

Curti-Khandepar P'yat drive against encroachments continues

Demolishes former sarpanch's structure in open space

PONDA: The Curti-Khandepar Panchayat continued its ongoing drive against illegal encroachments on panchayat open spaces, with a bulldozer demolishing an unauthorised structure belonging to former sarpanch Gurudas Khedekar on Monday.

The encroached structure—a shed—was located in the same panchayat open area at Zingadimaal, Curti, where the Panchayat had previously demolished various illegal constructions belonging to Damu Naik, including a chicken shop, rented rooms, and a workshop.

On discovering the structure built by the former sarpanch, the panchayat body, led by Sarpanch Nilkant Naik and panch Bhika Kerkar, immediately moved to demolish it.

It is worth noting that



“There's no rivalry. I only filed a case against him for illegal constructions, and the matter is now before a higher court

—Gurudas Khedekar, Former sarpanch

Khedekar had recently filed a disqualification petition against Kerkar for alleged illegal construction. Although the BDO initial-

“Khedekar had encroached on the open space with a ground-plus-one structure during his tenure as sarpanch and the action was taken following a directive from the Additional Director of Panchayats to clear encroachments in panchayat open spaces

—Bhika Kerkar, Panch

ly disqualified Kerkar, the court later overturned the ruling, allowing him to continue in office.

Asked if the demolition was linked to a personal rivalry with Kerkar, Khedekar denied any animosity. “There's no rivalry. I only filed a case against him for illegal constructions, and the matter is now before a higher court,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kerkar alleged “Khedekar had encroached on the open space with a ground-plus-one structure during his tenure as sarpanch and the action was taken following a directive from the Additional Director of Panchayats to clear encroachments in panchayat open spaces,” he said.

This marks the second such demolition in the same locality within a week.

Teen dies in Ambelim scooter mishap

PANJIM: An 18-year-old youth from West Bengal, Mohammad Faluz, tragically died in a self-accident on Sunday at Ambeli, Cutbana. Faluz, who was working in the Cutbana area, reportedly did not know how to operate a two-wheeler. According to police sources, the fatal accident occurred when he attempted to ride a parked two-wheeler inside the house while no one else was present.

Witnesses stated that Faluz managed to drive the scooter for roughly 100 meters before losing control and falling. He sustained a serious head injury during the fall.

Caritas Goa HOPE project bags international award



Team Herald

PANJIM: The HOPE (Healing, Opportunities, Protection, and Empowerment) project, an initiative by Caritas Goa, has been awarded the 2024-2025 edition of the international prize, Francis of Assisi and Carlo Acutis, for an Economy of Fraternity. The award was presented at the

Church of St Mary Major in Assisi, Italy

Based in Goa, the project evolved from Caritas Goa's earlier initiative, the helpline programme “Child-line,” dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of at-risk children, especially from Goa's most neglected and impoverished villages. After the Goan government took over the Child-

line programme in 2023, a group of seven young people—already active in Caritas Goa's work with deaf-blind individuals—came together to address the challenges that followed the transition.

Fr Sanford Rodrigues of the Archdiocese of Goa accepted the award on behalf of the team in Assisi, expressing gratitude for the €50,000 prize, which is expected to benefit around 1,000 young people. Along with the prize, recipients were given a scarf bearing the image of St. Francis removing his clothes—a symbol of renunciation of materialism.

Fr Rodrigues emphasised that HOPE is more than just a name.

'Peeping Tom' at dental college booked

Team Herald

PANJIM: A final-year MBBS student from Goa Medical College and Hospital has been booked by the Agassaim police for allegedly trespassing into the girls' hostel at Goa Dental College and attempting to film female students while they were bathing. The incident occurred on May 19, between 9:45 pm and 10 pm, at the girls' hostel in Bambolim village, where the two colleges are located in close proximity.

According to the complaint, the student used his mobile phone to record through a bathroom window, an act that constitutes a serious breach of privacy and a violation of both legal and ethical standards.

Following a complaint filed by the Girls Hostel Secretary of Goa Dental College, police have registered a case against the accused.

Police stated that the accused committed a serious breach of privacy, representing a significant violation of the law, moral standards, and the safety and dignity of the female residents.

Government begins door-to-door survey of ferocious dogs

PANJIM: In a bid to address rising public safety concerns, the Goa government has commenced a door-to-door survey of aggressive dogs across the state.

Minister for Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Nilkanth Halarnkar, confirmed the survey and said officials from the Animal Husbandry Department are currently visiting villages to register dogs. He appealed to the public to cooperate fully with the authorities to ensure smooth implementation of the initiative.

“As part of the campaign, certain breeds have been banned from being kept as pets,” the minister stated. “We have already started the survey. Once that is done, our staff will follow up to ask people to register their pets. The government has already banned the import of Rottweiler and Pit Bull breeds. Even breeding centres have been instructed not to breed these types of dogs.”

In February this year, the state cabinet, led by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, had approved amendments to the Goa Animal Breeding

and Domestic Regulations and Compensation Ordinance, 2024, effectively banning Pit Bulls and Rottweilers.

“Those who already have these breeds of dogs will have to take care of them and take responsibility,” Sawant had said.

The move followed growing public demand for a ban, after a spate of incidents across Goa involving attacks by Rottweilers and Pit

Bulls on children and other individuals.

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Drainage woes, free water scheme top Siolim-Marna gram sabha's agenda

SIOLIM: The Siolim Marna gram sabha held on Sunday saw discussions on several critical village issues, with particular focus on drainage concerns ahead of the monsoon, as well as the recent discontinuation of the government's free water scheme.

Despite poor attendance—blamed on the rains and inadequate publicity—numerous pressing matters came up for discussion.

Joaquim Barros raised the issue of incomplete drainage works, reminding the Sarpanch that the gram sabha in July last year had resolved that the tendering process for drains should begin in December and be completed by May. However, the works remained incomplete.

He warned that such lapses could pose a health hazard, with rainwater carrying filth, garbage, and sewage into people's homes. “Panchayats should give absolute priority to drainage works before the monsoons and get the drains cleared to ensure smooth flow of rain water,” he asserted.

Referring to last year's road widening project, Barros quoted the local MLA's claims that the halting of the work had caused flooding and hardship. “What has happened this year? With just a few days of rain, main roads in Siolim are already flooded. Drainage works are not properly done. Are we to expect such flooding every monsoon, or will things improve?” he asked.

In response, Sarpanch Sandesh Hadfadkar assured that maintenance of the drains would be taken up to prevent a recurrence of the issue.

The gram sabha also expressed disappointment over the discontinuation of the free water scheme. Initially launched just before the last Assembly elections for households using less than 16,000 cubic metres of water, the scheme was discontinued from 1 May 2025.

Locals questioned the decision, especially since nearly 50% of households in Goa had benefited. Gregory D'Souza and Barros asked whether the government faced such financial strain that it could not offer free water to taxpayers below a certain limit.

Youth held for raping minor

Team Herald

VASCO: The Verna police arrested Mallappa Odi (19), a native of Bijapur and current residing at Satarra on the charge of raping a 16-year-old girl from Zuarinagar.

The incident occurred when the minor gone was reported missing since May 19 and a complaint was filed three days later. The police immediately formed a team headed by PSI Carey Fernandes, who with the help of Umraj police station traced them.

A team went to Satarra and brought both of them to Goa. The statement of the girl was recorded where she confirmed that the accused had sexual intercourse

Citizens demand government intervention as unsafe buildings collapse in Margao

Team Herald

MARGAO: After two consecutive incidents of partial building collapses in the past two days, serious concerns have been raised about public safety in Margao.

Despite warnings and directions from authorities, the civic body appears unable to act effectively, prompting residents to demand immediate government intervention.

The first collapse occurred near Gandhi Market, followed by another at the Cine Lata theatre premises. In both cases, falling debris damaged parked vehicles, highlighting the imminent threat these dilapidated structures pose to life and property.

Citizens are alarmed that, despite the urgency, the Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has failed to act



decisively. Local residents, speaking to O'Heraldo, expressed frustration and fear, stating that their repeated appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

It may be noted that the district administration had earlier directed MMC to initiate demolition proceedings against 19 identified unsafe buildings in the commercial city. However, apart from notifying the Public Works Department

and requesting a demolition squad, no concrete steps have been taken.

Responding to the situation, Margao MLA Digambar Kamat emphasized that these buildings are privately owned and that the responsibility for demolishing unsafe structures lies with the respective owners. Nevertheless, citizens argue that public safety cannot be left solely to private discretion and are calling

for urgent and direct government action.

Cedrick Fernandes, a concerned citizen, said, “We cannot wait for someone to get injured or worse before action is taken. These buildings have been declared unsafe long ago. The authorities must take proactive steps rather than passing the buck.”

Sandanand Naik, another resident and shop owner near Gandhi Market, added, “Every day we open our shops with fear. Who will be responsible if a customer or a passerby gets hurt? This is not just negligence—it's endangering lives. The government must act now and enforce the demolitions.”

With the monsoon fast approaching, residents fear the risk of further collapses and demand that the government step in before tragedy strikes.

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