

Panjim's Latin quarter seeks fire risk assessment, safety plan

In absence of a dedicated fire safety plan, Sao Tome & Fontainhas locals request fire dept to initiate a thorough assessment and propose appropriate preventive measures

Team Herald

MARGAO: Concerned about the fire risk facing their neighbourhood, residents of Sao Tome and Fontainhas—heritage wards in the heart of Panjim—have written to the Director of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), Nitin V Raiker, seeking a detailed risk assessment and safety plan for the twin residential areas.

In their letter, the residents, who are represented by the Community Association of Residents and Establishments (CARE), noted that the Latin Quarter is made up of tightly clustered colonial-era homes, many of which are built using wooden materials for roofing, flooring, doors, and windows. The buildings are connected by common walls and accessed



through narrow streets and lanes, which makes emergency response particularly difficult.

"To say the least, these wards are highly prone to fire risk considering the area structure, high tour-

ist footfalls and increasing number of restaurants in the locality," CARE stated. "This gets more pronounced due to haphazard parking and major traffic snarls—sadly, a disaster in the making."

The residents stressed that the conservation status of the area, combined with the influx of visitors and commercial activity, requires greater attention from the authorities. They expressed concern over

DISASTER IN THE MAKING

❖ CARE has highlighted the high fire risk in the Latin Quarter due to tightly clustered wooden colonial-era homes, connected by common walls and narrow lanes, complicating emergency response

❖ It stated that the area's structure, high tourist numbers, and increasing restaurants exacerbate this risk, further compounded by haphazard parking and traffic congestion, creating a potential disaster

the absence of a dedicated fire safety plan for the neighbourhood, despite its historical and cultural sig-

nificance.

CARE's letter also referenced recent appeals made by civil society group GOACAN for a State-wide fire safety strategy and urged the fire department to prioritise vulnerable zones like the Latin Quarter. They requested Raiker to initiate a thorough assessment and propose appropriate preventive measures.

In addition to approaching the fire department regarding the fire audit, CARE has also recently submitted its suggestions on other issues to the Tourism Department on ways to safeguard the area and address the concerns they are facing in general due to overtourism. This follows their recent engagement with the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) on similar issues.

Law to regularise unauthorised houses on Comunidade & Alvara lands: CM

Team Herald

BICHOLIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday said that the State government is considering enacting a new law to regularise unauthorised houses built on private, Comunidade lands and Alvara lands where owner's name is reflected in the 1971 land survey records.

Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of the government office complex at Bicholim, the Chief Minister said nearly 10,000 people had applied under the existing Goa Regularisation of Unauthorised Construction Act (RUCA), but only 2,000 have benefitted so far. To address this gap, the government plans to amend the law so that more people, especially those who have built homes on their own land, are given a chance to regularise their houses, possibly after paying a fine.

The Chief Minister claimed that many hous-

Many houses are being demolished due to court orders following disputes, often between neighbours and the government is blamed for the demolition

-Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister

es are being demolished due to court orders following disputes, often between neighbours and the government is blamed...for...the...demolition.

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10th Prize—	27768

KNOTTY ISSUE

JOSEPH FERNANDES



A bunch of huge entangled cable wires poses danger to pedestrians near Art Park at Porvorim

CCP campaign aims to enhance safety of women, children

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) on Monday launched "Safety First: Empowering Women and Protecting Children" campaign, which aims to enhance the safety of women and children in the community.

In partnership with the Goa Police and SCAN-Goa, a voluntary organisation, the initiative is focused on educating, empowering, and engaging the public to foster a safer environment.

The campaign will feature visually striking hoardings and stickers placed throughout the city and on local buses to raise awareness and provide vital information about safety resources.

In collaboration with the Goa

Police, regular checks will be conducted on buses in Panjim and police officers in plain-clothes will travel in buses to ensure the safety of women and child commuters.

Targeted to reach a diverse audience, the campaign employs captivating designs and messages to appeal to all age groups. Hoardings will be strategically located in high-traffic areas, while stickers will be distributed at community centres, schools, and local businesses. Each display will feature essential safety tips, contact details for local support services, and information about the forthcoming Community Safety Fair.

The first phase of the initiative has already commenced with hoardings addressing child begging, complete with

helpline numbers, installed on electricity poles at the Panjim bus stand, Miramar, market entrances, D B Road, and 18 June Road.

These visual elements will serve as continuous reminders that community safety begins with awareness. Key topics will include personal safety strategies, resources available for victims of violence, and community reporting mechanisms. This campaign is about more than just raising awareness; it aims to cultivate a sense of community where everyone contributes to the safety of one another.

The campaign will also feature a series of events, workshops, training, and outreach programs designed to raise awareness about critical safety issues.

Saligao resident chargesheeted for assaulting Taleigao businessman

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Panjim Police chargesheeted a man now residing in Oman for assaulting Ignatius Martins, a businessman from Taleigao, who lost vision of his one eye.

According to the chargesheet, the incident occurred in August last year when the accused Joaquim Joao Benjamin

Joseph Mascarenhas, originally residing at Saligao had come from Oman and along with his business partner was staying with the complainant. Following arguments on August 4, 2024, the accused in a fit of rage punched Martins on his left eye causing bleeding. Martins immediately called his friend Milton D'Costa who rushed to a private

hospital, where the staff told him to go to the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim. At GMC, the accused, who was also present and requested Martins to inform the medical officer that he had fall at home and sustained bleeding injuries to his eye.

Martins underwent a surgery at the hospital but lost his vision. Later

the accused refused to pay the medical expenses and without informing Martins left for Oman. Later, the victim lodged a police complaint and an offence punishable under Section 117 (2) of BNS was registered against Mascarenhas. The chargesheet contains nine witnesses. The case was investigated and chargesheeted by Lady PSDI Rashmika Kavlekar.

Goa likely to experience thunderstorms, moderate rainfall today

Team Herald

PANJIM: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Goa, on Monday, said that thunderstorms accompanied with winds gusting to 30-40 kmph is likely at isolated places over North and South Goa districts and light to moderate rainfall is likely in the evening hours over both the districts on May 13.

"Thunderstorm accompanied with winds gusting

to 30-40 kmph is likely at isolated places over North & South Goa districts. Light to moderate rainfall likely in the evening hours over North & South Goa districts of the State," the IMD said.

The weather department said the maximum and minimum temperature in the State till May 18 will be 35 degree Celsius while minimum temperature will be 28 degree Celsius till May 14 and from May 15 to 18, it will be 27 degree Celsius.

Study feasibility to set up nuke power plant: Khattar

Agrees to consider request for 24x7 water supply scheme for Goa

Team Herald

PANJIM: Union Minister for Power, Urban Development and Housing Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday said that the Centre has asked State government to consider the possibility of establishing a nuclear power facility as a long-term measure for energy security and sustainability.

He also agreed to consider the request for 24x7 water supply Drink from Tap (DFT) Scheme for the State.

Khattar who was in the State to review progress of power sector and urban development scheme in the State, stated that the State does not have thermal, hydro or solar power plants and given that around 80 per cent of Goa's electricity is procured from outside the State, he asked the government to examine the feasibility of setting up nuclear power plant in the State and submit proposals.

The review meeting attended by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Power Minister Sudin

Now that the contracts have been awarded, I am confident that the implementation will gain momentum. Prioritising saturation of smart meters in government offices, colonies, commercial and industrial units, and high-load consumers will help ensure digitisation and improved service delivery

— Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister for Power, Urban Development and Housing

Dhavalikar, Urban Development Minister Vishwajit Rane and senior officials, focused on the power sector developments, loss reduction initiatives, and the progress under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS).

Commending the Electricity Department for its effective efforts in ensuring power availability and achieving universal electrification, Khattar said, "Goa has shown exemplary performance in reducing AT&C losses to 9.32 per cent, which is significantly below the national average. This is a testament to the State's sustained efforts in improving the efficiency of its power distribution system."

The Union Minister appreciated the State's significant progress

in implementing infrastructure works under RDSS aimed at reducing losses. However, he emphasised the need to accelerate the pace of smart metering, which has the potential to revolutionise consumer engagement with DISCOMs through data analytics and AI/ML tools.

"Now that the contracts have been awarded, I am confident that the implementation will gain momentum. Prioritising saturation of smart meters in government offices, colonies, commercial and industrial units, and high-load consumers will help ensure digitisation and improved service delivery," Khattar noted.

Highlighting the importance of operational efficiency, Khattar

encouraged the State to further reduce utility losses and integrate more Renewable Energy into the grid. He mentioned that this would help lower the cost of power supply and enhance overall performance.

He also acknowledged Goa's citizen-centric efforts in simplifying procedures for rooftop solar installations and new electricity connections, enhancing the ease of living for consumers.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister requested to consider special assistance for 24x7 water supply Drink from Tap (DFT) (Project cost about Rs 652.61 crore) special financial assistance of Rs 326.30 crore minimum for Water Source Augmentation, Infrastructure Development, Rehabilitation of Existing Network, pilot Drink-from-Tap projects including smart metering, IoT and SCADA-based monitoring systems to the State under AMRUT 2.0.

Sawant requested to consider given Goa's unique urban challenges, particularly due to the significantly high volume of

tourist inflow placing additional burden on civic infrastructure and requested that the State be considered as a special case for enhanced and expedited support under both AMRUT 2.0 and SBM-U 2.0.

The Union Minister advised the State to complete all pending works related to water supply (new/service tap connections and new/service sewer connections) under AMRUT; revision of action plan, expedite tendering work for toilets (community toilets, public toilets, aspirational toilets, urinals), Solid Waste Management, STP/co-treatment facilities under SBM; submit proposals, inform and educate citizens about PMAY-U 2.0 to get benefits of affordable housing; profile street vendors under PM SVANidhi, clear eligible loan applications and increase women participation.

Khattar also directed the State to submit proposal for PM-eBus Sewa Scheme and further reviewed the progress under Smart Cities and DAY-NULM.

INVITATION

THE ANNUAL FEAST OF MIRACULOUS HOLY CROSS OF VAL-AGONDA.

FEAST MASS : 08.30 AM PRECEDED BY LITANY ON 14TH MAY 2025

Feast-Mass Main Celebrant- Fr. Aidan Fernandes
Co-celebrants – Agonda Parish Priest- Fr. Patrick Luis
Asstt. To Parish Priest- Fr. Baltazar Fernandes, Fr. Octaviano Cunha
Fr. Darrell Fernandes, Fr. Sean Cardozo

Celebrated By - PARISHIONERS OF AGONDA

All Are Cordially Invited

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