

## **Pollution board raises concern over noise nuisance hampering tourism**

The Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) had recently decided to file a criminal complaint against the organisers of the Sunburn dance music festival for violating noise regulation norms. During the Board meeting held recently, members have raised concerns that violation of noise regulations is hampering tourism businesses.

“Members present informed that there should be an awareness conducted to appraise event managers, deputy collectors, mamlatdars and the police for better understanding of the noise rules, as Goa being a tourist destination, the businesses are being hampered,” the minutes of the meeting state. Board members suggested that deputy collectors being the enforcing department could be equipped with necessary equipment to measure sound.

GSPCB member secretary Miss Shamila Monteiro said that 12 noise monitoring terminals will soon be installed at different locations in the state for real-time noise data. The board members were also informed that four personnel are being hired and a central control room is being set up to monitor the sound data round-the-clock.

“The Board is required to have a control room to monitor online data in respect of noise monitoring/any other online data which needs to be operated 24 hours. To man this control room, the services of four operators will be required who will have to work on shift basis,” the meeting minutes read. The hiring over a three to six-month period was approved at a consolidated salary of Rs 20,000 per month.

Miss Monteiro told the GSPCB members that Board officials assist the police wherever required to measure noise, however, they cannot enforce as the authority to act against sound norm violators lies with sub-divisional magistrate and deputy superintendent of police.

The Board members decided that appropriate criminal proceedings have to be initiated against Space bound Web Labs for the violation at the Sunburn festival. The festival was found to have provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Noise Rules, 2000 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

Miss Monteiro was also authorized by the board to file the complaint and depose before the courts in the matter.

“The member secretary informed the members that a Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the high court of Bombay at Goa wherein it is recorded that there is breach of permission issued for holding the EDM by brazenly exceeding the Noise Pollution Rules. She further informed the members that the Board had monitored the noise levels during the EDM and that the material collected establishes violations and that there is sufficient matter for launching criminal proceedings against the violations,” the meeting minutes state.