

Paragliding only temporarily suspended, not banned: Min

Team Herald

PANJIM: Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte clarified that paragliding activities in Goa have been temporarily suspended, not banned.

Speaking to reporters, Khaunte explained that organisers must submit the required documents for verification. If no irregularities are found, the department will grant permission for operations to resume.

"There is a clear difference between a ban and a suspension. We have only suspended paragliding activities for the time being," he said.

"Paragliding is an adventurous, extreme sport. Even with all the precautions in place, accidents can still occur. However, we are firm in our commitment to ensuring that proper regulations



are in place. We have stated that anyone engaged in paragliding activities must present the necessary permissions. If their documentation is in order, they will be allowed to continue operations as usual," Khaunte added.

"We are very clear: we want to ensure that all activities are safe and secure for the people of Goa," he concluded.

The suspension followed

the tragic deaths of two individuals, including a female tourist from Maharashtra. The victims were identified as Shivani Dabale and Suman Nepali, a paragliding pilot. In response, the tourism department ordered the suspension of all paragliding activities across Goa until further notice.

The clarification comes after Calangute MLA Michael Lobo opposed an outright ban on paragliding in Goa, instead calling for more stringent safety regulations to be enforced.

Meanwhile, Shekhar Raizada, the owner of Hike 'n' Fly, the company running the paragliding activity, has been sent to 14 days of judicial custody. The body of Suman Nepali has been handed over to his family for final rites.

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PANJIM: Goa Assembly Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar announced on Friday that Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has agreed to convene a longer budget session of the Goa Assembly in March. This comes as the Opposition has raised concerns that limiting the Assembly session to just one day and restricting debates on crucial issues threatens the very fabric of democracy.

After chairing a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), Tawadkar confirmed that the Chief Minister had assured the Opposition that a lengthier budget session would be held in March. He also stated that the Opposition had

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— Yuri Alemão, Opposition Leader

agreed to this decision. Should any objections be raised against government bills, Tawadkar assured that these would be carried over to the next Assembly session.

However, Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemão has called on the Speaker to ensure that the democratic rights of Opposition members are protected. He stressed the vital role the Opposition plays in holding the ruling party accountable and repre-

sending the concerns of their constituents.

"To safeguard our rights, the Business Advisory Committee must ensure that Opposition MLAs are given sufficient time to engage in the proceedings of the House," Alemão said in a letter to the Speaker. He further criticised the practice of converting starred Legislative Assembly Questions (LAQs) into unstarred LAQs, arguing that this diminishes

transparency and undermines democratic principles. He called for an end to this practice and for those responsible to be held accountable.

Alemão also called for LAQ responses to be provided 48 hours before the House sits. "Despite being aware that MLAs need time to study the replies, these are deliberately delayed. This is done to prevent us from questioning the government on pressing issues," he added.

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concerns of the people and the state. I hope this issue is given serious consideration this year," Alemão concluded in his letter.

Meanwhile, Goa Forward Party (GFP) President and MLA Vijai Sardesai expressed regret over his party's support for Sawant as Chief Minister in March 2019. "We made a mistake by supporting Sawant. It's part of history, and we cannot rewrite it. Now he is harassing us," Sardesai said.

The Chief Minister declined to comment on Sardesai's remarks.

In response to the announcement, Opposition members convened in Porvorim, where they finalised their strategy for the upcoming two-day Assembly session.

citizenherald

Chicalim Park in desperate need of renovation

Once a popular hub for children and a serene gathering spot for senior citizens, Chicalim Park—located at the entrance/exit point of Vasco city—has sadly fallen into disrepair. In its prime, the park was full of life, especially in the evenings and during vacations when children filled the space to enjoy playful activities. It also served as a social space for the elderly to meet and spend time.

**CITIZEN
ADELMO FERNANDES
Vasco**

However, the park now paints a picture of neglect. The once-vibrant playground equipment is broken, and the entire park is overrun with dry grass, twigs, and waste. Instead of laughter and conversation, a desolate silence fills the air, as the park has slowly transformed into a dump-



ing ground for trash. Even more concerning, empty liquor and beer bottles can be seen scattered around, raising the risk of anti-social activities taking place in this neglected space.

While the park was renovated in April 2013, the lack of consistent maintenance

has caused it to deteriorate into its current pitiful state. As a prominent landmark in Vasco city, the park should serve as a much-needed recreational space—especially in a city with limited open areas.

It's high time for the authorities to take prompt

action and restore the park to its former glory. By doing so, Chicalim Park could once again become a hub for families, children, and the elderly, providing a safe and inviting space for recreation and social activities. We cannot afford to lose one of the few remaining open spaces in our community. It's time for a renovation, and it's needed now more than ever.



Dando-Mollo road at Velsao in need of urgent repairs

This is in reference to my letter published in *O Herald* on 27th February 2023, highlighting the deplorable condition of the road at Velsao, Dando-Mollo, in the Cortalim Constituency. The 400-metre stretch from the Mathany Saldanha Bridge to the dead end, which passes through housing areas, is in a dire state and requires immediate attention.

The road surface is severely damaged, with the top layer of hot-mix completely worn out, exposing the second layer. Loose asphalt from the eroded surface has scattered along the entire stretch, making the road slippery and posing a grave danger to all vehicles. The cracks and uneven texture amplify the risk of accidents, particularly during the monsoons, when the absence of proper drainage leads to further deterioration.

Rainwater flowing from nearby hills inundates the residential areas, soaking into the road surface and accelerating its decay. Proper gutters along residential areas are essential to channel this water and prevent inconvenience to local residents. Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts to draw the attention of the Velsao-Pale-Issorcim Village Panchayat, the issue remains unaddressed.



While the Panchayat has reportedly forwarded this matter to the Zilla Parishad (ZP) and the Public Works Department (PWD), there has been no tangible progress. The road urgently needs a fresh layer of hot-mix and proper drainage to prevent further damage.

On behalf of the residents of Velsao, I earnestly appeal to the Cortalim MLA and the Sarpanch to prioritise this matter and expedite the necessary repairs. Failure to address the issue before the monsoon will likely result in the complete collapse of the road, exacerbating the hardships faced by the community. Immediate action is not just a request, but a necessity.

Urgent need to relocate garbage segregation site in Mardungo ward

A temporary garbage segregation site, situated in Mardungo Ward, just behind a residential house and mere feet away from a chapel, has become a source of concern for local residents. For over six months, this site has been operating, and its impact on the community is hard to ignore.

**CITIZEN
ANSELM BARETTO
Assagao**

The stench emanating from the site is unbearable, making it a challenge for people to walk by without covering their noses. Those praying in the nearby chapel are particularly affected, as they have no respite from the foul smell until their service ends. The disruption of peace and health due to

the strong odours is damaging the sanctity of this area.

Though the site has an enclosure, people still dispose of their garbage bags improperly, flinging them outside, which has created a nuisance. This negligence has attracted cattle and stray dogs, who scavenge the discarded waste, further worsening the situation.

Given the growing problems caused by this temporary site, it is high time for the authorities to relocate it to a more suitable and less disruptive location. Shifting the garbage centre will alleviate the stench, reduce the disturbance for residents and worshippers, and prevent further damage caused by stray animals. It's imperative that the authorities take swift action for the well-being of the community.

Power dept staff negligent in work

It appears that the linemen of the electricity department are negligent in their work and always have a care-a-damn attitude. It is a good move that the department instructs the linemen to ensure overhead lines are kept free from trees and overgrown bushes, as these touch the wires and often

**CITIZEN
AARON FONSECA
Assagao**

result in tripping or short-circuiting, leading to power cuts. However, it is greatly seen with dismay that many linemen cut the bushes and trees touching the overhead wires and leave the debris on the roads, causing much inconvenience to motorists.

Many times, these are thorny trees that pierce pedestrians even while walking. It would be sensible for the power depart-



ment to equip their linemen with a goods carrier. When such branches are cut, they should immediately be loaded into their vehicles and transported to a dump yard. Alternatively, the

branches should be completely pushed aside so that they do not affect road users. Will the authorities concerned look into this matter?

Stray cattle and dogs create nuisance at nights in Mapusa

Despite the government's recent announcement of a proposed legislation to impound stray cattle and hold owners accountable for accidents caused by them, the situation on the ground suggests it's more lip service than action.

**CITIZEN
SUZAN D'MELLO
Marna**

In Mapusa, the growing population of stray dogs and cattle remains neglected, with civic authorities apparently doing little to address the issue. Most bovines and canines take over



the streets at night, and the municipality has failed to effectively manage their numbers or behaviour.

Cattle, often aggressive and roaming freely, charge at motorists and pedestrians, squatting in the middle of roads and increasing the likelihood of accidents. The stray dogs create further chaos,

particularly at night, by chasing bike riders, often leading to serious crashes.

The situation is worsened by the fact that most of the cattle are neither properly looked after nor provided food by their owners. They can often be seen foraging through waste and garbage on the streets, adding to the mess

and health hazards. While the government funds gaushalas to care for cattle, the ever-increasing numbers are overwhelming these shelters, leaving them struggling to provide adequate care.

The Mapusa Municipality must act now. It's high time they take responsibility and start impounding all stray animals, sending them to the animal shelters to alleviate this nuisance. It's no longer just an inconvenience—it's a serious safety hazard for residents and commuters. The authorities must take decisive action before more lives are lost or damaged.

Arlem Bypass in darkness

The Arlem Bypass cuts travel time and helps commuters avoid traffic, but there is no guarantee they will reach their destination in one piece. Driving down this winding road at night is a dangerous proposition, accomplished mostly by guesswork and prayers. With no streetlights, the twists and turns, the shrubbery and garbage on the side become one with the inky blackness of the landscape. As a result, all oncoming motorists have their headlights on high beam, blinding each other – but not slowing down.

If illuminating the stretch—the shortest route between Arlem and Nuvem – is too expensive, the least

the PWD could do is install reflectors on the sides of the highway so one can at least tell where the tar road ends and where the fields begin. Reflectors along the centre of the road, better signboards ahead of turns and at least a few streetlights along the long stretch are an urgent measure the government should consider implementing on this highway that caters to the people of Arlem, Fatorda, Gogol, Raia and beyond.

Due to the poor visibility, many people are forced to avoid this highway at night, and take the longer route around via Mathany Saldanha junction or Old Market Circle, which is a waste of time and fuel.

FRAUGHT WITH DANGER



Bricks dumped in inspection pits in the middle of the newly repaired road at Sangolda pose danger to the motorists. It would be prudent enough for the authorities concerned to place some signs to inform travelers about the danger.

**CITIZEN
SANDRA FERNANDES
Sangolda**

For years, the people of Livrament vaddo have suffered when the road was completely destroyed. The residents had to stay indoors due to dust pollution while senior citizens had a harrowing time travelling along the dusty and muddy road. It was difficult to even celebrate festivals and locals were virtually placed under house arrest. Now after villagers taking up the issues with various authorities, the road was finally repaired but potholes have appeared in several places.

The authorities should kindly repair the road as early as possible before road users end up in the potholes and injure themselves.

