

HC tells govt to list steps taken to rescue children forced to beg at traffic signals

Directs State to file affidavit within three weeks; appreciates concerns raised by public-spirited advocate

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the State government to file an affidavit within three weeks detailing its plan to rescue children forced to beg at traffic signals and implement child protection measures under the Juvenile Justice Act and the Bharat Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

The petition filed by a lawyer has also sought directions to authorities concerned to enact appropriate policies and law to prevent

PROTECTIVE MEASURES	
■ Petitioner urges govt to implement child protection laws	■ Establish task force to tackle exploitation in public areas
■ Asked to temporary shelters, facilitate educational access	■ Calls for awareness campaigns to educate public on issue

exploitation of children.

The Court also requested the petitioner, Advocate Moses Pinto, to offer his suggestions to the government on addressing the issue.

Advocate Pinto, in his public interest litigation

(PIL) writ petition, had sought government intervention to rescue children engaged in begging and ensure the implementation of child protection laws. He further urged the government to provide temporary shelters, facilitate educa-

tional access and establish a task force to tackle child exploitation in public areas. Additionally, he called for awareness campaigns to educate the public on the issue.

Appreciating the concerns raised by Advocate Pinto, the Court stated that since the petitioner claims to be a public-spirited advocate, he should provide his recommendations to address the issue.

"Depending on his suggestions, the Court may ask the government to implement them, if found feasi-

ble," the Court observed.

Directing the State government to submit its affidavit, the Court noted that merely registering offences under the Goa Prevention of Begging Act, 1972, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, is not a sufficient solution.

"It is necessary to address the root cause of this menace. The focus should be on prohibiting begging rather than merely prosecuting parents. A wholesome solution is required to resolve the issue," the Court stated.

High Court orders removal of encroachments at Mala-Panjim

Directs restoration of govt land to original state in 15 days

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has ordered the removal of encroachments on government land belonging to the North Goa Planning and Development Authority (NGPDA) at Mala, Panjim, and directed authorities to restore the land to its original condition within 15 days.

On March 26, 2025, the Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Tiswadi issued an order to Alex Fernandes and Paulo Fernandes, both residents near Mala Lake, instructing them to remove or demolish the illegal structures they had erected on a 244-square-metre area of government land. The order also mandated that the

The Court took note of the March 26 order and stated, "We expect them (respondents) to ensure compliance with the judgment of the Deputy Collector and SDO, Tiswadi, with only a word of caution that if they fail to do so, the Mamlatdar is already directed to take necessary steps."

land be restored to its original state within the specified timeframe.

The order further stated that in case of non-compliance, the Tiswadi Mamlatdar would execute the demolition and ensure the land's restoration.

The case was brought before the High Court in a writ petition filed by former CCP councillor Menino Da Cruz, Vinayak Mahale, and Amey Naik. During the hearing on Wednesday, government advocate Siddarth Samant submitted the Deputy Collec-

tor and SDO's order, issued under Section 4 of the Goa Land Prohibition and Construction Act, 1995, against the two respondents.

The Court took note of the March 26 order and stated, "We expect them (respondents) to ensure compliance with the judgment of the Deputy Collector and SDO, Tiswadi, with only a word of caution that if they fail to do so, the Mamlatdar is already directed to take necessary steps."

The matter has been adjourned to April 21.

Labourer gets life sentence for murder

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Principal District and Sessions Court sentenced a 43-year-old labourer to life imprisonment for murdering a fellow labourer by attacking him with an axe. The court also directed the convict to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh, of which Rs 75,000 must be given to the victim's family.

According to the Maina Cur-torim Police, Vivek Dev Singh, from Jharkhand, allegedly murdered a fellow labourer following a quarrel over a minor issue. The fatal attack took place inside their rented room in a house at Colleadongor, Raia.

The police stated that the house owner of the rented room had lodged

a complaint after witnessing the brutal assault. The accused had struck Mukesh Singh on the head with an axe, inflicting grievous injuries that resulted in instant death. Following the incident, the police shifted the body to South Goa District Hospital for a post-mortem examination.

During the investigation, the police recovered the murder weapon—the axe used in the crime. Public Prosecutor VG Costa, arguing before the court, presented evidence that Vivek Dev Singh had attacked Mukesh Singh while he was asleep, leading to his brutal and cold-blooded murder.

The court examined 13 witnesses in the case, including then PI Sagar Ekoskar, now DySP.

FALSE ALARM



A bomb threat at the Bardez Deputy Collector's office in Mapusa triggered a high-security response after an email threatened to blow up the office using an IED. Bomb disposal squads, ATS commandos, and police teams conducted a thorough search of the premises. It later turned out to be a hoax

Tourist Information Mgmt Enterprise launched to streamline data

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Department of Tourism has introduced the Tourist Information Management Enterprise (TIME), a crucial initiative aimed at streamlining the collection of tourist data from accommodation providers.

Under this initiative, every hotelier and accommodation unit is required to submit Statistics Proforma (Form-XI) data on a monthly basis. The submission deadline is the 5th of every month, ensuring that the Department of Tourism receives timely and accurate statistics regarding tourist stays. The data must be submitted online through the official Goa Online portal, making the process more accessible and efficient for all stakeholders.

Compliance with this regulation is directly linked to the renewal of registration certificates for accommodation providers. Hoteliers who fail to upload the

required statistics for the preceding year will not be eligible for renewal, reinforcing the importance of timely data submission. By enforcing this mandate, the Department of Tourism aims to improve the overall management of tourism-related data, ensuring that policies and infrastructure developments are backed by accurate and up-to-date information.

Accurate tourism data plays a vital role in shaping Goa's tourism landscape. Reliable statistics help the government formulate better policies, allocate resources efficiently, and enhance visitor experiences. Additionally, it allows for a more structured approach to sustainable tourism, aligning with the state's broader vision of Regenerative Tourism. By tracking visitor trends, authorities can make informed decisions to promote responsible tourism while ensuring that the industry thrives in a balanced and sustainable manner, states a press release.

Illegal roadside businesses face action in Bastora



Team Herald

MAPUSA: The Bastora Village Panchayat has issued show-cause notices to 27 illegal commercial establishments located along the road between Tar Junction and Moira Bridge, which abut major highways.

The owners of these structures have been given three days to respond, explaining why their unauthorised businesses should not be sealed.

The notice, issued by Panchayat Secretary Smita Parab, was served under Section 71 of the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994. This action follows a meeting held on March 28 by the Panchayat body, led by Sarpanch Rakhi Naroji.

During the meeting, discussions were held regarding a letter from the Director of

The owners of these structures have been given three days to respond, explaining why their unauthorised businesses should not be sealed.

Panchayats concerning a High Court order on illegal roadside structures. Consequently, the panchayat passed a resolution to issue show-cause notices to the owners of these unauthorised structures.

This move underscores the panchayat's commitment to enforcing legal compliance and eliminating unauthorised commercial activities along key roadways, in accordance with court directives and regulatory guidelines.

Mamlatdar faces HC wrath over illegal sand extraction

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a contempt petition concerning the illegal sand extraction activities in Goa, the High Court has directed the North Goa Collector to issue a show cause notice to the Bicholim Mamlatdar.

The notice demands an explanation from the Mamlatdar as to why he did not take timely action based on a report submitted by the Sankhali Talathi regarding the rampant illegal sand extraction at Virdi, located along the river Valvanti.

The case highlights concern over illegal sand mining in the region, which has been a subject of growing scrutiny due to environmental damage and regulatory lapses. The court's directive is a significant step in addressing the issue, and the next hearing on the matter has been scheduled for April 29.

This development comes as part of ongoing efforts by the judiciary to ensure stricter enforcement of laws surrounding environmental protection and prevent illegal mining activities that have detrimental impacts on Goa's natural resources.

'Lifting of Muthalik ban spells trouble for Goa tourism'

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Former Calangute MLA Agnelo Fernandes has expressed serious concerns over the lifting of the ban on Ram Sena leader Pramod Muthalik, warning that the move could have disastrous consequences for Goa's tourism industry.

Fernandes claimed that Goa is no longer the peaceful destination it once was, and this is deterring visitors. Speaking to reporters, he stated:

"Tourism is almost dead in Goa. Our hotels are almost empty. After Covid, a lot of tourists were coming to Goa, but now there are many other options, so most people go elsewhere. Peaceful atmosphere is no longer there in Goa."

He further alleged that the current political climate in Goa is contributing to this decline, saying:

"The political climate in Goa is also vitiated. There is polarisation. Two weeks ago, the government lifted the ban on Muthalik. When Parrikar was CM, whatever his faults, he was secular and peaceful. That is why he stopped Muthalik. This government is not stopping

him. There is a polarisation happening, and with this, our tourism will die."

Fernandes accused the BJP-led government of using polarisation as a political tool to secure electoral gains, warning that this approach would have long-term consequences for the tourism industry.

"Just because elections are coming, they're trying to polarise society. But it's bad for the long-term and will affect the tourism industry," he said.

Pramod Muthalik, the leader of the Ram Sena, gained notoriety in 2009 after members of his organisation attacked a pub in Mangalore, assaulting women and claiming that their presence in such establishments was against Indian culture. In August 2014, Muthalik and his associates were banned from entering Goa amid concerns that their brand of "moral policing" could disrupt the state's tourism-dependent economy.

In 2015, the Supreme Court dismissed a petition by Muthalik seeking permission to enter Goa, ruling that he and his followers engaged in "moral policing."

Mahila Congress agitates for 33% reservation in LS, assemblies

Team Herald

PANJIM: Chanting slogans of "Justice for Women," members of the Goa Pradesh Mahila Congress staged a protest march on Thursday as part of the nationwide 'Naari Nyay Andolan'.

The march, from Congress House to Azad Maidan, aimed to raise awareness about women's rights, gender justice, and the need for immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Act. Mahila Congress leaders, activists, and supporters participated in the protest, dressed in red to symbolise strength and determination.

As part of the movement, leaders demanded 33% po-



Goa Pradesh Mahila Congress leaders protest at Azad Maidan, Panjim, as part of the nationwide 'Naari Nyay Andolan'

litical reservation for women, urging the government to conduct a census and delimitation in time to reserve

seats for the 2027 Assembly elections.

Goa Pradesh Mahila Congress President, Dr Pratik-

sha Khalap, criticised the government for failing to prioritise women's welfare. "Women make up more

than 50% of the population, yet we are used only as a vote bank. The government has made no provisions for women, and the state government remains indifferent to our welfare," she said.

Dr Khalap also highlighted the rising number of crimes against women, contradicting the Chief Minister's claims that Goa is the safest state for women.

"Last year, 367 cases of crimes against women were reported. Since the beginning of 2025, 63 cases have already been registered. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister claims Goa is a safe state for women—perhaps he should inspect the dark streets without functioning lights or CCTV cameras at night."

She also slammed the Goa Women's Commission Chairperson for stating that women should not expect much from the government.

"If such statements are made, then the Chief Minister and all those appointed to these commissions should resign. There is a complete failure of law and order, and we will continue to raise our voices against injustices," she declared.

Emphasising the need for women's participation in governance, Dr Khalap added, "For better administration and governance, we need more women in the Parliament and the State Assembly. The Women's Reservation Bill must be implemented without delay."

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