

67 structures at Agonda turtle nesting site told to shut in 24 hours

GCZMA did not comply with the last High Court order: AG

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Wednesday directed closure of 67 commercial establishments situated near the designated turtle nesting site at Agonda beach, within next 24 hours.

The Court direction came while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition filed by Aman Gupta and after Advocate General Devidas Pangam told the Court that the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) had not complied with the last or-

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der issued by the Court. Later, he said that he had told the court that GCZMA on the first date of hearing will consider whether commercial activities can be stopped or not. Unfortunately, GCZMA did not comply with his statement and committed contempt of court. There was breach of



During the last hearing on February 24, the Court was informed that the GCZMA had issued show-cause notices to the 67 commercial structures around the turtle nesting site, and the Court had directed the GCZMA to submit the timelines within which the show-cause notices will be decided.

Since the GCZMA failed to initiate action to stop commercial activities by these establishments posing a danger to the nesting site, the Court issued notice to the GCZMA through its Member Secretary to explain why action should not be taken against it for non-compliance of the directions issued on February 24 and March 3. The notice is made returnable within a period of one week.

The Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) had also submitted that during the inspection carried out,

it was found that at least 20 structures did not have necessary consent to operate and they were asked to suspend their operations.

But on March 6, the Court had stated that mere directions for suspension of operation may not serve any purpose and had directed the GSPCB to immediately seal the structures, in which commercial activities were taking place.

The authorities must render full co-operation in sealing these premises, the bench had said.

The next hearing in the matter is scheduled on March 26.

MAIDEN VOYAGE



Olive Ridley turtles being released into the sea at Morjim Beach, which is a turtle nesting site

KTCL workers defer strike

Team Herald

PANJIM: The strike called by the KTC Drivers and Allied Employees Association was deferred for a few days as the KTCL management agreed to most of the demands of the union.

Speaking to O Herald, AITUC leader Advocate Suhaas Naik said, "The strike has been deferred because KTCL management has signed an MoU of settlement before the office of the conciliation. The strike has been deferred till the process of the conciliation is completed and the government takes concrete steps to resolve the demands. They have agreed to the demands in principle and we are waiting for the measures and steps and implementation."

He said the demands were accepted during a meeting held before the Labour Commissioner between KTCL management and workers represented by AITUC General Secretary AITUC General Secretary Christopher Fonseca.

Last month, the KTC Drivers and Allied Employees Association affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) had threatened to go on a strike and issued a 21-day notice to the Kadamba Transport Corporation (KTCL) management, effective from March 19, if the government fails to pay their Seventh Pay Commission dues.

Other demands of the association included an increase in the monthly wages of bus drivers and conductors with over two years of service, from Rs 18,000 to Rs 30,000, procurement of 300 new diesel buses to replace 200 condemned vehicles over the past two years, regularisation of temporary drivers and conductors who have completed over three years of service, etc.

Calls for free, fair probe in varsity paper 'theft' grow louder

Cong, NSUI, IYC meet Gov, demand action against those shielding Prof

Team Herald

PANJIM: Members of Goa Congress, the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) met Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday, demanding strict action against Goa University authorities for allegedly shielding the assistant professor and covering up a major paper leak scandal.

They urged the Governor, who is also the Chancellor of Goa University, to ensure that the investigation conducted by the fact-finding committee remains impartial.

Speaking to reporters, NSUI Goa President Naushad Choudhari stated, "Two days ago, we lodged



Members of the National Students' Union of India meet Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday, demanding strict action against Goa University authorities

a police complaint, and the investigation is currently in progress. Today, we met the Governor to demand a thorough and impartial probe into the case."

He further expressed concerns over the fact-finding committee,

which includes two senior members of the institution. "We suspect that the investigation may not be conducted in a fair and unbiased manner. That is why we urged the Governor to ensure that the probe remains impartial

"We suspect that the investigation may not be conducted in a fair and unbiased manner. That is why we urged the Governor to ensure that the probe remains impartial and that strict action is taken against those found guilty"

— Naushad Choudhari, NSUI Goa President

"We are not satisfied with the way things are progressing. We will only be satisfied when those involved in this scandal are dismissed from the institution and strict action is taken against them."

— Mahesh Nadar, IYC Goa Working President

and that strict action is taken against those found guilty," he added.

Choudhari also demanded that if the professor in question is found guilty, he should be sacked rather than merely suspended, along with similar action against the Registrar and Vice-Chancellor of the uni-

versity. Echoing similar concerns, IYC Goa Working President Mahesh Nadar stated, "We are not satisfied with the way things are progressing. We will only be satisfied when those involved in this scandal are dismissed from the institution and strict action is taken against them."

Hearing on plea against April start for academic year adjourned

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Wednesday adjourned the hearing to Monday, March 24 on writ petition filed by parents challenging the commencement of the new academic year in April as the petitioners sought time to file their rejoinder to the affidavit-in reply filed by the Directorate of Education.

During the hearing of a writ petition filed by Manuel Sidney Antao and seven others, the government informed the court that as per the draft rules under the Goa Education Act, the new academic

year for classes 1-5 will begin in June, while classes 6-10 and 12 will start from April 7, with classes ending at 11:30 am during April. They will have summer vacation from May 1 to June 3, 2025 and the schools will follow timings for these classes from June 4.

Director of Education Shailesh Zingde in his affidavit stated that the court of law cannot interfere with the policy decision of the government on the ground that is erroneous or on the ground that a better, fairer or wiser alternative is available. Only the legality of the policy and not its soundness is the subject matter of judicial review, he stated.

2 women among 5 held for Pilerne dacoity

Fish vendor, wife robbed at knife point; cash stolen, divided among accused at a Calangute hotel; cops on hot pursuit of three others

Team Herald

PANJIM: Five dacoits broke into the house of a fish vendor in Marra, Pilerne, in the wee hours of Monday, looted cash and gold worth Rs 24 lakh before fleeing from the site.

The Porvorim Police however swooped down on the accused which included two women and booked them for dacoity.

The accused have been identified as Joyce alias Priya D'Souza (32), Kalpana Barki (37), Imran Shaikh (34) from Pune, Subhash Kumar (27) from Uttar Pradesh, and Dhiraj Gupta (20) from Colvale.

According to the police, investigations revealed that Priya alias Joyce D'Souza, a neighbour of the



The Porvorim Police which swooped down on the accused

complainant, was aware of the victim's possession of a large amount of cash and gold due to her close ties with the family. Allegedly, she conspired with her associates Krishna Belgaonkar and Kalpana Barki to execute the crime.

Krishna Belgaonkar subsequently arranged for the remain-

CRIMES MOST FOUL

Joycee D'Souza: Earlier booked by Porvorim Police under sections of Immoral Trafficking Act

Kalpna Barki: Involved in 2018 murder of her husband, case registered at Curchorem PS

Krishna Belgaonkar: Involved in a 2018 murder case at Calangute PS, currently out on bail

ing accused, while Kalpana Barki and her associate Imran Shaikh arranged a vehicle to carry out the offence.

The dacoits then broke the door of the rented room with an iron rod, entered the house, threatened to kill the inmate Pappu Biswas and his wife. They then robbed the duo

at knife point and fled.

Following the crime, the stolen cash and gold were reportedly divided among the accused at a hotel in Calangute.

The police confirmed that Joyce D'Souza has been previously booked under multiple sections of the IPC by Porvorim Police including Immoral Trafficking. Krishna Belgaonkar was involved in a 2018 murder case registered at Calangute Police Station and is currently out on bail.

Similarly, Kalpana Barki was previously involved in the 2018 murder of her husband, a case registered at Curchorem Police Station.

The cops however acted swiftly and tracked down the accused based on the CCTV footage.

Decide on notices to 76 illegal structures by May 30, HC directs Se Old Goa VP

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the Se Old Goa village panchayat to decide on show cause notices issued to 76 illegal structures expeditiously and latest by May 30.

While hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition filed by John Baptista Mascarenhas, the panchayat in its affidavit-in reply stated that show-cause notices dated November 25, 2024 have been issued to about 76 persons who have carried out unauthorised constructions. The panchayat further stated that the process of considering the response to the show-cause notices is underway and the entire exercise is stated to be completed by May 30 this year.

The Tiswadi Mamlatdar during survey had identified 54 illegal structures within the prohibited areas at Old Goa. These illegal structures included belonging to former Minister Pandurang Madkaikar, former Se Old Goa sarpanch, Se Old Goa village panchayat and the Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation (GSIDC). They survey report has been submitted to the Court.

But the petitioner's counsel Parag Wagle, while referring to his affidavit-in rejoinder submitted that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), through its Director, (Monument II) had granted conditional approval to the Superintending Archaeologist during exposition of the relics of St Francis Xavier in 2024. In view of various breaches committed, the petitioner had addressed a representation dated January 16, 2025 to the respondents.

Adv R Chodankar, Central government standing

counsel appearing for the respondents namely the Ministry of Culture, Department of Archaeology, New Delhi, Conservation Assistant of ASI, Goa Circle, Old Goa and the Superintending Archaeologist of ASI, Old Goa, sought time to obtain instructions as regards the steps taken pursuant to the communication dated November 11, 2024 issued by the Tiswadi Taluka Mamlatdar.

The Tiswadi Mamlatdar during survey had identified 54 illegal structures within the prohibited areas at Old Goa. These illegal

structures included belonging to former Minister Pandurang Madkaikar, former Se Old Goa sarpanch, Se Old Goa village panchayat and the Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation (GSIDC). They survey report has been submitted to the Court.

According to the petitioner, there are numerous structures illegally erected in the prohibited area around the said monuments and these illegal structures are used for commercial as well as residential purposes without the mandatory and necessary permissions of the competent local authorities as mandated by the Act, and such structures and activities in the prohibited area lead to additional nuisance by way of garbage dumping in the vicinity of the said monuments.

He has stated that the concerned authorities had neglected and failed to take any action on the issue raised in order to protect, preserve and conserve the said monuments and its identity, thus, defeating the very intent of legislation, i.e. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

The petitioner has sought directions to the respondents including the village panchayat to take immediate action as per Act against the illegal structures in the protected and prohibited area around the said monuments.

He has also prayed that the respondents be directed to restore the land back to its original position.

The matter has now been posted for further hearing on June 17.

North Collector meets reps of political parties

Team Herald

PANJIM: North Goa Collector Sneha Gitte, IAS, held a meeting with representatives of Congress, GFP and BJP and discussed issues related to the next assembly elections.

By Collector Vinayak Chari said, "A meeting with the representatives of political parties was held as per the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). It was attended by leaders of all the recognised and unrecognised political parties. The meeting was regarding issues related to the elections and if there are issues with regards to Booth Level Officers (BLOs), Booth Level Agents (BLAs) and their appointments. Issues related to constituencies also were discussed in the meeting."

79th Birthday Greetings



To our dearest Mother
AGATA PIA FERNANDES COUTINHO
(Umta Vaddo, Calangute)

Mom, your birthday is a celebration of the love and joy you've brought into our lives. May your day be filled with the same warmth you've given us.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
Best wishes from your loving children:
Family of late Bernard Coutinho,
Bruno Coutinho & fly,
Jerry Coutinho & fly,
Meena Coutinho & fly,
Matias Coutinho & fly.