

Golden Triangle-based drug smuggling racket busted

Trio including a woman from Bangkok held; hydroponic weed worth Rs 11.67 cr seized; drugs were intended to be sold in Goa; look-out circulars and blue notice issued against other gang members hiding in Thailand

Team Herald

PANJIM: In one of the biggest seizures of drugs in Goa, Crime Branch Police busted Golden Triangle-based drug smuggling racket by arresting three persons including a woman from Bangkok and seized hydroponic weed (ganja) weighing 11.672 kg worth Rs 11.67 crore.

The police arrested a mule and two members of a well organised international gang and are on the lookout for more accused.

The accused have been identified as Goutham M (26) from Bengaluru and presently residing at Guirim, Bardez, Sreejil P P from Kerala and Shilna A from Bangkok and currently residing in Bengaluru.

The police team led by PI Tushar Lotlikar on March 8 ar-

MAJOR DRUG HAUL

■ A Golden Triangle-based drug smuggling racket was busted where three people, including a woman from Bangkok, were arrested and 11.672 kg of hydroponic weed worth Rs 11.67 crore was seized

■ Goutham M was arrested on March 8 with the contraband, leading to the arrest of Shilna A on March 12 in Bengaluru

■ Sreejil P P, the financial backbone of the gang, was apprehended in Kannur, Kerala, on March 19

■ The drugs were intended to be sold in Goa, and look-out circulars (LOCs) and a blue notice were issued against other gang members hiding in Thailand

■ All three accused are in police custody

rested Goutham, currently residing at St Anthony Waddo, Guirim, in possession of a transparent polythene packet containing dried greenish fruiting tops (buds) suspected to be hydroponic weed (ganja), weigh-

ing 11.672 kg worth Rs 11.67 crore. During a search, the contraband was found hidden in his rented room and seized.

During the course of interrogation, Goutham revealed that he was contacted by his friend

Taslim, based in Bangkok, who offered him Rs 1 lakh for delivering the consignment from Bangkok to India. Further disclosures led to the arrest of Shilna A on March 12 from Bengaluru by a team led by PI Vikas Deykar. According to the police, she is a key member of the group operating from Bangkok and coordinates with local suppliers in Bengaluru.

Financial investigation revealed that Sreejil P P, a native of Kannur, Kerala, is the financial backbone of the gang and had booked international flight tickets for Goutham and other individuals suspected to be involved in the syndicate.

The police team led by PI Kishore Ramanan apprehended Sreejil from Kannur, Kerala, on March 19.

Upon interrogation, it came to light that the drug was supposed to be sold in Goa. The Goa Police have now issued look-out circulars (LOCs) and blue notice against other members of the gang, who are hiding in Thailand.

A case has been registered against the three accused under Sections 20 (b) (ii) (B) of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

All three accused persons are currently in police custody and further investigation is in progress with the investigating officer PI Prashal Desai under the Supervision of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Rajesh Kumar and SP (Crime Branch) Rahul Gupta Indian Police Service (IPS).

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Bomb threat at DGP's office declared hoax after massive search by cops

Team Herald

PANJIM: An email threatening IED attack on the office of the Director General of Police (DGP) on Saturday turned out to be fake. However, as a precaution, the entire police headquarters were searched but nothing was found.

Security was beefed up at the police headquarters in Panjim and at the official residence of the DGP Alok Kumar after the message was received at 9.9 am on the DGP's email ID containing the threat of an IED attack targeting the DGP office.

The DGP's office received a bomb threat via email in the morning, prompting a massive search operation at the headquarters. Goa State Fire and Emergency Services along with the Bomb Disposal Squad, thoroughly searched the premises but found nothing suspicious.



A sniffer dog deployed at the Police Headquarters in Panjim

"At 9.09 am today, an email was received on the DGP's Goa email ID, threatening an IED attack. Immediately, Goa Police's security unit and district police were put on high alert. They are conducting checks as per Standard Operating Procedures. The Cyber Crime Unit is investigating the origin of the email, while the Bomb Disposal Squad

has confirmed that no explosives were found in the premises," informed official sources.

After extensive search of the premises, the police declared that it was a hoax bomb threat.

The email received by the DGP's office stated, "This is an urgent security alert regarding IED attack targeting the DGP's Office,

Goa, orchestrated by international drug cartels in collusion with hostile state actors. The threat is linked to recent developments involving Jaffer Sadiq (DMK-related meth case) and suggests the use of sulfur-peroxide-based IEDs."

The threat is linked to recent developments involving Jaffer Sadiq (DMK-related meth case) and suggests the use of sulfur-peroxide-based IEDs."

"This is a direct alert. We confirm Pakistan ISI cells and international cartels linked to the Jaffer Sadiq case have rigged the DGP office in Goa with sulfur-peroxide IEDs. Detonation expected before 3 pm today. This is real. Evacuate immediately. No delays. No discussions. Clear the building now. Deploy bomb scanners - check everything. Walls. Vehicles. Trash. Everything. Shoot on sight if you see anything suspicious. No warnings. This is not a drill. Act now," the email read.

SCERT to function as an autonomous body from Apr 1

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) will officially function as an autonomous body from April 1.

Previously, SCERT operated as a section of the Directorate of Education. However, it has now been registered as an independent entity under the Societies Act.

Director Meghana Shetgaonkar stated that the SCERT governing council will oversee daily operations, while policy decisions will be forwarded to the State government for approval.

"This move will enable SCERT to fast-track many key initiatives that fall under its purview," Shetgaonkar said.

The core mandate of SCERT includes conducting teacher training, overseeing textbook development, and ensuring sustainable quality education in the State.

Cops directed to file FIR based on power dept complaint

Team Herald

VASCO: The Vasco Judicial Magistrate First Class MFC Court has ordered the Mormugao police to register an FIR within 24 hours on a complaint filed by Electricity Department executive engineer Kashinath Shetye.

Shetye had alleged that some individuals obstructed the department officials from performing their lawful duty at Bogda, Vasco. The incident occurred on February 28 when Shetye had gone to Bogda to close traditional pathways which locals had claimed that it existed for more than

50 years. A war of words had also broken out between the Mormugao MLA Sankalp Amonkar and the executive engineer over the issue of closing traditional pathways.

Next day, Shetye filed a police complaint against four persons for allegedly threatening, intimidating and preventing him from carrying out official work. The complaint was filed under Sections 221, 329, 126, 192, 324 (5) and 61 of BNS.

Shetye said that he will perform his duty and continue his work and bring the issue to logical end.

Calangute p'yat to conduct survey of illegal structures

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Acting on directions from the Director of Panchayats (DoP), the Calangute panchayat will commence a survey on Monday to identify illegal structures in the area. This follows the High Court's order of March 6 regarding unauthorised constructions along roadsides, highways, and major roads, including

those being used for commercial purposes.

A resolution to carry out a site inspection was passed at the panchayat's fortnightly meeting last week, in response to the DoP directive dated March 19. Speaking on the matter, Calangute sarpanch Joseph Sequeira stated that while the panchayat was instructed to complete the survey within 15 days, the process is expected to take around a month.

"The village panchayat will conduct site inspections of all structures along the main road, from Ximer and the Candolim border to Arpora, covering the stretch from Calangute police station to Calangute market, as well as Calangute beach and Baga road," Sequeira confirmed.

He further noted that

some of the structures within the areas identified by the High Court may have obtained permissions from the Town and Country Planning Department and possess occupancy certificates. "We will carry out the survey strictly in accordance with the High Court's order and submit our compliance report accordingly," he added.

Several months ago, the Calangute gram sabha had passed a resolution to survey and identify all commercial establishments operating without a trade licence. In addition, the panchayat had previously demolished several illegal structures found to be built without the necessary permissions, particularly within the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) no-development area.

21-year-old dies in head-on scooter collision at Valpoi

Team Herald

VALPOI: A tragic road accident at Redeghat-Valpoi, on Saturday claimed the life of a 21-year-old and left three others critically injured. The deceased has been identified as Shawn Lobo, a resident of Sankhali.

According to sources, the accident involved a head-on collision between two scooters, leaving all four riders critically injured. Bystanders and emergency responders rushed them to the Community Health Centre at Valpoi, where the

on-duty doctor declared Shawn Lobo dead on arrival. Due to the severity of their injuries, the remaining three victims were referred to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim, for advanced medical treatment.

Valpoi police conducted a panchama at the accident site and have initiated a detailed investigation to determine the exact cause of the crash.

Locals say that the Redeghat is an accident-prone zone and has claimed many lives over the years.

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