

# Brave kin rescue woman from crocodile attack

## Human encroachment ‘disrupting’ wildlife patterns

Brother-in-law Prakash Naik & wife Sushanti pulled Vishranti Gaonkar out of the Dudhsagar river after she had been attacked by two crocodiles while washing clothes

Team Herald

PONDA: In a sheer act of bravery, two family members saved a sexagenarian from Dabal after she had been attacked by two crocodiles while washing clothes in the Dudhsagar river at Saton early Tuesday morning.

According to available information, the incident unfolded when Vishranti Gaonkar was washing clothes at the river, when two crocodiles suddenly attacked her and began to pull her into the water. Displaying remarkable courage, she grabbed onto a tree branch and cried out for help.

Fortunately, her brother-in-law, Prakash Naik, and his wife, Sushanti, who were nearby, heard her cries and immediately rushed to her aid. They witnessed the crocodiles dragging Vishranti into the river. Through their brave and daring efforts, Prakash and Sushanti managed to pull Vishranti back to the river bank, saving her life.

LOCALS SHELL-SHOCKED

■ Two family members, Prakash Naik and Sushanti, rescued a 60-year-old woman, Vishranti Gaonkar, from two crocodiles that attacked her while she washed clothes in the Dudhsagar river



■ Vishranti was injured and hospitalised

■ The rescue was lauded by locals, as this was the area's first reported crocodile attack, which has left the locals shell-shocked

■ They rely on the river for drinking water and washing clothes

■ Demand immediate safety measures to prevent such attacks in future

Vishranti sustained serious injuries from the attack and was shifted to the South Goa District Hospital in Margao for treatment.

The locals hailed Prakash and Sushanti for their courageous efforts by risking their lives to save the sexagenarian from the jaws of death.

According to sources, this is the first crocodile attack reported in the area, which has left the locals shell-shocked, as they rely on the river for daily needs such as

drinking water and washing clothes.

Following the incident, the Forest Department officials visited the village and inspected the site.

Voicing their concerns, the villagers have demanded immediate safety measures to prevent such attacks in future.

They said that the construction of a bandhara at Ambe has led to increased water storage in the area, which they believe has also increased the crocodile

population. They estimate around 10 to 15 crocodiles to be in their vicinity.

This incident follows previous unfortunate events in Ponda, including a fatal wild bison attack on a woman in Bondbag Bethora last year and the tragic death of a child due to a dog attack reported last month. The locals have urged the Forest Department to take proactive steps to ensure the safety of the community from animal attacks.

AJIT JOHN

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PANJIM: Man-animal conflicts and instances of wildlife straying into human settlements are on the rise in Goa in recent times, raising serious concerns across the State.

In January 2025, a wild bison wandered into the heart of Ponda town, triggering widespread panic and a rapid rescue operation. Just weeks later, in Bondbag, Bethora, a woman tragically lost her life after being attacked by another bison, underscoring how close these encounters are hitting home.

### MAN-MADE CRISIS

Elephants from the Dandeli forest in Karnataka have also started intruding into Dodamarg, a region bordering Goa. In April 2025, a farmer was killed in one such incident. A similar episode occurred in February, when an elephant attacked a woman in the same area. The growing frequency and severity of these events have placed Goa at the epicenter of a broader environmental crisis.

On August 30, an injured leopard rescued from a village in Sanguem died at the zoo while undergoing treatment, likely succumbing to injuries sustained from a vehicular collision. Around the same time, a pregnant black panther was killed in a road accident at Konem-Priol. A postmortem revealed three cubs in her womb. The panther was laid to rest at the Tisk-Us-gao forest nursery.

### WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

- In Jan 2025, a bison wandered into Ponda, triggering widespread panic
- Weeks later, in Bondbag, Bethora, a woman lost her life after being attacked by a bison
- In February, an elephant attacked a woman in Dodamarg
- In April 2025, a farmer was killed after elephants intruding into the same area
- Crocodile sighting in Santa Cruz has

sparked new concerns

- On August 30, 2024, an injured leopard rescued from a village in Sanguem succumbed to injuries sustained in a vehicular collision
- Around the same time, a pregnant black panther was killed in a road accident at Konem-Priol
- In just one week, five panthers died—allegedly due to negligence in Priol on the highway and in Sanguem taluka

These examples are not isolated. In just one week, five panthers died—allegedly due to negligence in Priol on the highway and in Sanguem taluka. These losses, combined with increased leopard sightings in disturbed habitats like Dodamarg, highlight how deeply human encroachment is disrupting wildlife patterns.

Environmental degradation is central to the issue. Environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar from Sattari noted that the natural habitats of animals like leopards—from Canacona to Pernem—have been severely disturbed. “Once upon a time, they would relish the meat of deer and sambar, but that is no longer available. Now, leopards are chasing and killing dogs and cattle, forcing them into human settlements,” he said. Bison populations, once naturally kept in check by tigers, have also surged, leading to more frequent and dangerous human encounters.

Meanwhile, the sighting of a crocodile near a pond in Santa Cruz has sparked new concerns, adding human-crocodile conflict to the growing list of challenges. The question re-

mains: are we prepared for this increasing proximity to the wild?

The lack of a scientific approach by the Forest Department in relocating animals has made matters worse. Monkey rescuer Aaron Fernandes from Silim explained, “Animals are shifted without considering their place of origin or the characteristics of their new habitat. They need to learn the topography, which may bring them into contact with humans or vehicles.”

There is also a gap in public awareness. Conservationist Charan Desai from Goa remarked, “People think animals only live in wildlife sanctuaries, but they also inhabit plateaus, hills, and small mountains. Areas where sugarcane is grown provide both water and cover. When a leopard enters a village, people panic—and panic never ends well.”

Goa is one of only two biodiversity hotspots in the country. At this rate, some of its most iconic wildlife may not survive for future generations to see.

In a recent move, the government announced plans to establish wildlife rescue centres in collabo-

ration with Wildlife SOS. These centres aim to enhance emergency response and care for injured animals. Aaron responded, “This kind of work has been ongoing for two decades, and there are local experts who are willing to support the Forest Department—whether through permanent centres, transit facilities, or better rehabilitation practices. Now the minister, who also oversees town and country planning, says he’ll open a sophisticated centre in Surla, a biodiversity-rich area. It feels a bit bizarre. I don’t know what to make of it—it could be a bit of a scam. When local expertise is available, why bring in an outside agency? I take it all with a pinch of salt.”

Experts suggest the government could also prioritise constructing wildlife corridors—such as roads with underpasses and overpasses—to reduce fatal encounters. When accidents do happen, timely veterinary care could make a critical difference.

Goa’s man-animal conflict is no longer a sporadic occurrence—it’s a crisis in the making. And the time to act is now.

## Forest dept to conduct survey, mapping of crocodile population

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Forest department will conduct a survey and mapping of crocodile population across the State in the wake of incidents of reptiles attacking persons.

Reacting to the incident of crocodiles attacking a woman at Dabal on Tuesday, Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane on Tuesday said that he held a meeting with forest officials and directed them to carry out a survey and mapping of crocodile population.

Ahead of the onset of monsoon, the department will launch a ‘Save Frog Campaign’ by involving local bodies so as to maintain the ecosystem, he said.

Rane said that the Forest department is considering declaring Vagheri hills as a protected forest or extending the boundary of the nearby Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary to include it.

Rane rubbished claims of the hill being sold off by him. He said that he had already asked the forest officials to lodge a complaint against one Amit

Rane for carrying out illegalities there.

The minister outlined several key decisions taken during the meeting. These include expediting verification of 480 private forest claims, and surveys of leopard and Indian gaur populations.

Additionally, the department is also considering undertaking study of forest fragmentation and the status of tiger corridors, declaring 3,550 survey numbers as mangrove reserves, and conducting an audit of sawmills across the State.

### PRE-MONSOON PRUNING



YATIN BAKHALE

Workers carry out pruning of old trees outside the Bhagwan Mahavir Bal Vihar, Campal-Panjim, trimming weak branches that obstruct streetlights and hang over D B Marg, as part of pre-monsoon safety measures

## Jharkhand native ‘kills’ kin in a fight over meal at Bethora

Team Herald

PONDA: In a fight over who should eat the chicken cooked at their residence, the Ponda Police arrested David Silastoppo (40), a Jharkhand native for allegedly murdering his brother-in-law Deepak Turkey (27) at their residence in Bethora.

According to police sources, David had brought chicken for their evening meal. Following the preparation of the meal by Deepak, he commenced eating. This action reportedly incensed David, who questioned Deepak as to why he had started eating without serving him first, given that he had provided the chicken. David asserted that Deepak should serve



Ponda police personnel visited the crime site to carry out further investigation in the murder case at Bethora

him before partaking in the meal himself. Deepak responded by stating that he was not David’s servant and declined to serve him.

Sources said this disagreement escalated into a vehement argument, which subsequently resulted in a physical confrontation.

During the altercation, David purportedly attacked Deepak with a sharp implement, causing serious injuries to his neck, resulting in his death and later fled.

Locals contacted the police, who after receiving information, arrived at the location and, following a

search, apprehended David while he was walking along Khandepar road, attempting to flee.

According to police, Both men were labourers residing in accommodation provided by their landlord Shrikant Umarye.

Based on Umarye’s complaint, police registered a case under BNS 2023 and are investigating the motive, though initial information suggests it was related to the food. Both the accused and the victim were reportedly under the influence of alcohol.

Both the accused and victim were employed as farm workers at Umarye’s kulagar for the past three months.

Ponda DySP Shivram Vagankar inspected the site.

## Guv seeks detailed report on ‘suicide’ cases at BITS Goa

Team Herald

PANJIM: Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai has expressed his shock and anguish over the news of suspected three suicide cases of students at BITS Pilani, Goa Campus, in the last few months.

He has sought a detailed report, on the reasons behind the suspected suicide cases and also what measures the institute has taken, in regard to prevent such incidents in the future, from the Director of BITS Pilani, Goa Campus.

It may be recalled that following the death of three students, BITS Pilani Goa campus on Sunday announced that it was revamping its curriculum and stated that students can answer the exam later if they are under stress.

“We are revamping the existing curriculum and a separate committee has been constituted to streamline the academic content. Students in distress under the current circumstances have been given flexibility to take examinations at a later time. New courses on mental and physical wellness and stress management will be included in the revised curriculum. A Student Wellbeing Dashboard is being developed to provide personalised support and timely interventions,” institute had said in a statement.

A 20-year-old student of BITS Pilani’s Zuarinagar campus in Goa, Krishna Kasera from Lucknow, was found dead by suicide last week. This was the second such incident at the campus in the past three months.

## River body to introduce new RoRo ferry on Divar-São Pedro route

Team Herald

PANJIM: The River Navigation Department (RND) is planning to deploy a small-sized roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) ferry on the Divar-São Pedro, Ribandar route, Director of RND Vikram Rajebhosale announced on Monday.

Speaking to reporters, Rajebhosale stated that the government has approved the introduction of two new ferries and a private company has

Final trials are underway by the company. If further modifications or rectifications are required, then they will be made. It will take another week. After one week we will conduct trial of the ferries. Most probably the commissioning of the ferries will take place in the last week of this month. These ferries will be deployed on Ribandar and Chorao route – Vikram Rajebhosale, Director RND

FILE PHOTO



been granted permission to construct and operate them.

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Meanwhile, the company con-

structing the ferries has commenced trial runs of the two RoRo ferries commissioned by the department in the Zuari River. Once tested, they will be introduced on the busy Ribandar-Chorao route. Each ferry has a capacity to carry up to 17 cars and features separate entry and exit points, which is expected to significantly reduce turnaround time.

The two RoRo ferries are being constructed on a build-and-operate basis. Additionally, the RND plans to phase out ferries that are over 20 years old.

## Mystery shrouds 10-year-old’s death

MARGAO: The death of a 10-year-old girl from Margao, brought to the Hospicio South Goa District Hospital, Margao, is shrouded in mystery.

The minor girl was found dead at her relatives’ residence at Loutolim. She suffered head injuries and it was uncertain whether she fell from the first floor of the residence.

Following a call from the hospital’s casualty police, the police visited the hospital and conducted an inquest panchanama.

The Maina-Curtorim police registered the case under BNSS which requires police to report unnatural or suspicious deaths due to suicide, accidents, or suspicious circumstances to the Executive Magistrate. PSI Sagar Kamat is investigating the case.



**MISSING, MISSING**  
Name: **ALAN KRISHNA**  
Age: **19 yrs.**  
Student of: **1st Yr MBBS**  
College: **Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences, Belagavi.**  
Missing since: **24/4/2025**  
If anyone has any information please Contact any of the below numbers:  
**0831-2405250** (APMC Belagavi Police station)  
**9480290450** (Sasi- Father)  
**9902685888** (Shyju- Secretary Keralaaleya Sanskritik Sangh Belagavi)  
**8095999106** (Alex- P.R. Secretary KSS)