

“It is over” — Judith’s first words to her husband, Prajay.

Almost killed by a 21-year-old behind the wheel of a Mercedes, bedridden Judith holds on to hope and love

Heartbroken husband accuses Anjuna police of siding with the accused’s family while harassing the victim’s relatives

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

KARASWADA, MAPUSA: Prajay Simepurshkar felt the music fade from his life as he held his nearly lifeless wife, Judith Fernandes, who had been knocked down by a Mercedes driven by reckless 21-year-old Anchit Sangelkar.

Just minutes before the accident, Judith, a music teacher at a private school in Sangolda, had called her husband, telling him she would be home soon. “We were supposed to go shopping afterward,” recalls Prajay, who had married Judith barely three months earlier. Life seemed like a bed of roses.

Not long after, she lay on a hospital bed—a bed of thorns.

A life-altering tragedy was imminent. Sangelkar, driving a Mercedes reportedly borrowed from a neighbour, with a female friend beside him, struck



Judith Fernandes kept hearts beating with her music

Judith and fled the scene.

According to her doctors, Judith suffered a tailbone fracture, multiple pelvic fractures, and several other injuries. The road to recovery would take months.

“Apart from the physical pain, it will take us both

“I was called to the Anjuna Police Station the afternoon after the accident and was made to stand outside, while the parents of the boy, who had run over my wife were allowed to sit with the PI in his cabin

— Prajay Simepurshkar, husband of hit-and-run victim Judith Fernandes

“My sister’s accident left me with the belief that the Anjuna Police were more interested in protecting the accused than supporting the victim’s family. The police let the accused go on police bail instead of presenting him before the magistrate. They made life easy for the man who knocked my sister down and fled

— Judith’s brother, a pilot

months to recover from this mental ordeal. Like any married couple, we dreamed of having a child. That was our immediate plan. Now, I don’t know what the future holds,” says Prajay, ready to bear any burden to see his wife smile again.

“Soon after her call, I received a phone call from a friend informing me that she had been hit by a car

and was lying on the roadside. I reached the spot within two minutes and held her in my arms,” says an emotional Prajay after helping a nurse change his wife’s dressings.

At this point, Prajay gazed into the abyss, wrecked with memories he wished he could erase. Covering his eyes, he let his emotions flow. “It is over,” she had whispered to me,”

he recalled, tears rolling down his face.

But there was another numbing pain for Prajay and his family—the apparent negligence of the Anjuna Police.

“I was called to the Anjuna Police Station the afternoon after the accident and was made to stand outside while the parents of the boy who had run over my wife were allowed to sit with the PI in his cabin,” recounts Judith’s husband, Prajay Simepurshkar, who owns a security agency.

“All I kept asking was, ‘Where is the boy (the accused, Anchit Sangelkar)? Where is the car?’ They kept telling me the boy would arrive and that the car would be brought in. Meanwhile, one of my friends found the accused sitting inside a tinted car in the police station compound,” says a disheartened husband.

Cont on Pg 5 >>

Team Herald

PERNEM: It started with a disagreement about dogs and ended in death. A bizarre and tragic chain of events unfolded in Mandrem on Friday night when a tourist from Delhi ran over a woman selling coconuts on the road after an argument.

The woman, identified as Maria Joao Fernandes from Junaswada, Mandrem, had been involved in several verbal face-offs with 23-year-old Deepan Rajeev Batra, a tourist from Delhi who was staying at nearby Sawantwada. According to police, Batra would bring his dogs for a walk near Maria’s house and coconut stall, something she had objected to since she herself had dogs, who would start barking on seeing Deepan’s pets.

On Friday Maria and Batra fought again and Batra’s mother also came out and fought with Maria, at one point holding her by the hair and throwing her to the ground. Maria had just got up from the road and was telling her neighbour about the incident when Batra allegedly sped up his car and knocked Maria down, dragging her for almost 10 metres under the wheels and killing her



(Top) Mandrem locals gathered at the police station; (below) The car which was involved in the accident



On Friday, Maria Joao Fernandes and Deepan Rajeev Batra fought and Batra’s mother came out and faced off with Maria, at one point holding her by the hair and throwing her to the ground. Maria had just got up from the road and was telling her neighbour about the incident when Batra allegedly sped up his car and knocked Maria down, dragging her for almost 10 metres under the wheels and killing her instantly

instantly.

Neighbours rushed out to find Maria’s lifeless body. They rushed her to the Community Health Centre, Tuem, where she was declared brought dead.

Batra drove straight to the Mandrem Police Sta-

tion and surrendered soon afterwards. He has been arrested under Section 103 (murder) and 281 (rash driving endangering human life) of BNS. Mandrem PI Sherif Jacques is conducting further investigations.

Oppn fumes as upcoming Goa Assembly session truncated yet again

Says it undermines principles of democracy and erodes the rights of legislators

Team Herald

PANJIM: The government’s decision to once again curtail the Goa Assembly session has drawn flak, with the Opposition stating that this undermines principles of democracy and erodes the rights of legislators.

After a two-day winter session last month, another brief three-day budget session of the State Legislative Assembly has been convened from March 24 to 26.

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— Legislative Assembly Bulletin

“BJP government’s decision to summon an Assembly session for only three days in March suggests that the party is afraid to face opposition. It undermines principles of democracy and erodes the rights of legislators. BJP’s dictatorship rule is also stifling the voices of activists by imprisoning them

— Yuri Alemao, Leader of the Opposition

sion on Monday, March 24, 2025 at 11.30 am,” states the Legislative Assembly Bulletin issued on Saturday.

The Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will present

his seventh budget in a row and will seek Vote on Account for next four months of the new fiscal.

Cont on Pg 5 >>

CHALLENGING TERRAIN



Indian Army personnel undertake a trek on the frozen Zaskar river, Ladakh.

Shivraj slams Air India over ‘broken seat’

Carrier orders probe; Civil Aviation Min seeks action

PTI, BHOPAL/MUMBAI: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday slammed Tata Group-owned Air India for allotting him a “broken and sunk” seat, prompting his ministerial colleague K Rammo-han Naidu to instruct the airline to take “necessary action”.

Separately, Air India apologised for the incident and ordered a “thorough probe” while the DGCA sought a report from the airline in the matter.

Later in the day, Chouhan, the Union Minister

for Agriculture, said he spoke about his experience so that the airline’s management comes to know about it and other passengers do not face such problem again.

Describing the incident as an “unethical” practice wherein the airline charges passengers full fare and then makes them occupy defective seats, Chouhan in a post on X said he had boarded the Delhi-bound Air India flight AI436 from Bhopal for Delhi to inaugurate a farmers’ fair in Pusa.

Cont on Pg 5 >>

MAX. TEMP 34.4 °C
MIN. TEMP 25.2 °C

idharudhar



Sitting & standing sold out, would you mind hanging?

Four months on, Anjuna residents continue to bear the brunt of water scarcity

Residents of Vazarwada forced to hire tankers; suspect water is being diverted to commercial establishments

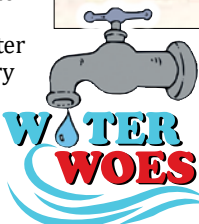
VITHALDAS HEGDE
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ANJUNA: Water scarcity has hit most parts of the coastal State, with residents bearing the brunt. The situation in Anjuna’s Vazarwada has turned from bad to worse, with the residents experiencing acute water scarcity for the past four months, which has forced them to hire tankers to meet their daily requirements.

The residents complained that since October last year, they are not receiving water supply even as earlier they used to receive water supply on alternate days.

They said that they were told that water supply would be normalised from January this year after laying the new pipeline. The villagers are not sure when this pipeline would be ready and suspect that the water is being diverted to commercial establishments.

Cont on Pg 5 >>



“I have received a water bill of Rs 3,000 and I have decided not to pay it because my supply is irregular for almost a year. Now, I am buying water from a private tanker to meet my requirements. Whenever I enquire, my ward member taunts me saying “it is because some people are talking to media”. My only fault was that I had aired my grievances to the media and this is how I am punished”

— Shanti Govekar, Vazarwada resident



“For the last three months there has been no water supply in the area. We were told that the pipeline will be replaced and water supply will be restored by February this year and till date nothing has materialised. Most hotels and commercial establishments in the area are supplied with water. We have to rely on private water tankers. Water is released early in the morning, but the pressure is so low that we could fill only four-six buckets before supply stops. For that too we have to stay awake at night.”

— Santosh Tamankar, a taxi operator from Vazarwada, Anjuna