

# LIFE LOST ON DUTY: Lineman dies of electrocution at Honda

The deceased Suryakant Gaonkar from Poriem came into contact with live wires while undertaking maintenance work on an electricity pole; another lineman Sarvesh Gaonkar sustained injuries due to an electric shock; Sattari residents demand action against JE

Team Herald

**PORIEM:** In a tragic incident reported at Postwada, Honda, a lineman of the Goa Electricity Department, Suryakant (Chandru) Gaonkar from Ghodemolwada-Morle in Poriem, died due to electrocution while undertaking maintenance work on an electricity pole.

According to initial information, Gaonkar came into contact with live wires while working on the pole and was electrocuted. Another lineman, Sarvesh Gaonkar, who was working alongside him at the time, sustained injuries as a result of an electric shock and subsequently fell

from the pole.

The unfortunate event has created significant tension amongst the residents of Sattari, who have demanded strict action against the Junior Engineer who was on duty, as well as other responsible senior officials, due to alleged negligence in ensuring the safety of the workers.

Political figures also voiced their concerns.

Congress member Manisha Usgaonkar and others were critical of the government, describing the incident as a result of utter negligence.

Expressing her profound grief over the death of the

electricity department employee, Poriem MLA Deviya Rane, said, "We are deeply saddened by the untimely demise of Suryakant (Chandru) Gaonkar, and in this moment of grief, our thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones."

Response to this tragic death, Power Minister Ramakrishna 'Sudin' Dhavalikar has ordered a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to the tragic incident. Furthermore, the Electricity Department has confirmed that they have sought explanations from the engineers who were responsible for overseeing the work.

## EARLIER TRAGIC INCIDENTS

■ **2020: 4 linemen lost lives while on duty**

■ **2022: Three line helpers died due to electrocution**

■ **2023: Five linemen or line helpers lost their lives by electrocution— highest in any year – in the last half a decade**

■ **Lineman Krishna Pawar, who was attached to Mapusa division, was fatally electrocuted in November while climbing down an electric pole in Siolim after finishing his job**

■ **2024: Manoj Zambaulikar, a resident of Pilgao, an Electricity Department lineman died due to electrocution while working on an electricity pole at Housing Board, Bicholim**

■ **The accident occurred due to a sudden power surge, even as it was claimed that the**



power supply to the high tension line was switched off

■ **These incidents have raised serious concerns about safety protocols and the negligence of the electricity department, with residents calling for stricter safety measures for field staff**

## Sacorda villagers confront BSNL officials over poor connectivity



Residents of Sacorda at the BSNL office at Ponda

Team Herald

**PONDA:** A group of residents from the remote village of Sacorda, marched to the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) office at Ponda, and confronted the officials, expressing serious concerns about the poor mobile connectivity in their area.

After finding that the official concerned unavailable, the group led by Sarpanch Sanjana Narvekar and several panch members grilled the other staff available highlighting the poor network issues they have been facing for the past year and emphasised the severe impact on the community, particularly the students. They later submitted a memorandum demanding urgent action to improve mobile connectivity in Sacorda.

The sarpanch said that the villagers of Sacorda are distressed by the unreliable mobile network and pointed out the danger in emergency situations where contacting essential services becomes im-

possible.

Highlighting the remoteness of the area, she mentioned that network problems are a frequent complaint among residents and noted that a letter was sent to the BSNL office in February 2025 requesting an upgrade of the BSNL network to 4G.

The locals said that today's visit was a follow-up, but they were informed of the concerned official's absence.

Panch member Mahadev Shetkar explained that while BSNL mobile service and three to four mobile towers exist in their area, the residents experience no connectivity. He described how mobile phones have become unusable and the BSNL towers have been ineffective.

He stressed the difficulties faced by villagers, especially students pursuing higher education, due to frequent call drops, voice distortion during calls, and extremely slow internet speeds, all of which cause considerable hardship in their daily lives.

## MOVING AT SNAIL'S PACE



Vehicles commute along a flooded road at Patto-Panjim on Tuesday, following heavy showers that lashed the State

## Industrial body bats for N-power plant

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) has urged the government to explore the possibility of establishing nuclear power plant as the State requires additional power in view of increasing demand for power.

Reacting to the announcement made by Union Minister for Power Manoharlal Khattar, regarding setting up of nuclear power plant in Goa, the GCCCI infrastructure committee members felt that additional power is required in the State in view of increasing demand.

Other options like power generation from coal, waves, wind, hydel, solar,

etc. have not been found feasible to meet the rising power demand. Hence it is worth exploring the option of the nuclear power as suggested by the Union Minister for Power.

GCCCI member Prakash Lotlikar desired that they contact experts from Don Bosco Engineering College or other technical colleges from Goa to apprise them on the latest technology available for nuclear power plants.

Regarding 24x7 water supply, Shrikant Dhond said that in some areas, supply of water 24X7 is quite possible. During his tenure in PWD, he had succeeded in doing that in Salcete and Quepem talukas by bypassing the overhead tanks and supplying water directly.

## Vanarmare tribe deprived of govt welfare schemes

Team Herald

**PONDA:** In a recent development concerning the Vanarmare tribe residing in Nirankal, Bethora, it has come to light that this nomadic community has been living without access to government welfare schemes, despite being eligible for the same.

During a field visit by Social Welfare Director Ajit Panchwadkar, as part of the Atal Asra special drive, it was revealed that the tribe was not getting benefits of the social welfare schemes. Consequently, it was decided to organize a special camp within the Panchayat to assist them with the necessary documentation and enrolment processes.

The Vanarmare tribe, comprising approximately 100 members including children, had previously

come into focus when their huts in Nirankal were damaged some years ago. Living without basic amenities, they received initial support from the Human Rights Commission, various Goans, and NGOs who stepped in to provide essential aid such as water and power connections. However, they had no access to government welfare schemes.

Despite the earlier assistance, the tribe faces challenges in improving their living standards, particularly due to the lack of land ownership for constructing permanent housing.

Panchwadkar during discussions with the tribe found that no members of the community are enrolled in vital schemes such as pre-matric and post-matric scholarships for students, or the Dayanand Social Security scheme.

## Merces local accuses 2 tenants assn members of embezzling Rs 3.20 lakh

Files police complaint against acting chairman & acting treasurer of the Tenants Association of Morombi-O-Grande, Vaddy-Merces

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Merces resident Sebastiao das Merces Fernandes through his power of attorney Cipriano Joao has filed a police complaint against the acting chairman and the acting treasurer of the Tenants Association of Morombi-O-Grande, Vaddy-Merces for alleged misappropriation of Rs 3.20 lakh.

Tiswadi Mamlatdar Kaushik B Dessai recently dismissed an application filed by Sebastiao Fernandes against the officiating chairman and the officiating treasurer of the Tenants Association, but stated that the applicant must file a police complaint for investigation of Rs 3.20 lakh paid by him to them.

The Tiswadi Mamlatdar vide order dated May 15, 2025, dismissed the application filed by Fernandes, who had alleged that

he had paid Rs 3.20 lakh to the acting treasurer and the acting chairman, as part payment for granting annual lease of Vaddy Manos sluice gate situated at Patto, Ribandar belonging to Morombi-O-Grande Tenants' Association for annual rent of Rs 10.50 lakh.

The Tiswadi Mamlatdar had asked the committee to continue till the new committee was duly elected.

Meanwhile, an auction for annual lease of sluice gate of the Association was fixed on December 18, 2024, in the chamber of the Mamlatdar at Panjim.

However, Fernandes complained that a day prior to the auction, he allegedly paid Rs 3.20 lakh to the acting chairman and the acting treasurer, as part payment for granting the annual lease of sluice gate. However, no receipt was issued to Fernandes.

After the managing committee terminated the lease agreement of fishing rights for breaching of terms and conditions, Fernandes filed an application before the Mamlatdar praying for termination of the managing committee.

Mamlatdar Dessai in his order stated that the auction of fishing rights of the sluice gates was a public auction and at the time of signing lease agreement between Fernandes and the chairman, the former did not whisper a word about the alleged payment of Rs 3.20 lakh.

At the same time, the Mamlatdar stated that the allegation of paying Rs 3.20 lakh will have to be thoroughly verified after investigation and that the applicant must file an appropriate complaint in this regard before the police since this allegation has to be probed from a criminal angle.

## Consider reducing shack licence fees for upcoming season, shack owners urge govt

Claim several shack owners suffered substantial financial losses during the current season

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** Stating that a number of beach shack owners have suffered substantial financial losses during the current season, which concludes this month, the Shack Owners' Welfare Society (SOWS) has requested the State government and tourism department to consider reducing shack licence fees for the upcoming season.

Speaking to the media in Baga, SOWS general secretary John Lobo highlighted the increased operational costs

faced by shack owners.

Lobo said: "We request the government and tourism department to reduce the fees. This season a lot of shack owners have suffered losses. The reason is costs have increased. The shack licence fee is Rs 1.5 lakh and above; excise charges Rs 30-40,000; we pay Rs 3.5 lakh to the Electricity Department to start. Plus there are the costs of building the shack and overheads. The government does not build and give us the shack."

He questioned the rationale

behind the high fees, considering they are solely for permission to operate. He pointed out that because of low tourist footfalls, many shacks have already shut down two months before the end of the season. Only some are open at the main Calangute beach, Baga and other prominent spots. Those open should be allowed to stay open till mid-June so that they recoup their investment, he said. "Domestic tourists are still

coming because of the May holidays and they're there till mid-June," he said.

He also said tourism stakeholders have been holding regular meetings with the tourism department and tourism minister.

Lobo said, "The tourism minister had asked us to give feedback on the reasons for low tourist footfalls. We stakeholders - shacks, water sports operators, small and medium guest house owners, travel agencies - have made many suggestions and we hope the tourism department will act on them."

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