

## A DAY LATER, CRACKDOWN ON 'ILLEGAL' HILL CUTTING

Deputy Collector and SDO seeks reports from Deputy Town Planner 'at the earliest' after O Herald exposed how rule of law was flouted

GAURESH SATTARKAR

PANJIM: A day after O Herald exposed the 'unauthorised' hill cutting at Sirvoi in Quepem, Quepem Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Manohar Karekar directed the Deputy Town Planner of the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department to investigate if development permissions or approvals were issued by the department for the work.

In his letter, Karekar also directed a probe into whether the 'activities' fall within any planned development zones and violate any provisions of the Regional Plan or Outline Development Plan.

APRIL 7, 2025

### 'ILLEGAL' HILL CUTTING SPARKS OUTRAGE IN SIRVOI

To, The Deputy Town Planner, Town and Country Planning Department, Quepem, Goa.

Subject: Regarding Alleged Illegal Hill Cutting and Land Development in Survey No. 62/3-A and 122/1-C of Village Sirvoi, Quepem Taluka - Reg.

Sir,

This office has come across a news article published in the Herald newspaper dated 07-04-2025, which alleges illegal hill cutting and land development activities in Survey No. 62/3-A and 122/1-C of Village Sirvoi, Quepem Taluka.

In view of the seriousness of the matter and potential violation of planning regulations, you are kindly requested to:

1. Verify whether any development permissions or approvals have been issued by your department in respect of the said survey numbers.

The letter issued to the Deputy Town Planner taking cognisance of the April 7 report in O Herald highlighting the alleged illegal hill cutting at Sirvoi

The letter seeks a report necessary action and urges the deputy town planner

to take appropriate action under the Goa Town and Country Planning Act, 1974, if any unauthorised development was identified. The hill cutting is taking place in survey numbers 62/3-A and 122/1-C.

Additionally, the Deputy Collector and SDO issued a show cause notice to property owner Santosh Phal Desai, questioning why action should not be taken against him for conducting hill cutting in the No Development Zone (NDZ). Karekar's letter began by

referencing the O Herald report titled 'Illegal Hill Cutting Sparks Outrage in Sirvoi', which brought the issue to his attention.

O Herald had revealed that, despite previous orders, including a show cause notice and stop work order issued by the Deputy Collector South-I, unauthorised hill cutting activities have continued. An inspection by the flying squad further confirmed that the actions violated Section 17(A) of the TCP Act 1974.

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## THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (SSC) EXAM RESULTS AT A GLANCE

The SSC exam results were announced on Monday by Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (GBSHSE) Chairman Bhagirath Shetye. Here are the highlights:

### PASS PERCENTAGE

- Overall **95.35 %** (2.97% increase over last year)
- Girls **95.71 %**
- Boys **94.98 %**
- Science saw a pass percentage of **96.87%**, Social Science **97.08%**, Mathematics (level I) **99.24%**

### PASS PERCENTAGE 2020-25

- 2020 **92.69 %**
- 2021 **99.72 %**
- 2022 **92.75 %**
- 2023 **96.64 %**
- 2024 **92.38 %**
- 2025 **95.35 %**

### PASSOUT NUMBERS

- 18,837** students appeared for the exam and 17,961 regular students passed
- Out of **9,280** boys **8,814** passed
- Out of **9,557** girls **9,147** passed
- 2,385** candidates scored **75-100%** marks, **8,921** got **60-74%** and **5,425** scored **46-59%**
- 477** Divyang candidates appeared for the examination and **450** cleared it, a pass percentage of **94.34%**

Four special schools, namely Sanjay Centre For Special Education, Porvorim; St Xavier Academy, Old Goa; Lokvishwas Pratishtan's Virani Isani High School For Hearing Impaired Children, Dhavli, Ponda; and Lokvishwas Pratishtan's I J Virani And N I Virani School & Home For Visually Impaired Children, Dhavli, Ponda, registered **100%** pass results According to Shetye, supplementary

exams will be conducted on May 5, 2025, for the candidates who have been in needs improvement category (in more than two subjects), ATKT (allowed to keep terms) category (needs improvement in one or two subjects) or candidates who have withdrawn or skipped their examination for any reason. Candidates who have secured overall 'H' or 'I' Grade in the subject have to clear that subject in the following board exam

## Govt hikes LPG price by Rs 50, CNG by Re 1

PTI, NEW DELHI: The domestic cooking gas LPG price on Monday was hiked by a steep Rs 50 per cylinder across India and CNG by Re 1 per kg, while the government raised taxes on petrol and diesel to shore up its revenues.

The increase in cooking gas price will be for the Ujjawala - poor beneficiaries who got LPG connection free of cost - and general users, and will be effective from April 8 and has been necessitated due to the rise in input cost, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.

Cooking gas for Ujjawala users will cost Rs 553 per 14.2-kg cylinder from the current Rs 503 in the national capital. The same for general users will now cost Rs 853.

The rates, which vary from state to state depending on local incidence of taxes, were last revised in March last year when they were cut by Rs 100.

Also, CNG prices were hiked by Re 1 per kg in the national capital and adjoining cities after the government last week raised input natural gas prices by almost 4%. CNG in the national capital will cost Rs 75.09 per kg, Indraprastha Gas Ltd - the city gas retailer - said in a post on X. This follows the price of input natural gas being hiked from \$6.50 per million British thermal units to \$6.75 from April 1.

Alongside, the government hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre each to raise about Rs 32,000 crore additional tax revenue. However, there will be no change in retail prices as the increase will be adjusted against the price cut that was warranted because of falling international oil prices.

Puri said prices of crude oil - which is turned into petrol and diesel in refineries - have fallen to about \$60 per barrel from \$70-75, and a reduction in the retail selling price of petrol and diesel is possible if the international oil prices stay at those levels.

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## THE FIGHT IS ON



A large group of children and parents holding placards at the Directorate of Education, Porvorim on Monday to protest against the commencement of the academic year in the peak summer month of April. The parent's contention is that their objections are not being heard. They asserted that they are not against NEP, but its poor implementation is detrimental to the student's future

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## Bloodbath on Dalal Street

Sensex tanks 2,227 points, wipes out Rs 14 lakh crore of investor wealth

PTI, MUMBAI: Stock markets crumbled on Monday with Sensex sinking by 2,226.79 points - its steepest single-day decline in 10 months - as a global market carnage following US President Trump's tariff hikes and retaliation from China fanned fears of economic slowdown. Dalal Street investors were a poorer lot on Monday as their wealth eroded sharply by Rs 14 lakh crore.

Trump has blown the lid off the illusion. Reality is biting back. PM Modi is nowhere to be seen. India has to accept reality. We have no choice but to build a resilient, production-based economy that works for all Indians

- Rahul Gandhi, LoP in LS

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## WILD SWINGS ON WALL STREET

AP, NEW YORK: Wall Street is careening through a shocking day of trading Monday, catapulting from an early drop that had dragged it 20% below its record to a sudden rise, only to revert to losses as worries remain about whether President Donald Trump's trade war will torpedo the global economy.

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## Heroes back home, Churchill Brothers FC fans ecstatic

Team travels in style on open truck to Patron's residence

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PANJIM: The atmosphere was electric at Dabolim airport as jubilant fans of Churchill Brothers FC welcomed their heroes home after the team's triumphant performance in the I-League. Despite the unexpected evening drizzle and a half-hour flight delay, the spirits of the supporters could not be dampened. Eager fans, who had waited anxiously, erupted in celebration the moment the victorious players disembarked from their flight.

As the team exited the terminal, the air was filled with chants of "Churchill, Churchill!" The crowd surged forward in excitement, eager to capture photographs with the players and the Alemao family.



It was a moment the fans had been waiting for over a dozen years.

Churchill Brothers finished atop the I-League table with 40 points, securing the provisional championship, though the final title decision hinges on the AIFF's upcoming ruling

on an appeal involving Inter Kashi match against one of their opponents. The decision, expected on April 28, could potentially award Inter Kashi additional points.

Despite the uncertainty, fans were in high spirits. "This season has been a roller coaster

for both the team and the fans, filled with unforgettable highs and lows," said long-time supporter Anthony K V. "But supporting this team is about more than trophies; it's about their resilience. I'm confident the decision on April 28 will go in our favour." Sudhir Patil, another dedicated fan, expressed his pride



(Left) Team members of Churchill Brothers and (above) CEO Valanka Alemao celebrate with fans on their arrival at Dabolim Airport, on Monday

in the team's journey: "Our players have shown incredible character this season. We are proud of their unwavering spirit." Team CEO Valanka Alemao was visibly moved, calling the victory a "dream come true." She attributed the success to "God's blessings and Mother Mary's intervention."

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## Crores for Bhoma road widening, villagers brace for fight ahead

Locals say funds should be allocated for a bypass so that village, temples can be saved

Team Herald

PONDA: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Monday announced the four-laning of the National Highway from Bhoma to Old Goa, sending ripples of anger and anxiety through the local villagers, who were upset that a bypass for Bhoma was not considered.

Bhomkars gathered at the Mahadev Temple in the evening, vowing to fight back and defend their village and temple. The primary concern among the locals is the potential loss of not only their homes but also their temple culture, along with several religious structures that have been central to their worship for centuries. Sanjay Naik, a leader of the protesting Bhomkars, stated that the proposed elevated road and seven metre service roads on both sides would be devastating, leading to the destruction of their village. Naik asserted the grav-



Bhomkars in a huddle, vow to fight for village and temple against proposed Highway expansion through the village

■ In Goa, we have sanctioned ₹1,060.21 crore for the 4-laning of a 7 km stretch from Bhoma to Old Goa on NH-748. This highway, formerly NH-4A, spans 153 km from NH-48 near Belgum in Karnataka to NH-66 near Panaji, Goa, serving as a vital link for passenger and freight traffic from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka to Goa.

■ With this upgradation, the entire Panaji-Khandepar corridor will feature a four-lane roadway with paved shoulders. Owing to severe congestion and limited Right of Way in Bhoma, Corlim, and Ella, two elevated corridors totalling 4.275 km and 7-metre-wide service roads on both sides have been proposed.

ity of their struggle, emphasizing that their gods, goddesses, and culture are under threat. He criticised the State government, questioning whether their

actions reflect 'Ram Rajya' or 'Ravan Rajya', and accused the ruling party of betraying them.

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## Prez Murmu in Portugal: Special stamps released

PTI, LISBON: President Droupadi Murmu and her Portuguese counterpart Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa jointly released a set of special commemorative stamps on Monday, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The stamps, highlighting the vibrant traditional costumes of both countries, feature a Portuguese woman elegantly dressed in the vivid red 'Viana do Castelo' festive attire alongside an Indian woman adorned in the intricately embroidered Black Kalbelia dress.

The two leaders held a tête-à-tête followed by delegation-level talks. "The joint release of such commemorative stamps is a rare and significant occasion, with India Post having issued only 35 similar stamps since 1991," Jitendra Gupta, the Director General of India Post, said.

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MAX. TEMP 34.2 °C  
MIN. TEMP 26.2 °C

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It will affect tourism big time; they can't make us starve!