

COURTING CRISIS AS CASES PILE UP

33% judicial posts vacant in Goa's lower courts

As frustrated litigants grapple with unending delays, case backlog in District and Subordinate courts approaches 60,000

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MARGAO: Goa's District and Subordinate courts are facing a worsening crisis, with nearly one-third of judicial positions remaining unfilled, according to information revealed in a recent Legislative Assembly session. Law and Judiciary Minister Aleixo Sequeira provided this data in response to a Legislative Assembly Question (LAQ) raised by Curtorim MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco.

In North Goa, nine out of 33 judicial posts in the District

GOA DISTRICT AND SUBORDINATE COURTS: WHY THE BACKLOG?

■ **1/3** judicial posts vacant in Goa's District and Subordinate courts (**19** out of **60** positions)

■ **9** out of **33** sanctioned posts vacant in North Goa

■ **10** out of **27** sanctioned posts vacant in South Goa

■ Nearly **60,000** cases (**42,680** in North Goa, **17,097** in South Goa) pending across District and Subordinate courts

■ **15** vacancies for Civil Judge Junior Division & JMFC positions

■ No Ad-Hoc District

Judges (Fast Track Court Judges) in South Goa currently

■ **5,002** cases – highest pendency in Mapusa's Civil Judge Senior Division and JMFC 'B' Court

■ Recent recruitment for District Judge position failed as no candidates achieved qualifying marks

■ One Senior Civil Judge in South Goa has been under suspension since December 31, 2023

■ The High Court is monitoring disposal rates of all courts in the State as per the LAQ reply

main vacant, while South Goa faces a far more critical situation with 10 out of 27 positions unfilled. Com-

of 60 judicial posts across Goa's lower courts are currently vacant, severely impacting the administration

Litigants get frustrated because of the long delays in delivery of justice. Many courts in Margao, for example, are without judges. The strength of the High Court of Bombay at Goa may also need to be increased in view of the pendency – Senior lawyer from Margao

GOA COURTS FALL SHORT OF NATIONAL JUDGE-POPULATION RATIO ON PAGE 5

of justice.

The vacancy situation is particularly acute for Civil Judge, Junior Division and Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) positions. In North Goa, nine of these positions remain unfilled against a sanctioned strength of 15, with only six current-

ly working and one judge undergoing training. In South Goa, 6 out of 12 sanctioned Civil Judge, Junior Division and JMFC positions are vacant.

More concerning is the complete absence of functioning Ad-Hoc District Judges (Fast Track Court Judges) in South Goa, with both sanctioned positions remaining unfilled. Additionally, 2 out of 4 District Judge positions in South Goa are vacant, and one Senior Civil Judge and CJM/JMFC is currently under suspension since December 31, 2023.

This judicial vacuum has contributed to a massive backlog of cases. North Goa's District and Subordinate courts are currently grappling with 42,680 pending cases, while South Goa has 17,097 cases awaiting resolution. Combined, there are nearly 60,000 pending cases across Goa's lower judiciary.

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ACT BEFORE THE CURTAIN FALLS



Puppeteers move cardboard animals through the botanical gardens at Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC), on Thursday. This is the first steps of "The Herds", a moving theatre performance that will travel from DRC to the Arctic Circle in a bid to bring attention to the climate crisis

3 criminals bailed out after goof-up by Porvorim Police

Get bail as cops fail to communicate grounds & reasons for arrest in their native language

Team Herald

PANJIM: After the Anjuna Police goof-up, now the utter failure on the part of the Porvorim Police to communicate the grounds and reasons for arrest by writing in the language understood by the three accused and their relatives under the Bharatiya

Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), prompted the Goa Children's Court, Panjim, to grant bail to the notorious trio, involved in a recent case of dacoity at Pilerne.

This is the second such release within a week as earlier another major goof-up by the Anjuna Police led to bail being granted to a rape accused by the POCSO Court,

within a week of his arrest without any surety.

There are guidelines from the Supreme Court that under BNSS, the accused and his family have to be intimated about the arrest in a language that is known to them and failure to do so results in bail.

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Protests against Waqf Act across the country

3 killed, 118 arrested in West Bengal; 18 policemen injured in Tripura

PTI, KOLKATA/AGARTALA: Protests against the Central government's Waqf (Amendment) Act turned violent in parts of the country as three people, including a father-son duo, were killed, and over 118 arrested in Suti and Samserganj blocks of Murshidabad in West Bengal, while 18 police personnel, including an SDPO, were injured during a rally in Tripura's Unakoti district on Saturday, police said.

In one of the most disturbing incidents reported so far, a father and son were found stabbed to death inside their home in Jafrabad, located in the violence-hit Samserganj area. Family members alleged that miscreants looted their home and then fatally attacked the two before fleeing.

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DEPLOY CENTRAL FORCES IN MURSHIDABAD: CALCUTTA HC

PTI, KOLKATA: Stating that it cannot keep its eyes closed when such situations come up, the Calcutta High Court on Saturday ordered deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, which has been hit by violence allegedly linked to ongoing protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act. The court said citizens must be provided with adequate security and protection to ensure peace and order in the region.

A division bench, presided over by Justice Soumen Sen, ordered deployment of CAPF in the affected areas of Murshidabad to assist in restoring normalcy. The central forces will operate in coordination with the State administration.

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Guesthouse owner booked for not giving drug lord Atala's details to police

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Anjuna Police registered a case against a guesthouse owner from Siolim for "illegally" providing accommodation to Israeli drug lord Yaniv Benaim alias Atala without furnishing the mandatory online 'C' Form to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), Panjim.

The police stated that during the course of investigation of Atala by the Anti-Narcotics Police (ANC), it came to light that Param Ulhas Varty, a resident of Siolim, had illegally accommodated Atala in his rented apartment for the past four months.

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Nawaz in crime thriller on Goa's smuggling cartel from 1990s

Film to explore career of customs officer Costao Fernandes

Team Herald

MUMBAI: It was a sensational smuggling bust that Goan old-timers have not forgotten even after three decades. Now, streaming platform Zee5 is turning the story of fearless customs officer Costao Fernandes into a gritty crime drama original film that will release on the OTT channel soon. Award-winning actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui will star as the officer who takes down one of the most powerful smuggling networks in Goa during the 1990s.

ZEE5 shared the first look of Siddiqui in character on Instagram, writing: "Before they called him a hero, they called him guilty."



Nawazuddin Siddiqui will play Costao Fernandes, the daring customs officer

#Costao took on Goa's smuggling network with nothing but grit and guts. Coming soon on #ZEE5 #CostaoOnZEE5."

An official synopsis describes the film as follows: "Inspired by the life experiences of Mr. Costao Fer-

nandes, a principled customs officer from Goa, the film follows his daring solo mission in the 1990s that successfully disrupted the largest gold smuggling attempt into India. Yet, true heroism often carries a heavy price."

Described as a "high-octane thriller", the film aims to offer a darker, more complex portrayal of Goa, far removed from its postcard-perfect image as a sunny beach destination. Apart from Nawazuddin, the film also stars Priya Bapat.

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