

QUEPEM COPS TRY TO BREAK UP BRAWL, GET BEATEN UP

Three held, search on for 5-6 more youths; gang had also assaulted two civilians

Team Herald

MARGAO: Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Pundalik Gaonkar and police constable driver Rohan Narvekar of Quepem police station were allegedly abused and assaulted by a group of youths while on duty at Shivnagar, Xeldem, in the early hours of Wednesday.

Based on the ASI's complaint, Quepem police have registered an offence under Sections 221, 352, 132, and 121(1) read with Section 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Three persons have been detained, and sent for medical examination.

According to police, the incident occurred around 3.10 am when ASI Gaonkar and constable Narvekar responded to a report of a fight at Shivnagar. Upon reaching the spot, they

ASI Gaonkar and constable Narvekar responded to a report of a fight at the water tank in Shivnagar. Upon reaching the spot, they were allegedly obstructed from discharging their lawful duty by a group of six to seven individuals. One of the accused, identified as Joyson Fernandes of Cacora, Curchorem, allegedly used abusive language and slapped constable Narvekar, injuring him

were allegedly obstructed from discharging their lawful duty by a group of six to seven individuals. One of the accused, identified as Joyson Fernandes of Cacora, Curchorem, reportedly used abusive language and slapped constable Narvekar, causing a minor injury, before fleeing in a car. Two others fled on a scooter.

Police sources said that the accused persons had allegedly been drinking at a party that night. They later gathered near the Shivnagar Tank, and were

blocking the road. Two passers-by requested them to move out of the way, so they could pass—but the group allegedly refused and a fight ensued. The police control room (PCR) received a call at around 2 am reporting the brawl. When the police team arrived, they found that two civilians, Brian Costa and Felix Fernandes, were being thrashed.

When police attempted to intervene, the situation escalated, resulting in the assault on the police personnel.

Police have since registered two separate cases—one related to the attack on police and another based on the complaint lodged by Brian Costa.

Costa, a resident of Xeldem, Quepem, alleged that Joyson Fernandes and five to six others formed an unlawful assembly and assaulted him and his friend Felix Fernandes without any provocation, causing them minor injuries. The three detained were identified as Bhaudip Prabhudesai, 23, Sameer Mankavi, 22, and Sadashiv Patil, 20, all residents of Cacora.

Quepem PI Arjun Sangodkar and LPSI Joyce Carvalho are investigating the matter. A search operation is currently underway to trace and apprehend all the accused, police said.

Booze shop reports fake Rs 500 note; Salcete traders on alert

Colva police begin probe; in April, the Home Ministry had issued a 'high-importance' alert that counterfeit currency was circulating

Team Herald

MARGAO: The circulation of counterfeit Rs 500 currency notes has raised alarm among the public and business community in the coastal belt of Salcete, with several shopkeepers and traders voicing concerns over a rise in fake notes being used during routine transactions.

In a recent incident, the owner of a liquor shop in Benaolim lodged a formal complaint at Colva police station on 1 May after detecting a counterfeit Rs 500 note during the day's cash tally. According to the complainant, the note initially appeared genuine but was later flagged due to inconsistencies in texture and watermark.

"It looked just like any other Rs 500 note, but on closer inspection, we realised it lacked the security features present in genuine currency," the shop owner said.

Colva police have initiated an investigation and are in the process of registering a case. Officers are currently reviewing CCTV footage from the shop and surrounding areas to trace the source of the fake note. Preliminary findings suggest that this may not be an isolated incident, and investigators are examining the possibility of a broader network involved in distributing counterfeit currency.

In response to the incident, authorities have urged all businesses—particularly those dealing with high volumes of cash—to stay vigilant and verify currency notes carefully. Anyone who

SECURITY FEATURES TO LOOK FOR



- **See-through features:** Hold the note up to the light to spot '500' printed in several places
- **Angle view:** Tilt the note at 45° to your eye — '500' appears again, including in Devanagari
- **Gandhiji at the centre:** Mahatma Gandhi's portrait is placed prominently in the middle
- **Colour-shifting thread:** Bend the note slightly — the security thread changes from green to indigo
- **Text & logo shift:** RBI logo, governor's signature, guarantee and promise clauses have moved to the right side
- **Watermarks:** Mahatma Gandhi and the electrotype watermark are visible
- **Number size:** Numbers on top left and bottom right grow from left to right
- **Colour change:** The number '500' shifts from green to blue
- **Ashoka Pillar:** Appears on the right side
- **Security lines:** Five bleed lines on each side, ruffle print of Mahatma Gandhi, and the Ashoka emblem in the circle box
- **Year of printing, Swachh Bharat logo and language panel:** (near the centre) can also be found on the note

comes across suspicious notes is advised to report them immediately to the nearest police station. The incident has caused unease within the local business community, particularly among small traders and vendors who rely primarily on cash transactions. Several shopkeepers have expressed concern over the lack of awareness and access to tools to detect counterfeit currency on

the spot. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines in the past to help identify fake notes, including features such as watermarks, security threads, colour shifting ink, and micro-letting. Local police are now considering conducting awareness drives for shopkeepers and the general public on identifying counterfeit currency more effectively.

ABANDONED BUS TURNS INTO DEN OF VICE



A derelict bus parked at the Interstate Bus Stand in Patto, Panjim, has become a hotspot for drunkards and drug users. Strewn with broken liquor bottles, snack wrappers, and cigarette butts, the filthy vehicle tells tales of countless late-night binges. Locals say women passengers feel especially unsafe walking past the bus after dark, yet the authorities have failed to act

Tolleabandh ground turns into 'lawless zone' at night, rue Navelcars

Team Herald

MARGAO: Alarmed by the nightly transformation of the Tolleabandh ground in Taulim, Navelim into what they describe as a 'hotspot for illegal activities', local residents have submitted a memorandum to Margao Sub-Divisional Police Officer DySP Sidhant Shirodkar demanding immediate police action.

In their complaint, the residents alleged that the ground has become a gathering point for drunken youth and drug peddlers after dark, with no police presence to deter such behaviour. They described the situation as one of "absolute lawlessness," and urged authorities to intervene be-



Residents of Navelim gather near the Tolleabandh ground to demand better policing after sunset

fore matters worsen. Adv Pratima Coutinho, speaking on behalf of the residents, also addressed a formal letter to the Superintendent of Police (SP), South Goa, highlighting the lack of enforcement in the area.

"The absence of police en-

forcement has made it a haven for criminal elements, putting the safety of local girls, women, senior citizens and minors at serious risk," she stated in the letter.

Coutinho pointed out that despite multiple appeals and complaints from the local communi-

“The absence of police enforcement has made it a haven for criminal elements, putting the safety of local girls, women, senior citizens and minors at serious risk — Pratima Coutinho

ty, authorities had failed to take any effective steps. She called for regular police patrolling and stricter enforcement of the law to restore a sense of safety in the neighbourhood.

Copies of the letter were also marked to PI Margao Town Suraj Sawant and DySP Shirodkar. Residents said they expect prompt and concrete action from the police to prevent any untoward incidents and to bring back order to the area.

Gracias calls for constitutional backing, grants for Romi Konkani in schools

Team Herald

MARGAO: Veteran activist and political leader Adv. Radharao Gracias strongly advocated for constitutional recognition and educational support for Romi Konkani at 'Chauddi', a public gathering recently organised by the Global Konknni Forum (GKF) at Ravindra Bhavan, Margao.

Citing Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantee minorities the right to preserve their language, script, and culture—including establishing educational institutions with state support—Gracias asserted that the Goa government is constitutionally bound to extend grants and recognition to educational initiatives in the Roman script.

"There is no ambiguity in the Constitution. If a school is set up where Konkani is taught in the Roman script, the government cannot deny support or funding," he said. "We have a strong legal case. If the government refuses, we must be prepared to take the matter to court."

He called on the Diocesan Society of Education and the Dalgado Konknni Akademi to take the lead by starting schools with Romi Konkani as the medium of instruction. "If these institutions fail to act, the Global Konknni Forum should step in," he said. "We

must act now—this may be the last generation capable of securing justice for Romi Konkani." Speaking to reporters after the event, Gracias reiterated the need to establish schools where Roman-script Konkani is taught as a subject or medium. "The real issue is that no such schools exist today. Once an institution is set up, constitutional provisions

ensure the government cannot ignore it," he said. Gracias also noted a growing interest among Goans in learning Konkani in the Roman script, emphasising that the preference for this script is both cultural and practical. "Many relate more to Roman-script Konkani. The government must acknowledge this linguistic reality."

ROMI KONKANI SUPPORTERS RALLY FOR EQUAL STATUS AT MARGAO MEET

MARGAO: In a powerful show of unity, hundreds of Romi Konkani supporters gathered at Ravindra Bhavan, Margao, under the banner of the Global Konknni Forum (GKF), renewing their demand for equal status for the Romi script under Goa's Official Language Act. Addressing the gathering, GKF president Antonio Alvares accused the state government of perpetuating historical injustice. "The government has ignored the sentiments and contributions of Romi Konkani speakers. We are here to correct that," he said. Forum founder Domic Fernandes reiterated that the movement's objective was

clear and focused. "We are not against any script. We demand fairness and equal representation for Romi Konkani," he said. GKF secretary Jose Salvador Fernandes emphasised the growing support for the cause. "This is no longer just a local issue. The call for Romi script recognition has found support across India and in the Goan diaspora worldwide." Jamina Rodrigues, an office bearer of the forum, underscored the need to integrate Romi Konkani into education and administration. "Romi has a deep-rooted presence in Goa's cultural and literary history. It should be taught in schools and used in official communication.

Scrap new labour codes, workers' union demands on May Day

Team Herald

MARGAO: An On the occasion of International Labour Day, the Goa United Workmen Union (GUWU) extended greetings to all workmen and employees across sectors, recognising their daily commitment and hard work. However, the union simultaneously declared May 1 a "black day" for Goan workers, in protest against the implementation of the four new labour codes passed by the Central government during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GUWU president Olencio Simoes said that while Labour Day traditionally honours workers, this year's celebration is overshadowed by what he called "draconian" laws

that would erode worker protections. "These codes will empower employers to exploit workers, encourage child labour, reduce wages, undermine women's safety, and eliminate job guarantees," he warned.

Simoes highlighted that the four codes—the Code on Wages (2019), the Industrial Relations Code (2020), the Code on Social Security (2020), and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (2020)—replace 29 existing labour laws, some of which date back to the colonial era. He cited the Indian Trade Union Act of 1926, the Payment of Wages Act of 1936, and the Employees' Compensation Act of 1923 among the key legislations being diluted or



rendered ineffective. "The shift from 29 detailed laws to just four simplified codes sacrifices key worker rights and safety norms. Thirteen separate safety laws have been merged into one, drastically weakening the safety framework and leaving workers vulnerable," Simoes said. He alleged that the codes promote a "hire and fire" culture, enabling industries to terminate employees at will, and accused the government of dismantling labour protections under the guise of reform. He further stated that the

“The shift from 29 detailed laws to just four simplified codes sacrifices key worker rights. Thirteen separate safety laws have been merged into one. The codes promote a 'hire and fire' culture, enabling industries to terminate employees at will. These codes will empower employers to exploit workers, encourage child labour, reduce wages, undermine women's safety, and eliminate job guarantees — Olencio Simoes

new codes fail to protect women from workplace harassment and violence, unlike previous laws. According to Simoes, the legislation also marginalises trade unions, allowing them to be denied registration or even proscribed under vague provisions of the Industrial Relations Code. "The codes establish an uneven playing field between employers and workers, with unions placed at a

legal disadvantage," he said. Simoes also pointed out that the laws exclude large segments of the workforce. "Agricultural and domestic workers are kept outside the purview of these codes, and the Shops and Establishments Act remains untouched. This leaves out countless workers in retail, offices, and other commercial employment," he said. The union argued that the codes further erode state

autonomy, replacing India's federal labour structure with a centralised approach that restricts the ability of states like Goa to legislate in workers' interests.

General Secretary Arun Galve added that the codes violate international labour standards ratified by both colonial and independent India at the International Labour Organization (ILO). "They violate ILO Convention No. 1 on working hours, No. 81 on labour inspection, and No. 144 on tripartite consultation," Galve said. "The standard eight-hour workday and 48-hour work week have been scrapped, opening the door to longer working hours without mandatory overtime pay." Galve warned that the

new uniform minimum wage structure would significantly disadvantage Goan workers. "In Goa, the minimum wage for unskilled workers is Rs 405 per day, while in Nagaland it is Rs 203. With a uniform national rate, wages here could drop sharply," he said. The union also fears that under the new framework, many benefits—such as bonuses, house rent allowances, provident fund contributions, conveyance, overtime pay, and gratuity—will no longer be assured.

Calling the new laws regressive and anti-worker, both Simoes and Galve urged the Goa Labour and Employment Minister to reject the implementation of the labour codes in the state.