

Activist group calls for protecting Panjim's flood-prone areas

GBA says rezoning of flood-prone areas in city will allow multi-story constructions with increased FAR of 300 and a height of 40 metres; want the areas to be reverted to their original zoning

Team Herald

PANJIM: Calling upon Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister and the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) to protect flood-prone areas and save Panjimites from danger, the Goa Bachao Abhiyan (GBA), a group focused on environmental protection and civic activism in Goa, voiced strong opposition to the rezoning of flood-prone areas in Panjim, stating that the rezoning would allow multi-story constructions with increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 300 and a height of 40 metres. The GBA demanded the areas be reverted to their original zoning.

Addressing a press conference, former CCP councillor Patricia Pinto and GBA convenor Sabina Martins said, "We, the people of Panjim and Goa need

to live life without fear of flooding. We have seen cloudburst wrecking in Jammu and Kashmir a few days ago. Just a cloudburst will get Panjim flooded. We welcome the TCP Minister's idea of afforestation, but at the same time as the TCP Minister please look into the issue of rezoning of all flood-prone areas of Panjim which is against the order of the Chief Town Planner and against CRZ laws in force. Please revert these areas into their existing zoning and then we will know you are really serious about greening urban areas."

Marked as recreational area also known as Quarterdeck as per the Outline development Plan (ODP) of Panjim, Pinto said that the government has proposed to allow a multi-storey construction by increasing the FAR (floor area ratio) from 5 per cent to 300 per cent

GBA'S NO TO ZONE CHANGES

■ GBA said as per Panjim ODP, Quarterdeck is marked as recreational area

■ Accused govt of proposing to allow a multi-storey construction by increasing the FAR from 5% to 300% & height of 40 metres

■ Claimed this was done to establish an entertainment hub to cater to visitors of casinos, knowing that it is a flood-prone area

■ Opposed zone changing for the proposed 'Passenger Ropeway Project'

from Campal to Reis Magos across River Mandovi with ancillary tourism activities

■ Alleged that the govt has acquired 8,000 sqmts at Reis Magos to construct buildings, for which trees will be felled

■ Objected to the change of public/institutional zone to 300 FAR and a height of 40 metres to allow construction of a pvt commercial venture near Miramar beach, which is partly flood-prone

and height of 40 metres.

She alleged that this was done to establish an entertainment hub to cater to visitors of casinos and despite knowing that it is a flood-prone area. The TCP Department is breaking its own order and going against the CRZ regulations in force.

The GBA also opposed the zone changing for the proposed 'Passenger Ropeway Project' from the gov-

ernment swimming pool, Campal to the Reis Magos across River Mandovi along with ancillary tourism activities. The government has acquired 8,000 square metres of land at Reis Magos to construct buildings for the ropeway project and it will require felling of trees, Pinto said.

The ancillary tourism activities proposed are artificial skiing, artificial skydiving, scuba diving, aquar-

ium, a restaurant and a kids zone activities, she said, adding, "Do we need this overcrowded Panjim? We don't want these artificial activities, but Panjim to be natural."

The GBA further opposed the change of public/institutional zone to 300 FAR and a height of 40 metres to allow construction of a private commercial venture near Miramar beach, the area which is partly flood-

prone.

Pinto and Martins also appealed to the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) to protect flood-prone areas and save Panjimites from danger. The objectives of CRZ laws are to promote development in a sustainable manner on scientific principles taking into account dangers of natural hazards in coastal areas and sea level rise due to global warming. The government should strictly implement CRZ laws and should not grant approval blindly and under pressure, they stated appealing to the GCZMA to protect flood-prone areas.

The GBA has appealed to the TCP Minister to retain recreational zones and to respect flood-prone areas a notified by the GCZMA and further to remove the increased FAR and height, which is unsustainable by any count.

Vasco police register cheating case in FD fraud

Team Herald

VASCO: Vasco police have registered a cheating case against Mohammad Zaki Khan, an agent of the Sahara Credit Co-operative Society Ltd, Vasco Branch, for allegedly defrauding Sharavan Kumar Sharma, a resident of Baina, Vasco, of Rs 2.12 lakh.

According to the complaint filed by Sharma, between 2012 and 2014, Khan induced him to invest Rs 2.85 lakh in a Fixed

Deposit (FD) scheme with the society. However, Khan is accused of fraudulently obtaining a loan of Rs 2.12 lakh against the FDs in Sharma's name, without his knowledge or consent.

The loan amount was reportedly misappropriated by the accused for personal use, leading to the financial loss. An offence under Sections 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 420 (cheating) of the IPC has been registered in the case.

Congratulations
Sr. Ruzaria Corte UMI
The Newly Elected Provincial Superior.
The Ursulines of Mary Immaculate, Sacred Heart Province, Bangalore.
congratulates Sr. Ruzaria Corte UMI of South Goa/ Canacona on her election as Provincial Superior. Blessings on her new mission.

Wishing a very Happy Birthday
to our dynamic, young, and energetic leader,
Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant
Your visionary leadership and grassroots-focused governance model have brought a new era of development and empowerment across Goa. You are truly the finest politician Goa could have — dedicated, proactive, and always connected to the people. Your commitment to progress and inclusive development continues to inspire us all. May God bless you with a long, healthy, and impactful life in the service of the people.

With warm regards and best wishes from—
ROQUEZINHO D'SOUZA
(Social Worker-Pale-Velsao / President-Pale Farmers Association / Member- Goa Khadi and Village Industries Board)

Happy Birthday 75th
DR. DHILAN DESAI
Palolem - Canacona.
Happy Diamond Jubilee!
Congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone! Doctor, let this celebration of your happiness, wisdom, and the countless moments that have enriched not only your life but also the lives of your loved ones and all around you!!
Wishing you many more years of joy and good health.
-: Best Wishes From :-
KRISHNA PAGUI and Fly SAI VALENTINES RESORTS
& Staff, Palolem.

HAPPY Birthday To
DR. PRAMOD SAWANT
(Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Goa)
Sir, on this joyful day we wish you a very happy and a prosperous life. May you have a long tenure to carry on the good work.
Best wishes from
SHACK OWNERS WELFARE SOCIETY - GOA
CRUZ CARDOZO (President)
SEBY D'SOUZA (Vice president)
JOHN LOBO (General secretary)
CYRIL SILVEIRA (Treasurer)
AND ALL THE MEMBERS

WEED WOES



The Tar River in Mapusa, a key site for Ganesh Visarjan and Dahi Handi festivities, is once again choked with rapidly regrowing water hyacinth, despite prior clearing efforts

'K'taka objecting to joint inspection of Mhadei basin'

Team Herald

PANJIM: Water Resources Department Minister Subhash Shirodkar has said that while Goa is in favour of a joint inspection of the Kalsa-Bhandura project in the Mhadei basin, the Karnataka Government has once again objected to the move, citing the matter as sub judice.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday, Shirodkar said the demand for a joint inspection was listed as agenda item two at the fourth PRAWAH meeting held in Bengaluru on Tuesday. "As usual, Karnataka objected, claiming the matter is sub-judice and cannot be interfered with," he stated.

The Central government, according to the minister, has written to PRAWAH instructing it to consult legal counsel on the matter. "PRAWAH will act based on the legal opinion received, but Goa has reiterated its stand that a joint inspection must be conducted," Shirodkar emphasised.

When asked about Karnataka's continued resistance, the minister remarked, "Only those who have done something wrong object to inspection. We have nothing to hide."

In a related development, Goa has extended support to Maharashtra in the ongoing discussions, stating it has no objection to the Virdi Dam project.

ACB raids residences of suspended cops in meat bribery case

Team Herald

PANJIM: Sleuths of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday carried out searches at the residences of suspended Police Inspector Sunil Gudar and suspended Head Constable Mohammad Hussain, both of whom were recently arrested on allegations of demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 25,000 from a Karnataka-based meat trader.

The ACB team raided the residences of the two suspended cops and are reportedly searching for other locations where the PI was believed to be staying.

Meanwhile sources within the ACB revealed an alleged conversation recorded by the complainant, in which Head Constable Hussain is heard stating that a higher bribe amount was necessary to "fix" the meat trade issue, claiming that another senior officer also had to be paid off. This recording has been sub-

mitted by the complainant to the police and is being treated as corroborative evidence in the bribery investigation and cops are going to probe as to who the third official who could be.

The ACB team that conducted the raid included PIs Melito Fernandes and Satish Gaude, PSIs Sameer Haldankar and Nilagi Majik, Head Constables Sainath Sawant and Dayesh Chodankar, and Police Constables Sapnil Salgaonkar and Snesh Naik.

Sources further disclosed that the team is expected to visit the Konkarn Railway Police Station today to gather additional evidence related to the case.

In the meantime, Rahul Naik has been assigned charge of the Konkarn Railway Police Station following the suspension of the accused officers.

When questioned on the matter, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant stated, "The PI has already been suspended."

Govt deploys drones to curb illegal LED fishing in Goa waters

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a bid to crack down on illegal fishing activities, particularly the controversial use of LED light fishing, the Goa Fisheries Department has launched a drone surveillance pilot project to enhance monitoring and enforcement efforts across coastal waters.

Speaking to reporters in Porvorim, Fisheries Minister Nilkanth Halarnkar explained that drone technology will significantly improve real-time monitoring of violations, especially in areas where traditional patrolling is difficult.

"For the last ten days, drone surveillance is being carried out. These drones have the capacity to monitor around ten kilometres of area, although our jurisdiction extends up to 12 kilometres into the sea. The cameras are able to capture details of the staff on individual boats. This service has been initiated on a pi-



lot basis for two months," Halarnkar said.

The Minister further stated, "In the forthcoming fishing season, we will be able to monitor boats while seated in our Panjim office. This will be especially useful in keeping a check on illegal fishing using LED lights. A tender will now be issued, and the drone service will be extended for

a period of one year. The drones will be operated from our office in Panjim."

Illegal fishing practices, including bull trawling and LED light fishing, have raised alarm among environmentalists and traditional fishing communities, due to their destructive impact on the marine ecosystem. These methods often attract and trap juvenile

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— Nilkanth Halarnkar, Fisheries Minister

fish and other marine species, threatening biodiversity and the livelihoods of traditional fishermen.

Local fishing communities have long demanded stricter penalties, increased surveillance, and a complete ban on LED fishing. The introduction of drone surveillance is seen as a significant step toward addressing these concerns.

Tourism Dept cracks down on illegal yachting operations

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Department of Tourism has issued a strict directive to all watersports operators conducting yachting activities in the State, mandating full compliance with the provisions of the Goa Registration of Tourist Trade Act, 1982 and Rules, 1985. The action comes in the wake of a rising number of operators conducting yacht services without the requisite No Objection Certificate (NOC), licence, or official permission

from the Department.

As per the official circular issued by the Department, all such operators must register their activities within 15 working days from the date of issuance of the notice. The directive is aimed at regulating yachting services, enhancing tourist safety, and ensuring adherence to legal procedures.

Director of Tourism, Kedar Naik, underlined the significance of this move, stating,

"The Department is committed to streamlining watersports activities in the State to ensure

safety, transparency, and accountability. Unregulated operations pose a risk not only to tourists but also to the environment. We urge all operators to come forward and regularise their services under the existing legal framework."

This initiative forms part of a wider strategy by the Department to enhance compliance among tourism stakeholders and to promote responsible tourism in line with Goa's vision for a well-regulated and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

Scamster impersonating 'CBI officer' dupes Canacona woman

MARGAO: A woman from Nagarcm, Canacona, was defrauded of Rs 3 lakh by an unknown person who impersonated a telecom company representative and later posed as a CBI officer.

According to the complaint filed by Vidhi Bhairali of Nagarcm, Canacona, the incident began when an unknown individual contacted her, claiming her mobile number was at risk of being permanently banned. The caller advised her to obtain a clearance certificate from the CBI to prevent the disconnection.

Subsequently, Bhairali received a message via WhatsApp from a person posing as a CBI officer. The impersonator falsely claimed that another SIM card issued in her name

had been used in human trafficking, and that a bank account opened in her name at HDFC Bank was involved in illegal activities.

The accused further intimidated the complainant by warning her that all her bank accounts would be frozen unless she transferred her money to a "government merchant navy account." She was initially instructed to visit Delhi to obtain the alleged clearance certificate. However, when she declined, she was told to complete the process online.

During the so-called "online clearance process," the complainant was manipulated into carrying out RTGS bank transfers, ultimately leading to a financial loss of Rs 3 lakh.