

## Youth's joyride in borrowed Merc leaves family shattered

21-year-old in hit-and-run gets bail; accident survivor battling it out in hospital

Team Herald

PANJIM: A borrowed Merc, a stolen joyride, and a horrific accident that left a pedestrian with crippling injuries – that is the heart-breaking and bizarre story that has unfolded since Tuesday night, when 21-year-old Archit Sanglekar reportedly took his girlfriend out for a spin.

Sanglekar, a photography student, was approached by his neighbour Akshay Kavalekar, a hotelier and a Mercedes owner, who wanted some photos of his car clicked because he wanted to sell it online. Sanglekar requested access to the car for a couple of days, saying that he wanted



**“Judith has suffered head injuries, a tailbone fracture and multiple other fractures. She is being treated in a private hospital at Mapusa and has been advised bed rest for a minimum of six months. She may not be able to walk for the next six months**

–Prajay Simepurshkar, husband of Judith, the accident survivor

ed to take his sister for a competition. Kavalekar was happy to oblige.

However, Sanglekar did not return the car as promised and on Tuesday night took his girlfriend for a joyride to Anjuna. On their way back, the speeding car knocked down Judith Fernandes, a music teacher at Ardee School in

Sangolda, while she was taking an evening walk around 8.30 pm near Sao Joao Chapel, Siolim. Sanglekar did not stop and fled the scene; neither did he tell his parents or the car owner about the accident.

When the news of the accident started doing the rounds on social media, a suspicious Kavalekar con-

fronted the 21-year-old, who broke down and confessed to his involvement in the accident. Kavalekar convinced him to go to the police station, where he was arrested but later released on bail. The police have seized the Merc.

The turn of events has left the Fernandes family shat-

tered, and husband Prajay Simepurshkar questioning how the accused person got bail in a few hours. “Judith has suffered head injuries, a tailbone fracture and multiple other fractures. She is being treated in a private hospital at Mapusa and has been advised bed rest for a minimum of six months. She may not be able to walk for the next six months,” Simepurshkar told **O Herald**, pleading to the government to help the family in the crisis.

Head constable Krishna Asvekar, who is probing the case, said that Archit was arrested and released on bail after his statement was recorded, since the offence was bailable.

## NO LESSONS LEARNT



Passengers at Patna railway station, Bihar, try to find space between the coaches of an overcrowded train amid rush owing to the ongoing Mahakumbh Mela, on Thursday

## More cheating cases pour in, lens on overseas job scam syndicate

Unsuspecting Goans recount harrowing tales of intimidation and lost money; claim police involvement emboldens fraudsters

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PANJIM: The harrowing experience of two deported Goan youth who were scammed into paying lakhs for legitimate US jobs but were forced to attempt entering America via an illegal route has blown the lid off fraudulent overseas recruitment agencies operating without proper registration, in Goa.

Victims have recounted distressing experiences, claiming they were misled by agents posing as legitimate consultants with many suggesting these agents operate with apparent protection

**“I was forced to sign an MoU to recover Rs 10 lakh of the Rs 14 lakh I had paid, under pressure from the police present. My remaining Rs 4 lakh and my passport are still being held by the agent**

– Sahil Vernekar, job aspirant from Verna

**“We paid for jobs abroad, not to commit a crime. We are jobless here and when even the police don't act, what else can we do? I went to Vasco police station to file a complaint, but they refused to help**

–Mayur Devidas from Quepem

from local police.

One victim, Sahil Vernekar, a young job aspirant from Verna, described how he was allegedly coerced into signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in front of police at the Panjim police

station after paying Rs 14 lakh for an overseas job opportunity.

“I was forced to sign an MoU to recover Rs 10 lakh of the Rs 14 lakh I had paid, under pressure from the police present,” Vernekar told Herald. “My remaining Rs 4

lakh and my passport are still being held by the agent.”

Vernekar revealed that his passport had been in the possession of a well-known Panjim-based agent for the past three years. “Now, the agent demands that I sign another MoU to get my passport back, but that I will lose my remaining Rs 4 lakh if I do,” he explained.

Vernekar's father, Sandip, claimed that their family faced intimidation tactics, including a false complaint filed against him at the Women's Police Station in Panjim by one of the agent's employees.

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## Indians among US deportees to land in Panama

PTI, PANAMA CITY: A group of Indian deportees from the United States has arrived in Panama, where the Indian embassy has obtained consular access and is coordinating their safe return.

These individuals are part of a larger group of 299 migrants sent to Panama under the US government's intensified crackdown on illegal immigration. The Indian embassy confirmed their arrival but did not specify the exact number. Panamanian authorities have housed them in a hotel with essential facilities.

“They are safe and secure... The embassy team has obtained consular access. We are working closely with the host government to ensure their wellbeing,” the embassy posted on X.

The US has already deported three batches, totalling 332 Indians, back to India. Of the 299 migrants recently sent to Panama, 171 have agreed to return to their home countries, including some Indians. So far, 41 air tickets have been purchased, including 17 for Indian deportees.

However, 98 migrants who refused voluntary repatriation have been transferred to a remote facility in Panama's Darien province.

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## No woman officer at Cuncolim PS a major flaw, hampers probes

Team Herald

MARGAO: At a time when crimes against women are a global cause for concern, the Cuncolim Police Station has been running without a woman Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) after the lone woman officer was transferred to Sanguem recently.

**Margao, despite being one of the busiest stations in the State, has only one woman PSI. Colva and Maina Curtorim police stations each have two woman PSIs, while Colva, which oversees a large coastal belt, continues to operate with only two woman officers**

This disruption may be hampering investigations into crimes like sexual abuse, kidnapping of women – all of which should be dealt at the local police station. For example, the past two months Cuncolim PS has seen four cases of rape, all of which had to be transferred to Women's Police Station in Margao – one of the busiest in the State – due to the absence of a woman PSI.

It has been learnt that the Women's Police Station in Margao currently

has four promoted woman PSIs and one regular woman PSI. Salcete has five police stations – Margao, Cuncolim, Fatorda, Colva and Maina Curtorim. Recently, the only lady PSI at Cuncolim was transferred to the Sanguem Police Station, but no replacement has been posted yet.

Sources indicate that Fatorda Police Station recently had two lady PSIs, with one more joining shortly, bringing the total to three. Margao, despite being one of the busiest stations in the State, has only one lady PSI. Colva and Maina Curtorim police stations each have two lady PSIs, while Colva, which oversees a large coastal belt, continues to operate with only two lady officers. However, no lady PSI has been posted to Cuncolim, leaving it without one entirely.

The acute shortage of woman PSIs at Cuncolim Police Station has significantly impacted the handling of cases related to crimes against women. The situation is particularly concerning given that the station's jurisdiction covers 11 village panchayats and one municipality, yet it continues to function without a single lady PSI.

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## Cloud over Goa's coastal zone mapping

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Chennai-based National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) has strongly opposed the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority's (GCZMA) objections to two sets of documents – Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) and Coastal Zone Management (CZM) maps – that were previously approved, arguing that the objections would undermine the legitimacy of both sets of maps along with the various

authorities that have already given approval.

NCSCM raised these points in a counter-affidavit before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Pune, with Purvaja Ramachandran, Acting Director of NCSCM, voicing her concerns.

The GCZMA had initially recommended the two sets of maps – CZM at 1:4000 scale and CZMP at 1:25000 scale – during a National Coastal Zone Management Authority (NCZMA) convention in September 2022.

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## Vatican adds St Teresa's feast day to universal liturgical calendar

AGENCY, KOLKATA: Church leaders in India have welcomed the Vatican's decision to inscribe the feast of **St Teresa** of Kolkata into the universal liturgical calendar, calling it a step that will inspire Catholics worldwide to emulate her service to the poor.

Pope Francis has decreed that St Teresa's feast day will be observed globally every year on September 5, the anniversary of her passing in 1997. Until now, it was commemorated only within the Missionaries of Charity and the Indian Catholic Church.

The decree, signed by Cardinal Arthur Roche, acknowledges numerous requests from bishops, clergy, religious commu-



nities, and lay faithful seeking official recognition of her contribution to the Church's liturgical life. It highlights the global impact of her spirituality and her continued influence as a beacon of hope for those in physical and spiritual distress.

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza of Calcutta called it a significant recognition of St Teresa's lifelong dedication to the poorest and most abandoned. He noted that the move would further encourage the Missionaries of Charity in their humanitarian work worldwide.

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## Muddy, untreated water leaves Usgao fuming

Residents fighting for basic amenity for decades, demand water from Opa plant

Team Herald

PONDA: Summer is yet to set in, but villagers of Usgao are already sweating at the prospect of the hot, dry – and waterless – months that await them. For residents here have to wait till 11 pm almost daily for an hour of water supply. And this water often comes in a trickle due to the low pressure, and in many areas it's muddy and untreated, claim locals.

They complained that untreated water is supplied from bore wells at Palwada, Dhavo Guno, Pali, Sidhanath Nagar and Sai Nagar and they have to wait for at least a day for the mud to settle down before the water can be used.



Water from the borewell stored in a tank at a house at Paliwada, Usgao. The house owner said that borewell water is muddy and takes one day for the mud to settle at the bottom.

The matter had even reached the High Court when locals had petitioned the court

to assuage their daily drinking water needs by curtailing water supply to industries.



**“Many get untreated water directly from the bore well, which is muddy. We have no option but to use this water to meet our daily requirements**

–Gajanan Pokre, Pali-Usgao resident

**“Tiral receives water supply for only an hour. There has been a water crisis in some parts for two decades. We have pleaded in court that we should be supplied water on priority**

–Rohan Naik, local resident who moved High Court last year for water

Rohan Naik, a local, who with the support of residents filed the petition last year, said, “In-

dustries earn profits at cost of the locals. Tiral receives water supply for only an hour. There

has been a water crisis in some parts for two decades. We have pleaded in court that we should be supplied water on priority.”

Accusing a tyre manufacturing unit at Usgao of consuming water in large quantities, he said, “Though they are permitted 20 lakh litres per day, the locals suspect that the company is extracting water twice the permissible limit, which has affected the supply in our areas. The villagers demand that they be supplied treated water from the Opa plant.”

Speaking to **O Herald**, Rohan said, “There would be a severe water crisis if Karnataka diverted Mhadei water.”

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Sorry, we officially change names not breeds.