

Report in HC flags major flaws in tree translocation

Hyd-based contractor, Doctor Trees, mishandled the project with little regard for trees' survival, shows survey findings

Team Herald

PANJIM: A scathing report submitted to the High Court of Bombay at Goa has raised serious concerns over the translocation process of five rainforest trees in Porvorim, accusing the Hyderabad-based contractor, Doctor Trees, of mishandling the project with little regard for the trees' survival. The petitioner, Aaron Victor E Fernandes, has called for immediate corrective measures to address these shortcomings and to ensure that future tree translocations adhere to best practices.

The report, prepared by landscape designer and ecological consultant Parag Mody, outlines significant flaws in the translocation process. It states that future projects must be overseen by qualified professionals experienced in arboriculture and ecological restoration. The report emphasises the need for gradual

NO REGARD FOR GREENERY

The report's observations:

- Two trees had been excessively pruned, with all branches removed. This drastic reduction in canopy made identification difficult and severely hindered their recovery
- Root-balls were excessively cut, compromising the trees' ability to absorb nutrients and water
- The chosen location in rice paddy fields, prone to waterlogging, is an unsuitable environment for the
- A 75 to 100-year-old banyan tree, which has not yet been translocated, is already in a severely compromised state due to excessive pruning of branches, aerial roots, and leaves, making it nearly unrecognisable
- The fourth tree, located near a temple, has yet to be translocated, but based on the methods used for the other trees, it is expected to undergo heavy pruning, which will compromise its survival



pruning to reduce stress on trees and preserve enough canopy for recovery, as well as ensuring that root-balls are preserved during excavation and transport. The location of the trans-

located trees is also under scrutiny. According to the report, the trees were relocated in a paddy field, which are prone to waterlogging.

Cont on Pg 11 >>



FAITH TRUMPS SAFETY: Devotees continue to throng the Maha Kumbh festival a day after the deadly stampede, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Thursday. (Right) a young girl loses touch with the rest of her family and an old devotee waits at the lost and found area to be reunited with her family



Day after Kumbh stampede, PIL in SC seeks safety measures for devotees

PTI, NEW DELHI: A PIL was filed on Thursday in the Supreme Court seeking implementation of specific guidelines and regulations to ensure safety of devotees attending the Maha Kumbh where at least 30 people were killed and 60 injured in a pre-dawn stampede at Sangam area in Prayagraj.

The stampede took place on Wednesday on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya.

The petition, filed a day later under Article 32 of the Constitution by lawyer

JUDICIAL COMMISSION TO VISIT SITE TODAY

PTI, LUCKNOW: The three-member judicial commission set up by the Uttar Pradesh government to probe the Maha Kumbh stampede will visit the site on Friday, panel head Harsh Kumar, a retired judge of the Allahabad High Court, said. Kumar also said that the commission has a month to wrap up its investigation but

will try to expedite it.

Kumar and panel members former director general of police (DGP) V K Gupta and retired IAS officer D K Singh reached the office assigned to them here and began their work on Thursday, an official statement said.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Vishal Tiwari, seeks to prevent stampede incidents and protect the fundamental rights of equality and life under Article 21.

The plea, which made the Centre and all the States as parties, has sought a direction to the Centre and the State governments to work

collectively in ensuring a safe and secure environment for devotees at the Kumbh.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

15 tents gutted in fresh fire

PTI, MAHAKUMBH NAGAR: At least 15 tents were gutted on Thursday after they caught fire near Chamanganj Chowki outside Sector 22 in the Maha Kumbh Mela area with officials saying there was no loss of life.

Chief Fire Officer (Kumbh) Pramod Sharma said information about a fire was received this afternoon and the fire was extinguished immediately.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Bata

UP TO **70%** OFF

At all Bata Stores across Goa

WASHINGTON ACCIDENT

No survivors in plane-chopper crash, says Trump

PTI, WASHINGTON: An American Eagle plane about to land at the Reagan National Airport collided with a US Army Black Hawk helicopter Wednesday night, in one of the worst aviation disasters in recent US history.

Cont & more on Pg 11 >>

Rottweiler attack shakes Assagao

Team Herald

PANJIM: A peaceful Wednesday night in Assagao turned into a nightmare for 40-year-old Vinil Salgaonkar when he was attacked by a ferocious Rottweiler, allegedly left unleashed by its owner, leaving him injured and shaken.

This horrific attack comes just months after the tragic death of a seven-year-old boy in Anjuna, who succumbed to brutal injuries from a pitbull mauling last August.

The latest incident occurred near the Government Primary School in Badem, Assagao, where Vinil was attacked by the Rottweiler.

The dog's owner, Sham Govekar, has been booked by Anjuna police for reckless endangerment, accused of failing to take the necessary precautions to protect human lives.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Smart City a 'scam', Panjim has been 'abandoned': Palekar

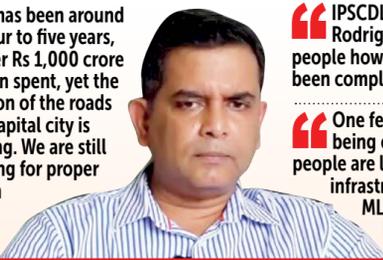
AAP Goa chief plans RTI and legal action, alleges Rs 1,000 crore already spent on project that has no end date yet

Team Herald

PANJIM: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) State President Adv Amit Palekar has alleged that the Smart City project, implemented by the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Ltd (IPSCDL), is a scam. Palekar stated that the party will file an application under the Right to Information (RTI) Act to uncover how much money has been spent on the project and later approach the High Court if necessary.

Addressing the media, Adv Palekar criticised the execution of the project and expressed concerns about the lack of accountability. "We plan to examine how funds have been allocated and spent by not just IPSCDL but also the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP), the Goa State Urban Development Agency (GSUDA), and

“It has been around four to five years, and over Rs 1,000 crore has been spent, yet the condition of the roads in the capital city is appalling. We are still searching for proper roads in Panjim



the Public Works Department (PWD)," he said.

Palekar claimed that over Rs 1,000 crore had already been spent on the Smart City project, but the results were far from satisfactory. "It has been around four to five years, and over Rs 1,000 crore has been spent, yet the condition of the roads in the capital city is appalling. We are still searching for proper roads in Panjim," he said, pointing to the ongo-

ing construction chaos. He specifically highlighted the situation near Azad Maidan, where a road had been dug up multiple times without improvement.

"This road has been dug up four times, yet look at the condition. Who is responsible for this? Why isn't anyone questioning the IPSCDL? It seems like they aren't afraid of anyone," Palekar said, adding that the public was being unfair-

ly inconvenienced. "Most of the roads are blocked, and people are forced to travel longer distances just to get to their destinations," he added.

Palekar further alleged that the city's leadership, including local MLA Atanasio 'Babush' Monserrate, the Mayor, and BJP leaders, had neglected their responsibilities.

Cont on Pg 11 >>

Goa bags first gold in National Games

Bhuvaneshwari won in Kaipuro category of Kalaripayattu

Ajit John

ajit@herald-go.com

PANJIM: Goa secured its first gold medal in the 38th National Games being held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand after **Bhuvaneshwari Suresh Jadhav** emerged victorious in the Kaipuro (open-hand fight) category of Kalaripayattu. Competing in the 60-70 kg female category, she defeated her opponent from Delhi in a closely contested final yesterday.

Bhuvaneshwari's path to gold was marked by dominant performances. In the earlier rounds, she outclassed her rivals, beating Rajasthan 17-6 and Haryana 14-5, before sealing the final with a closely fought golden point victory. This achievement marks her debut appearance at the National Games.

Meanwhile, Goa narrowly missed out on another medal as Shrungi



Bandekar finished fourth in the 400-meter medley finals.

Speaking to O Herald, Bhuvaneshwari shared insights into her journey in Kalaripayattu, a martial art she was introduced to by her parents.

She said, "I was introduced to the sport by my parents. It was considered just an art form, then."

Cont on Pg 11 >>

MAX. TEMP 33.8 °C
MIN. TEMP 20.8 °C

idharudhar



No entry without VIP passes!

7 of 8 lifts in coma, Ponda hospital leaves patients in the lurch

Ponda Sub District Hospital and PWD play pass-the-buck game as patients' plight gets ignored

SANTOSH NAIK

PONDA: Patients, pregnant women, senior citizens, and other visitors to the Ponda Sub District Hospital (SDH) are having a tough time accessing the medical facilities since seven out of eight lifts are malfunctioning currently. Those frequenting the hospital have called for urgent repairs to ensure that patients and their kin - especially those can't climb stairs - are not inconvenienced.

Viraj Sapre, a social worker and frequent visitor to the hospital for medical check-ups, expressed concern over the ongoing situation. He explained that since January 14, the hospital's lifts, including



Patients and visitors to the hospital forced to take the stairs in the absence of functional lifts

those designated for patients, doctors, and individuals with physical disabilities, have gradually stopped functioning.

At present, only the lift at the casualty department is operational, but it too is prone to frequent breakdowns. As a result,

“Since January 14, the hospital's lifts, including those designated for patients, doctors, and individuals with physical disabilities, have gradually stopped functioning

“At present, only the lift at the casualty department is operational, but it too is prone to frequent breakdowns

“Surgeon's post vacant for

the past 22 months, forcing patients to either go to GMC or spend a lot on surgeries in private hospitals

“This has forced many patients to seek treatment at the Goa Medical College (GMC) or private hospitals, incurring significant costs for surgeries

“The hospital's skin specialist position is also currently vacant

“Health is a priority service, and this issue should be addressed on a war footing to prevent further suffering - Viraj Sapre, social worker

patients, especially those with knee issues, pregnant women, and elderly individuals, are forced to climb up to four

floors, which could exacerbate their health problems. Sapre emphasised the importance of healthcare serv-

ices and stressed that immediate action must be taken to repair the lifts. He called on both the Health Minister and the Public Works Department (PWD) Minister to expedite the necessary funding and repairs. "Health is a priority service, and this issue should be addressed on a war footing to prevent further suffering," Sapre said.

The hospital's infrastructure has faced additional challenges, with the post of surgeon remaining vacant for the past 22 months. This has forced many patients to seek treatment at the Goa Medical College (GMC) or private hospitals, incurring significant costs for surgeries.

Cont on Pg 11 >>