

## STRAY DOGS MAUL 1.5-YR-OLD GIRL. WHEN WILL THE GOVT WAKE UP?

The stray population keeps rising even as promises of programme to control the dog menace remain unfulfilled

Team Herald

**PONDA:** In a tragedy that has left the State in shock, 19-month-old Nabiya Sheikh was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs early Friday morning at Talle-Durgabhat in Ponda. The attack occurred around 6:30 am, while the toddler was playing just outside her grandmother's home.

CCTV footage shows the child walking through the gate onto the road moments before being attacked by a pack of around 15 dogs.

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**BIG DISCOUNT SHOPPING FESTIVAL**  
GAITONDE PLAY GROUND  
Nr. COLLECTOR OFFICE  
**CANACONA**  
14th To 23rd APR  
TIME : 10.30 am To 9.00 pm

### DOG BITES IN GOA: A GROWING THREAT

After a toddler's tragic death, stray dog attacks raise alarm across the state

#### REPORTED DOG BITE CASES:

■ Between 2018 and 2022, Goa recorded over **95,000 dog bite cases**, averaging about **40 incidents daily**

■ **2022: 8,057 cases**

■ **2023: 11,904 cases**

■ In 2023, Margao's Hospicio Hospital alone registered **2,130 dog bite cases**

■ **2024: 17,236 cases**

■ **January 2025: 1,789 cases** (averaging 57 per day)

■ In first three months of 2025, a noticeable spike along Salcete's coastal belt

■ Ponda Sub-District Hospital records an average of **80 to 90 dog bite cases every month**



Goa is home to approximately **56,000 stray dogs**, as per the 21st National Livestock Census

#### REASON

The rising number of attacks is linked to the growing stray dog population, worsened by irregular feeding by visitors

#### FALLOUT

The problem is now affecting tourism, with increasing concerns over visitor safety and Goa's reputation as a family-friendly destination

#### WHAT'S (NOT) BEING DONE

The govt claims to have launched large-scale sterilisation and vaccination drives, with coastal areas as a priority but problem going from bad to worse

■ High-risk hotspots include Benaulim, Betalbatim, Calangute, Mandrem, and Colva beaches

■ In January 29, a foreign tourist was mauled by a pack at Mobor Beach, sustaining **15 bites** and a fractured arm

■ On February 22, a tourist was bitten by stray dogs in Cavelossim

“As per the Animal Birth Control Rules, it is the mandate of every local authority to do sterilisation to control the dog population. But it seems it is not their priority. You have to feed these dogs and make them friendly, catch them, and sterilise them

– Dexter Braganza, Executive Secretary, District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, North

“I have been fighting with the authorities for long to construct dog shelters on the lines of cattle pounds. Stray dogs have become the biggest threat to people, and the menace is affecting tourism. Sterilisation is not the only solution—we need to set up dog shelters

– Dixon Vaz, Cavelossim Village Sarpanch

## HC orders 3 mining companies to cough up Rs 2 cr for damage to Sirigao fields

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** High Court of Bombay at Goa, comprising Justices M S Karnik and Nivedita P Mehta, has ruled that three mining companies must pay Rs 2 crore to the District Mineral Fund (DMF) for the damage caused to agricultural lands in Sirigao village.

The companies involved — Sesa Mining Corporation, Rajaram Bandekar Mines Pvt Ltd and Chowgule and Company Pvt Ltd — held mining leases that included areas within Sirigao village.

In the same judgment, the Court also closed the public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition filed

by the villagers of Sirigao. The PIL had originated as a letter from the residents, raising concerns over damage to their agricultural lands, particularly the Savat and Kharat khazans.

Previously, the mining companies had deposited Rs 2 crore.

However, the Water

Resources Department (WRD) had assessed the total damage at Rs 4 crore. To initiate repair work, the remaining Rs 2 crore was temporarily drawn from the DMF, on the condition that the companies would later reimburse the amount.

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## DAY OF MOURNING AND REFLECTION



Devotees gather around a statue of Jesus Christ placed in a coffin, during a symbolic funeral as part of the solemn observance of Good Friday at Panjim's Immaculate Conception Church

## Wanted by NIA, terrorist Happy Passia arrested in US

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Gangster-turned-terrorist Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passia, who was arrested in the US, had Interpol's Blue Notice issued against him on the request of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with its probe in Chandigarh grenade attack case, official sources said on Friday.

The NIA has also declared a reward of Rs 5 lakh on the absconding accused. It had last month chargesheeted him along with three others, including Pakistan-based designated terrorist Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, for their involvement in the attack.

The sources said that there was a "Blue Notice" issued on the NIA's request against the absconding accused Passia.

The Interpol's Blue Notice is issued "to collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a criminal investigation".

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## Marina or pontoon? Mystery deepens over Malim project

Company says it has permissions for pontoons, not setting up marina; Captain of Ports 'unaware'

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

**PANJIM:** A lot of dust has been kicked up over the proposed marina near Malim jetty, but when *O Herald* got in touch with the company — Marina India — spearheading the project, there was no end to the confusion over the no-objection certificate (NOC) for the construction work.

Managing Director of Marina India, Gautama Dutta, initially claimed the company had obtained a NOC from the Captain of Ports but later retracted, clarifying that Marina India would only proceed with the project "with the blessings of the Captain of Ports."

Captain of Ports Octavio Rodrigues categorically denied issuing any NOC for the project. "They [Marina India] have not approached us for any NOC, and we cannot be dragged into the controversy unnecessarily," Rodrigues said.

"I do not know which jetty they are talking about but we do not have any plan. If any development takes



A floating pontoon already operating near the Malim Jetty

place then it will only be through the State Maritime Water Transport Committee (SMWTC) which is headed by Secretary (Ports), Government of Goa," he said.

According to Rodrigues, the Government of India may say that it has no objection but it will request the project proponents to approach the State government.

However, Marina India appears to have secured a separate NOC through the

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) portal for the construction of jetties or terminals. Dutta confirmed that permission is being sought for the installation of 14-15 floating pontoons for yachts.

"We have applied for an NOC through the IWAI portal. The pontoons will be set up for yachts to dock along the river. I don't know exactly where," he said.

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## Oppn slams Dhankhar's remarks on judiciary

**AGENCY, NEW DELHI:** Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's recent criticism of the judiciary has triggered a sharp reaction from several opposition leaders slamming him and calling his remarks objectionable.

Senior leaders like Kapil Sibal and Kalyan Banerjee strongly condemned his statements, calling them unconstitutional and damaging to the dignity of high constitutional offices.

Reacting strongly, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal called Dhankhar's remarks both "unconstitutional" and "deeply disappointing," asserting that no Vice President or Rajya Sabha Chairman in the past has made such overt political statements. Sibal emphasised that constitutional authorities like the Speaker and Chairman must remain neutral and equidistant from political parties to preserve institutional dignity.

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## Easter shortage looms as Panjim beef vendors left high and dry

ANILKUMAR MISHRA  
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**PANJIM:** Even as the city gears up for Easter celebrations, dozens of displaced beef vendors from the Panjim Municipal Market continue to remain in uncertainty, nine months after their shops were demolished by the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP).

Despite a Supreme Court order directing their rehabilitation, the vendors are yet to be allotted even temporary stalls, forcing them to run their businesses from far-flung areas with dwindling customer bases and mounting financial losses.

The delay has not only hurt the vendors but also left consumers across Panjim and surrounding areas struggling to source quality beef during major festivals. With Easter around the corner, the situation has once again cast a shadow over festive preparations.

"We have been suffering losses for the last nine months. Over half of our business is down," Mushtak Khatib, who now operates from a village outside the city, told *O Herald*.



The area in the Panjim Municipal Market where temporary stalls for beef vendors were promised but remain unconstructed

#### MORE ON PG 2 >>

"When we were in Panjim, customers came from St Cruz, Taleigao, Porvorim, Betim and the city itself. Now, we're restricted to one village. We lost business during tourism season, Christmas, New Year and now Easter is here, and we're still without our shops."

In February, the Supreme Court ordered that vendors be allowed to resume business with temporary arrangements, including deep freezers, refrigerators, meat cutting facilities and shutters for security. The Court also directed that basic water and electricity supply be provided to them. Yet, implementation on the ground remains stalled.

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– Mushtak Khatib, a meat vendor

"There's already a shortage of beef. During Eid and Christmas it was the same. Retailers aren't willing to order large quantities because they're unsure of where and how we'll sell it. This Easter, customers will again struggle to get what they need

– Meat vendor

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