

# Cops continue with combing operations across State to enhance security

## Tenant verification drives intensified, hunt for anti-social elements in hide-outs, vigil at bus-stands and railway stations as preventive measure against potential threat after Pahalgam terror attack

Team Herald,

**PANJIM/MARGAO:** In light of the current security situation, the Goa Police have been undertaking continuous, organised combing and verification operations to ensure public safety.

As part of these efforts, between the nights of April 25-26 and April 26-27, they conducted a cumulative verification of 5,325 tenants and 2,566 servants across North Goa. During this period, 78 individuals were taken into custody for preventive action, 345 stranger roll entries were made, 906 suspected individuals were rounded up, and 34 cases were registered against unauthorised hawkers.

In North Goa, combing operations were focused on vulnerable locations such as Kamrabhat, Miramar, Indiranagar, Chimbél, Mercés, St Cruz, Ekta Nagar and Khorlim, Mapusa and Nagoa, Auchitwado, Colvale, Vatadev, Bicholim, Hatwada, Valpoi, Aldeia de Goa Bambolim, Arambol, Donwaddo Salvador de Mundo, Baga, Sinquerim, and Malpém Railway Station. The operations prioritised locating hide-outs of anti-social elements and verifying tenants, domestic help, and foreigners residing in hotels, guest houses, and homestays.

The South Goa District Police also conducted fo-



Police conduct verification drives focusing on coastal and sensitive areas in Goa

cusied combing operations, particularly in Mangor Hills, New Vaddem, and Bogmalo

Beach, as well as other sensitive areas. These operations involved the verifica-



tion of 2,515 tenants and 433 strangers, the rounding up of 171 individuals, and

**THREE PAK NATIONALS WITH SHORT-TERM VISAS HAVE LEFT GOA: CM**

**PANJIM:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday said that three Pakistani nationals who were staying in the state on short-term visas have already left, while police have started action against unauthorised persons living in the state.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "Verification of migrant workers in both the South as well as North Goa districts is being carried out by the police. Around 2,500-3,000 people have already been verified. Some have been detained, while some were released after carrying out verification. This is being done on a large scale. By this evening, we will know how many verifications have been done."

On 25 April, the Chief Minister had said that three Pakistani nationals, who were in the state on short-term visas, had been asked to leave the country as per the deadline set by the central government.

the arrest of 17 persons. Additionally, 107 hotels and guest houses were inspect-

ed, resulting in the filling of 68 'C' forms and the verification of 3,318 persons,

Including foreign nationals. "We have also strengthened coastal security measures. All Officers In-charge of Coastal Security Police Stations have initiated combing operations at jetties and have deployed police personnel at sensitive beaches along the coastal belt. Verification drives have also been conducted for fishermen at Talpona Beach and other key coastal points," said a police officer. "To enhance maritime surveillance, we have implemented a structured boat patrolling pattern along Goa's 105 km coastline," he added. Cyber vigilance has been intensified as well. The Social Media Monitoring Team is maintaining real-time surveillance across various platforms.

## Uproar over personal remarks against Betalbatim sarpanch

### Situation gets out of hand, cops intervene to maintain law and order at gram sabha

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A routine gram sabha in Betalbatim turned chaotic on Sunday, as a heated exchange erupted between a villager and Sarpanch Anthony Fernandes as the argument, which initially centred on personal remarks, quickly escalated, forcing police intervention to maintain law and order.

The incident occurred when a concerned villager made a direct comment on the health of Sarpanch Fernandes, prompting a sharp verbal counter from him. The altercation spiralled into a tense confrontation, which led to the temporary halt of the meeting. As the situation went out of hand, police were called in to diffuse the

tension and ensure that the meeting could proceed without further incidents.

The tension was further fuelled by a few villagers who questioned the legitimacy of a signboard recently erected in the village. The board reads: "Beware - This village has exhausted its resources. The carrying capacity has exceeded. Builders, promoters, developers, buy land in our village at your own risk."

In response, Sarpanch clarified that the signboard was erected following a resolution passed by the villagers in an earlier meeting. "By law, the panchayat cannot prevent individuals from purchasing land in the village. The sign is not a legal prohibition but a symbolic

expression of the community's concern about unchecked development and resource exhaustion," he explained.

Beyond the signboard controversy, the gram sabha also addressed pressing issues of waste management in the village. Fernandes announced that daily door-to-door garbage collection will commence in May. He stated that the panchayat had been actively seeking land for waste segregation facilities.

"We approached multiple landowners requesting a site for waste segregation. While most refused, one eventually agreed. Unfortunately, even this arrangement is now facing opposition from a section of the villagers," said Fernandes.

## Bethora resolves to cut 'exorbitant' house tax hike

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Following a heated discussion, the Bethora-Conshem-Kodar-Nirankal Panchayat on Sunday unanimously passed a resolution to reduce the recent hike in house tax, after several villagers raised concerns that the steep increase had placed an undue burden on them.

The house tax had been hiked last year, and villagers alleged that they were not taken into confidence when the decision was made. The issue dominated the gram sabha proceedings for nearly two hours, with a large number of locals attending to demand a rollback of the tax hike. Eventually, a resolution to reduce the house tax was passed unanimously.

According to the new rates fixed: For huts, house tax will be Rs 70 per year; For laterite stone houses, Rs 5 per square metre; For RCC structures, Rs 12 per square metre; For commercial establishments, Rs 50 per square metre; For agro-based activities, Rs 20 per square metre; For industrial structures, Rs 200 per square metre; Garbage tax is fixed at Rs 200 per year.

Villager Hemant Samant said the earlier house tax hike was exorbitant and that many people attended the gram sabha specifically to raise the issue. "Ours is an agriculture-based panchayat, and we earn agricultural income only for a few months each year. Following demands from locals, the house tax has now been reduced," he said.

## WEAVING A LEGACY

JOSEPH FERNANDES



Rukmini Parwar from Podwal Corjuem engrossed in the task of slicing bamboo strips, a step in the intricate process of crafting beautiful eco-friendly bamboo products which reflects the rich cultural heritage of Goa

## Curtorim farmers net bountiful fresh water fish

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Farmers in Curtorim, a village located in South Goa, are celebrating a record-breaking freshwater fish harvest this year, marking a significant milestone for local agriculture and the fishing community.

This bumper harvest, featuring a variety of fish

natural resources. The protection of traditional lakes, which are essential for agriculture and aquaculture, remains a top priority for local leaders.

The member of the tenant association also highlighted the significance of this year's harvest. "For the first time, we are able to offer a wide variety of



Abundance of freshwater fish for local consumers

species, has been made available at affordable prices, offering an abundance of freshwater fish for local consumers.

In a statement, Curtorim MLA Alex Reginald Lourenco emphasised the need to protect the region's traditional lakes, which play a crucial role in both the local agricultural and fishing industries.

"We must take immediate steps to protect our lakes, as they are vital to our way of life. The leakage of septic tanks into these lakes must be prevented to preserve the water quality," Lourenco said.

He reiterated that his primary focus is to transform Curtorim into a fully agricultural village, ensuring that both farming and fishing remain sustainable for future generations.

Lourenco's call for action is aimed at improving the environmental health of the region, which has been grappling with pollution and the degradation of its

freshwater fish, and they are being sold at very reasonable prices. This is a big win for our community, as it allows local fish lovers to enjoy fresh, home-grown fish while also supporting our local farmers and fishermen," he said.

Lourenco also stressed that ensuring the sustainability of the lakes is key to maintaining the agricultural and fishing heritage of Curtorim. The village has faced challenges from increasing pollution, particularly from the leakage of septic tanks, which threatens the water quality of these crucial resources.

While Curtorim leads by example, there are hopes that other regions of Goa will take notice and implement similar measures to protect their own natural resources. By combining agricultural practices with environmental protection, Curtorim aims to set a precedent for sustainable development in the region.

## FDA file police complaint against banana trader

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials have filed a police complaint against a Mapusa trader after they allegedly caught him red-handed dipping bananas in Ethapone liquid and destroyed one ton of the contaminated fruit.

In a post, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said on Saturday, April 26, the FDA officials maintained a strict vigil at the Mapusa Sub Yard, with a surveillance team comprising Richard Noronha, Rajaram Patil, Amit Mandrekar, and Lenin De Sa operating incognito and observing suspicious activities by Baswant B Barmanawar of M/s Prasad Fruits.

## Baga treatment plant a dud; sewerage network non-functional: Calangute Sarpanch

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** The Baga sewerage treatment plant (STP) has turned out to be a "white elephant", Calangute Sarpanch Joseph Sequeira said at a gram sabha of the Calangute panchayat on Sunday, after villagers said they were opposed to any new 'reverse pipeline' to take treated sewage water to the Pilerne industrial estate.

Villagers pointed out that the sewerage system work, which was started in 2012 by the then BJP govern-

ment, is yet to be made operational, with only the STP at Baga functional.

"The sewerage system is an utter failure. The soil in Calangute is sinking sand and the pipes keep sinking," gram sabha member Anthony D'Souza said. Sarpanch Sequeira said the reason for the non-functional sewerage system is the faulty laying of the underground pipes.

"Parrikar came and started it in 2012. If they had laid the pipes properly, then by now the sewerage treatment plant would have

been functioning smoothly. Even Tito's Lane is sinking," he said.

"Now they've come and started digging again at Holiday Street because four pipes had not been laid to connect the pumping station," he added. Locals have also alleged that the pipeline was shoddily installed because of kickbacks paid to politicians by the contractors.

Digging again for the reverse pipeline is uncalled for, locals said, after the years of disruption caused during the laying of the

unused sewerage pipeline which was supposed to be completed 10 years ago. Following allegations that untreated sewage was being released into the Baga river by the STP, Sequeira claimed that tests by the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) have found no pollution of the river. Claiming that there is large-scale filling of low-lying areas and agricultural fields going on, Calangute Constituency Forum (CCF) president Premanand Divkar said that nothing is being done about this. The

sarpanch said they have lodged many complaints with the deputy collector and other authorities. Sarpanch Sequeira said they will make all efforts to help villagers save structures in the CRZ area and those affected by the recent High Court order on illegal constructions, but it is for the state government to bring in an ordinance or amendment to save the structures. "If our government brings an ordinance, then everything will be solved. An ordinance has to be done," he said.

## Rare black panther killed in hit-and-run on Ponda-Panjim highway

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Early Sunday morning, a black panther was killed in an accident on the National Highway at Connem-Priol after it was hit by an unknown vehicle while crossing the road. Locals, who were initially delighted to witness the rare sight of a panther - a rare genetic variant of a leopard, expressed deep sadness over its death. Upon receiving information, Ponda Forest officials picked up the injured animal, which had been struck at around 12:45 am.

Officials put a net over it and upon inspection, found it was still alive. The big cat was rushed to the Veterinary Hospital in Ponda for treat-



Big cat succumbs to injuries at vet hospital; locals say large expressways should have special facilities for animals to cross safely, demand emergency services for animals

ment, but was later declared dead. A passing citizen had noticed the injured Panther lying on the road and immediately informed the police. Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane has ordered an inquiry. Charan Desai, an animal lover who actively participates

in wildlife rescue operations, rushed to the site.

"I feel very bad about the loss of such a rare animal. We have never seen such animals in Ponda earlier," he said. Desai also stressed the need for an emergency service for animals. "My

team is ready to assist in rescuing animals; however, government permission is essential. While building new highways and roads, we should also create emergency facilities for animals," he added.

Meanwhile, some Priol locals also stressed the need for emergency services for injured animals, similar to the '108' ambulance service for humans. "Similarly, while constructing roads and highways, there is a need to provide underpasses or overhead crossings for monkeys and other small wildlife. If we do not create such facilities and protect them, the following generations will only see their photos in books," a local resident said.

## 2 arrested for illegal slaughter and sale of meat

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Valpoi Police have arrested Mudassar Shaikh and Riyaz Khan, both from Sattari for alleged illegal slaughter and sale of meat.

According to police, a joint inspection was carried out by officers from the Veterinary Dispensary, Valpoi, and Valpoi Police at a meat shop located in Nagem, Sattari, during which several irregularities were observed.

Based on the findings, an FIR was registered against Shaikh Cold Storage and Al Khan Storage under Section 325 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

## DRAW POSTPONED

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