

TOURIST FAMILY ASSAULTED BY TOUTS, TATTOO ARTISTS AT CALANGUTE

Goan woman comes to their aid; police allegedly refuse to record tourists' complaint, ask them to 'compromise' instead

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Three tourists from Odisha were allegedly assaulted and molested by a large group of tattoo artists and toutts at the Calangute promenade on Friday evening.

The tourists — Dev P, his wife Rashmi, and his brother Arun Kumar — said they had driven down from Odisha and arrived in Calangute on Friday afternoon. After checking in, they headed to the beach. While walking along the promenade, a man offered Dev a tattoo, which he declined. Despite his refusal, the man persisted, put his arm around Dev, and forcibly dragged him into a nearby tattoo shop.

"When I refused to get a tattoo, they started assaulting me," Dev recounted.

"When I refused to get a tattoo, they started assaulting me. Soon, we were surrounded by 15-20 people, and when we tried to leave, the number swelled to nearly 100. We came to Goa for a holiday — is this a tourist place or a terrorist place?"

— Dev P, tourist from Odisha



"It seems like the authorities are involved — there's a 'setting' in place. If you visit this area in the evening, you'll see hundreds of toutts openly cheating tourists. When I confronted one tattoo artist, he laughed and said they 'pay money'."

— Ciana Fernandes, Calangute



"Soon we were surrounded by 15-20 people, and when we tried to leave, the number swelled to nearly 100. We came to Goa for a holiday — is this a tourist place or a terrorist place? We came to see how tourism functions here because Odisha is also developing its own tourism sector. I appeal to the tourism minister to please ensure the safety of visitors. It's only because of one local woman that we were saved," he added.

That local woman, Ciana

Fernandes, who intervened to help the tourists, said she has repeatedly complained about the growing menace of toutts along the Calangute promenade. Following Friday's incident, she called the police, who escorted the tourists to the station but allegedly urged them to 'compromise'.

"They dropped us back at our hotel and told us to return the next morning to record our statement along with the tattoo shop owner," Dev said. "But when

we returned, they refused to check CCTV footage or register our complaint. It seems like there's an understanding between the police and the tattoo operators," he alleged.

Following a previous complaint by Fernandes and other tourism stakeholders regarding tourist harassment during the Christmas-New Year season, Calangute police and the Tourist Police Unit had conducted a crackdown, rounding up several toutts

and pimps.

"But they were back within days," Fernandes claimed. "It seems like the authorities are involved — there's a 'setting' in place. If you visit this area in the evening, you'll see hundreds of toutts openly cheating tourists. When I confronted one tattoo artist, he laughed and said they 'pay money'. Calangute MLA Michael Lobo was here just two days ago and promised to clear

the area. Who is really behind this — the MLA, the chief minister, or the tourism minister?" she questioned.

In January, the Calangute panchayat raided several shops on the promenade that were allegedly operating multiple businesses without valid permits. Sarpach Joseph Sequeira had said some shops had licenses for garment sales but were also running tattoo parlours and other businesses.

"We shut down around five such shops that were carrying out multiple activities. People should be able to walk comfortably to the beach," Sequeira said, adding that the panchayat would continue its crackdown on illegalities and unauthorised vendors in Calangute, Baga, and Tito's Lane.

Valpoi police bust illegal beef transport network, arrest four

Team Herald

VALPOI: The Valpoi police intercepted an illegal beef transportation network and arrested four persons during an early morning operation at the Keri check-post in Chorla Ghat.

According to SDPO Bicholim Jivba Dalvi, the arrested individuals have been identified as Amaanali Hussainsab Dessai, 23, of Zuarinagar, Mormugao; Sayyed Aminsab Mokashi, 29, of Mangor Hill, Mormugao; and Sohail Salim Naikwadi, 28, and Irfan Asif, 23, both residents of Ujwal Nagar, Belagavi, Karnataka.

During the operation on March 16 at around 2.30 am, police detained two vehicles — with registration numbers GA-03-Y-7867 and GA-05-B-9993 — at the BCP Keri check-post. Upon inspection, officers discovered beef meat collectively weighing 500 kg, valued at approximately Rs. 2.75 lakh.

The police seized both vehicles and the beef under a panchanama, with the total value of the attached property estimated at Rs 18 lakh.

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The Valpoi police registered an FIR under Section 8 of the Goa Animal Preservation Act, 1995.

The raid was supervised by SDPO Jivba Dalvi and led by PI Videsh Shirodkar, along with PSI Prathamesh Gawas and constables Somnath Ustekar, Nikhil Gawas, and woman constable Sangeetha Zore.

Further investigation is underway under the supervision of SDPO Jivba Dalvi, PI Videsh Shirodkar, and overall guidance of Tikam Singh Verma, IPS.

GOOD SHEPHERD

ZARA FERNANDES



A migrant shepherd holds a little lamb as he keeps a watch on his flock at a field in Guirim

Churchill voices concern on implementation of NEP 2020

Team Herald

PANJIM: Former Chief Minister Churchill Alemao has voiced concern regarding the Goa government's implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and early start of the new academic year demanding government intervention and a meaningful dialogue with parents, educators and experts.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Alemao has highlighted several critical issues causing widespread distress among parents and students.

"The state government's decision to commence the academic year from April 1st aligning it with NEP 2020, has unfortunately triggered significant anxieties and raised serious questions among parents and students. The recent alterations to the academic schedule appear to contradict the fundamental principles outlined in the NEP 2020 and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023. This discrepancy is causing confusion and con-

The planning and execution of NEP 2020 implementation in class IX for the 2024-25 academic year are perceived as 'disastrous', raising serious concerns about the quality of education being provided

— Churchill Alemao, Former Chief Minister



cern among parents and educators," he said.

He has said that the absence of clear and detailed instructions regarding the promotion of class IX students for the 2024-25 academic year is causing immense mental stress and uncertainty which is not acceptable.

The current language formula being implemented appears to contradict the principles of NEP, particularly its emphasis on multilingualism and flexibility and this needs immediate rectification, he added.

Churchill has said that the rushed implementation of these changes may inadvertently deny children their "Right to Opportunity", disrupting their learning process and causing unnecessary stress.

Stating that the lack of a clear and convincing rationale for the hurriedly shift in the academic year is deeply concerning, he has said that the government must provide a transparent explanation supported by evidence-based reasoning.

"The planning and execution of NEP 2020 implementation in class IX for the 2024-25 academic year are perceived as 'disastrous', raising serious concerns about the quality of education being provided," he has said.

The former Member of Parliament (MP) has said that it is imperative that the government engage in a meaningful dialogue with parents, educators and education experts to address these concerns and ensure a smooth and effective implementation of NEP 2020.

Fair price shops to get grains at the doorstep from March 22

Team Herald

PANJIM: The state Government will now provide doorstep delivery system for grains, thereby eliminating the need for dealers of fair price shops (FPS) to make several trips to the taluka level godowns to collect their monthly supplies.

"The Association will also be free from paying tips at godown, transport and unloading charges. This is great relief to fair price shop owners," informed Association general secretary Gandhi Henriques.

Another achievement is that all fair price shops/societies will get its dues of Rs 1 crore while, the State government will receive Rs 4 crore due to the department of civil supplies and consumer affairs.

This doorstep delivery will come into effect from March 22, said Henriques.

He said fair price shop owners and societies need to submit their report on March 22 for ration quota distribut-

ed upto March 21, 2025.

Meanwhile, Secretary (Civil Supplies) Sanjit Rodrigues IAS has convened a meeting of representatives of fair price shop owners and committee members of All Goa Consumer Co-operative Societies, contractor/agency and transporters and assistant directors of civil supplies of all talukas at the Mantralaya conference hall, Porvorim at 4 pm on Monday, March 17.

Sarzora, Sao Jose de Areal locals join hands against railway station

Team Herald

MARGAO: Local residents and social activists from Sarzora and Sao Jose de Areal have once again strongly opposed the proposed railway station at the border of both villages.

They demanded that the government focus on improving basic facilities rather than pursuing unnecessary projects like new railway stations.

Speaking to reporters,

Fredy Travaso argued that the proposed railway station is merely a plan for coal transportation.

"This government is fooling the people on the issue of new proposed railway stations. People of Sarzora and Sao Jose de Areal are already divided due to the existing railway tracks, and we don't want further divisions," he stated.

Local MLA Cruz Silva expressed that there is still no clarity on the location of the

proposed railway station, whether it will be at Sarzora or Sao Jose de Areal. "We want the government to focus on improving the basic necessities instead of bringing unnecessary projects to our village. People are suffering from pollution due to the presence of polluting industries in Sao Jose de Areal. There is also a severe water scarcity problem that urgently needs the government's attention," he emphasised.

Pedestrian killed in Bambolim accident

Team Herald

PANJIM: A 78-year-old pedestrian, Francisco Marcelio Rodrigues, from Dramapur, Salcete, lost his life after he was hit by a car near Holy Cross Chapel, Bambolim.

The accident occurred on Saturday when driver of the four wheeler, Atmar Redkar (26), allegedly drove rashly on NH-66, hitting the victim when he was crossing the road.

Social activists say govt trying to suppress voice of dissent

Team Herald

PANJIM: Social activists on Sunday extended their support to Rama Kankonkar, Xencor Polgi and Suraj Arondekar and demanded that action should not be initiated against them.

Speaking to reporters at Ambedkar Garden, Patto, activist Rupesh Velip said, "The government is filing false and fabricated cases against the activists

to suppressed their voice. It is part of a conspiracy and we have gathered here to condemn it. We will not tolerate this politically motivated moves. Recently Rama Kankonkar had been arrested. Later he received threatening messages. Instead of giving him protection, the police have again filed an FIR and are out to arrest him."

"A new case has been filed against Rama Kankonkar on false charg-

es of hurting sentiments of people. My question is where was the government when Mhadei was sold? Were the sentiments not hurt when statements were made against other communities? Some people make statements they want and they are not arrested but here when activists are raising their voice to protect Goa, cases are being filed against them and they are being arrested," Rupesh Velip said.

Navelim gram sabha urges VP to compile asset list

The controversial extension of the local school was also discussed; members were informed that extension has been approved by panchayat and will include plenty of parking space

Team Herald

MARGAO: During the gram sabha meeting of the Navelim village panchayat on Sunday, members called on the panchayat to prepare a comprehensive list of its assets. However, the anticipated debate over the proposed extension of the local higher secondary school failed to generate significant discussion.

Panchayat members shared details about the extension plans, which include provisions for a double parking facility. The annual budget for

the panchayat was approved, but villagers reiterated the need for a complete inventory of panchayat-owned assets.

Notably, a day prior to the meeting, a group of concerned Navelim villagers had expressed worries about the unchecked expansion of educational institutions near the main junction. The Navelim Civic and Consumer Forum had raised these concerns with both the panchayat and the public, yet the matter received minimal attention during the gram sabha.

Fr Gabriel Coutinho, head of the educational institutions

in the area, explained that the proposed extension aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP).

"As per NEP guidelines, we are focused on creating infrastructure, and this extension is a necessity. Additionally, those opposing the extension have refused to utilise one of the school's floors, making the extension essential for improved services," Fr Coutinho stated.

He assured that the extension would not worsen traffic congestion in the area.

Panchayat member Paul Pereira told **O Herald** that

the panchayat had already approved the school extension plans.

"The plans include a double parking facility, with parking provision in the basement as well," Pereira said.

Addressing ongoing traffic concerns at the Navelim junction, Pereira added that the panchayat would once again engage with the traffic cell and other relevant authorities to find solutions to ease congestion.

He also noted that traffic flow in Navelim had improved slightly following the opening of the western bypass.

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