

**RISE CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN**

# Ensure child panels are active in villages: Directorate of P'yats

Tells BDOs to direct P'yat Secys to submit action taken report by May 5

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Taking note of the rising crimes against children in the State, the Directorate of Panchayats has asked all the Block Development Officers (BDOs) to ensure the formation and functioning of Village Child Committee in the respective Village Panchayat across the State.

Under the Goa Children's Act, 2003, it is mandatory to constitute a Village Child Committee (VCC) in every Village Panchayat for pro-

tecting children's right and promoting child friendly environment, to discuss the issues/problems faced by the children in the society and to resolve the same.

In view of this, the Director of Panchayats Siddhi Halarnkar has directed all the BDOs to check whether the Village Child Committee is constituted and functional in all the Village Panchayat coming under their respective jurisdiction under the Goa Children's Act, 2003. If the Village Child Committee



is not constituted then all the BDOs are directed to direct the concerned Village Panchayat Secretaries to constitute the same and submit the compliance.

Further the BDOs are directed to direct all the Village Panchayat Secre-

taries to ensure that committee shall be functional in their respective Village Panchayat and to submit the action taken report to the Directorate of Panchayats by Monday, May 5.

Expressing concern over rising crimes against children in the State, Goa Civic Action and Consumer Action Network (GOACAN) has called upon the Directorate of Panchayats to ensure the formation and activation of the Village Child Committee (VCC) in all the Village Panchayats in 2025-

26 under the Goa Children's Act by issuing the necessary instructions.

The GOACAN was concerned with the two recent incidents of crime against children. In a brutal and heart-wrenching incident reported at Macasana, Salcete, a father committed murder of her six-year-old daughter while, in another incident a 10-year-old boy lodged a complaint against his mother, alleging that she assaulted him with a steel rod at their residence at Bordem, Bicholim.

## HC restricts food street at Vasco children's park to 5%

Petitioner argued that park's use for commercial activities violated its intended purpose

Team Herald

**VASCO:** The High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed the State authorities to reduce the food street at the historic Vasco Children's Park to 5 per cent of the park's total area.

The Court passed the order while hearing public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition filed by former Congress Minority Cell chairman Nazir Khan, who had opposed the conversion of a section of the park into a commercial food zone.

The park was classified as a "Recreation Zone" under the Zoning Plan. Khan argued that its use for commercial activities violated its intended purpose.

The Goa State Urban Development Agency (GSUDA) and the Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC), in their defence, claimed that the food court was outside the main park and demarcated by a mesh fence. But Khan submitted 2022 Google Street View images showing a cricket pitch previously present in the same area now taken up by the food stalls.

**“The food court currently occupies 6.2 per cent of the park area and the Mormugao Municipal Council will have to demolish approximately 53 square metres to meet the High Court's directive**

—Nazir Khan, former Congress Minority Cell chairman

**“The municipality would abide by the High Court's decision. The government had submitted a plan to the municipal council to establish a food court that would bring all food vendors to one location instead of letting them sell on footpaths**

—Girish Borker, Mormugao Municipal Council chairperson

While the advocates argued that Clause 6A.3.1 of the Goa Building Regulations 2010 permits food stalls within parks up to a limit of 5 per cent of the total area, the court ruled that the authorities must strictly adhere to this threshold.

Khan said that the food court currently occupies 6.2 per cent of the park area and the Mormugao Municipal Council will have to demolish approximately 53 square metres to meet the High Court's directive.

Welcoming the High Court's decision Mormugao chairperson Girish Borker

said that the municipality would abide by it. He informed that the government had submitted a plan to the municipal council to establish a food court that would bring all food vendors to one location instead of letting them sell on footpaths.

The food court project was implemented through the Goa State Urban Development Agency (GSUDA) and was stopped after the PIL writ petition was filed. Now that the High Court has given its verdict, the municipal council will demolish any excess construction of the park area.

## Drug lord Atala's bail plea rejected

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Additional Sessions Judge-3 North Goa on Wednesday rejected the bail plea of drug lord Yaniv Benaim alias Atala in the case registered at ANC Police Station.

The ANC strongly opposed the grant of bail to Atala by highlighting the criminal history of the accused of having been involved in seven cases, out of which he has been convicted in four cases and three cases are under investigation.

The ANC in its say objecting to grant of bail to the accused made a mention that the accused had previously made two attempts to escape from the country wherein he successfully managed to escape during his first attempt through Nepal and thereafter he was extradited from Peru.

It was also brought on record that the accused does not possess either a valid passport or Visa and thus illegally staying in India.

The ANC also made a mention that the accused is required again in custody for further investigation of the case and that if released



he might not be traceable as he has had a history of attempting to illegally flee the country.

Arguments were heard in the matter and the bail plea of the accused was dismissed by the court.

Further proceedings and investigations in the case is directly monitored by DySP ANC Nerlon Albuquerque and SP ANC Sunita Sawant.

It may be recalled that the notorious al-

leged drug lord, whose arrest 15 years ago exposed the police-politicians-drug mafia nexus and resulted in the suspension of seven policemen, was arrested early on April 5, 2025, by the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) with drugs worth Rs 8.7 lakh. The ANC had seized 50 grams of cocaine and 110 grams of charas, along with Rs 40,000 in cash, from Atala, who was picked up from his rented accommodation at Siolim.

## 12 shack allottees appeal against licence suspension, demolition notices

Tourism Director orders demolition of Arambol shack following the murder of a local on Jan 26

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** As many as 12 shack allottees have filed their appeals before the Secretary (Tourism), who is the appellate authority against the suspension of licences and demolition notices issued by the Department of Tourism, for subletting their shacks.

In a crackdown on subletting of shacks in February this year, the Department of Tourism had found that 110 shacks allottees in the coastal belt of North Goa sublet their shacks, while show cause notices were issued to 38 shack owners for subletting shacks to others.

During the surprise inspections, the department officials found PoS and QR codes in the names of others and not shack allottees.

The shack owners tried to defend that the people deployed in the shack were their relatives or close family friends and they were authorised by them. Later show cause notices were



issued to 110 shack allottees and 82 cases were disposed of after these allottees proved their claims with documents.

In the case of the remaining 28 allottees, the department terminated their licences and the allottees were debarred and were directed to stop their operations. The security deposits were also forfeited and they were asked to remove their temporary shacks. The maximum eight licences were suspended in Calangute, three at Arambol and one at Vaddycandolim. But the three shack allottees from Arambol filed writ petitions in the High Court of Bombay at Goa seeking to stay the demolition orders. Howev-

er, the Court asked them to approach the appellate authority against the order of the Director of Tourism.

Meanwhile, the Director of Tourism has again ordered demolition of a shack at Arambol beach following the murder of a local allegedly by the staff of the concerned shack on January 26.

The Director of Tourism gave a hearing to the licence holder Manuel Espirito Santo Fernandes as per the directives of the High Court of Bombay at Goa and passed the order permanently blacklisting Fernandes and debarring him from participating in any future shack allotment processes under the Department of Tourism.

## TCP says no to company's hotel project at Bambolim

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department on Wednesday issued a stop-work order to Worldwide Resorts and Entertainment Pvt Ltd for allegedly commencing hotel construction at Bambolim without mandatory environment clearance.

The order comes a day after Goa State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (Goa-SEIAA) issued a stop-work order to the company for ongoing construction, citing the absence of mandatory Environment Clearance under the EIA Notification 2006.

The order issued by Deputy Town Planner Prakash Bhandodkar said, "The Technical Clearance Order was subject to the condition that necessary NOC if required from concerned authority under

building by-laws if any, to be obtained prior to construction work. It is observed that you have undertaken construction activities without obtaining prior environment clearances as prescribed under EIA Notification 2006 and therefore you have violated the condition as stipulated in the said technical clearance."

"The direction of the government note is received to immediately put a stop to the construction activities for non-compliance of conditions imposed. You are directed to immediately stop

the ongoing construction activities for non-compliance of conditions," the order said.

Recently, activists held candlelight protests against the alleged illegal constructions on hill slopes and on the beach at Bambolim. They demanded a halt to these activities and restoration of the destroyed ecologically fragile areas.

The activists alleged that there were illegalities such as felling of trees and deep excavation on hill slope that damaged aquifers by Worldwide Resorts.

## Municipal, surface drains cleaned, says city corp

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) Commissioner Glen Madeira announced on Wednesday that the cleaning of municipal and surface drains has been completed.

Regarding the creeks and river, Madeira stated that the Water Resources Department (WRD) has been contacted for cleanup operations. He clarified that these efforts did not conflict with any Smart City projects, as the desilting work was the CCP's responsibility, and that task has been accomplished.

Madeira emphasised the CCP's commitment, noting that a budget of Rs 40 lakh was allocated and the work was outsourced.

When questioned about the recurring waterlogging issues during monsoon, he said it was waterlogging and not flooding.

He expressed optimism about mitigating this issue this year, stating that the CCP has completed desilting the drains, which will now discharge into the creeks.

Madeira mentioned that the concerned departments have been informed to undertake the necessary work on

the creeks, which fall under the WRD's purview, while the rivers are the responsibility of the Captain of Ports.

Municipal Engineer Venkatesh Sawant reported that desilting work has been completed in 28 wards and is currently underway in wards 29 and 30, with an anticipated completion date of May 1. In addition to drain desilting, tree trimming is also being conducted and is expected to be finished by May 31.

Sawant also noted that the WRD is responsible for the major nullahs within the city. While work on the major nullahs has not yet started, it is expected to commence by May 1 and typically takes a month to complete. Sawant highlighted that all these works are being carried out in consultation with the councillors, as their local knowledge is valuable in determining the specific needs of each ward.

Addressing the issue of waterlogging in Panjim during the monsoon, Sawant explained that it is primarily due to the combination of high tides and heavy rainfall, which obstructs the outflow of water and expressed hope for an improved situation this year.

### Calangute P'yat begins desilting of nullahs

**CALANGUTE:** The Calangute Panchayat launched pre-monsoon desilting works of nullahs at a cost of Rs 25 lakh from the Saligao-Calangute border till Agarwaddo.

Sarpanch Joseph Sequeira said the nullahs in that area have not been desilted for many years.

"We are undertaking the desilting works so that the water drains from the Saligao border down to Agarwaddo and into the Baga river. All the nullahs up to Agarwaddo will be desilted," he said. Sequeira said the VP is also moving a proposal to the WRD to build a retaining wall for the nullahs so that water is harvested and can be used during the summer. "We request the people to co-operate and not release sewage or dump garbage in the nullahs," he said.

Calangute VP bio-diversity committee members said the VP has decided to declare Motar Spring as a heritage site. The spring, was well-known for the healing properties of its water.

## Labour Day celebrations today, 20 to get Shram Gaurav Awards

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will present Shram Gaurav Awards 2025 to the 20 awardees representing the unorganised sector- migrants, domestic, industrials and municipality, on the occasion of Labour Day.

The function is organised by the office of the Commissioner, Labour and Employment, Goa Labour Welfare Board and Goa Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board will be provided for the benefits of workers.

The awareness programme will be held at various places such as at M/s Casa de Povo hall, Taleigao; Se Old Goa Village

The Minister for Labour

Atanasio 'Babush' Monserrate will preside over the function.

Special awareness programmes to sensitive employees/workers working in the State in Industrial sector, construction and various other sectors will be held. Information about the various schemes implemented by the Office of the Commissioner, Labour and Employment, Goa Labour Welfare Board and Goa Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board will be provided for the benefits of workers.

The awareness programme will be held at various places such as at M/s Casa de Povo hall, Taleigao; Se Old Goa Village

Panchayat hall; attached to the Tivim Industrial Estate, Karaswada; Mapusa Industrial Workers Association hall; Bicholim Industrial Estate; M/s Megawide Infrastructure India Pvt Ltd, Mopa-Pernem hall; Margao Municipal Council hall; Queula, Ponda Panchayat hall; GIDC hall at Verna Industrial Estate and the Naqueri-Betul Panchayat hall (old), Quepem.

All the workers/employees from such sectors are invited to attend the awareness programme in the venues nearby to them and get familiarised with the various schemes implemented by the Labour Department for the benefits of workers.

## EV charging infra: Govt approves 50:50 cost sharing model

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** During a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, the Goa government has given the green light to 50:50 cost-sharing model for the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

This initiative will see the government and charg-

ing station developers each cover half of the costs.

In another significant decision, the Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA), currently operating as a society, will be transitioned into a company to enhance its operational efficiency.

Further key decisions made at the meeting include the approval to re-

cruit a Managing Director and essential staff to bolster GEDA's capabilities. The government also plans to expand the reach of solar street lights in both rural and urban areas. Additionally, subsidies for green energy will be enhanced, encompassing biogas units, solar water heaters, and installations in government buildings.

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	1L	71	73
Amul Gold	500 mL	34	35
	1L	67	69
Amul Taaza	500 mL	27	28
	1L	53	55

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The new prices will be effective from the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2025 in Goa and nearby markets.

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