

CCTVS A MUST AT PARTY SPOTS TO CHECK FOR NOISE VIOLATION: HC

Amicus Curiae proposes, Advocate-General agrees that CCTVs are needed. But when will it be implemented?

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

PORVORIM: Establishments that have the licence to play music must install CCTVs as a pre-condition to getting the relevant permissions to operate. The ongoing High Court proceedings over noise pollution in the Anjuna-Vagator belt threw up this crucial point when the case came up for hearing on Tuesday.

CCTV footage from these establishments is vital since police have claimed on multiple instances that they have not found loud music playing after the 10 pm deadline when they reached the spot following a complaint. CCTV footage would be crucial to ascertain exactly when the music stopped - before or after the deadline.

Tuesday saw the first hearing of Contempt Petition 12 of 2023 with new judge AS Chandurkar, alongside Justice Nivedita P Mehta, addressing the issue of establishments playing amplified music after 10 pm. Amicus Curiae Nigel da Costa Frias proposed that such establishments should be required to install CCTV systems, a suggestion the two justices accepted.

“It is only through CCTV footage that we will be able to come to the truth and the Court should direct Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) to make it mandatory, for all seeking consent to operate, to have CCTV”

— Nigel da Costa Frias, Amicus Curiae

“Loud music should not be allowed after 10 pm and it is important that the GSPCB makes it mandatory for all establishments to have CCTVs installed before giving them consent to operate”

— Devidas Pangam, Advocate General

Costa Frias pointed out the recurring issue of establishments violating noise regulations, with police reports often indicating no evidence of loud music after officers visit the locations. “It is only through CCTV footage that we will be able to come to the truth and the Court should direct Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) to make it mandatory, for all seeking consent to operate, to have CCTV,” Costa Frias told Justice Chandurkar, who had replaced Justice MS Karnik in the matter. “It is through CCTV that the court will be able to reach the truth,” he added.

Costa Frias also presented an interim report from two new members of the Noise Monitoring Committee (NMC) - retired Captain Gerald Fernandes and Kamalakar Naik. However, the report faced opposition

from Advocate General Devidas Pangam, who contested the findings, particularly regarding areas outside the committee's jurisdiction. “The new members were appointed to oversee Anjuna and Vagator, yet their report includes meetings with police in Calangute and Baga, which do not fall under their jurisdiction,” Pangam argued.

In response, Costa Frias reported, stating, “While the members may have overstepped their jurisdiction, the issues raised in Calangute and Baga are pertinent to Anjuna and Vagator as well. Let geographical boundaries not hinder the process of ensuring the right to peaceful sleep for all.”

The Advocate General continued to challenge the validity of the NMC's interim report, asserting that it should not hold

weight due to jurisdictional concerns. Costa Frias countered, stating that the need for CCTV in establishments playing loud music applied universally, including in Anjuna and Vagator.

The hearing also addressed a proposal in the interim report calling for electronic signboards to be displayed at the entrance of establishments playing amplified music outdoors. Additionally, Section 2(b) of the report emphasized the need for mandatory consent from the GSPCB and permission from the Sub-Divisional Magistrate to play amplified music. Any establishment failing to secure these approvals should face closure, the report stated.

As the hearing progressed, Costa Frias urged the court to require the police to provide a status report on the First Information Reports (FIRs) filed

thus far. He also emphasized the importance of CCTV systems in curbing noise violations, a stance that was echoed by Advocate General Pangam. “Loud music should not be allowed after 10 pm and it is important that the GSPCB makes it mandatory for all establishments to have CCTVs installed before giving them consent to operate,” Pangam agreed.

The police have previously presented evidence of numerous complaints regarding loud music, but their reports often indicate that no music was heard upon their visits to the establishments. After hearing the arguments, the justices ruled that all establishments playing music after 10 pm must have CCTV coverage.

“Fifteen FIRs have been filed, and we need to know their status,” Costa Frias pressed during the hearing. Justice Chandurkar then inquired, “Who is the licensing authority?” “The licensing authority is the Deputy Collector,” responded Pangam. Justice Chandurkar further ordered that the Superintendent of Police submit an Action Taken Report on the FIRs within two weeks.

Mulgao locals firm on removal of houses from mining lease

Meeting of villagers and Vedanta with Collector fails to break ice

Team Herald

PANJIM: A meeting of Mulgao villagers with North Goa Collector Sneha Gite, IAS, along with officials of Vedanta Limited remained inconclusive on Tuesday with the villagers remaining firm on their demand to remove houses from the mining lease.

Speaking to mediapersons after the meeting, Bicholim MLA Chandrakant Shetye said, “The company officials said that there should be a buffer zone of 50 metres, while the villagers said that they will allow the buffer zone of 100 metres. When the issue of the lake came up, it was pointed out that the matter is before the National Green Tribunal. On employment issue, I said that if the company is doing everything as per the rules then why should the residents of Mulgao be deprived of the benefits. Why should they eat dust? We require sustainable mining, but doubts of villagers must be cleared. I am with the villagers. The company must have some consideration of the demands made by the villagers.”

Shree Kelbai Devasthan Committee president Vasant Gad said, “We are firm on our de-

“We are firm on our demand that the houses and temples which have been shown in the mining lease should be removed. There are other issues which we have to put in the secondary stage. First and foremost the houses and temples should be removed from the lease”

— Vasant Gad, Shree Kelbai Devasthan Committee president

mand that the houses and temples which have been shown in the mining lease should be removed. There are other issues which we have to put in the secondary stage. First and foremost the houses and temples should be removed from the lease.”

He said, “If mining activities are carried out at a distance of 50 metres from our houses then we will have to face dust pollution, noise pollution. That is why we are against making a buffer zone of 50 metres.”

The meeting was attended by officials from GSPCB, DMG, Vedanta Limited, Comunidade of Mulgao president, Mulgao sarpanch and others.

Introduce stronger laws to enhance digital security, MP urges Centre

Tanavade raises concern over spam calls, phishing and data privacy breaches

Team Herald

PANJIM: Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade on Tuesday raised concern over spam calls, phishing and data privacy breaches affecting millions of Indians and urged the Union government to introduce stronger laws, enhance digital security and enforce stricter monitoring to tackle this growing menace.

Addressing Parliament, Tanavade highlighted the surge in unsolicited spam calls, fraudulent audio and video calls via WhatsApp and social media, and deceptive messages through emails, SMS, and fake websites. These scams pose a serious threat to citizens' privacy, security, and finances, he said.

“Every day, innocent people receive calls from fraudsters posing as banks, government agencies, or law enforcement. Many fall into their trap, losing their hard-earned money,” Tanavade stated.

He emphasized that those unfamiliar with digital technology, especially senior citizens and rural populations, are at higher risk of falling victim to such frauds.

Tanavade further pointed out that the misuse of personal data is a key issue. Fraudsters obtain phone numbers and personal details illegally through data harvest-

“Every day, innocent people receive calls from fraudsters posing as banks, government agencies, or law enforcement. Many fall into their trap, losing their hard-earned money. Those unfamiliar with digital technology, especially senior citizens and rural folk, are at higher risk of falling victim to such frauds”

— Sadanand Shet Tanavade, Rajya Sabha MP

ing, mining, and unauthorised purchases from third-party brokers. This breach of privacy demands immediate government action.

“The right to privacy is a fundamental right. The government must take strict steps to stop unauthorised data access, impose tougher penalties, and regulate telemarketing to prevent such frauds,” he urged.

The MP also noted that Goa has seen an increase in such scams, with many Goans losing their savings to fraudsters, and called on the government to introduce stronger laws, enhance digital security, and enforce stricter monitoring to tackle this growing menace.

GRAVE THREAT



Smart City contractors' negligence stands exposed as an open trench at Vivanta Junction, St Inez, poses danger to commuters, especially pedestrians using the stretch

GU to start UPSC coaching centre

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa University is taking the initiative to set up a Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) coaching centre to offer numerous advantages to students by making their preparation more structured and efficient.

Having a facility in Goa

would be a game-changer for aspiring civil servants. It would not only bridge the gap in access to quality education but also empower more Goan students to compete at a national level. With the right guidance, structured learning, and consistent effort, more aspirants from the State can achieve their dreams of serv-

ing the nation, states a press release issued here.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination is one of the most challenging competitive exams in India. Aspirants from across the country prepare rigorously for years to secure a position in India's prestigious civil services.

Cabinet reshuffle likely after budget session

Team Herald

PANJIM: The much-awaited Cabinet reshuffle is likely to take place after a brief budget session of Goa Assembly, which will end on March 26.

At least three to four ministers would be dropped to induct mostly those MLAs, who had defected from Congress to the ruling BJP in September 2022. The last reshuffle was held in November 2023 when Aleixo Sequeira was inducted as a Cabinet Minister after dropping Nilesh Cabral.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who is currently in New Delhi met and interacted with Union Home and Home Minister Amit Shah. It is learnt that the issue of Cabinet reshuffle was also discussed during the meeting.

However, Sawant said that he briefed the Union Home Minister on key issues, including the State's progress in implementing the new criminal laws, developments in the mining sector, and sought his guidance on furthering administrative and developmental initiatives.

Sawant later met Union Minister for Railways, Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, in New Delhi.

Sawant informed that during the meeting, key initiatives to enhance railway operations in Goa, including the expansion of services, introducing fast trains along the Pernem-Canacona

corridor, and the development of Mayem Railway Station were discussed. He mentioned that he also discussed the upgrading of Margao Railway Station through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, among other vital infrastructure advancements.

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Vigilance inquiring into undervaluing of CTP's Assessment Orders: AG

Team Herald

PANJIM: Advocate General Devidas Pangam on Tuesday told the High Court of Bombay at Goa that an inquiry has been initiated by the Vigilance Department into the matter of undervaluing of the Assessment Orders by Chief Town Planner Rajesh Naik, while calculating fees for correction of zone under Section 17 (2) of Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act, thereby causing a loss of crores of rupees to the public exchequer, in spite of the Finance Department having flagged the same vide letter dated August 1, 2024.

The Finance Department in its letter had clearly stated that fees had to be collected as per new rates notified in Gazette dated March 28, 2024.

Hearing a miscellaneous civil application to their writ petition filed by activists Swapnesh

“This being a case of corruption, all electronic records should be preserved. The respondents should be directed to preserve all electronic records, including emails, digital files and backup data related to the 120 cases and to submit an affidavit confirming compliance with this direction within the next seven days”

— Adv Rohit Bras De Sa

Sherlekar, Jose Carlos Da Veiga Gracias and Rupesh Shinkre, the AG Pangam said that the State government had already issued notices to parties to pay up within a week, failing which it will revoke the permissions.

Also the State government wants to see the effect of the judgment striking down rules and guidelines of Section 17(2) of TCP Act, the Court was informed.

Arguing on behalf of the petitioners, Adv Rohit Bras De Sa said that this being a case of corruption, all electronic records should be preserved.

He said that the respondents be directed to preserve all electronic records, including emails, digital files and backup data related to the 120 cases and to submit an affidavit confirming compliance with this direction within the next seven days.

Adv De Sa also pointed out that there was a conflict of interest as one of the items/land at Karapur, Bicholim belongs to the TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane.

In the Official Gazette the remark mentioned that no fees were collected as “de-

letion of proposed road fee not applicable.”

Adv De Sa prayed that the respondents be directed to produce within seven days, all original files, records and communications pertaining to the 120 cases published under Section 17 (2) of the TCP Act since April 2024 including but not limited to original application with date of receipt stamps; all file noting and internal communication; minutes of meetings of the Expert Committee; Assessment Order (both original and revised, if any); payment receipts and treasury challans and all communication between the Department of Finance, Chief Town Planner and the TCP Minister.

He also sought that the respondents be asked to provide, within 14 days, a comprehensive report certified by the Secretary (Finance), detailing the exact

amount of deficit fees to be recovered in each of the 120 cases; the calculation methodology used for each case; the legal basis for any exemptions or waivers granted; the total cumulative loss caused to the public exchequer; measures taken or proposed to recover the deficit fees along with interest.

To constitute an independent Audit Committee comprising a retired HC Judge as Chairperson, a senior officer from CAG and a senior town planning expert from the National Institute to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the respondents, assess the total loss caused to the public exchequer and submit a report to Court within 30 days.

The Court granted two weeks to all respondents to file their affidavit and posted the matter for consideration on April 8.

ESMA on transport services for six months

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa government on Tuesday imposed the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) on transport services for six months.

According to a notification, the government has prohibited strikes in all transport services for passenger and goods movement by land or water across the state with immediate effect.

The order, issued under the Goa Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1988, will remain in force for six months. The decision has been taken in the public interest to ensure uninterrupted transport services, the notification said.

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