

REGULATE, DON'T BAN HOUSIE, SPORTS PROMOTER URGES GOVT

Writes to CM, sports and tourism heads proposing establishment of Goa Board Games Federation to lend structure and legitimacy to community games like Housie

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a detailed letter addressed to top officials of the State government, sports promoter and former Goa Badminton Association secretary Sandeep Heble has urged that the game of Housie—a Goan community favourite—should be regulated, not banned. His proposal comes shortly after the South Goa Collector issued directions under the Goa Public Gambling Act to crack down on Housie and similar activities, prompting outcry from sections of the public.

In the letter, Heble addressed his proposal to the Chief Minister, the Sports Minister, the Tourism Minister, the Secretary (Sports), the Director of the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, the Executive Director of the Sports Authority of Goa, and the President/Sec-

“Rather than banning a local tradition, there is a need to regulate, repackage, and manage it better—bringing communities together while promoting tourism and local enterprise
— **Sandeep Heble, former secretary, Goa Badminton Association**

retary of the Goa Olympic Association.

“As a sports promoter and former Secretary of the Goa Badminton Association, who was also the Chef de Mission for the Goa team at the 37th National Games, I would like to propose an idea deeply rooted in our Goan culture and with the potential to be developed into a vibrant, regulated movement,” Heble wrote. He suggested the formation of a Goa Housie Association—or a Goa Board Games Federation—a structured mechanism that could be established to register local clubs, issue guidelines, provide permissions, and allow responsi-

ble hosting of events.

He described Housie as a traditional game played at birthdays, weddings, family gatherings, church feasts, ti-atras, and fundraising events that support local causes, including sports clubs. “All it takes is a caller, a board, a few lucky numbers—and it brings communities together like few other activities can,” Heble said.

Heble pointed out that the issue came into focus after the South Goa ban, during which Goa Football Association president Caitano Fernandes led a delegation to the Chief Minister, highlighting how essential Housie is to sustaining sporting activities. “It is not a lottery—it is

a fun game bringing friends, families together. It is tradition, it is culture, and above all, it is community,” the letter noted.

Heble went further to suggest that Goa could serve as the base for a National Federation for Board Games, covering not only Housie, but also Ludo, Monopoly, Snakes and Ladders and other traditional games under one umbrella. “Goa is already home to several respected sports administrators who are well connected with the hotel, tourism, and entertainment sectors,” Heble noted, listing names such as Vero Nunes, Gududatta Bhakta, Mac Vaz, Nisha Madgavkar, Elvis Gomes, Gaurish Dhond, Rajesh Khaunte and others who could lend credibility and guidance to the initiative.

He suggested integrating board game events with musical and cultural

shows, thereby creating performance platforms for triatrists, musicians, and artists, while generating employment for locals. Heble appealed to both the government and the Goa Olympic Association to take the lead.

With the tourism sector seeking family-friendly, safe, and engaging post-pandemic experiences, Heble proposed launching an annual Goa Housie or Board Games Festival, similar to IFFI, the Kite Festival or the Cashew Festival. He envisioned Goa hosting the Goa National Board Games Festival in 2026 and, eventually, an International Board Games Festival. He suggested that the initiative could be brought under the “Khelo India Board Games” banner and feature a cheerful, culturally resonant mascot—perhaps the Bulbul or Kingfisher—to reflect Goa’s vibrant spirit.

Mining may be halted again if SC guidelines are flouted, warns Goa Foundation

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Mining in Goa could be halted once again if companies continue to violate Supreme Court guidelines, warned Goa Foundation’s **Claude Alvares** on Sunday, citing recent incidents at Mulgao in Bicholim as evidence of non-compliance.

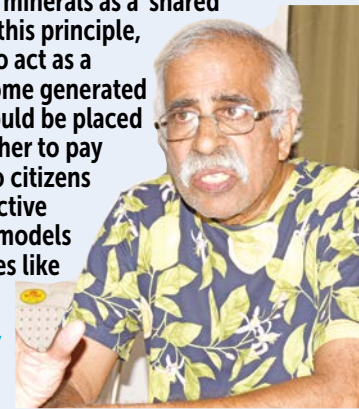
“Mining will have to be stopped again because all the Supreme Court guidelines have been violated, and we will be filing a petition in this connection next week,” Alvares said, speaking during a talk at the Museum of Goa in Pilerne.

Alvares reminded the audience that in 2012, the Shah Commission had exposed widespread illegalities in Goa’s mining sector, revealing collusion between politicians, bureaucrats, and leaseholders. The commission described the situation as a “complete collapse of the system.” Subsequently, in 2018, the Supreme Court condemned the “rapacious exploitation” of Goa’s natural resources.

Although the auctioning of mining leases has brought some transparency, Alvares alleged that “everybody is undervaluing the ore” currently being extracted.

He reiterated that Goa’s mineral wealth belongs to its people, in line with the National Mineral Policy of 2019, which frames

“Goa’s mineral wealth belongs to its people, in line with the National Mineral Policy of 2019, which frames minerals as a ‘shared inheritance’. Under this principle, the State is meant to act as a trustee, and all income generated through mining should be placed in a public trust, either to pay regular dividends to citizens or be used for collective welfare—similar to models adopted by countries like Norway
— **Claude Alvares, founder, Goa Foundation**



minerals as a “shared inheritance.” Under this principle, the state is meant to act as a trustee, and all income generated through mining should be placed in a public trust, either to pay regular dividends to citizens or be used for collective welfare—similar to models adopted by countries like Norway.

Tracing the history of mining in Goa, Alvares noted that the first leases were granted in 1929 under Portuguese rule. “The government had identified 800 mining leases in the belly of Goa stretching from north to south, but only about 120 were ever operational. None of them paid any royalty to the government,” he said.

Following Goa’s Liberation in 1961, there was a “tussle” between mining companies claiming ownership of the leases

and the Indian government, which asserted its rights under the “doctrine of conquest.” It wasn’t until 1987, when the Indian government introduced legislation to clarify ownership, that mining companies began paying a small royalty. This was increased to 15% in 2008, raising government revenue from around Rs 20–30 crore to Rs 900 crore.

Rahul Bose of the Goa Foundation, who also spoke at the event, said the figure has now ballooned to around Rs 55,000 crore with the reintroduction of mining through auctions. However, he stressed that mining must adhere to constitutional principles of economic fairness, environmental protection, and equitable distribution—ensuring that the real beneficiaries are the people of Goa.

Barcem locals gherao police station, demand compensation for accident victims

Team Herald

MARGAO: Villagers from Barcem and neighbouring areas have threatened to block buses plying from Margao to Canacona via Paddi if compensation is not paid to the families of two local men who were killed in a road accident. The accident occurred on the night of April 16 around 8.45 pm near a sharp turn at Paddi, which residents say is a known accident-prone area. According to Cuncolim police, an interstate passenger bus en route to Canacona and further to Bengaluru allegedly



Locals threatened to block buses if compensation is not paid to the families of two local men who were killed in a road accident

struck a two-wheeler travelling in the same direction, killing both the rider and the pillion on the spot.

Police have registered an offence under Section 281 and 106(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and

Sections 134(a)(b) of the Motor Vehicles Act against the driver of the bus. Following the accident, local villagers approached the police, demanding compensation for the victims’ families. They were informed that the owner of the bus would present himself at the police station on Sunday. However, when the villagers assembled at the station as told, the owner failed to appear.

Police told them that efforts to contact the owner over the phone were unsuccessful, further aggravating the villagers’ frustration.

Brave youngsters from Mungul-Colva douse fire in fields

Team Herald

MARGAO: A group of young boys from Mungul-Colva who noticed a fire breaking out in a field in the area rushed to the spot and made efforts to bring it under control. Though the cause of the fire is yet to be determined, the boys acted swiftly upon seeing the flames in the fields and used whatever tools they could find to contain the blaze.

They reportedly worked for hours trying to extinguish the fire with green leaves and branches. Several villagers appreciated the boys’ prompt response and their determination



The boys reportedly worked for hours trying to extinguish the fire with green leaves and branches

in preventing the fire from spreading further. Locals said that the group played a crucial role in controlling the fire before it could cause serious damage.

Sources at the Margao fire station confirmed that several such

incidents of dry grass catching fire have been reported in recent days. “It is not yet clear how these fires are starting. We will inform the police if we suspect any mischief,” a source at the fire station said.

Vanarmare tribal children join locals to clean Dudhsagar riverbank at Nirankal

Team Herald

PONDA: Children from the Vanarmare tribal community, also known as the Katkari Samaj, joined local school children in a riverbank cleanliness drive at Shigneval-Nirankal along the Dudhsagar River on Sunday.

The initiative was organised by Sanvedna Kendra, an NGO working for the educational and social development of the Katkari community, with the support of the Betoda-Nirankal Gram Panchayat, villagers of Shigneval, and the Government Primary School, Shigneval.

The Kelini River site, a popular summer destination for locals and tourists seeking a freshwater dip, has seen increasing pollution due to littering by visitors. The area, often crowded with picnickers carrying



Toddlers, collected around 20 bags of garbage

food and liquor, had become littered with plastic, bottles, thermal charcoal and other solid waste.

During the drive, volunteers, some of them just toddlers, collected around 20 bags of garbage, which were then handed over to the panchayat for proper disposal.

Sarpanch of Betoda-Nirankal, Madhu Khandeparkar, who was present and actively participated in the drive, praised Sanvedna Kendra for spearheading the

campaign in collaboration with local parents and the Vanarmare community. He also appealed to visitors to refrain from polluting the riverbank and respect the natural environment.

The cleanup campaign drew active participation from various community members, including Madhavi Rane, president of Sanvedna Kendra, Dashaarath Morajkar, Babani Mapari, Apurva, Dhruvi, and local parent Dayanand Gawde.

DDSSY camp to be held at Sao Matias today after islanders flag inconvenience

Team Herald

PANJIM: After **O Herald** highlighted that the relocation of the Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana (DDSSY) centre from Panjim to Bambolim had caused inconvenience—particularly for residents of island villages like Divar and Sao Mathias—the government has announced a DDSSY camp at the Sao Matias panchayat office to address the issue.

A public notice issued by the Village Panchayat of Sao Matias states, “This is to inform all the public in the jurisdiction of Village Panchayat Sao-Matias that Village Panchayat Sao-Matias, in collaboration with Goa Electronics Limited, will conduct a Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana (DDSSY) camp where beneficiaries can renew or update their DDSSY cards.”

According to the notice, the camp will be held on

April 21, from 10 am to 1 pm and 2.30 pm to 5 pm.

Beneficiaries attending the camp have been asked to carry their Aadhaar card and mobile phone to receive OTPs, along with any other documents that may be required depending on the nature of the update.



Meanwhile, the Sao Matias Panchayat has written to the neighbouring Goltim-Navelim Panchayat, urging it to create awareness about the upcoming DDSSY camp in its own jurisdiction.

Residents had earlier complained that after the DDSSY centre was shifted to Bambolim before last year’s Lok Sabha elections, it had been functioning with inadequate manpower and infrastructure, making it difficult to access services.

Goa College of Architecture fined Rs 10,000 for RTI delay

PIO directed to submit compliance report on directions before May 8

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa State Information Commission (GSIC) has imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on the Goa College of Architecture for delay in furnishing information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

In his order, Goa State Chief Information Commissioner Aravind Kumar H Nair has directed Prof Dr Leon A Morenas, Principal of the Goa College of Architecture, to submit a compliance report regarding the compensation to the Commission by April 30.

Nair stated that although the appellant, Roy C D’Souza, did not seek compensation, the Commission, considering the time, energy, and resources expended by him in seeking the information through his RTI application dated 15 January 2021, has directed the Public Authority (Goa College of Architecture) under Section 19(8)(b) of the RTI Act to pay a sum of Rs 10,000 to the appellant.

The Commission has also instructed the College to furnish the remaining orders for the years 2002–2003 and 2010–2018 to the appellant within 15 days from receipt of the order.

“Since the cataloguing of all files except those held by the Principal is carried out, the present PIO is directed to complete the cataloguing exercise by obtaining files from the custody of the Principal, Goa College of Architecture. It is the responsibility of the present PIO and the administrative section, including the head of the Public Authority (Principal, Goa College of Architecture in this case), to ensure cataloguing and indexing of all documents and files of the Goa College of Architecture,” the Commissioner said.

The present PIO has been asked to submit a compliance report on the above directions before May 8, 2025.

This marks the second time the Goa State Information Commission has penalised the Goa College of Architecture. In December last year, the GSIC imposed a maximum penalty of Rs 25,000 on the former College Principal for failing to provide information under the RTI Act. The former Principal had not even heard the first appeal filed by applicant John Nazareth, former president of the Goa Government Employees Association (GGEA).

Senior citizen succumbs to accident injuries

VASCO: A senior citizen from Nagoa, Verna who was seriously injured in a tragic road accident near Titan Junction, opposite Marble City, Verna succumbed to his injuries on Saturday. The police gave the name of the victim as Vithoba Rane (71), a resident of Police Colony Society, Nagoa. The accident had occurred on April 17 when Rane was proceeding on his two-wheeler from Verna to Cortalim and on reaching near Titan road junction, his two-wheeler collided against a vehicle also travelling in the same direction.

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