

shorttakes

MOTORCYCLIST SUCCUMBS TO INJURIES IN NUVEM SELF ACCIDENT

MARGAO: Ramdayal Chavan, a resident of Dongri, Vasco da Gama, succumbed to serious injuries after crashing his motorcycle into an electric pole near the Honda Show-room at Nuvem junction. The incident occurred on February 22, late night around 1.30 am. Maina-Curtorim Police reported that Chavan was riding a motorcycle in a rash and negligent manner when the crash occurred. As a result of the collision, both Chavan and his pillion rider, Sneha Eliparbhatha of Baina, Vasco, sustained injuries. Unfortunately, Chavan later succumbed to his injuries at the South Goa District Hospital in Margao. During the investigation, the police conducted an inquest panchanama over the body, and it was subsequently sent for a post-mortem examination. The Police Surgeon confirmed the cause of death as "damage to the head, spine, and chest, consequent to blunt force impact." The body was handed over to the family for final rites.

MAN ASSAULTED DURING SHIV JAYANTI RALLY IN QUEPEM

MARGAO: Claudio Fernandes of Assolda, Quepem, was allegedly assaulted during the Shiv Jayanti rally at Kotambi. Quepem police said Fernandes suffered minor injuries and is undergoing treatment at South Goa District Hospital. A complaint has been filed, but no FIR has been registered yet. Authorities await the medical report for further action.

THREE ARRESTED FOR ASSAULT IN CURCHOREM

MARGAO: Karim Ismail Shaikh, Zakir Ismail Shaikh, and Tahir Ismail Shaikh, all residents of Pontemol, Curchorem, allegedly attacked Aatif Kotur of Xeldem using an iron kada before kicking and pushing him to the ground. Curchorem police have registered the offence under BNS 2023 sections 352, 118(1) r/w 3(5), and further investigation is underway, led by PSI Prajyot Bakhale.

SCOOTER STOLEN FROM OPEN PARKING NEAR FATORDA SPORTS COMPLEX

MARGAO: Ayman Mukhtar Sayyad of Arlem Junction, Fatorda, has filed a complaint with the Fatorda Police regarding the theft of a Honda Aviator scooter. According to the complaint, on February 19, at around 6 pm, an unknown individual stole the scooter belonging to Mustafa Shaikh, which had been parked near the Multipurpose Hall at the Sports Complex in Fatorda. The investigation is currently being handled by LPSI P. Joshi of Fatorda Police Station.

SCIENCE DAY CELEBRATION AT GVM'S DADA VAIDYA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PONDA: The Science Day celebration at GVM's Dada Vaidya College of Education will take place on February 28, starting at 9:30 am. The theme of the event will be "Discovery and Invention in Science." The celebration marks the culmination of the Science Popularising programme, Scifun, an 11-year-old initiative aimed at training BEd students to teach science through creative and hands-on methods. The programme includes the use of hand-held charts, handmade materials, and interactive learning to make science engaging for students. A street play in Konkani is also part of Scifun, incorporating an interdisciplinary approach. Additionally, an exhibition will be held as part of Scifun, showcasing its work across over 40 schools in Goa and two in Maharashtra, benefiting more than 7,000 students. Science demonstrations featuring low-cost, everyday materials will also take place, along with a Green Exhibition that includes topics such as mangroves, millets, microbes in food, and rice cultivation in Goa. Students from various disciplines, including English, Hindi, Geography, History, Konkani, and Marathi, will perform to further promote an interdisciplinary approach. The chief guest for the event will be a representative from the National Forensic College in Curti, who will bring along a few students to demonstrate forensic science techniques.

FIRST-AID TRAINING CONDUCTED FOR TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS IN CALANGUTE

CALANGUTE: A first-aid training session was held at Calangute panchayat for shack owners, water sports operators, and tourism stakeholders to improve beach safety and emergency response. Dr Lloyd De Souza, a certified Basic Life Support instructor, led the session covering CPR and injury management.

E-book on medicolegal guidelines and autopsies released

Team Herald

PANJIM: An E-Book on Medicolegal Guidelines and Autopsies has been released recently. It has been edited by Dr R G Wiseman Pinto - Professor of Pathology and former Dean of Goa University and President of Asian Society of Cytopathology.

The E-Book contains guidelines as to when the autopsies are to be made Medicolegal or Pathological. It also has details of the types of autopsies, such as medicolegal or forensic or coroners autopsy, pathological or clinical or medical autopsy, complete autopsy, partial autopsy or restricted autopsy, panel autopsy, digital autopsy or virtu-

al autopsy or virtopsy, history of autopsies in the world and history of autopsies in India; besides the prominent professors of pathology in India who encouraged pathological autopsies in the country. These medicolegal guidelines were formulated by Dr Pinto on February 21, 2009, with inputs from Dr Silvano Dias Sapeco, Dr N G Dubashi, Dr Edwin Gomes, Dr Ponraj S, Dr Dilip Amonkar, Dr F P Noronha, Dr M Nazareth, Dr Guruprasad Pednekar, Dr Savita Chandra, Dr C P Das, Dr Philomena D Sousa and Dr Zelio D Mello. The E-Book can be obtained free of cost from Dr R G Wiseman Pinto.

Rapid infrastructure development displaces bison into Ponda

Residents and activists call for wildlife corridors amid growing human-wildlife encounters

Team Herald

PONDA: Over the past several days, wild bison have been frequently spotted wandering along main roads, internal roads, and highways in Ponda city, surrounding villages, and major routes.

According to social activists, rampant highway development, high protective walls, and extensive hill cutting have obstructed the natural movement of wildlife, leaving them struggling to find food and water.

Social activist Rohan Naik highlighted that the rapid infrastructural changes have significantly disrupted wildlife habitats. He stated, "Forests are located close to Ponda city and its villages. The destruction of their natural pathways has forced wild animals, including bison, to enter human settlements in search of resources."

The recent widening of roads from Curti-Bethora to Bhaithakhhol-Borim, along



with the construction of high retaining walls and excessive hill cutting, has created barriers that prevent animals from returning to their forested areas after crossing roads. The absence

of designated wildlife corridors has exacerbated the situation, compelling animals to stray into residential areas.

Locals have reported multiple instances of wild

“Forests are located close to Ponda city and its villages. The destruction of their natural pathways has forced wild animals, including bison, to enter human settlements in search of resources – Rohan Naik, social activist

bison being spotted in Ponda city, Curti, Dhavalim, and other parts of the region. While no major incidents have been reported so far, a tragic incident occurred in Bondbag-Bethora, where

a woman was fatally attacked by a wild bison. The victim reportedly mistook the bison for a buffalo and attempted to drive it away from her backyard.

Naik recalled a widely circulated video from last year that showed a wild bison waiting for an extended period to cross a road near a hill-cutting site. He emphasised that for years, wild animals such as bison and leopards have relied on natural water sources in areas such as Bethora Junction, Curti and Durgabhat. However, due to hill cutting and high protective walls, their traditional access routes have been blocked, leaving them no choice but to venture into human settlements in search of food and water.

Rahul Naik, a local from Borim, expressed his concerns over the ongoing development projects. He stated, "Development is necessary, but it should not come at the cost of wild-

life. Animals have an equal right to live. With highways cutting through forests, animals are unable to cross, increasing the risk of accidents for both humans and wildlife."

He further pointed out that wild bison are struggling to navigate their surroundings as construction and new plots emerge along the highways, restricting their movement.

Despite the bypass highways being widened, no corridors have been allocated for wildlife on any of the three bypass roads in Ponda. This has led to growing concerns among residents about the increasing human-wildlife conflict.

The encroachment of forest land due to expanding settlements, highway projects, and hill cutting has directly impacted the region's wildlife. Locals urge authorities to implement measures to ensure the safe coexistence of both humans and wild animals.

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COLLECTIVE CRY FOR JUSTICE IN SUPPORT OF RAMA KANKONKAR

Rajan Ghathe, another activist, said, "This is an attempt to scuttle our voices. Politicians should know that the more you try to stop us, the thicker our skin will become. Activists and Goans together will show what they can do."

Stating that it is disheartening to see a social activist being treated like a criminal, former president of Konkani Bhasha Mandal (KBM) Anvesha Singbal said, "Decisions like these are a threat to the very existence of democracy. The State chose the CM to run the government in the most democratic manner. If a citizen cannot speak against him in a democracy, then we might as well appoint a dictator. You cannot instil such fears in the minds of the common man. You will only lose respect from people like us in the bargain."

Adv Cleofato Coutinho said, "Congratulations Home Minister. You showed him your power. I stand by Rama Kankonkar."

Yugank Naik said, "Social workers are not full-time politicians. They do not have the backing of political forces, societies or organisations. Their views are not going to fit the government or the system. If they say something in anger or resentment, it is not right to turn the whole system over on them with the help of the law. The arrest and full prosecution of Rama is outside the common sense of democracy."

Commenting on Kankonkar's arrest, Political commentator Prabhakar Timble said, "Ruling MLAs are silent, Other Backward Classes (OBC), Schedule Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) leaders and Jai Shivaji brigade are also silent"

South Goa MP Capt Viriato Fernandes criticized the government's actions, alleging an attempt to silence voices that speak out against corruption and mismanagement.

"Rama is a dedicated activist who stood up against the wrongdoings of the government and authorities. Social activists are the fifth pillar of democracy. Goa would have been in ruin without the efforts of such activists. If the government believes that arresting Rama will silence others, they are deeply mistaken," he stated, adding that the issue will be raised in Parliament.

The MP further pointed out the unjust treatment activists are facing under the current administration, calling it a clear violation of their rights to freedom of expression.

Expressing shock and distress at the way Rama was handled by the police, Goa Forward Party supremo and Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai said, "Rama Kankonkar is not a criminal. He is a true Goan, denied justice and forced to speak out against the Chief Minister of Goa. Goa is not a monarchy, and yet Pramod Sawant's police had the audacity not only to arrest him, but also to humiliate him and his community publicly."

Labelling the incident as an atrocity, he claimed that it is part of a larger, systematic attempt by the BJP in Goa to undermine the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in the State.

Urging all conscientious Goans to come together and condemn this undemocratic act, Sardesai called it anti-Scheduled Caste and anti-Goan.

He called for unity against what he described as a "feudalistic party and despotic leadership that only values power and social supremacy."

However, BJP spokesperson Giriraj Pai Vernekar said, "In Goa, opposition politicians and activists believe that speaking against the government should grant them immunity from their own wrongdoings. They collude with fugitives, face cases of cheque bounce and fraud, issue death threats to the elected Chief Minister, and then cry vendetta when action is taken. Politics and activism cannot be an insurance policy to shield wrongdoing."

FATHER CALLS FOR DIVINE HELP IN FIGHT FOR RAMA

While Kankonkar's arrest has sparked outrage, questions are being raised about the contrasting handling of his case compared to that of other suspects. Notably, police have been criticized for their approach to locating Kankonkar—tracked via his phone's Google location—while they claim to be unable to trace Stanley George, who is underground and is accused of cheating Goans in the US job scam. This discrepancy has drawn further criticism of the police's handling of the situation.

Family members of Kankonkar, including his wife Rati, father Gurudas, and mother, expressed frustration at not being allowed to meet with him during his detention. Rati revealed that she had been informed by the Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) that Kankonkar had not eaten the previous

night. She further accused the police of providing misleading information about his condition and the status of his arrest.

"We were not allowed to meet him, and the police have been lying to our faces," Rati said, visibly upset.

Gurudas Kankonkar, Rama's father, speaking emotionally outside the police station, called on divine intervention, saying, "Prabhu Ram, if you are there, you will stand for this Rama. You will stand for my Rama and put better sense in the minds of those who are troubling him."

Kankonkar's mother expressed her belief that her son was not fighting for his own benefit but for the betterment of the people of Goa. She called the arrest unwarranted.

In his defence, Kankonkar has maintained his innocence, insisting that the allegations against him are baseless. He had previously challenged CM Sawant to arrest him if there was truth to the accusations.

Reflecting on the situation, Kankonkar's father drew a contrast to former Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, stating, "Parrikar never did politics of vengeance. He never did this."

As the situation continues to unfold, it remains to be seen how the controversy will impact the political landscape in Goa, with activists and opposition leaders rallying behind Kankonkar's cause.

Earlier, Rama was sent to 14 days judicial custody by the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Panjim and later released on conditional bail.

ALMOST KILLED BY A 21-YEAR-OLD BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A MERCEDES, BEDRIDDEN JUDITH HOLDS ON TO HOPE AND LOVE

Yet, Prajaya refuses to give up hope, believing that their marriage was destined by God and that it was divine intervention that kept Judith alive. "My wife is suffering, and it is unbearable for me to see her in this condition. It will take time, but one day, we will see the rewards of faith," he says, grappling with fate.

"My sister's accident convinced me that the Anjuna Police were more interested in protecting the accused than supporting the victim's family. They let the accused go on police bail instead of presenting him before the magistrate. They made life easy for the man who ran my sister over and fled," says Judith's brother, a pilot, who flew in as soon as he heard the news.

Judith is now out of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), though she remains in immense pain, unaware of the ordeal her husband has faced at the hands of the police. Five days after she had whispered, "It's over," the couple continues to hold on to their faith in God and each other, hoping that the authorities will eventually distinguish right from wrong.

OPPN FUMES AS UPCOMING GOA ASSEMBLY SESSION TRUNCATED YET AGAIN

Condemning the government's decision to convene three days sessions, Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemas said,

"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," he said.

Goa Forward Party president and MLA Vijai Sardesai posted on 'X': "3-day Assembly session a break from BJP's year-long, busy schedule of loot, despotism and scams. For @DrPramodPSawant and his cabinet the Assembly sessions have become a ritual that has to be performed as shabbily and quickly as possible to get back to what they are really good at, and proud of: scheming and scamming. Spending time to answer to the people, or abiding by democratic processes is to @BJP4Goa a gross waste of time, and a necessary evil."

Calling truncated Assembly session a blatant attempt to stifle democratic processes and silence the voices of the people, Benaullim MLA Venzy Viegas likened the decision to authoritarianism, drawing comparisons to the dictatorial regime of Salazar, claiming that this approach would rush through crucial discussions and debates, undermining the core principles of democracy.

"The government must reconsider this decision and ensure that the Assembly session is structured to allow for meaningful discussions, debates, and the active participation of all stakeholders," Viegas stated, urging the government to safeguard democratic practices in the State.

FOUR MONTHS ON, ANJUNA RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF WATER SCARCITY

Santosh Tamankar, a taxi operator from Vazarwada, Anjuna, said, "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."

Complaining that her water supply has suddenly stopped, Shanti Govekar, another resident said, "I have received a water bill of Rs 3,000 and I have decided not to pay it because my supply has been 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," she rued.

Rudolf D'Souza, a senior citizen said, "We are suffering terribly for the last three months. We do not receive PWD water supply and depend on private tankers. We are desperate for water. What we want is basic necessities. Commercial properties which have mushroomed are 'robbing' us of our domestic supply. They have installed huge pumps and dug bore wells. I had raised this issue during gram sabha."

Complaining that water supply has become irregular since the last five months, Erenia Pinto said, "Earlier we used to receive water supply on alternate days and it was sufficient for us. But now in spite of installing a water pump we are not receiving water. I fetch water from my neighbour's well and I cannot bring water from the tanker due to narrow road access."

Eliza Pinto said, "Since November last water supply has been affected. I buy water from a tanker by paying Rs 1,200."

Many housewives came out of their houses to narrate their ordeal. They said that they are forced to spend sleepless nights due to irregular water supply. "We can remain hungry without food, but we cannot survive without water," said one of the women.

When contacted, Anjuna-Caisua ward V member Pratima Govekar claimed that she had not received complaints from residents.

APPOINTMENTS

