

shorttakes

**WOMAN FINED RS 5,000 FOR UNAUTHORISED MASSAGE AT CALANGUTE BEACH SHACK**

**CALANGUTE:** In an ongoing crackdown on illegal activities along Goa's coastline, a woman from Karnataka was caught red-handed providing an unauthorised massage service to a tourist at a beach shack in Calangute. Mala Chavan, was apprehended on Friday by the Tourist Security Force while she was massaging a customer. Following the incident, the Deputy Director of the Tourism Department imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on her for offering massage services to tourists without legal authorisation.

**67-YEAR-OLD MAN DIES AFTER FALL FROM MANGO TREE IN ADCOLNA**

**MARGAO:** Shankar alias Dnyaneshwar Fatde Gaonkar, 67 from Fatde Wada, Adcolna-Banastarim, succumbed to injuries sustained after falling from a mango tree. The incident occurred on Thursday, and the man later passed away while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim. According to information from the South Goa District Police Headquarters in Margao, Mardol Police were alerted via a wireless message from the GMC casualty police unit regarding the incident. During a police inquiry with the deceased's family members, it was revealed that Gaonkar had climbed a tree to pluck mangoes when he accidentally slipped and fell to the ground, sustaining serious injuries. He was rushed to the GMC hospital but unfortunately succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment in the casualty ward. Police visited the site and conducted a scene of Unnatural Death (UD) Occurrence Panchnama. An inquest Panchnama was also carried out, and the body was referred for post-mortem examination. The police surgeon certified the cause of death as "injury to head, chest, and vertebrae with damage to underlying vital organs consequent to blunt force impact from surface and/or object." Following the autopsy, the body was handed over to the family for final religious rites. PSI Zaki Hussain of Mardol Police Station is investigating the case.

**ATTEMPTED THEFT AT BANK ATM IN QUEPEM AND GUDI-PARODA**

**MARGAO:** Rajeev Sharma, Senior Manager of Canara Bank's Quepem branch, has filed a complaint with Quepem regarding an attempted ATM theft. The incident occurred on Friday, at approximately 2.30 am at the bank at Quepem, located opposite the Old Police Station in Cusman-Quepem. According to the police, unknown individuals attempted to steal cash from the ATM by breaking into the ATM booth. The culprits also caused damage to the machine during the act. Quepem Police have registered the offence under Sections 324(3), 305 read with 62 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Further investigation is underway. Meanwhile, Anjali Pawar, Deputy Manager of SBI's Margao Main Branch, has filed a complaint with Quepem Police regarding an attempted ATM theft in Gudi Paroda, Salcete. The incident took place at around 2.06 am on Friday. Unknown individuals attempted to break into the ATM, causing damage to the front door, keypad panel, E-surveillance system, wires, and false ceiling panels. They also tampered with the CCTV system. The offence has been registered under Sections 324(3), 305 read with 62, and 3(5) of the BNS. ASI Nagesh Gaonker is handling the investigation.

**PICK-UP STOLEN FROM OPEN PARKING IN SAO JOSÉ DE AREAL**

**MARGAO:** Gouse Ishak Almelkar, a resident of Sao José De Areal, Salcete, has reported the theft of his pick-up goods carrier to the Maina-Curtorim Police Station. According to the complaint, the theft occurred between 7 pm on April 17, and 9.30 am on April 18, from an open parking area near an old tyre godown in Sao José De Areal. The vehicle is valued at approximately Rs 1.8 lakh and is registered in the complainant's name. Maina-Curtorim Police have registered the case under Section 303(2) of the BNS (2023). ASI Rajendra Sangodkar is investigating.

**GOA FOUNDATION TO DISCUSS MINERAL POLICY AND MINING REFORMS AT PILERNE**

**CALANGUTE:** Claude Alvares and Rahul Basu of the Goa Foundation and Goenchi Mati Movement will be addressing the public on April 20, at 11.30 am at Museum of Goa (MOG), Pilerne. Entry is free. The event will focus on India's National Mineral Policy 2019, which describes minerals as a "shared inheritance," with the state acting as trustee. The speakers argue that this principle is far removed from practice. They will propose an alternative approach, stating that mining should only be permitted with the consent of Goan society and must comply with constitutional mandates to ensure fairness, environmental protection, and equitable distribution of resources. Highlighting systemic failure in Goa's mining sector, they will refer to the 2012 Shah Commission report, which exposed rampant illegalities, and the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict that criticised the "rapacious exploitation" of natural resources. Though mining has tentatively resumed, they assert that governance remains fundamentally broken—impacting Goa's people, its future generations, and the natural environment.

**CM'S FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME EXTENDED UNTIL MAY 2027**

**PANJIM:** The Goa government has extended the Chief Minister's Fellowship Programme until May 31. According to a notification amending the scheme, the programme offers young professionals the opportunity to work closely with the state government on various policy and governance-related projects. Fellows participating in the initiative will receive a monthly stipend or honorarium.

**GWMC TO AUCTION 142 CONDEMNED VEHICLES ON APRIL 23**

**PANJIM:** The Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC) has invited bids and quotations from eligible bidders for the disposal of 142 condemned vehicles belonging to various government departments. The auction is scheduled for April 23. The sale will take place on an 'as is where is and no complaint basis' near the Police Quarters in Porvorim, starting from 10 a.m. Of the vehicles listed for auction, 14 are less than 15 years old, while the remaining 128 are over 15 years old. Bidders must be registered as a Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) for purchasing vehicles older than 15 years.

# Bhomkars enlist reasons against NH expansion, demand bypass

**Vow to oppose destruction of religious, cultural heritage; object to existing alignment through heart of the village; authorities told to respect gram sabha resolution**

Team Herald

**PONDA:** The residents of Bhoma continue their agitation against the proposed expansion of the National Highway through their village, citing cultural, environmental, and social concerns. Villagers have submitted a list of ten key reasons for their opposition and insist that the highway be realigned through a bypass route instead of the existing alignment through the heart of the village.

Bhoma villagers assert that the matter is currently sub judice and have criticised the government and PWD for repeatedly seeking adjournments in court and for not providing explanations to the media or the public. One of their major concerns is the lack of clarity regarding the fate of the revered Sateri Devi shrine located at the centre of the village.

**Ten Main Reasons for Opposition to the NH Expansion through Bhoma:**

**Destruction of cultural heritage:** Villagers fear the expansion

will destroy a 400-year-old cultural legacy, including traditional festivals such as Kallostav and Rathostav, which require open spaces for public celebration. An elevated road or flyover would obstruct these festivities.

**Threat to religious sites:** Bhoma houses five significant temples—Sateri, Mahadev, and Sati Devi shrines among them. These temples form the spiritual and cultural nucleus of the village, which the flyover would directly impact.

**Loss of community peace and identity:** Sanjay Naik, a prominent leader of the Bhomkars, stated, "We lost peace of mind due to the forced project. Money or an elevated road will not give us this happiness." Residents cherish the tranquillity and unity their culture brings.

**Village division:** The proposed flyover would physically divide the village, hampering social cohesion and affecting daily life, especially for the elderly and children.

**Ignored legal norms and gram sabha resolutions:** Vil-



A view of the site where highway expansion is proposed

lagers claim that the alignment plan has not been explained to them. Furthermore, a resolution passed during the gram sabha opposes the expansion, yet the authorities continue to push the project forward.

**Violation of NH expansion norms:** As per previous government policy set during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, NH expansions were to avoid village centres and include bypasses to preserve public safety and harmony. Bhoma villagers demand similar consid-

eration.

**No 30-metre setback:** Highway expansion rules stipulate a 30-metre setback on both sides of the central line. In Bhoma, this criterion is not met, and yet expansion is being considered instead of a bypass.

**Risk to traditional lake and ecology:** Excavation for flyover pillars near the ancient village lake could lead to its destruction, affecting the local environment and heritage.

**Displacement of ST and OBC**

**communities:** Many houses that could be demolished belong to Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC), who have lived there for centuries. Villagers argue that compensation is being directed to landlords while the actual residents face homelessness. "The former CM protected our rights under the Tenancy and Mundkari Acts, but this government seeks to remove us," Naik said.

**Bypass provided in other villages:** Villagers question why Bhoma is being singled out when bypasses have been approved and constructed for other villages in similar situations. They argue that equal treatment should be extended to Bhoma to protect its social fabric.

Villagers also reiterated that they are not against development but insist that any expansion should be inclusive, respectful of heritage, and legally sound. They believe a bypass is the only viable solution to balance infrastructural development with cultural preservation.

**HOMEGROWN GOODIES**



Local vendors Sindhu Bhonste (L) and Meenakshi Ghadi brave the scorching heat, showcasing fresh Goan produce – vegetables, coconuts, and mangoes - at Mapusa Market

**Over 150 entries received for Goa Open Innovation Challenge 2025**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa Open Innovation Challenge 2025 has received over 150 applications as of mid-April, with participants registering from across India and abroad. The initiative, which is being implemented by the Startup and IT Promotion Cell under the Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C), Government of Goa, continues to attract significant attention from the innovation ecosystem.

The challenge has garnered interest from startup founders, student innovators, industry leaders, and various government departments. Designed to foster practical innovation, the initiative offers participants the opportunity to pilot their solutions in collaboration with government and industry partners.

Sectors being targeted through the challenge include Tourism, Waste Management, Agriculture, Goa Public Service, NABARD, and Industry.

With the application deadline set for April 28, interested individuals and teams are encouraged to apply. The final event is scheduled on May 30.

**Margao Cong terms BJP-led hike in municipal fees as start of 'Burre Din'**

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Margao Congress Block and Shadow Council for Margao (SCM) dismissed Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's statement about 'Acche Din for Madgaonkars', claiming instead that the town was experiencing the start of its 'Burre Din'.

Addressing a press conference, SCM convener, Coutinho, said the recent steep hike in licence fees adopted by the Margao Municipal Council (MMC), with the support of Kamat, contradicts the Chief Minister's claim of there being 'Acche Din' for the common people of Margao.

Joined by Snehal Onskar, Lincoln Vaz, Damodar Onskar, Robert Vaz, Anel Alvares, Anwar Naroo, Iftiyaz Shaik and others, the group alleged that the fee hike imposed by the BJP-backed council was unjustified and anti-people. They pointed out that sanitation fees had al-

ready been increased from Rs 600 to Rs 900 in April 2023, within six months of Margao MLA Digambar Kamat joining the BJP, and that the current hike goes up to 550%.

"The burden placed on taxpayers through this latest decision will ensure 'Burre Din' not just in Margao, but across Salcete, as many residents and business owners from the taluka operate from Margao and are affected," Coutinho said.

Reacting to the Chief Minister's claim that the Margao seat is a 'sure shot' win for the BJP, the Margao Congress Block said such statements overlook the public's growing discontent. "Crowds at BJP meetings didn't convert into votes during the Lok Sabha elections," they pointed out.

They also criticised the BJP and Kamat for attempting to take credit for the clearing of the Sonsodo dump, claiming

that the action was taken only after repeated directions from the High Court. "There's no visible progress at Sonsodo now, except for mysterious weekly fire incidents," said Coutinho, adding that even sewerage works are being monitored by the High Court.

Coutinho further questioned the cost escalation of the Rawanfond bridge project, which jumped from Rs 21 crore to Rs 54 crore shortly after Kamat joined the BJP.

Snehal Onskar alleged that the council repeatedly imposes steep fee hikes without ensuring any accountability in the use of public funds. "There's no transparency, and people are angry," said Onskar.

The group concluded that citizens will continue their opposition until the hike is rolled back, asserting that the BJP's anti-people decisions are leading to its political decline.

**Police assure probe into senior citizen's suicide at Mangueshi**

Team Herald

**PONDA:** The Mardol Police have assured a thorough investigation into the suicide case of Prakash Kamat (67), who allegedly died by suicide on Thursday night after reportedly facing harassment from his landlord and family. Kamat had been residing there for 67 years.

Prior to his death, Kamat left behind a suicide note in which he accused the landlords of harassment and threatening him to vacate the premises. Based on this note, his son, Srinivas Kamat, filed a formal complaint at the Mardol Police Station, demanding a police probe and initially refusing to accept the body for the final rites.

Following the complaint, police registered an offence against four individuals and have begun an investigation into the matter. On Friday morning, police officials, including Ponda DySP Shivram Vaigankar, met with the bereaved family and assured them of a proper inquiry and justice. After the assurance, the family agreed to accept the body for the last rites.

Speaking on the case, Adv Raju Mangueshkar questioned how such threats could be made while the matter was sub judice. He called upon the government to take the issue seriously and ensure justice for the deceased and his family. He also expressed his gratitude to the media for bringing the matter to light.

Further investigation into the case is ongoing under the supervision of PSI and Ponda DySP.

**power shutdown**

**MARGAO:** On April 19, at Babay Transformer, Margao, from 9 am to 6 pm. Affected areas are Mahalaxmi Electrical, Vijaylaxmi Electrical, AIM Salcete high school, Shree Laxmi light house, Bharat sales, Lazineha apartment, Ana Maria apartment, Krishna Metal, opposite DCB bank, opposite C. P. Bluechip Co-op society and surrounding areas.

**CORTALIM:** On April 19, at Panchabhat DTC, from 8 am to 3 pm. Affected areas are Panchabhat, Kargil and Combhat.

**PONDA:** On April 19, from 9 am to 2 pm. Affected areas are Sapana Town, Prabhunagar and near LIC office Khadpabhandh and surrounding area.

**CORTALIM:** On April 20, 2025 at Eclate Old DTC, from 8 am to 3 pm. Affected area is Eclate and surrounding.

**CURTORIM:** On April 21, at Bhatti New DTC, Curtorim from 8 am to 3 pm. affected areas are Bhatti and Sandeule.

**PONDA:** On April 21, at Royal Builders T/C, Exalt developer's T/C Ponda, from 8 am to 2 pm. Affected areas are Santa Cruz and surrounding area.

**SAO JOSE DE AREAL:** On April 21, from 8 am to 2 pm. Affected areas are all crushers in the area of Sao Jose de Areal Salcete.

**PONDA:** On April 21, at Purohit T/C, Bhardwaj T/C Ponda, from 9 am to 2 pm. Affected areas are Khadpabandh and surrounding area

**Two Shivlings found in water body at Sancoale**

Team Herald

**VASCO:** Two Shivlings were discovered by workers in an exposed river bed near khazan lands at Sancoale on Wednesday.

A worker, employed at a nearby service station, noticed the two Shivlings submerged in the water and informed the local residents.

Following the discovery, the locals alerted the Department of Archaeology, whose officials arrived at the site and took possession of the two idols. The department is now investigating to determine the age and historical significance of the Shivlings, which are suspected to have been stolen.

"During low tide, the surface of the river bed was exposed and that's when the Shivlings were

During low tide, the surface of the river bed was exposed and that's when the Shivlings were exposed and noticed by a service station employee – Department of Archaeology official

exposed and noticed by a service station employee," said an official. The Shivlings were carved out of stone-one 5cm in diameter and the other about 12 are now with the Department of Archaeology were the exact age, composition and the region from where the stone was sourced will be determined by archaeologists will be discovered.



HERALD PIC