

## 'ILLEGAL' HILL CUTTING SPARKS OUTRAGE IN SIRVOI

### Despite show cause notice and stop work order, 'unauthorised' activities have resumed in Survey Nos. 62/3-A & 122/1C, according to residents

GAURESH SATTARKAR

**QUEPEM:** Despite the show cause notice and stop work order issued by the Deputy Collector South I, "unauthorised" hill cutting and land filling activities have resumed in Sirvoi-Quepem, causing considerable distress among local residents.

Prashant Naik Dessai, a member of Save Goa BioDiversity, told **O Herald** that these illegal activities are underway at two locations, specifically in Survey Nos. 62/3-A and 122/1C in Sirvoi.

He alleged that the hill cutting is being carried out with the backing of the some government departments and the local panchayat.

He said, "The High Court of Bombay at Goa had ruled against converting agricultural land into settlement zones and had directed the panchayats, mamlatdars, police inspectors, and deputy collectors to form flying squads to investigate complaints within an hour. Despite a complaint lodged on December 24, 2024, regarding the hill cutting, no action has been taken."

Dessai questioned how hill cutting could be permitted in an area surrounded by agricultural fields, emphasising the potential problems for poor farmers if a project were to proceed there.

He further pointed out that the some government departments have not provided technical clear-



"Unauthorised" hill cutting and land filling activities underway in Sirvoi-Quepem

“How could hill cutting be permitted in an area surrounded by agricultural fields. Some govt departments have not provided technical clearance, and neither has the panchayat issued NOC to the party concerned

—Prashant Naik Dessai, a member of Save Goa Bio Diversity

“I contacted the flying squad, who visited the site and issued a stay order. However, the illegal activity has resumed recently. I plan to approach higher authorities to address the hill cutting and determine its legality

—Deepti Naik, Xeldem panch member

“The panchayat will investigate the situation and take action if necessary. We have not granted any permission for the activity

—Kavita Gawas Dessai, Xeldem sarpanch

ance, and neither has the panchayat issued a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the party concerned.

Deepti Naik, a panch member, stated that she was not informed about the unauthorised activity by either the land developer or the sarpanch,

despite a stop work order.

She added that a person Santosh Phal Desai, who is alleged to be a key person developing the land, threatened her and instructed the operators of heavy earthmovers to resume work.



### WHAT THE RESIDENTS CLAIM

- Locals claim illegal activities are on in Survey Nos. 62/3-A and 122/1C in Shirvoi
- Allege these activities are being conducted with some departments and panchayat support
- Say the activity defies High Court ruling against converting agricultural land into settlement zones and direction to VPs, mamlatdars, PIs, and Dy collectors to form flying squads to investigate complaints within an hour
- Claim that despite a complaint lodged on Dec 24, 2024, no action was taken

## Pope makes surprise appearance at St Peter's Square

**AP, VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis made a surprise entrance to St Peter's Square during a special Jubilee Mass for the sick and health workers on Sunday, marking his first public appearance at the Vatican since his release from the hospital two weeks ago.



The pontiff waved at the crowd that stood and applauded as he was rolled unannounced to the front of the altar in the square.

"Good Sunday to everyone," Francis said, speaking into a microphone, which he tapped to make sure it was working on a second attempt. "Thank you very much."

The pontiff's voice sounded stronger than when he addressed well-wishers outside of Gemelli hospital on the day of his release March 23, after battling life-threatening pneumonia during a five-

week hospital stay.

He has just completed two weeks of at least two months of doctor-ordered rest as he continues physical, respiratory and speech therapy, as well as treatment for a lingering lung infection.

The pope referred to his experience with illness in both the traditional Sunday blessing and the homily read by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, organiser of the Holy Year that is expected to bring some 30 million pilgrims to Rome.

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## 7 die after treatment by 'fake' doc in MP

**PTI, DAMOH:** Seven persons have died allegedly after being treated by a fake cardiologist at a missionary hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, prompting the NHRC to launch a probe into the matter, officials said on Sunday.

A team of the National Human Rights Commission will camp in Damoh till April 9 to conduct an investigation into the matter, NHRC member Priyank Kanoongo said.

As per a complaint lodged by a local resident with the NHRC, a person using the name 'Dr N John Camm', who was said to be working at the hospital, had shown himself to be educated and trained from abroad.

The complainant claimed the real name of the person is Narendra Vikramaditya Yadav.

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**RALLYING AGAINST THE 'DIVISIVE' DUO** AFP

Protesters hold signs during a "Hands Off!" protest against the policies of US President Donald Trump and his advisor, Tesla CEO Elon Musk, in Huntington Beach, California

## Protesters assail Trump, Musk in 'Hands Off!' rallies

**AP, WASHINGTON:** Crowds of people angry about the way President Donald Trump is running the country marched and rallied in scores of American cities Saturday in the biggest day of demonstrations yet by an opposition movement trying to regain its momentum after the shock of the Republican's first weeks in office.

So-called Hands Off! demonstrations were organised for more than 1,200 locations in all 50 states by more than 150 groups, including civil rights organisations, labour unions, LBGTQ+ advocates, veterans and elections activists. The rallies appeared peaceful, with no immediate reports of

arrests. Thousands of protesters in cities dotting the nation from Midtown Manhattan to Anchorage, Alaska, including at multiple state capitols, assailed Trump and billionaire Elon Musk's actions on government downsizing, the economy, immigration and human rights.

On the West Coast, in the shadow of Seattle's iconic Space Needle, protesters held signs with slogans like "Fight the oligarchy." Protesters chanted as they took to the streets in Portland, Oregon, and Los Angeles, where they marched from Pershing Square to City Hall.

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## AAP leader alleges assault by PSI

Team Herald

**CANACONA:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) demanded on Sunday the immediate dismissal of probationary Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) Raj Shekhar Reddy for allegedly slapping party leader Sandesh Talekar.

The incident occurred when Talekar visited the police station to inquire about three individuals detained for allegedly touting on the beach.

According to reports, PSI Reddy told Talekar not to interfere and to leave the police station when Talekar demanded to know the reasons for the detentions.

Talekar retorted that the police station wasn't "anybody's father's property," which allegedly enraged PSI Reddy, leading him to slap Talekar.

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## Churchill Brothers I-League provisional toppers after 1-1 draw

### Title fate rests on AIFF verdict on April 28

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Churchill Brothers finished provisionally on top of the I-League 2024-25 table after a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Real Kashmir FC in Srinagar on Sunday, but their wait for the title and a historic promotion to the Indian Super League will hinge on the AIFF Appeal Committee's verdict later this month.

Churchill Brothers finished with 40 points, one ahead of Inter Kashi (39), but the table could yet see a twist if the Antonio Lopez Habas-coached Inter Kashi are awarded three additional points -- currently kept in abeyance -- from their protest over Namdhari SC fielding an ineligible player earlier this season.

The AIFF Appeal Committee is set to hear the case on April 28.



Churchill Brothers players celebrate after their match against Real Kashmir FC at the TRC football stadium in Srinagar, on Sunday

If the decision goes in Inter Kashi's favour, their points tally will rise to 42, making them the I-League champions and sealing the promotion to the ISL in only their second season.

The controversy relates to Inter Kashi's match against Namdhari SC on January 13, when the latter won 2-0. But the AIFF Disciplinary Committee later

found out that they fielded an ineligible player. The committee awarded a 3-0 forfeit win to Inter Kashi along with three points. However, the AIFF Appeal Committee later put the decision "inoperative and in abeyance" until the final hearing.

"The AIFF Appeal Committee has stayed the forfeiture decision... a final

“On behalf of my club and family, I would like to thank each and every Goan in the State and across the globe. I thank the Almighty for answering my prayers and for fulfilling my dreams of making it to the India Super League. Since my team is arriving tomorrow at 8.30 pm at Dabolim airport, I appeal to every supporter and well wisher to join the rally upto Alemao mansion, Varca, followed by the celebrations

—Churchill Alemao, patron of Churchill Bros

decision is yet to be taken," the AIFF had stated.

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