

shorttakes

**Court acquits man accused of raping daughter with special needs due to lack of evidence**

**PANJIM:** A Fast Track Special Court (POCSO) in Goa has acquitted a man accused of sexually assaulting his 19-year-old daughter with special needs, citing insufficient evidence to support the prosecution's claims. Presiding Judge Durga Madkaikar ruled that the prosecution failed to establish the charges beyond reasonable doubt. The court's decision was based on the medical examination, which revealed no signs of sexual assault—specifically, the hymen was intact, and no physical injuries were found on the victim's body. In her judgment, Judge Madkaikar highlighted significant discrepancies in the victim's statements during cross-examination, which undermined the credibility of the allegations. Furthermore, the court noted that the prosecution's case was primarily based on the testimonies of investigating officers, while statements made by teachers were considered hearsay and inadmissible as concrete evidence. Given the absence of substantial proof and the inconsistencies in witness statements, the court extended the benefit of the doubt to the accused and ordered his acquittal.

**66-year-old dies after fall while repairing garage in Borim**

**PONDA:** Vasant Naik, 66, resident of Ponda, has died while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim, following a fall from a height at Borim. Police enquiries at GMC revealed that the deceased had been admitted after falling while repairing a garage shed at his residence. An inquest panchanama was conducted which was subsequently sent for post-mortem examination. The police surgeon opined the cause of death as "head injury associated with blunt chest trauma consequent to blunt force impact from surface and/or object." After the post-mortem, the body was handed over to family members for final rites in accordance with their religious customs. The enquiry was conducted by LPSI Anjali H Dhulapkar of Ponda Police Station.

**Man found dead in nullah at Kavlem after suspected fall from bridge**

**PONDA:** Shekhar Naik, 58, resident of Kavlem, Ponda, was found dead in the Kapileshwari nullah beneath the bridge at Velop-Kavlem. According to the deceased's family, he was known to consume alcohol regularly and often sat on the said bridge. It is suspected that while returning home the previous day, he may have fallen from the bridge, resulting in his death. The family members have stated they do not suspect any foul play. Police conducted a scene of UD occurrence panchanama and an inquest panchanama over the deceased's body, which was then sent for post-mortem examination. The Police Surgeon determined the cause of death to be "asphyxia as result of drowning." Following the examination, the body was handed over to the family for disposal as per religious rites. The enquiry was carried out by PSI Krishna Gawas of Ponda Police Station.

**Ponda man dies after self-accident**

**PONDA:** Krishna Jalmi, a resident of Querim-Ponda, died at GMC Bambolim following injuries sustained in a self-accident involving his scooter. The incident occurred on 24 May while Jalmi was returning home from his shop. He reportedly lost control, slipped and suffered serious injuries. He succumbed to his injuries in the casualty ward at GMC Bambolim. An autopsy confirmed death due to "damage to head, brain and chest consequent to blunt force impact." PSI Zaki Hussain of Mardol Police Station is conducting further inquiry.

**Assolna man dies after fall at home; police rule out foul play**

**MARGAO:** Joseph Miranda, 62 and a resident of Assolna, has died at Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim, after reportedly suffering a self-inflicted fall at his residence, Cuncolim Police confirmed. Upon receiving information from the Casualty Police at GMC Bambolim, a team from Cuncolim Police Station rushed to the hospital and conducted an inquest panchanama. The body was then subjected to post-mortem examination. According to the Police Surgeon, the cause of death was due to a head injury consequent to blunt force impact by surface and/or object. Police have ruled out any foul play in the incident and the body has been handed over to the family for final rites.

**Hyderabad history-sheeter remanded to 7-days police custody**

**PANJIM:** Abdul Altaf, a 25-year-old history-sheeter from Hyderabad, has been remanded to seven days of police custody by the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court in connection with the alleged murder of Dheeru Sharma, a security personnel from Madhya Pradesh. The incident occurred in the early hours of Thursday at a casino located in Campal-Panjim.

According to police sources, Altaf is the prime suspect in the fatal attack on Sharma, which has sparked serious concerns over casino security and criminal elements operating in the area. Panjim police are continuing their investigation into the motive behind the murder and any potential accomplices. Altaf's custodial interrogation is expected to shed more light on the events leading up to the crime.

**St Anthony's feast at Deussua on June 15**

**CHINCHINIM:** The blessing of the maddi followed by Mass, for the upcoming Trezena and feast of St Anthony will be held on June 2, at 5.30 pm at Deussua-Chinchinim. The Trezena will commence on June 3, and continue until June 14.

The Mass timings during the Trezena will be 6.15 am, 8.15 am, and 5 pm.

The feast of St Anthony will be celebrated on June 15, with masses at 5 am, 6.45 am, 8.30 am, 12 pm, and 5 pm. Auxiliary Bishop of Goa and Daman Simião Purificação Fernandes will be main celebrant at the feast Mass at 10.15 am.

**power shutdown**

**VERNA:** On June 2, from 8 am to 5 pm. Areas affected are Velsao Dando, Fabrica waddo, Infant Jesus area.

**CANSAULIM:** On June 2, from 8.30 am to 5 pm. Affected areas are Velsao Dando, Fabrica vaddo and Infant Jesus area and surrounding areas.

**Ponda council demolishes Portuguese-era shops**

Owners claim to be selectively targeted, demand justice for destroyed livelihood; PMC says notices issued

**PONDA:** The Ponda Municipality has cleared eight roadside shops—locally known as gaddas (kiosks)—dating back to the Portuguese era, citing a recent High Court (HC) directive to remove highway encroachments across Goa. The demolition has sparked outrage among the affected shop owners, who claim they were neither properly rehabilitated nor treated fairly.

Shocked and distressed the owners have demanded justice from the Chief Minister of Goa, alleging that their livelihoods have been destroyed overnight.

According to the Ponda Municipal Council (PMC), the demolition was carried out in a road widening zone based on a recent HC order directing the removal of encroachments from major highways and roadsides. However, the gadda owners claim they were legally operating since the Portuguese era.

"This action is unjust and without proper rehabilitation," said several affected shopkeepers. They expressed concern over the selective nature of the clearance. "In the same row, an old building, a religious structure and a staircase remain untouched. In such a situation, how is road widening possible?" they questioned.

The shop owners further ascertained that they had been conducting business for over six decades. "There are many encroachments along the roadside here. Why



Notices had been served earlier, and the gaddas were removed accordingly  
**Vishant Naik, Municipal Engineer**

There are so many illegal structures in Ponda, yet only eight shop owners have been targeted. This is a grave injustice  
**Anand Naik, Affected vendor**

They were promised relocation, but the site shown to them at Indira Market is in a dilapidated condition and not commercially viable. Hence, they rejected the offer  
**Surel Tilve, Advocate**

were only our shops demolished? We suspect vested interests behind this," said one vendor.

The affected vendors have submitted a written request seeking rehabilitation or permission to re-settle near the old Shastri Hall building site, which was recently demolished.

Municipal Engineer Vishant Naik confirmed that the demolition was executed as per High Court directions concerning roadside encroachments on national highways, major internal roads and within the city. "Notices had been served

earlier, and the gaddas were removed accordingly," he said.

Naik added that the PMC had earlier attempted to remove the structures, but the shop owners had approached the District Court where the matter remained pending. "We had offered to relocate them to the Ponda Market Complex and Indira Market, but they refused," he said.

However, an owner countered this claim: "The Indira Market is in a dilapidated state, and there is no possibility of attracting customers there. We had no

choice but to reject the relocation offer."

Anand Naik, another affected vendor, said, "We are struggling to feed our families. The Chief Minister had promised to remove only illegal structures, but we were operating under a renewed lease. Suddenly, the PMC stopped collecting taxes from us. There are so many illegal structures in Ponda, yet only eight shop owners have been targeted. This is a grave injustice."

Naik added that although rehabilitation was offered, the proposed locations were not viable for sustaining

**New toll rates for link road to Mopa Airport**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has officially notified toll rates for vehicles using the elevated link road connecting NH 66 to Manohar International Airport in Goa. The toll, which will be collected by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), will apply to taxis, private vehicles, and local residents.

According to the notification, toll charges will range from Rs 19.70 for private cars and Rs 32.50 for taxis to Rs 127.30 for large container and trailer trucks with seven or more axles. In a move aimed at supporting regional transport services, taxis registered in North Goa will be eligible for a 50% discount, provided no alternate route exists for commercial traffic.

To ease the financial burden on locals, the NHAI has also introduced a monthly toll pass priced at Rs 350 for the 2025-26 fiscal year. This pass is available to residents who live within 20 kilometers of the toll plaza and have vehicles registered in their name. The monthly fee will be revised annually, the ministry said.

**WRD faces criticism over dam safety during officials' absence**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** As rains batter Goa, a storm of criticism is brewing - not just over the weather, but over the absence of key Water Resources Department (WRD) officials at a time of heightened flood risk and dam safety concerns.

Several senior engineers tasked with overseeing Goa's water infrastructure are currently away attending a week-long training programme at the National Water Academy in Pune. Among them are the superintending engineer for Goa and two engineers responsible for major dams, including the Amthane dam, where crucial gate installation work has just begun. The state-sponsored training runs from May 26 to June 1.

While the programme is acknowledged as important for professional development, its timing has drawn sharp criticism. With the monsoon in full swing, officials stress that the physical presence of these senior engineers is vital for real-time monitoring and response, particularly in managing water levels and supervising ongoing works.

**Mestawada nullah contaminated by oil; Mormugao council vows action**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The water quality in Mestawada nullah has come under sharp scrutiny after lab tests confirmed grease and oil contamination in a black water sample from the site. Following complaints from local residents about pollution, the Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) launched testing that revealed this serious environmental threat.

MMC Chairperson Girish Borker confirmed the presence of grease and oil, which can severely harm aquatic life and disrupt the nullah's natural flow. "This contamination is a grave issue. We are determined to find the source and take corrective action," Borker stated.

In response, the MMC has begun investigating the origin of the oil spillage, coordinating with nearby industries, businesses, and households to uncover any improper waste disposal practices causing the pollution.

Adding to the urgency, the local MLA has filed a police complaint with Vasco police, emphasising the need for accountability.

**Minister orders probe into 5-month delay in support price for dairy farmers**

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Cooperation Minister Subash Shirodkar, speaking at the Goa Dairy premises on Saturday, announced that dairy farmers have not received their support price for the past five months and promised immediate action against officials responsible for the delay.

"I will take action today itself on concerned officials responsible for the delay," said the Minister, while addressing the gathering following the inauguration of two mobile veterinary ambulance services funded by the District Mineral Fund.

He added that such delays are causing "injustice and frustrations" among farmers, which in turn is affecting their milk production. Shirodkar said the newly launched mobile veterinary services would

I will take action today itself on concerned officials responsible for the delay  
**- Subash Shirodkar, Cooperation Minister**

greatly benefit farmers by providing timely treatment for their livestock.

The Minister also highlighted the launch of a new initiative, Viksit Bharat Viksit Sheti, started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 29. "16,000 scientists across India are currently working under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to develop high-yielding crop varieties and farmers should stay in contact with them," he advised.

Additionally, Shirodkar informed that the government has begun a 15-day Sheti Vikas Abhiyan across 60 villages to promote agricultural develop-

ment. He further stated that the government has set a target to increase the number of bhandaras (traditional water storage systems) by 500 to meet both the rising drinking water demand of Goans and the requirements of farmers.

Also present at the event were Goa Dairy Chairman Parag Nagarsekar, North Goa District Mineral Foundation's Pundalik Khojurvekar, South Goa Mineral Trust Chairman and Additional Collector Vishal Kundaikar, Rama Parab, Dr Sachin Tendulkar and the Managing Director of Goa Dairy.

Chairman Nagarsekar stated that the two ambulances, costing Rs 20 lakh, are fully equipped and will benefit farmers in treating their dairy animals. He affirmed that Goa Dairy remains committed to providing veterinary services to support the farming community.

their livelihood. He appealed to the Chief Minister for proper resettlement.

Prakash Mazrekar, a physically challenged shop owner who arrived at the site in a wheelchair, broke down in tears. "I lost everything. My two shops were my only source of income, and they were located at the same place for over sixty years. This is an inhuman act," he said, blaming the Municipality and local politicians for the demolition.

Dr Ketan Bhatikar also criticised the PMC's action. "The livelihoods of poor people have been snatched without any proper notice or rehabilitation. Politicians are set to benefit from this selective demolition," he alleged.

Advocate Surel Tilve, representing the shop owners, stated that his clients were operating

under lease agreements, which were recently terminated by the PMC. "They were promised relocation, but the site shown to them at Indira Market is in a dilapidated condition and not commercially viable. Hence, they rejected the offer," he said.

APPOINTMENTS

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