

## AGONDA SHACKS SEALED TO SAVE TURTLE NESTS

Experts say entire beach stretch is vital to turtle conservation even as district officials rush to finish the job



PICS: AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

Some of the establishments sealed by the authorities along the beach stretch, in Agonda

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

AGONDA: The Deputy Collector and other officials were present at Agonda on Friday, sealing establishments that have been ordered shut by the High Court to protect the turtle nesting sites on the beach.

The 24-hour deadline set by the court to pull the shutters down on 67 places had expired, but it was clear that the administration would need more time to seal all. The stretch of coastline in question spans from Valvado to Dhovolkazonvado in Agonda. Thirteen places were visibly wrapped in tarpaulin,

“We are sealing structures identified by the authorities of the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA). If an establishment has not been sealed, it means it was not deemed necessary. I think we sealed 20-25 establishments yesterday, and we’re continuing today – Madhu Narvekar, Deputy Collector

though some rooms remain unsealed. While certain areas have been completely sealed, many others still lack the necessary closures. Deputy Collector Madhu Narvekar provided some context, stating, “We are sealing structures identified by the authorities

“Turtles can come ashore anywhere along the beach to lay their eggs, which are relocated to designated hatching sites. The entire beach is declared a nesting site. No activities that can disturb the turtles are allowed anywhere along the beach. Nesting and hatching are both critical aspects of the conservation effort – Nester Fernandes, Project Coordinator at Coastal Conservation Foundation

of the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA). If an establishment has not been sealed, it means it was not deemed necessary.” Narvekar further explained the meticulous nature of the task: “Some establishments have several

rooms. For example, the one we just sealed had ten rooms, all of which needed to be sealed. Multiply that by the number of establishments and you can imagine how much time this will take.”

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## Massive warehouse blast shatters night calm at Betul

Team Herald

MARGAO: A powerful explosion at a warehouse allegedly storing gunpowder in Naqueri-Betul late Thursday night sent shockwaves across South Goa, with flames visible from Agonda Beach, 15 km away. The blast triggered a massive fire, causing structural damage to nearby homes and sparking fear and outrage among residents. However, no casualties were reported.

Three fire tenders from Margao, Cuncolim and Curcholem battled the blaze for hours before bringing it under control. Locals expressed anger over the incident, questioning authorities about safety lapses. Some alleged the warehouse lacked proper permits, while industry representatives claimed the Petroleum and Ex-



Fire-fighters after dousing the fire at the Betul blast site, on Friday

plosives Safety Organization (PESO) had issued a license.

Local MLA Alton D’Costa, along with panchayat members, visited the site, following the panic caused by the deafening explosion. Residents demanded accountability, with many voicing frustration over potential negligence.

According to a police release, the fire broke out at approximately 10.55 pm on Thursday. The fire caused significant damage

to the storeroom and perimeter fence. The cause of the explosion is under investigation, and forensic teams have been deployed.

South Goa District Collector Egna Cleetus has issued prohibitory orders barring public entry within an 800-metre radius of the site until further notice. “It is necessary to take exigent measures in this regard so as to prevent any danger to human life or safety and security of public property and

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which may affect the overall security and may create disturbance of larger public order and tranquillity,” Cleetus said in the order.

## GU ‘paper leak’: FIR against teacher

Team Herald

PANJIM: Based on a complaint from Goa University, Agassaim police have lodged an FIR against Assistant Professor of Physics Pranav Naik, who is accused of leaking a question paper to one of the girl students at the university.

According to a statement issued by the university, police have been asked to

inquire into “unauthorised unlawful activities carried out by him (Naik)”.



In the FIR, Naik has been charged under various Sections dealing with forgery with the intent to cheating,

trespass, house-breaking and cheating based on the complaint filed by S N Dhuri, Registrar of Goa University.

In his police complaint, Professor Dhuri alleged that Naik made duplicate keys of the cabins of multiple faculty members without their consent and unlawfully entered the cabins without permission, breaching their

privacy and security and also helping one girl student in the exams and thereby cheating other students.

Earlier in the day, a statement issued by the university said: “The university had constituted a fact-finding committee to submit a prima facie report on the alleged matter.”

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## INDIA RANKS 118<sup>TH</sup> ON WORLD HAPPINESS INDEX

- India has gone up in the rankings from last year's 126<sup>th</sup> position
- Pakistan ranks 109<sup>th</sup>, outperforming India
- Finland claims the top spot as the happiest country for the 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year
- Denmark (2<sup>nd</sup>), Iceland (3<sup>rd</sup>), and Sweden (4<sup>th</sup>) follow closely in the rankings
- Costa Rica (6<sup>th</sup>) and Mexico (10<sup>th</sup>) enter the Top 10 for the first time
- Israel ranks 8<sup>th</sup>, despite ongoing conflicts in the region
- The United States drops to 24<sup>th</sup>, down from 11<sup>th</sup>
- United Kingdom holds 23<sup>rd</sup> position
- China is ranked 68<sup>th</sup>
- Palestine surprises with a 108<sup>th</sup> ranking, while Ukraine is at 111<sup>th</sup>



### WHAT DRIVES HAPPINESS?

- It's not about wealth or growth—it's about trust and connection.
- Key factors include:
  - Shared meals and the support of loved ones
  - A belief in the kindness of others



### METHODOLOGY:

- Rankings are based on self-reported ratings of people's lives, focusing on subjective well-being

### STUDY BY:

- Gallup Analytics
- Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford

## Cash at judge's home: In-house probe on, says SC

PTI, NEW DELHI: Following reports of alleged cash discovery from sitting Delhi HC judge Yashwant Varma's official home, the Supreme Court on Friday said the Delhi High Court chief justice had initiated an in-house inquiry against him and the proposal to transfer him to the Allahabad High Court was a separate matter.

The purported discovery of a huge stash of cash happened following a fire at Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at around 11.35 pm on March 14, prompting the Delhi fire department personnel to rush to the spot and douse it.

The incident created ripples in the legal circuit, with many voices calling for the judge's resignation while criticising the Supreme Court collegium decision to transfer him.

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## Community effort restores Benaulim's forgotten spring

Dry for 15 years; now hope springs for other water channels

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a remarkable community-driven effort, a long-neglected natural spring in Benaulim has been restored to its former glory, thanks to the dedication of local residents with the support of the Benaulim Panchayat. The spring, which had been closed for nearly 15 years, is now flowing once again, much to the delight of the villagers.

Instead of opting for modern construction methods, the restoration team chose traditional stone construction to maintain the spring's natural essence and eco-friendly character.

For many villagers, the revival of the spring has rekindled cherished memories. An elderly resident, Minguel



Villagers supervise the spring restoration work at Benaulim

Fernandes, fondly recalled fishing in the spring during his childhood. Farmers, too, shared stories of how they once relied on the spring for drinking water and irrigation, only to see it deteriorate over time.



The restoration project was not without its challenges. Roque Fernandes, a local activist, revealed that he had repeatedly written to the panchayat urging them to redevelop the spring.

“Today, we can see water flowing again. I have asked the panchayat to complete the remaining tasks soon. There will be steps to go down too. There are many other springs like this in the village which were filled up with construction debris,” Fernandes said. He added that senior citizens, who would recall how the spring was ages ago, would like to see the restored spring too.

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