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Four Men Dressed as Transgenders Arrested for Attempted Kidnapping of Schoolgirls in Mumbai's Vasai

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In a shocking incident that has raised concerns about children's safety, four men were arrested in Vasai, a suburb of Mumbai, for attempting to abduct two schoolgirls while dressed as transgender persons. The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon in Kharekuran, a locality in the coastal town of Vasai.

According to the police, the girls, aged 13 and 14, were returning home from school when they were approached by four men riding an autorickshaw. Three of them were disguised as transgenders, while the fourth man was driving the vehicle. The group allegedly tried to force the girls into the rickshaw, threatening them with a knife.

Fortunately, the girls raised an alarm, which alerted nearby residents. Locals rushed to the scene and managed to apprehend the suspects before they could flee. The crowd beat up the accused and handed them over to the Vasai Police.

The arrested men were identified as Sharad Shinde (30), Sanjay Golankar (29), Nilesh Mandavkar (28), and Suraj Matol (26), all residents of Kalwa in Thane district. Preliminary investigations suggest that the accused had been scouting the area for several days, masquerading as beggars while monitoring children's movements.

Residents said they had seen the same autorickshaw and individuals roaming around the area earlier, asking for money under the pretext of being part of the transgender community. Some locals suspected their behavior but did not report it until the kidnapping attempt occurred.

A case has been registered against the four under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including attempt to kidnap and criminal intimidation. The Vasai Police are currently examining CCTV footage from the area and gathering additional witness statements.

"We appreciate the courage shown by the girls in resisting the attackers and the prompt response from the community," said a senior police official. "We are investigating whether the accused are part of a larger network involved in child trafficking or similar offenses."

The incident has sparked anxiety among parents and school authorities in the area. Police have urged communities to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activity. Security has been stepped up around local schools, and patrolling has been intensified in residential neighborhoods.