season and found that as many as 108 shacks were sublet by the allottees to others mostly to outsiders. The department had permitted erection of 265 shacks along the beach stretch of North Goa.

The Tourism Department will soon issue show cause

notices to another 40 shack operators as to why their shack licence should not be cancelled and shack dismantled. The hearings to show cause notices is likely to start from February 26.

A similar survey of 98 shacks erected on the beach stretches of South Goa will be undertaken on Saturday and Sunday.

Meanwhile, Director of Tourism Kedar Naik on Friday held a hearing of Manuel Esprito Santo Fernandes, who had been asked to demolish his shack for allegedly subletting it at Arambol beach.

The hearing was held as per the High Court directive and the matter has now been posted for arguments on February 24.

The Dept of Tourism had ordered demolition of shack following a murder of a local Amar Bandekar allegedly by the staff of the concerned shack on January 26.

TARGET OUTSIDERS, SPARE LOCALS, SAY SHACK OWNERS

CALANGUTE: The beach shack operators in the Calangute-Candolim beach-belt have welcomed the Department of Tourism crackdown on sub-letting of shacks, but said the government should keep its assurance not to target shacks being sub-let to locals. Shack Owners Welfare Society (SOWS) general secretary John Lobo said the chief minister and the tourism minister had assured them recently that handing over a beach shack to another traditional beach shack operator would not be considered as sub-letting.

"It is common for shack operators to make multiple applications in the names of their family members in the hope of getting a licence because of the lottery system in allotment of shack licences. So many times, a family gets more than one beach shack licence. That extra licence is



mostly given to another traditional beach shack operator who could not get a licence. This is a friendly arrangement," Lobo said. Lobo said that only those shacks which have been sub-let to outsiders and non-Goans should be considered as sub-let and fined.

However, even those who have given shacks to other locals have received notices, said Manuel Cardozo, president of the Goan Traditional Shacks Owners Association. "We were given verbal assurances by the chief minister and the tourism

minister that these shacks would not be touched, but still they have sent the notices," he said. Cardozo said post-Covid, the beach shacks business had largely not been profitable. "Many beach shack operators have

suffered losses because of fewer foreign charter tourists. The licence period is also three years, so many who cannot afford to put up their shacks simply rent them out because they can make more money," he said. According to Cardozo, the situation could have been avoided if only one member from a family is allowed to apply for licence. "The department of tourism makes more money if there are more applicants, with Rs 10,000 for each application which is non-refundable," he said.

Hold joint inspection of unauthorised structures in command areas at Anjuna: HC

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department, Bardez Deputy Collector and three other departments to conduct a joint inspection of unauthorised structures built in the command area and partly in natural cover at Anjuna and to submit a detailed report of site inspection.

Bardez Deputy Town Planner, Bardez Block Development Officer (BDO) and the Director of Panchayats are the others, who will be part of the joint inspection team. The inspection will be carried out within next three weeks.

The Court ordered joint inspection after petitioners counsel Adv Rohit Bras De Sa told the court that illegal and unauthorised structures had sprouted in the command area in survey numbers 509/1 and 509/1-A of Anjuna village, which falls in no development slope and partly natural cover as declared in the Regional Plan 2021.

During the hearing, ad-

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The petitioners Wayne Pereira and Agnes A Monteiro De Souza, both from Anjuna had prayed that the concerned government authorities be directed to immediately hold a site inspection and make a detailed site inspection report since commercial operations were carried out in these illegal structures.

The Court has issued notices to all the respondents including four nightclubs, which are suspected to be running in these structures in violation of law.

DANGER LURKS OVERHEAD

UPENDRA NAIK



Branches of the dead tree near Thomas Garage in St Inez have begun to drop, posing risk to passersby. O Herald had highlighted the decaying mammoth back in December 2024. However, two months on, the authorities have failed to act, despite people losing their lives to falling tree branches this past monsoon

SC upholds Goa govt's decision to recover power tariff rebates

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the Goa government's decision to recover previously granted electricity tariff rebates from industrial companies, reaffirming the State's authority to withdraw economic incentives in public interest.

The Bench comprising Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Sandeep Mehta ruled that the doctrine of promissory estoppel cannot be rigidly enforced when financial burdens on the public exchequer are at stake.

Citing past rulings, the Court dismissed the appeal, affirming that Goa government's demand notices were legal and justified. The verdict supports the 2001 decision of the High Court of Bombay at Goa and strengthens the government's power to revoke incentives that strain state finances.

Several companies including Puja Ferro Alloys Pvt Ltd, Global Ispat Pvt Ltd, Sunrise Electromelt Ltd and Karthik Inductions Ltd had approached courts in this regards. The

companies were aggrieved by the demand notice sent by the Electricity Department to recover previously offered electricity tariff rebates under its 1991 Notification, which provided a 25 per cent rebate on electricity tariffs for industrial units.

The dispute arose when the Goa government rescinded its 1991 Notification. Although the rebate scheme was withdrawn on March 31, 1995, the appellants - industrial units that applied for power before this date - argued that they were still entitled to the benefit despite receiving power supply after the rescission.

Further complicating the matter, the Goa government issued two amending notifications in 1996, which appeared to extend the rebate benefits. The appellants demanded the continuation of the rebates in terms of such amendments.

However, these amendments were later declared void ab initio by the High Court in 2001, a decision that was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court.

Police personnel under scrutiny following Siddiqui's statements

Team Herald

PANJIM: The role of police personnel has once again come under scrutiny after casual remarks made by Siddiqui alias Suleiman Khan on camera, prompted an investigation into the conduct of the police personnel who were accompanying him.

Recent media reports have quoted statements made by the accused, Siddiqui, to journalists while being presented before the Panaji Court for an extension of his judicial custody. The police have claimed that these statements contain unverified allegations.

The police stated that while the Old Goa Police are currently investigating all aspects related to his escape from lawful custody, it is important to note that his previous and ongoing cases are either under investigation or sub judice.

"Some of his statements may be intended to dissuade witnesses from providing testimony to the police or the court," said a Goa Police officer.

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"The accused's mobile phone(s) have been seized and sent to the Goa Forensic Science Laboratory for forensic examination. A forensic analysis has been requested of all videos either made, received, or sent from his mobile phone," he added.

Police have ordered a detailed inquiry report from the SDPO Panjim regarding the conduct of the police personnel who were accompanying Siddiqui, in order to determine whether any lapses in protocol were committed.

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GFP meets Governor, raises concerns over defamation of Opp MLAs

Team Herald

PANJIM: A delegation from the Goa Forward Party (GFP) met with Governor P. S. Sreedharan Pillai at Raj Bhavan and submitted a memorandum alleging that hardcore criminals are being used to defame and silence MLAs who are critical of the government.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Dr Babita Angle Prabhudesai, a member of the delegation, said, "Suleiman Siddiqui has stated that he was forced to shoot a video under gunpoint and coercion. An attempt has been made to defame Vijai Sardesai. This is a very serious allegation. A hardcore criminal is being used to defame a vocal MLA who consistently speaks against the government. This is the first time such an incident has occurred. That is why we submitted our memorandum to the Governor."

When it was pointed out that Siddiqui had

Suleiman Siddiqui has stated that he was forced to shoot a video under gunpoint and coercion. An attempt has been made to defame Vijai Sardesai. This is a very serious allegation - Dr Babita Angle Goa Police

mentioned other MLAs as well, Dr Prabhudesai responded, "If he has named other MLAs, then those concerned should come forward and submit a memorandum to higher authorities, just as we have done. He or she should come forward and voice their concern."

She further claimed that Vijai Sardesai had neither met nor spoken to Siddiqui.

In response to a question, she said, "Whether the Governor takes action or not, in a democracy, nobody can take away my right to complain. Our attempt will always be to bring any wrongdoing before the people."

fssai

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