

Zone correction fees: HC takes note of undervaluing Assessment Order

Petitioners demand inquiry against Chief Town Planner for having caused loss of Rs 7.16 crore to public exchequer

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Wednesday took serious note of undervaluing the Assessment Order for calculating fees for correction of zone under Section 17 (2) of Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act thereby causing a loss of Rs 7.16 crore to the public exchequer even as the Advocate General told the Court that steps have been taken to recover the money as per the revised rates notified on March 28, 2024.

Activists Swapnesh Sherlekar, Jose Carlos Da Veiga Gracias and Rupesh Shinkre had filed a writ petition seeking to immediately hold an inquiry against the Chief Town Planner Rajesh Naik for having caused loss to the public exchequer by

The Petitioner stated that the records reveal that there are as many as 120 cases which have been Gazetted and published under Section 17 (2) of TCP Act since April 2024. In several of these cases similar fraud had been played by the CTP and prayed that Naik be suspended pending disciplinary inquiry

deliberately undervaluing the Assessment Order in violation of/contra to the government notification published in the Gazette on 28/03/2024 and thereby deliberately causing a loss of Rs 7.16 crore to the public exchequer.

On March 16, 2023, the government had notified fees for processing applications for correction/rectification of zone of land/properties in Regional Plan for Goa. A fee of Rs 200 was prescribed for correction/rectification of zone un-

der Section 17 (2) of the TCP Act, for land having area above 20,001 square metres.

A year later the government revised/increased fees and another Notification dated 28/03/2024 superseding earlier Notification dated 16/03/2023 and notified new fees at increase rates. It fixed Rs 1,000 for correction/rectification of zone of land to settlement zone for land having area above 20,001 sq mts.

Three months later on

June 11, 2024, CTP Rajesh Naik and Vinod Kumar Chandra (who holds post of Town Planner and Junior to Naik) forwarded a proposal for zone rectification from the Brahm Agro Terra Projects Ltd, Bengaluru, for approval of the government, recommending correcting/rectifying 89,500 sq mts area from property/land bearing Survey No. 17/1 admeasuring 2,64,197 sq mts of Chopdem Village in Pernem Taluka. The government approved 89,500 sq mts for rectification/correction to settlement zone in Regional Plan 2021 under Section 17 (2) of the TCP Act.

Arguing on behalf of the petitioners, Adv Rohit Bras de Sa pointed out that it was the duty and responsibility of the CTP Naik, to assess

total fee payable as Rs 8.95 crore, however Naik in the Assessment Order passed by him on June 11, 2024 dishonestly and fraudulently accessed/calculated the fee at the rate of Rs 200 per square metre instead of Rs 1,000 per square metre and caused damage/huge monetary loss to government treasury by fabricating incorrect/false document. Due to this, it caused a loss of Rs 7.16 crore to the public exchequer.

The Petitioner stated that the records reveal that there are as many as 120 cases which have been Gazetted and published under Section 17 (2) of TCP Act since April 2024. In several of these cases similar fraud had been played by the CTP and prayed that Naik be suspended pending disciplinary inquiry.

Panchayat razes illegal structures in Arambol

Team Herald

PERNEM: The Arambol village panchayat on Wednesday started demolition of illegal structures falling under Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) at Girkarwado.

Around 15 temporary structures and huts are to be razed as per the directives of the High Court of Bombay at Goa. On Wednesday, six structures were demolished by authorities or removed by people. The drive will continue for next two days, informed Arambol panchayat secretary Subhash Kambl.

As many as 216 illegal structures situated at Girkarwada and Dando have been identified by the High Court for demolition as they fall within the CRZ. Kambl said that initially 15 structures will be demol-



ished within the next three days.

Kambl said that all these illegal structures were issued demolition notices even as some had dismantled their structure.

According to Kambl, some matters are being heard in the High Court and the village panchayat will take action as per the Court directives.

Earlier, the authorities had sealed 61 illegal structures including guest houses after it was found that they were used for commercial purposes at Girkarwada and Dando in Arambol without obtaining permissions from the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) and the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB).

RERA penalises builder for taking home buyers for a ride

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has penalised the builder, who took more than 10 per cent of the consideration amount from the home buyers before registering the agreement for sale before Sub Registrar.

RERA Member Vincent D'Silva on Wednesday imposed a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on the Prescon Homes Private Limited for violation of section 13 of RERA Act. The section 13 states that no deposit or advance be taken by the promoter without first entering onto agreement for sale.

D'Silva in his order has directed the builder to pay interest at the rate of 11.10 per cent per annum, to the complainants on the sum

of Rs 42,52,500 for the period from 30-09-2022 till 22-03-2023 within 30 days from the date of the order.

The RERA Member also directed the respondent to pay further interest at 11.10 per cent per annum from March 23, 2023 till effective payment in the event of failure to pay the interest amount to the complainants. It also asked the builder to pay Rs 2 lakh to both the senior citizens within 30 days failing which it will carry interest at 11.10 per cent per annum till effective payment.

The respondent is also asked to file a compliance report of the order in the form of an affidavit within next 60 days of the order, failing which further

legal action will be initiated by the Authority under the RERA Act, for execution of the order.

Joseph Bonaventure Rodrigues and his wife Brenda Barbara Rodrigues of Mumbai, both senior citizens had booked an apartment in the senior centric residential complex at Azossim.

NEW PONDA CARNIVAL COMMITTEE PONDA - GOA			
Draw Result			
1. 6819	6. 9253		
2. 1336	7. 5190		
3. 3037	8. 9830		
4. 7238	9. 2370		
5. 5325			
Prizes should be collected within 30 days			

Canvas shoes now must for school students

Edu Dept cites environmental concerns, health risks from leather products, synthetic materials

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Directorate of Education has mandated that all students in government, aided, unaided, primary, secondary, higher secondary and special schools wear canvas shoes as part of their uniforms.

The initiative aims to reduce the environmental impact associated with leather and synthetic shoes, which involve harmful chemicals in their production.

A circular issued by Director of Education Shailesh Zingde said, "Protection of environment needs to be practiced as much as it is preached. There is no dispute that leather comes at a huge environmental cost. The production of leather from animals involves use of highly toxic chemicals which may be harmful for human skin. Other shoes which are made of artificial leather and other synthetic materials are also manufactured using the same chemicals. Use of this can be signifi-

Canvas shoes are made up of eco-friendly materials, more resistant to wear and tear, more comfortable and relatively inexpensive and most importantly they do not pose any harm to the environment and students. Canvas shoes are always prescribed for sports purposes and can easily be used for everyday wear – Shailesh Zingde, Director of Education

cantly reduced by wearing canvas shoes in the schools," he said.

"Canvas shoes are made up of eco-friendly materials, more resistant to wear and tear, more comfortable and relatively inexpensive and most importantly they do not pose any harm to the environment and students. Canvas shoes are always prescribed for sports purposes and can easily be used for everyday wear," he said.

DUST THOU ART

FREDDY FERNANDES



A priest applies ashes to a devotee's forehead in the shape of a cross to symbolise repentance for sins on the occasion of Ash Wednesday at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, Panjim

Attacks on tourists, murders will tarnish Goa's reputation: CM

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday urged tourism stakeholders not to take the law into their own hands, warning that recent incidents of violence against tourists could have a long-term impact on Goa's tourism industry.

"When there are fights involving tourists in restaurants and shacks, and when there are murders, tourists will be scared to come to Goa in the future. Even if there are minor problems with tourists, you can dial 100 and call the po-

lice," Sawant said at Calangute during a function.

He criticised the practice of leasing out shacks to outsiders, stating, "We take shacks and give them to others to run, and they bring people from other states. When there are problems, instead of sorting it out across the tables, they flash knives and attack. There are people with that mindset, and the impact of these incidents lasts for years. Even 10-15 years later, people will still say, 'Tourists went to Goa and were murdered.' The result is the number of visitors to Goa will decline."

Chicalim villagers win 15-year-long battle, restoration of 'reclaimed' jetty land begins

Village Panchayat suspends trade licence of M/s Abhishek Engineers Pvt Ltd for illegally reclaiming land

Team Herald

VASCO: The Captain of Ports (CoP) Department started the restoration of over 4,000 square metres of "illegally reclaimed" jetty land at Chicalim Bay.

The land, which was "unlawfully reclaimed" by M/s Abhishek Engineers Pvt Ltd, will now be returned to its original State government after a 15-year-long battle by the Chicalim Villagers Action Committee (CVAC).

On Wednesday, a joint inspection was carried out by officials from the Captain of Ports, Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA), Goa State Biodiversity Board, DRDA South, and local stakeholders, including CVAC President Cyril Fernandes and general secretary Rui M Da Costa Araujo, to assess the progress of the restoration work.

Reacting to the develop-



ments, Rui M Da Costa Araujo said that years of relentless efforts had finally borne fruits. "This 15-year fight for justice has ended in victory. It is truly gratifying to see the restoration work in progress," he said.

Cyril Fernandes welcomed the development and urged government authorities to adopt a scientific approach in executing the restoration work.

"While this is a significant achievement, the Captain of Ports and DRDA must ensure that scientific methods

are applied to restore the land effectively. A detailed scope of work should be prepared and strictly followed," Fernandes said.

Fernandes dedicated the success to the residents of Chicalim, Dabolim and Sao Jacinto, and thanked CVAC members for their unwavering dedication and support over the years.

Panchayat suspends trade licence of violator

In another development, the Chicalim Village Panchayat suspended the trade licence of M/s Ab-

hishek Engineers Pvt Ltd for illegally reclaiming land from the Zuari River at Chicalim Bay.

The Panchayat in its order dated March 4 has stated that the trade licence will remain suspended until the Captain of Ports certifies that the illegally reclaimed land has been fully restored to its original condition.

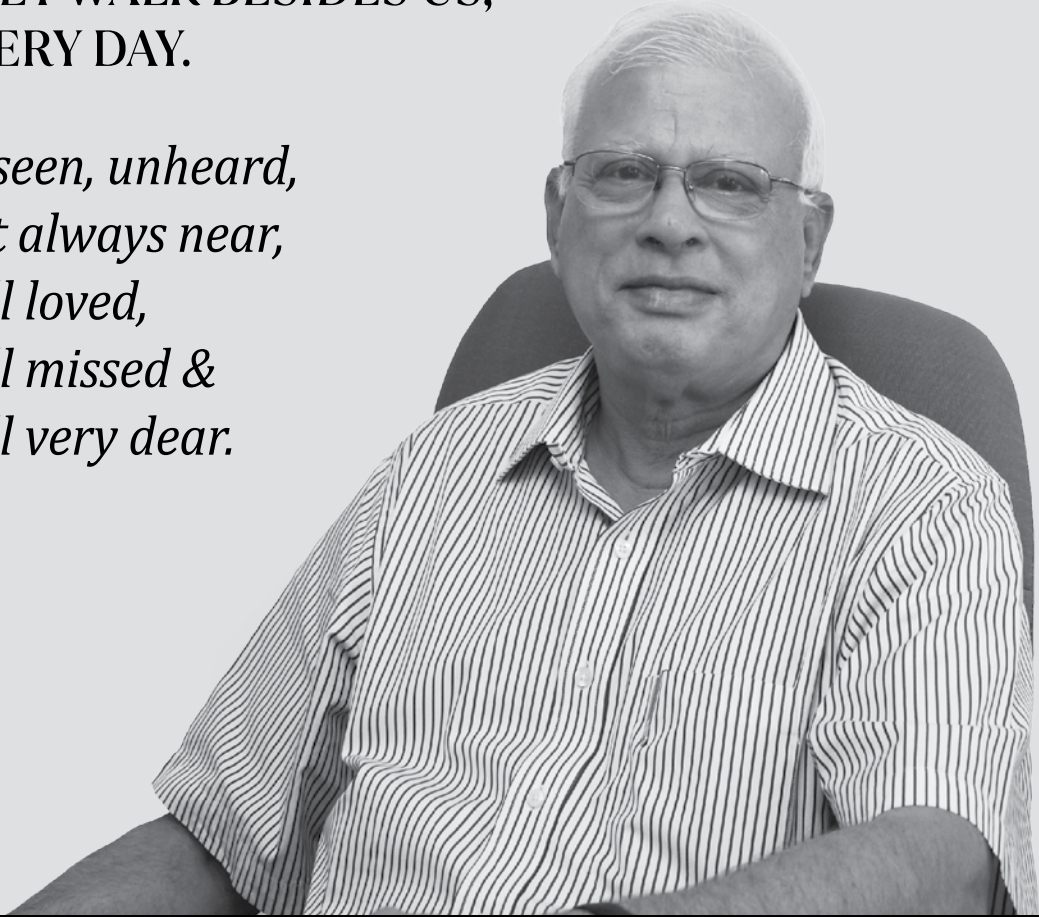
Environmentalists and locals had long raised concerns over the damage caused by the unauthorised reclamation, which was blatantly carried out by M/s Abhishek Engineers Pvt Ltd from 2010 onwards.

Reacting to it, CVAC president Cyril Fernandes said that the panchayat's decision will send a strong message against illegal land reclamation. "We hope this step will pave the way for sustainable development while preserving Goa's natural heritage," he said.

THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

THOSE WE LOVE DON'T GO AWAY,
THEY WALK BESIDES US,
EVERY DAY.

Unseen, unheard,
But always near,
Still loved,
Still missed &
Still very dear.



VICTOR ALBUQUERQUE

(4th November 1941 - 6th March 2022)

Through all these years you have been our light, our strength,
our guide and will always continue to be so.

A loving tribute from all of us at:

Victor Hospital
Passion for caring

NOVOTEL
GOA DONA SYLVIA

Radisson
GOA CAVELOSSE BEACH

Radisson
PUNE HINJAWADI

Radisson
GOA CANDOLIM

MERCURE
HOTEL
GOA DEVAAYA RESORT

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