

# Goa Cong launches agitation to train its guns on BJP govt

**Big crowd gathers for Samvidhan Bachao Abhiyan (Save the Constitution Campaign), but question mark hangs over the involvement of 'outsiders' in the stir**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** As part of its nationwide Samvidhan Bachao Abhiyan (Save the Constitution Campaign), the Goa Congress held a public meeting at Azad Maidan in the state capital to train its guns on the ruling BJP government.

While the gathering drew a large crowd, the composition of the crowd - many of whom were obviously not indigenous Goans - has raised questions about the involvement of locals in the agitation.

Senior Congress leaders addressed the gathering, voicing concerns over what they termed as a steady erosion of constitutional values, rising crime rates, and mounting unemployment. The speakers accused the BJP-led government, both at the Centre and in Goa, of undermining democratic institutions and called on citizens to stand up in defence of the Constitution.

Addressing the crowd, South Goa MP Viriato Fernandes alleged that the current regime is attempting to dilute the powers granted to the people by the Con-



The mixed crowd at the Congress agitation at Azad Maidan

stitution. "Recently, we saw the Vice President attack the Chief Justice of India, followed by another BJP MP making similar remarks. Last year, Anant Kumar Hegde said the Constitution could be changed if the BJP gets a two-thirds majority. This is alarming and shows their real intentions," Fernandes said.

He further alleged that the Pramod Sawant-led Goa government operates under the control of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. "Though elected by Goans, the state government is just a puppet. Laws are being made to benefit real estate lobbies from

Delhi. Goa's natural resources—its hills, fields and rivers—are under threat. The nationalisation of our rivers in 2016 and the approval of the Kalasa-Bhandura DPR in 2023 by the Modi government is proof," he added. Fernandes also expressed concern over North Goa's growing drug menace, stating, "Goa was once one of the safest states. Now, North Goa is being called a drug state. This must change."

Dr Pratiksha Khalap, President of the Goa Pradesh Mahila Congress, criticized the BJP for allegedly failing to deliver on its promises. "Every promise they made has turned out

to be a 'jumlā'," she said.

Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) President Amit Patkar joined in the criticism, saying, "Basic services like water and electricity are failing in Goa. The BJP has misled people in the name of land and mining scams."

He also highlighted rising crime in the state, stating, "Rapes, murders, kidnappings—these are becoming daily occurrences. We must raise our voices against this government and protect our Constitution."

Dr Anjali Nimbalkar, Goa desk co-incharge, emphasized the need for unity against terrorism and di-

## HERALD ASKS

■ Why did the crowd gathered for the meeting at Azad Maidan have so many non-Goan faces?

■ Apart from implementing national programmes, what is the state Congress unit doing to consolidate Opposition unity?

■ Why is Goa Congress not raising a storm over the multiple scams and other issues plaguing the state - for example, last year's job scam, land-grab scams, Mahadei water issue, Old Goa heritage zone dispute and more?

visive politics. "Terrorism has no religion, caste or colour. But whenever BJP feels threatened, it uses the ED, IT and CBI to suppress the opposition. Meanwhile, common people are grappling with inflation while the BJP continues to focus on caste and religion," she said.

# 13 of 20 open-air units have CCTV monitoring noise meters, HC told

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

**PORVORIM:** The Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court was informed that 13 of 20 open-air units have installed CCTV cameras covering their noise monitoring devices, as the Court continues to monitor compliance with noise regulations.

Justice Bharati Dangre, during the hearing of Contempt Petition 12 of 2023, asked Amicus Curiae Nigel Costa Frias if he was willing to verify whether these establishments were playing amplified music in open-air areas beyond the 10pm deadline during the Court's summer break.

The hearing began with Costa Frias informing Justices Dangre and Nivedita P Mehta that the CCTV systems were expected to be operational before the vacation, and that Xavier Retreat House in Baga had filed an intervening application in Writ Petition PIL 7 of 2021.

Justice Dangre noted that an affidavit filed by the counsel for the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) listed the open-air units with CCTV installations and noise monitoring systems. The Supreme Court mandates that open-air music must stop after

**According to the report, the following venues did not have CCTV cameras covering their noise meters: Shiva Valley, Hill Top, W Goa, Dynamo, Diaz, Titlee, Nine Bar, Purple Martini 1, Purple Martini 2, Howling Wolves, Gypsea, and Mayan Beach Club**

10pm, and the Amicus Curiae has been pushing for the use of CCTV recordings to identify violators.

In an affidavit submitted to the court, Additional District Magistrate Mahadev Araundekar said the GSPCB informed him that only 20 of 36 units playing amplified music in open-air settings had installed electronic signboards displaying sound decibel levels.

Araundekar said he had directed GSPCB representatives and Deputy Collectors to include CCTV installation as a mandatory condition when issuing permissions. Establishments, including beach shacks under the Tourism Department, were also instructed to maintain a 30-day backup of CCTV footage and make it available to GSPCB and the police

on demand.

"Please issue directions to everybody that has not installed CCTV and noise monitoring systems to fall in line, as this will help ascertain the factual position," Justice Dangre said.

The GSPCB inspection report, based on visits to 20 units between April 9 and 11, noted that no assessment could be made for House of Chapora, which was shut during all three inspections.

According to the report, the following venues did not have CCTV cameras covering their noise meters: Shiva Valley, Hill Top, W Goa, Dynamo, Diaz, Titlee, Nine Bar, Purple Martini 1, Purple Martini 2, Howling Wolves, Gypsea, and Mayan Beach Club.

The report also stated that Slique had shut down, while no comments were made regarding the CCTV setup at Gypsea, although its noise meter and decibel display board were in place.

Araundekar further informed the Court that Sub-Divisional Police Officers (SDPOs) had been directed to register FIRs on complaints of noise pollution, in line with earlier Court directives.

The matter will next be heard on June 19, 2025.

# ED attaches 24 properties worth Rs 193.49 crore in land grab case

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Panjim Zonal Office, on Tuesday announced the provisional attachment of 24 immovable properties across Bardez — including Calangute, Assagao, Anjuna, Nerul, and Parra — valued at Rs 193.49 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in connection with the Goa land grab case.

This marks the second round of provisional attachments in the case. In 2023, the ED had earlier attached 31 properties valued at Rs 39.24 crore, which was later confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority (PMLA), New Delhi.

The ED initiated its investigation based on multiple FIRs registered by the Goa Police and probed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on land grabbing. The cases involve allegations of forgery, cheating, and fraudulent acquisition of land in Goa.

The ED's findings reveal that the accused created forged documents or deeds in the names of deceased individuals or their ancestors. These forged documents were then used as genuine to unlawfully insert the names of the accused or their associates into official land records maintained by the Government of Goa. Once the properties were fraudulently acquired, they were either sold to third parties to generate proceeds of crime or transferred to associates via sham sale deeds without actual financial transactions.

The 24 attached properties under the current Provisional Attachment Order (PAO) include those sold to third parties, those transferred via sham deeds, and other properties recently identified — all located in prime tourist locations within Bardez Taluka.

With this latest action, the total value of properties attached in the Goa land grab case has now reached Rs 232.73 crore.

# Bicholim farmers refute mining firm's claim

Team Herald

**BICHOLIM:** The farmers and tenants from Pilgao have refuted the claims of the mining company that a section of affected villagers are seeking revised settlement terms.

Sudhakar Vaigankar, a tenant from Pilgao said that they had blocked the truck transporting iron ore because the company was delaying compensation to the affected farmers and tenants. He said that when they stopped the transportation, the Bicholim Mamlatdar told them to meet the Deputy Collector to discuss and to find a solution. But the company officials did not turn up for the meeting.

"We have been cultivating fields for the last 50 years. The mining company has been transporting ore now and the details of environmental clearance granted to the company by the MoEF&CC will throw light when they got it and started operations. When mining was halted, we tried to cultivate fields but were unable due to siltation. If the company is in possession of valid documents then they should produce them," Vaigankar said.

# NIGHTTIME VIGILANCE



Police personnel on duty at Mapusa's Gandhi Circle stop and check passing vehicles at 1 am as part of enhanced security measures following the Pahalgam terror alert in J&K

# Illegal bullfight in Seraulim leaves one bull dead

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** In blatant violation of the Supreme Court's ban on bullfighting, a 'dhirio' was allegedly held in Seraulim, Salcete, attracting a large crowd of spectators. The Colva Police have arrested one person in connection with the incident, in which one bull tragically lost its life due to injuries sustained during the fight.

Police said the fight took place on April

28, in the open paddy fields of Betalbatim.

According to sources, a substantial amount of money was bet on the outcome of the fight, which involved two bulls — one reportedly from Salcete. The situation spiralled out of control when, during the fight, the bulls charged into the crowd, forcing several spectators to flee the area. A video of the incident shows that thousands had gathered to witness the event.

# Two police officers face pay cut for failing to register FIR

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The State Police Complaints Authority (SPCA) has recommended a reduction in the time scale of pay for two police officers—PI Krishna Sinari and PSI Dhiraj Devidas—for dereliction of duty in failing to register an FIR in an assault case.

The Authority has recommended that the time scale of pay of PI Sinari be reduced by one stage for a period of two years, with effect from the date of imposition of the penalty. During this period, he will not be eligible for any increment. The punishment must be imposed within 90 days from the date of the report, it stated.

Similarly, the time scale of pay of former PSI Devidas is to be reduced for a period of one year, also effective from the date of imposition of the penalty. He too will not earn any increment during this period.

The case pertains to a woman from Chimbél who had lodged a complaint before the SPCA, seeking action against the then Old Goa PI Krishna Sinari and PSI Dhiraj Devidas for failing to act on her repeated complaints. According to the complainant, she had filed several complaints against her in-laws, but the police treated them as non-cognisable

and took no action. This, she stated, emboldened her in-laws to continue harassing her and her family through quarrels, assaults, and verbal abuse.

In his defence, PI Sinari denied the complainant's allegations, stating that both families had assaulted each other and had been advised to lodge formal complaints, after which action would be taken. He further claimed that both sides were warned not to interfere with each other and were advised to resolve their property dispute privately or approach the court.

However, the three-member SPCA bench—comprising Chairperson Justice Nutan D Sardessai (Retd) and Members Dr Indradev Shukla and Shirish Prabhu Lavande—found that there was a complete dereliction of duty, amounting to an abuse of power, in failing to register an FIR.

"The conduct of the respondents, as is evident, shocks the judicial conscience and fails to inspire confidence in the functioning of the police machinery, thereby inviting public disregard and disdain, coupled with apathy on their part," the Authority stated.

The DGP Office, Panjim, has been directed to submit a compliance report within 15 days of implementing the action as recommended by the SPCA.

# Chicalim p'yat bye-election cancelled after court reinstates disqualified member

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa State Election Commission (GSEC) has cancelled the bye-election to Ward I of Chicalim panchayat following a ruling by the South Goa District and Sessions Court, Margao, which quashed and set aside the disqualification of panchayat member Maria Mascarenhas.

The bye-election was scheduled to be held on May 11. The GSEC had commenced the election process by inviting nomination papers from April 21, and only one nomination paper was filed on the final day of submission.

However, in a judgment dated April 25, the District and Sessions Court, Margao, quashed and set aside the order dated January 2, 2025, issued by the Mormugao Block Development Officer (BDO), which had disqualified Maria Mascarenhas as a panchayat member. The court reinstated her.

In pursuance of the District Court's judgment and the subsequent order issued by the Department of Panchayati Raj and Community Development—and in exercise of powers conferred under Article 243K of the Constitution of India and Section 237 of the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994—the GSEC has declared the bye-election process for Ward I of Village Panchayat Chicalim in Mormugao taluka as cancelled.

The model code of conduct, which was in force for the bye-election in Chicalim village panchayat, stands withdrawn with immediate effect.

Meanwhile, the bye-elections to Ward I of Tivim VP and Ward VII of Assonora VP, both in Bardez taluka, will proceed as scheduled on May 11.

# Mr. Martin Joseph Thypodath A Journey of True Visionary



(L-R) Mr Martin Joseph Thypodath- Chairman & MD Freedom Holidays Pvt Ltd.; Mr Sundar Advani- Chairman & MD Caravela Beach Resort, Goa; Adv Carlos Alvares Ferreira- MLA Aldona constituency; Mr Rajesh Kale- Dy Director of Tourism; Mr Gavin Dias- GM GTDC; Mr Jack Sukhija- President TTAG; Mr Bency George- Director BD Freedom Holidays Pvt. Ltd.

**28th April 2025** marked a special day for Freedom Holidays family & Mr. Martin Joseph Thypodath (Founder & Chairman, Freedom Group & Chairman- IATO Goa Chapter), as this day they celebrated 2 milestones  
1) 30 glorious years of Freedom Holidays Pvt. Ltd. since its inception on 15th August 1994 (hence the name "Freedom"), by its visionary founder Mr. Martin who started it all with one briefcase, mind full of dreams & heart full of determination. What began as a focused venture has evolved into a multifaceted powerhouse. Today, Freedom Holidays spans cargo services, travel tours, event management, excursions, airline operations and luxury cruises. Martin's foresight and ability to adapt have driven consistent, exponential growth, solidifying his reputation as a true business genius in India's travel and logistics landscape. Along this journey Martin who is a native of Kochi but brought up in Goa and holds Goa close to his heart, hires predominantly Goan staff & promotes Goa as destination across the world.

2) Birthday Celebrating, beating chronic Leukaemia: A journey of a self-made entrepreneur is tough to begin with, adding to the challenge was a deeply personal battle-Martin's fight with chronic leukaemia since 2022. True to his character, Martin faced these trials with courage and was declared cancer free on 14/02/25. He celebrated his 58th birthday on 23rd March and re-energised for the future. Martin lives by the mantra "Live each day like it's your last." This occasion was graced by friends, family, well-wishers & prominent people from hospitality & tourism industry who wished Martin the best of health & all the success to Freedom Holidays.

ADVERTORIAL

**BANDIANTULO KHURIS ASSOCIATION OF CORTALIM**  
*Celebrating*  
The Annual Feast of  
**BANDIANTULO KHURIS**  
(MIRACULOUS CROSS) CORTALIM  
will be celebrated  
**TOMORROW, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**  
The litany will be held at 5.15 p.m.  
*This year feast is celebrated by*  
**SACRAMENTA DIAS and AMY DIAS**  
(1<sup>st</sup> Arvalle, Cortalim)

*Happy Birthday*  
**MR. JIT AROLKAR**  
(M.L.A., Mandrem Constituency)  
  
*On this joyful day we wish you a very long and a happy life. May all your dreams come true.*  
Best wishes from:  
**DOWN DA VILLAGE, GOLDEN RICE & DD COTTAGES (HOTELS)**  
**Dickson & Fly.**