

After years of delay, Campal set to get new recreational, sports facility

Team Herald

PANJIM: The long-awaited football-cum-parade ground at Campal, Panjim, is set to open its gates soon, with 95 per cent of the work already completed. Only the laying of pavers and installation of recreational facilities for children remain, which are expected to be finished within a month.

Jointly developed by the State government and the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL), the project is estimated to cost Rs 28.85 crore. The upgraded facility will also include dedicated parking for two-wheelers and cars, adding to its accessibility and convenience.

The journey to this nearly completed project has not been without challenges. In January 2021, the Goa State Urban Development Agency (GSUDA) had dropped its initial plan to construct a football stadium at the Campal parade ground due to delays in obtaining a non-objection certificate (NOC) from the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department, as well as financial constraints. The land, measuring 40,000 square metres, belongs to the TCP Department.

At the time, GSUDA's general body had stated that the project could be



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tunity arose when IPSCDL decided, at its board meeting, to take up the construction under the Smart City/AMRUT Mission Scheme of the Government of India. The project, executed through GSUDA as deposit work, was renamed "Rejuvenation of Campal area of Panaji City as green space with recreation centre."

In March 2021, the TCP Department granted approval for the land's use, with the condition that the completed project be handed back to the department unconditionally.

Contractor M/s Bagkiya Construction Pvt Ltd has since dismantled the on-site cement plant, and final touches are now underway. With its multi-purpose design and focus on both sports and recreation, the Campal football-cum-parade ground is poised to become a prominent public space in the capital city.

PROJECT COMPLETION STATUS

- 95% of work completed
- Only pavers and children's recreational facilities pending
- Expected to be finished within a month

CHALLENGES FACED

- Delay in NOC from Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department
- Financial constraints

PURPOSE AND OUTLOOK

- Designed as a multi-purpose space for both sports and recreation
- Set to become a key public facility in Panjim

PROJECT REVIVAL

- Revived under Smart City/AMRUT Mission Scheme
- Renamed as: Rejuvenation of Campal area of Panaji City as green space with recreation centre
- TCP granted approval in March 2021, with condition to hand over project post-completion

revived if the TCP granted and if alternative funding the necessary clearances was sourced. The oppor-

Court reserves bail order in Bastora case

Team Herald

MAPUSA: The Mapusa District Court-II Additional Sessions Court on Monday heard arguments on the bail applications filed by three accused — Ranganath Shetye, Vinod Shetkar alias Shetye, and Adv Kaushal Shetye, all residents of Moira — arrested in connection with the alleged assault and attempt to murder a couple from Nachinola. The court has reserved its order for Wednesday.

After completing their initial five-day police custody, the three accused were produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Mapusa, who extended their police custody by two more days. The trio were arrested on June 3.

Opposing their bail pleas and seeking custody extension, the investigation officer told the JMFC that the accused are not cooperating and are deliberately misleading the investigation.

Advocate Vinayak Porob, representing the victim's family and assisting the prosecution as an intervener, informed the court that the prime accused, along with several identified and unidentified individuals, remain absconding.

Congress divided on 'Samvidhan Bachav Yatra' restart

Confusion arises within party ranks as sudden relaunch sparks criticism and mixed reactions from leaders and supporters

Team Herald

PANJIM: A series of social media posts by Congress leaders announcing the launch of a "Samvidhan Bachav Yatra" from Mandrem on Sunday has sparked confusion within the party and drawn criticism from civil society observers. The abrupt declaration has raised eyebrows across the political spectrum, with many questioning the timing, intent, and coordination behind the move.

DIVIDED THEY FIGHT

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) had earlier directed all State units to organise a 60-day "Samvidhan Bachao Abhiyan" beginning on Constitution Day (November 26, 2024) and concluding on Republic Day (January 26, 2025). In line with this directive, the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) had formally announced plans to carry out the campaign across all 40 Assembly constituencies.

On November 27, a public function in Panjim marked the official launch of the initiative. The event, headlined by constitutional expert Adv Cleofato Almeida Coutinho, was intended to kickstart a statewide outreach. However, in the weeks that followed, the campaign lost momentum and saw no substantial follow-up activities or public engagements, effectively rendering it inactive.

In an unexpected development, the Mandrem Block Congress Committee held an event on Sunday, which is now being portrayed on social media as the formal launch of the "Samvidhan Bachav Yatra." The retrospective rebranding of the event has led to confusion among party workers, especially since there was no prior internal communication or official notification about the campaign's revival or restructuring.

Despite the confusion, South Goa District Congress president Savio D'Silva came out in strong support of the programme. "We had

"We had decided to organise the Samvidhan Bachav Yatra in all constituencies and also at the booth level. I don't understand why some partymen are opposed to every programme. Whether it is organised or not, they always find something to complain about

— Savio D'Silva, South Goa district Congress president

decided to organise the Samvidhan Bachav Yatra in all constituencies and also at the booth level. I don't understand why some partymen are opposed to every programme. Whether it is organised or not, they always find something to complain about," D'Silva remarked.

The incident has reignited concerns over lack of internal coordination and communication within the Congress party's state unit, with civil society observers questioning the credibility and consistency of such campaigns.

SGD hospital delay: Govt flayed for broken tertiary status promise

Team Herald

MARGAO: Citizens of South Goa are voicing growing frustration over what they describe as the government's failure to deliver on its promise of upgrading the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH) to a full-fledged tertiary care facility.

The issue dates back to August 27, 2024, when residents of Margao, under the banner of Madganvocho Awaaz, submitted a formal memorandum urging authorities to make the SGDH fully operational and adequately staffed. The hospital, formerly known as Hospicio, was meant to serve as the cornerstone of advanced public healthcare in South Goa.

Just days later, on August 31, 2024, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane publicly declared that upgrading SGDH was his "responsibility" and vowed to transform it into a tertiary care center. He even visited the hospital in September 2024, inspecting its facilities and



assuring citizens those necessary steps would follow.

However, on June 8, 2025, Minister Rane appeared to soften his stance, stating that he would "find ways" to give SGDH semi-tertiary status—a downgrade from his original commitment.

This shift has triggered criticism from residents, activists, and local leaders.

Prabhav Naik, youth leader and one of the signatories of the original memorandum, said: "We were promised tertiary care. Now we're being asked to accept something less. Why this step-motherly treatment to South Goa? What changed in nine months?"

Hospicio continues to suffer from severe staff shortages. Key depart-

ments function with skeletal personnel, and critical posts remain vacant despite repeated assurances from the government. Whether it is nurses, technicians, or specialist doctors, recruitment remains sluggish, affecting patient care directly. For a hospital expected to serve an entire district, this is unacceptable, said Naik.

Despite being in 2025, SGDH still lacks a fully operational Cardiac Catheterisation Lab (Cath Lab), a basic requirement in any tertiary or even semi-tertiary care institution. Heart patients in South Goa continue to be referred to GMC Bambolim or private hospitals, often losing precious time in emergencies.

Sacorda villagers plead for mobile network, power and water amid govt's digital push

Team Herald

PONDA: Residents of Deulwada in the remote Sacorda village have voiced serious concerns over poor mobile network connectivity, frequent power outages and inadequate water supply, saying they are being left behind in India's digital revolution.

Villagers said that although the Government has introduced digitalisation across sectors, they are unable to avail the benefits due to a complete lack of supporting infrastructure in their locality. The residents expressed a deep desire to become part of Digital India, but said that without the basics, such as reliable internet and electricity, it remains a distant dream.

"Government has introduced digitalisation in every field, and we too want to taste its fruits," said Bipin Naik, a resident of Sacorda, which falls under the Sanguem constituency. "There is an urgent need to improve network facilities



in our village. From online gas booking, ration distribution, banking, Aadhaar services to ambulance calls — everything now depends on mobile connectivity. However, we have only BSNL here, and its network is weak and unreliable. When the power goes, so does the network, and this disrupts daily life."

He added that many residents had installed Wi-Fi, but it becomes useless during power outages as routers stop functioning. "Online learning is now a necessity, especially for higher education. Due to the poor infrastructure,

Earlier, life continued without mobile connectivity. But now, from banking to ration and studies, everything depends on it — Gayatri Mapari, Deulwada-Sacorda panch

should allow other service providers to set up infrastructure.

Pradeep Verenkar, another local from Deulwada, highlighted the challenges faced by students. "My daughter is preparing for NEET and needs to study online. Even though we installed Wi-Fi, it doesn't work during power failures. Sometimes we are forced to climb the hill at night and stay there for hours just to get a signal. It's frustrating and dangerous."

He said even basic tasks like calling the 108 ambulance service, gas booking or receiving ration quotas become difficult. "The Prime Minister talks about Digital India, but we are unable to access its benefits."

Nodal Officer appointed to prevent untoward incidents at Vasco Saptah

Team Herald

VASCO: In preparation for the upcoming annual Damodar Bhajani Saptah, the newly elected Vasco Saptah Committee has decided to appoint a nodal officer to help prevent any untoward incidents, including stampede-like situations during the popular religious festival.

Committee president Narendra Gurav has appealed to political leaders to avoid bringing large groups of supporters to the Damodar temple, particularly during the main coconut anointment ceremony, to prevent overcrowding.

Following a meeting of the committee, Prashant Joshi stated that several important measures were discussed, taking into account the massive turnout expected during the Saptah celebrations. He noted that new guidelines may be issued soon, especially in light of last month's tragic stampede during the Shree Lairai

Devi jatra in Shirgao. Joshi added that the decision to appoint a nodal officer throughout the Saptah festivities is aimed at ensuring crowd control and the safety of devotees. The committee has pledged to work responsibly and in close coordination with authorities, including the South Goa Collector, police, and other government departments, while strictly adhering to all directions and guidelines.

Additionally, the Mormugao Deputy Collector has directed the committee to reduce crowding within the temple premises during the inaugural function and the culminating Gopal Kala ritual.

The newly elected committee includes Narendra Gurav as president, Mahesh Naik as vice president, Santosh Khorjuvekar as secretary, and Dilip Kajale as treasurer of the Damodar Bhajani Saptah Utsav Samiti, Vasco.




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