

O HERALDO

The Voice of Goa - since 1900

Ensure the mango season is fruitful

A recent surprise inspection by the food and drugs administration (FDA) at the sub-market yard at Mapusa led to the seizure of 180kg of mangoes after it was found that the boxes in which the fruits were stored also contained sachets of ethylene ripener. The action came after the FDA inspected seven units at Siolim engaged in selling local mango varieties and eight at the Mapusa sub-yard dealing in varieties brought in from other states. Stock was seized from two units at the Mapusa yard as officials noticed some suspicious material. Twenty-four samples of the fruit were subsequently sent for a chemical residue analysis and to determine if they were being ripened by way of unapproved methods. Results are expected shortly, FDA officials said.

The consumption of fruits has increased considerably in recent years due to the myriad health benefits they provide and also due to their availability round the year. However, highly perishable fruits like mangoes, papayas and bananas cannot be transported long distances after ripening as they tend to spoil. To avoid spoilage while moving and storing such fruits, traders generally harvest raw fruits and ripen them artificially just before sale. This process involves controlled ripening so that the fruits ripen faster and uniformly, thereby achieving the desired characteristics intended for better consumer acceptance and improving sales.

According to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the use of ethylene gas at a concentration of up to 100ppm (parts per million) is permitted for artificial ripening of fruits. While ethylene

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gas can be generated from various sources, it is comparatively more expensive, which is why many traders often resort to using unsafe and banned ripeners. The industrial-grade calcium carbide is often used to release acetylene gas for artificial ripening mainly of mangoes, bananas and papayas.

The use of calcium carbide may be a quick fix for many traders looking to preserve their stocks of fruits and ensure maximum demand and sales, but this chemical has traces of arsenic and phosphorus, which is harmful to humans. Potential side-effects upon consuming fruits laced with calcium carbide include dizziness, frequent thirst, irritation, weakness, difficulty in swallowing, vomiting, and skin ulcers. Also, acetylene gas released from calcium carbide is equally harmful for handlers.

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There are certain requirements if fruits are to be ripened using ethylene. Firstly, an airtight room, preferably an insulated one for better temperature control, is a must. A temperature regulation system to keep the fruit stocks either warm or cool - depending on the climate of the area - needs to be installed. There also has to be a humidity regulation system and proper air circulation and ventilation. Fruits should be kept in ventilated plastic crates or stackable fruit boxes inside the ripening chamber. These boxes or racks should be stacked in such a way that there is at least a minimum of 4-6 inches of space from the walls and between the adjacent crates. To ensure uniform ripening, maintaining airflow throughout the chamber is critical. Also, the fruits stacked for ripening should not occupy more than 75% of the volume of the chamber (as well as the crate) during the process.

While it is best to allow fruit to ripen naturally by harvesting them at optimum maturity, wrapping them individually with paper, or by arranging them in layers over paddy husk, wheat straw, or inside an airtight rice bin, these options are usually cumbersome and time-consuming, particularly when fruits are mass-produced for large-scale sale.

Nevertheless, there are certain telltale signs that a fruit has been artificially ripened, which consumers need to be aware of if they intend to steer clear of such fruits. To begin with, artificially ripened fruit will have a uniform skin colour. Also, they are generally found to have lesser flavour and a shorter shelf life.

Another clear sign that a particular fruit has been artificially ripened is if they are available much before the season in which they naturally grow.

So, before one decides to gorge on those enticing, sunset yellow mangoes, it would be prudent to ensure that they are purchased from reliable or known vendors and not the many sellers who emerge by roadsides selling heaps of the King of Fruits from out of a van. It is better to be safe than sorry.

comment



BLAISE COSTABIR

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Illegal constructions serve as vote banks, and every effort will be exerted to safeguard them under the guise of humanitarian considerations. Such justifications, however, are unlikely to withstand judicial scrutiny, as the Supreme Court has unequivocally stated that illegal constructions cannot be legitimised, irrespective of prolonged occupancy. These infractions must catalyse prompt remedial

Choksi must face trial in India

The arrest of fugitive diamond merchant Mehul Choksi in Belgium, an accused in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab National Bank fraud case marks a significant victory for Indian investigating agencies. However, the job is still incomplete. India should up the ante for his extradition where he must stand trial for the massive financial fraud he committed along with his nephew Nirav Modi. Both fraudsters fled India before details of the colossal fraud became public. Nirav was arrested in Britain in 2019 but has managed to stall his extradition so far on one pretext or the other. The financial fraud committed by fugitive fraudsters shook the country's banking industry with depositors wondering whether it is safe to park money in banks.

Belgium, known for its strong stance on human rights, must do everything within its right to extradite a fugitive who has looted India's public funds.

Editor-in-chief: Raul Francisco A. Fernandes. **Executive Editor:** Satadru Ojha (Responsible under PRB Act) **Regd Office:** St Tome Road, Panjim, Goa. Tel: 0832- 6750840 (Editorial) and 0832- 6750839 (Advertising) **Margao:** 2737689. **Mumbai Office:** 16-A, Bell Building, 2nd Floor, 19 Sir PM Road, Fort, Mumbai - 400001 (Tel: 22840702/ 22844908). RNI No: 43667/83.

Illegal construction: Time to bell the cat

The recent ruling by the High Court of Mumbai regarding the demolition of unlawful edifices throughout Goa represents a pivotal moment in confronting the challenge of unauthorised construction that has beset Goa. Every authority entrusted with the enforcement of regulations has seemingly turned a blind eye, presumably due to political patronage. The court's pronouncement emerges amidst escalating apprehensions regarding environmental degradation and the safeguarding of Goa's distinctive cultural and ecological heritage. While the structures will face demolition, one must ponder whether the officials who flouted the directive will be held accountable.

Goa has experienced a distressing escalation in illegal constructions over the past few decades. Numerous structures have been erected without the requisite permits, frequently encroaching upon ecologically sensitive regions, including coastal zones, forests, and both communal and private lands. The intervention of the High Court signifies a judicial acknowledgment of the imperative to uphold urban planning regulations and environmental safeguards. Furthermore, it underscores the administration's failure to effectively enforce the law.

Given the political conundrum that illegal construction represents, it is hardly surprising that the State's political leadership has consistently sought to defer the issue, frequently attempting to regularise these unlawful edifices, albeit with limited success. This approach merely postpones the inevitable and instils false hope among the proprietors of such properties. On one hand, those illegal structures located within highway expansion zones were urged to dismantle voluntarily, while others were reassured that, for the time being, only identification—not demolition—was under consideration. MLA Carlos is the sole figure who has unequivocally asserted that the ruling mandates the Government to identify and subsequently demolish these illegal structures; there exists no alternative.

The ruling has elicited a spectrum of reactions among the populace. On one hand, environmental advocates and community leaders have lauded the decision as a crucial stance against the rampant urbanisation that jeopardises Goa's natural allure and fosters an "anything goes" mentality. Conversely, certain property owners have articulated apprehensions regarding the potential forfeiture of their homes or businesses, contending that the abrupt implementation of these regulations may precipitate economic distress for those who have invested in these assets. What of the law-abiding citizen, for instance, whose enterprise is adversely impacted because he dutifully pays taxes on his legitimate premises, thereby rendering his services costlier than those offered by illegal establishments?

If the Government were to resolve to enact an ordinance to safeguard illegal constructions, would those illegal edifices, already demolished, be permitted to be reconstructed under the tenets of equality? The proposed ordinance aims to regularise irregular structures situated on private land; however, what provisions exist for illegal constructions, which are the primary concern? Irregular structures can invariably be regularized,

measures, encompassing both demolition and penalties for negligent officials. Will those who willfully ignore the onset of illegal construction or its subsequent demolition face repercussions? Without such accountability, demolitions will merely address the symptoms rather than the underlying affliction. This ruling not only endeavours to uphold extant laws but also aspires to dissuade future transgressions by establishing a precedent for accountability.

This necessitates the identification of unlawful structures; some of which already have pending demolition orders, yet no action has been undertaken. Once these structures are identified, is there a possibility for their regularisation? If regularisation is not feasible in areas designated for road widening, can the Government regularise them on land that it does not possess? Furthermore, in relation to the road-widening zones, what were the Public Works Department officials doing while their territory was encroached upon? Did they report the encroachments to the relevant authorities, only to be instructed to disregard them, or did they choose to overlook them independently?

Local administrative bodies in Goa have now been apprised of their responsibilities. They are tasked with ensuring that all construction endeavors adhere to legal stipulations, thereby safeguarding the interests of the community and the environment. This ruling serves as a clarion call for local officials to engage in vigilant monitoring and enforcement practices, thereby ensuring that the enchanting essence of Goa is preserved for posterity.

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If the Government were to resolve to enact an ordinance to safeguard illegal constructions, would those illegal edifices, already demolished, be permitted to be reconstructed under the tenets of equality? The proposed ordinance aims to regularise irregular structures situated on private land; however, what provisions exist for illegal constructions, which are the primary concern? Irregular structures can invariably be regularized,

provided they adhere to established regulations. Might this ordinance, for instance, preserve illegal constructions erected on agricultural land, where development is proscribed according to zoning laws? Should this be permitted, it would signify that law-abiding citizens could derive significant advantages from flouting the law. If the Government does indeed choose to confront this issue decisively and take action, it will undoubtedly send a clear message that, in the future, individuals will be compelled to reconsider their inclination to engage in illegal construction or to treat regulatory frameworks with contempt.

What is imperative is decisive action against officials who willfully ignore violations at the outset and, when alerted, compel the complainant to navigate an arduous bureaucratic labyrinth. Ideally, a centralised command center should be established to receive complaints confidentially, taking the requisite administrative measures to address issues proactively. The rapid response teams designated to tackle hill cutting or unlawful filling—initial steps toward illicit construction—ought to be integrated within this command center. Each report will be meticulously monitored, with diligent follow-ups conducted. This approach will safeguard officials from intimidation by local politicians, and should it be determined that the accountable officials have neglected their duties, they must face immediate repercussions. This framework will empower them to resist any coercion to avert their gaze from wrongdoing.

With the hammer descending upon "Lala Ki Basti," can the other illegal colonies remain untouched? The residents must come to the realisation that they have been deceived. The Goa State Rehabilitation Board may serve as a viable solution. This Board has the capacity to construct temporary transit accommodations for those whose residences have been deemed illegal. This initiative was envisioned by the late Chief Minister Parrikar but has since been neglected. Another crucial aspect that the Government ought to address is apprehending the land sharks who have duped these individuals into believing they were acquiring land with legitimate documentation. There are con artists at large, and if the Government is genuinely committed to safeguarding the rights of the affected populace, then this is a viable course of action—not merely resorting to the expedient ordinance route.

The High Court of Mumbai's adjudication regarding the demolition of illegal structures in Goa signifies a momentous juncture for the future of the state, as the local leadership grapples with the intricacies of executing this ruling. Will the Government possess the fortitude to confront this formidable challenge? Only time will reveal the answer.

(The author prefers to write rather than chat in a balcao)

people's edit

JOURNEY FROM GOOD FRIDAY TO EASTER SUNDAY

JOSEPH LEWIS D'SILVA

Good Friday

One of the criminals who was hanging with Jesus said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingly power." (Lk.23:42).

Jesus replied, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk. 23:43).

Abraham's bosom

The word 'Paradise' here, does not refer to final Heaven; where Jesus was taken up after 40 days of His resurrection. (Acts 1:3).

Jesus meant the thief would join Him in Abraham's Bosom (a place of rest in Hades; also called: 'realm of the dead' --- referred as Sheol in Hebrew and Hades in Greek. This realm had different sections as seen in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. (Lk. 16:22-26). It is here that Figures, like Adam and Eve, Lazarus and Abraham etc., who had died before Jesus, were waiting for the Redeemer, to go to Heaven.

Doors of Heaven: Closed & opened

No one could go to heaven before ascension of Jesus, as the doors of heaven were 'closed' after Adam's sin. (Gen. 3:24).

When Jesus died, "... the Temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom." (Mt. 27:51). This signified that the barrier between God and humanity was removed. The book of Hebrews confirm this: "... through Jesus a new living way has been opened for us." (Heb. 10: 19-20). These verses from Matthew and Hebrew collectively emphasize how Jesus' death and resurrection opened the doors of heaven.

Holy Saturday

Descended into hell

On Good Friday, Jesus was put to death in the body. On the second day (Saturday), while His body was in the tomb; (Lk 23:53); His soul/spirit, "...descended to the lower parts of the earth." ---the realm of the dead. (Eph. 4:8-9).

The Apostles' Creed states: "Jesus descended into hell." It doesn't mean Jesus went to a place of torment for the damned.

"He was put to death in body, but made alive in the Spirit. In that state, He went and preached to the imprisoned spirits...who disobeyed God, during the days when Noah was building the boat". (1Pe. 3:18-19).

Jesus descended into the place of the dead to proclaim His victory over death and sin and demonic forces. (Colossians 2:15). This act resembles a victorious king announcing his triumph over his enemies. Christ led the righteous souls who were waiting into His victory procession.

Easter Sunday

"After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning...an angel of the Lord said to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, "I know you are looking for Jesus... He is not here; He has risen! From death, Jesus met them and they worshipped Him. (Mt. 28: 1-9).

After His resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for 40 days, appearing to His disciples and proving He was alive. (Acts. 1:3). Finally, "He was taken up to heaven as His apostles watched, and a cloud hid Him from their sight." (Acts.1:9).

Hope of Resurrection

Good Friday reminds us of Christ's sacrifice; Holy Saturday of His descent to the dead; and Easter Sunday of His glorious resurrection. His triumph invites us to trust in His promise of eternal life and to live in the hope of resurrection.

cases need to be corrected, and foolproof collection of evidence, its interpretation and reporting cannot be stressed more. DNA match test, fingerprint collection and analysis, and toxicology are extremely important for a forensic scientist as well as the court of law.

So, it is quite imperative to train youngsters in forensic sciences. Apart from MD in forensic medicine, there are several Master of Science (MSc) courses that impart knowledge to students.

The National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), established in 2009 at Gandhinagar, and elevated to the national university status in 2009, is in the forefront of forensic training offering MSc in different branches of forensic science.

India has NFSU campuses in eight other cities and an international campus in Uganda. As Home Minister Amit Shah told a conference recently, nine such campuses are on the anvil which is good news.

Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

letterstotheeditor

For letters to the editor contact us at editor@herald-goa.com.

All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

The Indian government has claimed that the amount involved in bank frauds has dropped appreciably in the past few years, thanks to steps such as the setting up of an online Central Fraud Registry. However, catching the 'big thieves' is no less important for strengthening deterrence and reassuring depositors.

Gregory Fernandes, Mumbai

Using old popular songs — good or bad?

Popular music composer Ilayaraja has initiated action against the makers of actor Ajith's latest release 'Good Bad Ugly' for using three of his iconic songs without consent. He also hit the headlines many a time in the past too, initiating legal action against those using his work without proper permission. The songs used in the new movie include the very

popular 'Illamai idho idho' from the film Sakalakala Vallavan, 'En jodi manja kuruvu' from 'Vikram' (1986), and 'Oththa roova' from the movie Nattupura Pattu. The veteran music composer has demanded an official apology along with a compensation of Rs 5 crore from the production house for using his music without consent.

This incident once again highlights the music composer's commitment to protecting his creative work, making it clear that intellectual property rights must be respected. Gone are the days when film makers sit with music composer's for hours and days to compose tunes and what we see nowadays is instant recreation and plagiarism of old popular tunes exposing the sad condition of present day film music.

Gimmicks of remaking or incorporating old songs to evoke

nostalgia and thereby creating a sense of familiarity for audiences - old and young - can work for sometime but not always. Also it is surprising to note present day film makers either 'forgetting or ignoring' copyright infringement and potentially resulting in lawsuits and financial penalties plus embarrassment.

M Pradyu, Kannur

Forensic science as a discipline in India

Crime has no borders and, therefore, forensic science has no bounds. The application of scientific principles to criminal cases is of great significance because it contributes immensely towards timely justice. Besides, innocent people should not suffer for no fault of theirs.

By the same token, the abysmal conviction rates in criminal