

# Site inspection confirms hill cutting at Morpirla, but p'yat is still clueless

Locals and greens say the activity in Survey Number 93/7 has destroyed cashew trees and soil is being extracted and transported elsewhere

Team Herald

**QUEPEM:** Despite the Quepem Mamlatdar, local talathi, and the flying squad confirming the illegal hill cutting at Kokanifond in Morpirla, following a site inspection, surprisingly, it has now come to light that the local panchayat is completely unaware of the activity.

The locals and environmentalists have raised serious concerns over the alleged illegal hill cutting in Survey Number 93/7 of Ward No. 7, which has led to the destruction of several cashew trees, with soil being reportedly extracted and transported elsewhere.

When contacted Sarpanch Ashvini Gaonkar

## NO ACTION OR STAY ORDER

A few days ago, the Quepem Mamlatdar, local talathi, and the flying squad had conducted an inspection of the site. Despite this, no action or stay order has been issued so far. This has raised questions: if the mamlatdar is aware of the hill cutting and has already carried out an inspection, how is it that the local panchayat remains unaware of the situation?

stated, "I was unaware of this hill cutting at Kokanifond. I have not received any complaint letter in this regard. This information came to me through media reports. If such an activity is ongoing, I, along with local panch Nitesh Gaonkar, will visit the site for inspection and take necessary steps to

stop it. Carrying out such work without informing the panchayat is unacceptable."

The Sarpanch assured the public that the panchayat would take prompt action once the situation is verified on the ground, and that those responsible would be held accountable.

It is pertinent to note

**"I was unaware of this hill cutting at Kokanifond. I have not received any complaint letter in this regard. This information came to me through media reports. If such an activity is ongoing, I, along with local panch Nitesh Gaonkar, will visit the site for inspection and take necessary steps to stop it. Carrying out such work without informing the panchayat is unacceptable**

— Ashvini Gaonkar, Morpirla Sarpanch

that wwa few days ago, the Quepem Mamlatdar, local talathi, and the flying squad had already conducted an inspection of the site. Despite this, no action or stay order has been issued so far. This has raised questions: if the mamlatdar is aware of the hill cutting and has already carried out an inspection, how is it that the local panchayat remains

unaware of the situation?

"The panchayat is an independent body, and they need to look into this matter. We have conducted the inspection and will send the report to the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department in a few days. We will also issue a stay order. It is up to the police to decide whether an FIR will be filed or not," a source stated.

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Porvorim PSI Sitaram Malik, currently stationed in Kolkata to investigate the alleged misappropriation of Rs 4.62 crore in central funds allocated to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), disclosed that funds were routed through five banks to execute the scam.

These banks include Bandhan Bank, State Bank of India (SBI), Bank of Baroda, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Punjab National Bank.

The officer further stated that a resident from Kolkata has been detained in connection with the case. He declined to offer further details, stating that investigations are ongoing and it would be premature

**One of the accused, Rabin Paul, whose bank account was allegedly used in the transactions, has claimed he was unaware of the activity. However, police remain unconvinced, citing the traceability provided by digital banking systems**

to share more at this stage.

Earlier, PSI Malik had revealed that the fraud came to light on May 16 when Dr Shambhu Ghadi, Director of Goa Samagra Shiksha, was alerted by a bank official about a suspicious signature on a cheque submitted for clearance. Dr Ghadi, who confirmed that he had not issued the cheque, rushed

to the bank. Upon verification of irregularities, he promptly filed a complaint with the Porvorim Police.

Preliminary investigations have pointed to 10 questionable transactions between March 8 and 25. One of the accused, Rabin Paul, whose bank account was allegedly used in the transactions, has claimed he was unaware of the activity. However, police remain unconvinced, citing the traceability provided by digital banking systems.

Paul, who was arrested in Barasat, West Bengal, is not believed to be an unwitting participant. Investigators suspect he earned a commission of approximately 10 percent on each fraudulent transaction.

## One dies in road accident in Goa daily, says CM

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Tuesday said at least one person dies every day in a road accident in the State, which adds up to over 365 deaths every year.

Speaking at the launch of the Driver Sensitisation Tab Lab at the RTO office near KTC Bus Terminus, Panjim, Sawant said, "We are afraid of and careful about COVID-19, but we are not afraid of and careful about accidents."

The 'Wrong Side of the Road' project, introduces a 45-minute module that combines video-based learning with attitudinal assessments to offer a reflective learning experience.

Sawant announced that completing the module will be mandatory for all individuals applying for new or renewed driving licenc-

es in the State. Similar Tab Labs have been set up in all nine RTOs across the State under CSR initiative and, aim to inculcate road safety awareness and responsible driving practices.

The Chief Minister said that Driver Sensitisation TabLabs is a revolutionary step in road safety awareness and will feature interactive learning modules, real-life accident stories, and crucial lessons on safe driving. Every citizen visiting RTOs for licences or renewals will engage with these powerful resources, sparking reflection and responsibility, and ultimately helping prevent accidents, he said.

Sawant said, "Together, let us build a culture of safe driving, responsible choices and awareness on our roads. A safer Goa begins with aware citizens. Let's make every journey a safe one."

## FDA busts supplier of analogue chocolate products in Calangute

Seizes products worth around Rs 3 lakh

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) late Monday night busted a major supplier of analogue chocolate products in Calangute and seized products worth around Rs 3 lakh, which were sold as chocolates.

Stating that FDA had been on his trail for over two weeks, officials said, "Last 15 days we were after him. In the last three-four months we conducted raids on shops selling cashew nuts and other products in the Calangute-Candolim, Arpora and Anjuna areas during which we found a lot of analogue chocolate products with labels of Mahima



enterprises and traders," FDA officials said.

"On the label the address was at Parra, Calangute-Mapusa road, but we could not find his whereabouts. Then we learnt that he had a place in Calangute. On Monday we kept a watch and at 9.30 pm he came to the place. When we ques-

tioned him, he could not produce any licence," FDA officials said.

It was found that the products were manufactured in Gujarat, Rajasthan and other northern States and brought to Goa and packed in Calangute. The products were made with vegetable fat instead of

choco butter.

"He was doing all his illegal activity here by putting labels and selling his products. He was only coming at night to do his packing and leave in the morning. Because of that we could not find him," the FDA officials said.

FDA officials seized products worth around Rs 3 lakh and also took samples of nine products which will be sent to a laboratory for testing during the raid on Monday night. "Based on the report we will take further action. This place has no electricity because of which some of the products have melted. He is also supplying to a lot of places, not only in Bardez, but other talukas also," the FDA officials said.

## Competent authority declines to stay CCP's order to vacate bldg

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Urban Development) Appellate Authority Sandip J Jacques, IAS on Tuesday declined to stay the impugned order of the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) Commissioner ordering to vacate the El Dourado building situated adjacent to Falcon Apartments and fixed the appeal for further hearing on merits before the Competent Authority on June 3.

Kamal Renjen and 10 traders who were tenants of the El Dourado building owned by CCP had challenged the order of the CCP Commissioner dated May 21, 2025, directing them to evict from the premises located on the ground floor of the building within a period of 24 hours, failing which, the CCP would seal the premises.

Aggrieved by the said order, the next day the appellants filed an appeal before

the appellate authority to set aside the order dated May 21, 2025, along with an application for stay of the order.

As the regular Secretary, Urban Development/Appellate Authority under the Statute is on leave and on account of the urgency and as directed by the High Court of Bombay at Goa, the Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Revenue) as the third link Officer to the Secretary Urban Development heard the appeal.

Adv Ronauq Rao contended that the CCP Commissioner under Section 272 of the CCP Act 2002, is not vested with the power of sealing, but only the power to demolish or remove the building or any part affixed thereto.

HOLY CROSS ASSOCIATION	
Campal Khadint	
Reg No. 39/Goa/20233	
DONATION COUPON DRAW	
1st Prize	001156
2nd Prize	001249
3rd Prize	001853
Consolation Prizes	
1. 001028	6. 001691
2. 000523	7. 000418
3. 000260	8. 001415
4. 003452	9. 003471
5. 001321	10. 003082

## Chorao-Ribandar Ro-Ro ferry trial run begins

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The trial run of the much-awaited roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry service commenced on the Chorao-Ribandar route on Tuesday.

The Ro-Ro ferry can carry over 15 cars and equal number of two-wheelers per trip and features an enclosed seating area for passengers.

Ro-Ro ferries allow vehicles to roll on from one end and roll off from the other, simplifying vehicle transportation across the river.

Last year, the River and Navigation Department (RND) had unveiled plans to introduce roll-on roll-off ferries (RoRo) on Ribandar-Chorao route.

## Vascoite injured in dog attack, two women booked

Team Herald

**VASCO:** The Vasco Police on Tuesday registered a case against two women after their pet dog allegedly attacked a local resident at Mangor Hill.

The incident occurred in the afternoon on May 21 when the dog bit Laxmi Pillai, residing at Mangor Hill.

Pillai in her complaint stated that Gudiya Singh and Asmita Singh, both residents of Vasco, negligently unleashed their pet dog at their residence, which attacked her causing severe injuries.

The complainant further stated that the accused also allegedly abused her with filthy language and threatened her, saying they

**Pillai in her complaint stated that Gudiya Singh and Asmita Singh, both residents of Vasco, negligently unleashed their pet dog at their residence, which attacked her causing severe injuries**

would bring more dogs to the area.

The Vasco Police registered a case under Sections 291 and 352 read with Section 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and PSI Plato Carvalho is conducting investigations under the guidance of Vasco PI Vaibhav Naik and the overall guidance of Mormugao DySP Gurudas Kadam.

## Stop allocating tourism land to pvt entities: Activist to corp

Accuses govt of selling State land to outsiders

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Activist Sanjay Barde submitted a memorandum to the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) director Kuldeep Arolkar demanding the corporation stop allocation of tourism land to private entities.

Barde clarified that by "private bodies", he meant that such land should be given only to Goans, not to individuals or companies from outside the State.

Barde emphasised that Goa's freedom fighters fought for the rights and future of Goans, but today the government was selling State land to outsiders. He criticised the gov-

ernment for frequently claiming a lack of funds, questioning how ordinary people could have money if the State itself was broke.

He further stated that if the Central government, knowing Goa's dependence on tourism, failed to provide funds for tourism-related projects, it would be highly detrimental. He alleged that the Tourism Minister was allotting land to non-Goans for various projects, against the will of the local people, who did not want their land tied up in 40-year leases.

Barde cited the example of land opposite Hotel Mandovi, which was

leased to an outside party to develop a five-star hotel for a period of 30 to 40 years. He insisted that instead of leasing land to outsiders, the Goa government should develop tourism projects itself, which would generate employment for Goans—a benefit not currently being realised.

He also criticised the Opposition for failing to take a stand on the issue. While he acknowledged that reserving land solely for Goans might go against the Constitution, he argued that Goa was a special case and that its people deserved special protection and consideration.

## Vedanta holding 80% land in Navelim ind estate: CM

Team Herald

**SANKHALI:** Expressing regret that 80 percent of land in the Navelim Industrial Estate is currently held by Vedanta, with much of the remaining land allocated to projects that provide little or no benefit to Goans, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant attributed the prevailing situation to poor decisions by previous political leaders.

He was speaking during the foundation stone laying ceremony of the ethanol plant being developed by Central Biofuels Ltd at the Navelim Industrial Estate in Sankhali.

The plant is part of the initiative of "Greener Goa, Stronger Goa, and Smarter Goa." The State government is launching several green projects across the State.

This project is aimed at contributing to environmental sustainability and for boosting the agricultural sector and generate employment opportunities for the local population.

The plant, which will produce ethanol from sugarcane and other crops, ensures that even the by-products of production will be utilised effectively as nutritious cattle feed, thereby eliminating pollution and waste. Sawant appealed to the people of Navelim to extend their full cooperation to this initiative, highlighting its long-term benefits for the community.

He said that it took him 13 years to bring an environmentally friendly project to a site that had remained inactive for over two decades.

## Navy to welcome triumphant Navika Sagar Parikrama II crew

Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K who successfully circumnavigated the globe; to arrive in State tomorrow

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Indian Navy is all set to welcome the triumphant crew of Navika Sagar Parikrama II on successful completion of circumnavigation of the Globe onboard Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini.

Accomplishing this rare feat in double-handed mode, Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K are set to touch the shores of Goa on Thursday, May 29. This extraordinary sailing expedition was flagged off from Naval Ocean Sailing Node,

Goa on October 2 last year. The flag-in ceremony of this landmark event will be presided over by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Mormugao Port.

Formally marking the culmination of the circumnavigation. The expedition symbolises India's maritime endeavours, showcasing the nation's prominence in global maritime activities and Indian Navy's commitment to excellence and Nari Shakti signifying the motto "Courageous Hearts Boundless Seas".

Over a period of eight months, the Naval duo (famously called #Dil-Roo) covered a distance of 25,400 nm (approximately 50,000-km) across four continents, three oceans and three Great Capes, braving extreme weather conditions and challenging seas relying solely on sails and wind power.

The crew encountered winds upto 50 knots (93 kmph) coupled with stormy weather conditions and extremely cold temperatures during the journey, setting the ultimate test of human en-

durance, perseverance and sailing skills. Though each leg had its own challenges, the third leg of the journey from Lyttleton to Port Stanley was one of the most arduous.

The crew encountered three cyclones, navigated through the treacherous Drake Passage and successfully rounded Cape Horn. The circumnavigation highlights the unwavering spirit, exceptional valour, courage and perseverance of the officers amidst challenging conditions of the sea and nature.

