



Socorro Panchayat Issues 7-Day Eviction Notice Over Child Sexual Assault Case

■ Family residing in 20 Point Programme area asked to vacate following serious complaint involving minor victim
 ■ Accused school driver arrested by Porvorim Police

Team Goemkarponn

SOCORRO: Socorro Village Panchayat has issued a 7-day eviction notice to Allabhaksh Saiyydabade and his family, residents of the 20 Point Programme area, following a serious child molestation complaint lodged by a mother from Mapusa, Bardez. The

complaint alleges that Saiyydabade, hired as a school transport driver for the complainant's 6-year-old daughter, sexually assaulted and abused the child multiple times at various locations in Porvorim prior to November 2025. He also allegedly assaulted and threatened the minor victim.



The minor victim was medically examined at GMC Bambolim, where the medical officer confirmed evidence of sexual assault. Acting on the complaint, Porvorim

Police registered an FIR on 21 December 2025, immediately traced the accused, and arrested him the same day. Saiyydabade has been remanded to four days of police custody, with further investigation ongoing under LPSI Prajyoti Dessai and PI Rahul Parab of Porvorim Police Station.

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US to End H-1B Lottery, Introduce Pay-Weighted Visa Selection System

■ New rules prioritise higher-paid, highly skilled foreign workers; change likely to impact Indian professionals

New York: The United States has announced a major overhaul of its H-1B work visa programme, ending the long-standing lottery system and replacing it with a weighted selection process that favours higher-paid and more highly skilled foreign workers. The move, notified by the Donald Trump administration, is expected to significantly alter how work visas are awarded and could make it harder for entry-level professionals, including many from India, to qualify.

Under the new framework, H-1B visas will no longer be distributed through a random draw. Instead, applications will be ranked based on wage levels and skill criteria, increasing the chances for candidates offered higher salaries. The Department of Homeland Security said the new rule will come into force on February 27, 2026, and will apply to the fiscal year 2027 H-1B registration cycle.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services said the existing lottery system had been misused by some employers to hire foreign workers at lower wages. "The random selection process was exploited by employers primarily seeking to import foreign labour at salaries below what would be paid



to American workers," a USCIS spokesperson said.

The change is part of a broader push by the Trump administration to reshape employment-based immigration. A government statement said the new system aligns with other policy measures, including a presidential proclamation requiring employers to pay an additional \$100,000 per H-1B visa as a condition for eligibility. That fee requirement is currently under legal challenge. The administration has also introduced a proposed "gold card" visa offering a path to citizenship for wealthy individuals in exchange for a \$1 million payment.

The H-1B programme allows US companies to hire foreign workers in specialised occupations and is widely used by technology firms, hospitals and educational institutions. Indian

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Congress Eyes 27 Seats in 2027, BJP Calls Claim 'Daydreaming'

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) has expressed confidence of securing a decisive victory in the 2027 Assembly elections, claiming that recent Zilla Panchayat election results reflect rising public discontent



against the BJP. Speaking at a press briefing, GPCC president Amit Patkar

said the ZP outcome had reinforced Congress' position as the principal opposition in the state and marked a clear turnaround for the party. He said the results pointed to strong anti-incumbency sentiments against the ruling BJP, which, according to him, were evident across constituencies. Patkar said the

party has begun a detailed booth-level assessment to identify strengths and gaps, which he said would help sharpen organisational strategy ahead of the 2027 polls. He noted that Congress' performance had steadily improved over successive elections, pointing out that the party increased its ZP tally

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY PATRAO

Warm birthday wishes to **SHRI. RITESH NAIK**

Best Wishes From
 Amit Kamat - Nisarga Infra
 Sandeep Nigalye - Raj Housing
 Chandan Naik - Arya Builders
 Kishore Naik - Pankaj Tiles Corporation
 Jalaram Enterprises
 Rauf Mulla - HUM Builder
 Pradeep Pandey - Sai Rubber
 Tejas Shenoy - Businessman
 Mahendra Khandeparkar - Businessman

Disqualification Petition Filed Against Arpora-Nagoa Sarpanch Roshan Redkar

Team Goemkarponn

ARPORA: A plea seeking the disqualification of Arpora-Nagoa Sarpanch Roshan Redkar has been submitted to the Directorate of Panchayats, alleging misuse of authority, corruption and multiple violations of statutory provisions.

The petition, filed by Siraj Pednekar on Tuesday, calls for Redkar's removal from office and seeks an interim direction restraining him from functioning as sarpanch until the case is decided.

According to the petitioner, Redkar unlawfully granted a



licence to the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub, despite the establishment being situated in an ecologically sensitive zone where commercial activity is restricted. Addressing mediapersons, the petitioner's counsel alleged that the approval was granted in

violation of applicable laws and said the illegal permission was a contributing factor in the circumstances surrounding the devastating fire that claimed 25 lives on December 6. The petition also raises allegations that the sarpanch issued 13 repair licences for non-existent structures, all of which are said to be located within Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) protected areas. It further claims that Redkar himself is facing a demolition order in connection with an unauthorised construction.

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ZP Verdict Strengthens Sawant's Grip on Goa and His Standing in Delhi

The verdict of the 2025 Zilla Panchayat elections has quietly but decisively reshaped Goa's political landscape. While much attention has been placed on opposition failures, the larger story is one of consolidation. Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant has emerged from these elections stronger, more secure in his leadership, and significantly more relevant within the BJP's national power structure.

Zilla Panchayat elections are often dismissed as local contests, but in Goa, they serve as a critical barometer of rural sentiment. They test a government's organisational strength, its grassroots connections and its ability to translate governance into votes. On all these counts, the BJP under Sawant has passed convincingly. Winning a clear majority of ZP seats across North and South Goa is no small feat in a state known for volatile politics and fragmented mandates.

For Sawant, this result is not merely about numbers. It is about authority. Since taking over as Chief Minister, he has faced scepticism from rivals and, at times, from within his own party. Questions were raised about his political heft, his ability to manage allies, and his command over the organisation. The ZP results have answered those doubts far more effectively than any speech or reshuffle could.

Rural Goa has endorsed continuity. This endorsement matters because village-level governance is where policies meet people. Roads, water supply, sanitation, welfare delivery and local employment shape voter perception more than headline politics. That the BJP managed to retain dominance at this level suggests that Sawant's administration has not lost touch with the ground. It also indicates that welfare schemes and development projects have found

"The Delhi factor cannot be overstated. For a small state like Goa, political capital in the national capital translates into leverage. It means quicker clearances, stronger representation and greater confidence from the Centre in backing state leadership. A chief minister who wins local body elections convincingly earns credibility as a mass leader rather than a caretaker. Sawant has crossed that threshold. Critics may argue that opposition disunity played a role, and that is true. But elections are not won by chance. Political leadership is measured by the ability to exploit openings and convert weakness of rivals into an advantage. The BJP did exactly that. Sawant's leadership ensured that the party remained focused while the opposition remained scattered."

resonance beyond urban centres.

Equally important is what this result signals to New Delhi. In today's BJP, chief ministers are judged not just on governance but on their ability to deliver elections and keep the organisation disciplined. Sawant has demonstrated both. The campaign was tightly managed, alliances were held together, and internal dissent was kept under control. This sends a clear message to the central leadership that Goa is in steady hands.

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There is also a psychological dimension to this victory. Zilla Panchayat wins to energise the cadre. They create a pipeline of local leaders, strengthen booth level machinery and generate momentum ahead of larger elections. With Assembly polls on the horizon in the coming years, this result provides Sawant a solid foundation to build upon.

However, consolidation brings responsibility. A stronger mandate raises expectations. Rural voters who backed the BJP will expect faster development, better services and responsive governance. For Sawant, the challenge now is to convert political capital into tangible outcomes. Stability must translate into delivery.

Still, politically speaking, the message from the ZP elections is unmistakable. Dr Pramod Sawant is no longer just managing Goa. He is shaping its political direction. In doing so, he has not only strengthened his position within the state but has also enhanced his standing in Delhi as a leader who delivers results.

LETTERS

Justice Mahesh Sonak's Elevation a Proud Moment for Goa

A very proud moment for Goa and Goans that our very own Honourable Justice Mahesh Sonak has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court. He is only the second Goan to attain the distinction of being appointed as Chief Justice of a High Court. The first being Justice Ferdino Rebello, who retired in 2011 as Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court. Incidentally, Mahesh Sonak started practicing in 1988, at the age of 23, under then Goa's topmost lawyer Ferdino Rebello.

On June 21, 2013, Mahesh Sonak was sworn in as a Judge of the Bombay High Court and has endeavored to ensure that the wheels of Justice moved in accordance with the law while doing his part in taking the Judiciary to enhanced heights.

Anyone who has interacted with Mahesh Sonak will confidently vouch that he has all it takes to be a good Judge. Besides having a sound knowledge of Law, he is gifted with a consistent good disposition, which is vital for a Judge to conduct Court proceedings. Even as an Advocate, Mahesh Sonak was outstanding and a true role model for the legal fraternity. Let us wish the ever so humble, down-to-earth, and upright Justice Mahesh Sonak all the very best in discharging this important role as Chief Justice of a High Court.

Our Goa is gifted with outstanding legal eagles and the best of legal brains, but sadly, a Goan has never been elevated to the Supreme Court of India. May that wish, hope, and desire of every Goan be a reality soon. Now, Justice Mahesh Sonak is our best bet to make Goa and Goans proud.

- Aires Rodrigues, London/Lisbon/Goa

Opposition's Failure Handed BJP a Free Run in ZP Elections

The recently concluded Zilla Parishad elections in Goa have once again exposed a hard and uncomfortable truth. The BJP did not merely win this election. It was gifted a cakewalk by the collective failure of the opposition, particularly the Revolutionary Goans Party, the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress.

At a time when there was a clear undercurrent of public dissatisfaction, the opposition parties chose ego, posturing and political one-upmanship over responsibility. The result was predictable. A divided opposition meant consolidated votes for the BJP. This was not political inevitability. It was political negligence.

Goa's electorate has repeatedly shown that it is willing to back alternatives, provided they appear credible and united. The ZP elections were never about ideology alone. They were about arithmetic, coordination and basic political sense. All three were missing. Instead of coming together on a minimum common programme to stop the BJP's dominance at the grassroots level, the opposition preferred to fight each other.

The consequences go beyond one election. Zilla Parishads shape local development, planning and accountability. By failing to forge an alliance, these parties have weakened democratic checks and handed over complete control to the ruling party.

Opposition politics is not about individual party survival. It is about representing people who seek balance, debate and accountability. On that count, RGP, AAP and Congress have betrayed the trust of Goans.

If lessons are not learnt now, Goa risks becoming a one-party state not because the BJP is unbeatable, but because the opposition refuses to act like an opposition.

A Concerned Goan

Goa-IPB Clears 10 New Projects Worth ₹217.25 Crore, Over 900 Jobs to Be Created

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The 40th meeting of the Goa Investment Promotion & Facilitation Board (Goa-IPB) was chaired by Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant in the presence of Industries Minister Mauvin Godinho, GIDC Chairman Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, the Chief Secretary, senior government officials and industry representative.

During the meeting, the Board approved 10 new investment projects involving a total investment of ₹217.25 crore, which are expected to generate 941 employment opportunities across diverse sectors



including aviation and adventure tourism, food processing, automobile and mobility, packaging, tourism and hospitality, logistics, electronics and toy manufacturing.

The Board also reviewed major investment proposals seeking incentives under the Goa Industrial Growth & Investment Promotion Policy, 2022.

These include a ₹722 crore DI pipe

manufacturing project by Vedanta Ltd. with employment potential for 585 persons, a ₹1,500 crore expansion project by 3B Advanced Composites Pvt. Ltd. in glass fibre manufacturing expected to generate 1,000 jobs, and a ₹363 crore medium voltage switchgear manufacturing unit by Siemens Ltd. at Verna, creating 182 jobs.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister

Dr. Pramod Sawant said, "Our government remains firmly committed to transparent and time-bound clearances, ensuring ease of doing business, promoting sustainable industrial growth and generating meaningful employment opportunities for Goans. Through the Goa-IPB, we are facilitating investments that align with Goa's development vision while safeguarding environmental and social interests."

The approvals reaffirm the State Government's focus on attracting quality investments, strengthening industrial infrastructure and boosting job creation in Goa.

Atal Smruti Sammelan to Be Held Across Goa from Dec 25 to 30: CM

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant said that the Atal Smruti Sammelan will be organised across Goa from December 25 to December 30 to commemorate the conclusion of the Atal Smruti Shatabdi and to familiarise the younger generation with the life, ideals and social contributions of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Chief Minister was speaking after joining a meeting of the BJP Goa Pradesh, chaired in the presence of BJP Goa President Shri Damu Naik and attended by BJP Tamil Nadu leader Shri K. Annamalai. The meeting was also attended by party office-bearers and workers from across the State.

Highlighting the significance of the twin observances, CM Sawant said, "Veer Bal Diwas inspires us to dedicate ourselves to the service of the nation, remembering the supreme sacrifice of the four Sahibzade, while the Atal Smruti Sammelan strengthens our resolve to uphold the ideals of good governance, Antyodaya and our collective mission of building a Viksit Bharat."

He said the party



is observing Veer Bal Diwas across the State in reverent memory of the four Sahibzade, whose courage and sacrifice continue to inspire generations.

Referring to organisational matters, the Chief Minister said that a meeting was held to congratulate all BJP Zilla Panchayat candidates and to discuss a series of programmes scheduled in the coming days.

"We have organised the Atal Smruti Sammelan in many parts of Goa. This Sammelan is being held across the State so that today's youth can learn about Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his social work. The Atal Smruti Sammelan will begin on December 25 and conclude on December 30," CM Sawant said.

The programmes form part of the BJP's efforts to connect with youth, highlight the legacy of national leaders and reinforce the party's commitment to nation-building and inclusive development.

POCSO Court Denies Bail to Teen Accused in Minor Kidnapping and Sexual Assault Case

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Fast Track Special Court under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in Panaji has refused to grant bail to an 18-year-old accused in a case involving the alleged abduction and

sexual assault of a minor girl, citing preliminary evidence and the ongoing nature of the investigation.

The order was delivered by Presiding Officer Durga Madkaikar. The accused was taken into custody on December 13 after the victim's father lodged a complaint,

alleging that his 16-year-old daughter had been unlawfully taken away from his custody.

As part of the investigation, police traced the minor to Karnataka, where she was rescued and subsequently brought back to Goa. The prosecution informed the



court that the victim, in her statement, alleged that the accused had engaged in sexual relations with her. Medical examination findings placed before the court reportedly indicated injuries consistent with

NBWL Clears Iron Ore Handling at Kalem Yard Inside Bhagwan Mahavir Sanctuary

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In a move that has triggered concern among local residents and environmental groups, the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has given its approval to the South Western Railway (SWR) to continue iron ore handling operations at the Kalem railway yard, which lies within the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park. The decision was taken during a recent NBWL meeting, where the Board recommended the proposal to the Union



Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for granting wildlife clearance. The clearance involves the use of 0.7616 hectares of forest land within the sanctuary, subject to strict conditions aimed at protecting forest land and wildlife habitats during both execution and operation of the activity.

Tension in Porvorim After Arrest in Minor Sexual Assault Case

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Tension prevailed in Porvorim on Tuesday evening after residents gathered outside the residence of a man arrested in connection with the alleged sexual assault of a six-year-old girl.

According to Porvorim Police, an FIR was registered on December 21, 2025, following a complaint filed by the mother of the minor victim, a resident of Mapusa, Bardez. The complaint alleged that the accused, identified as Allabhaksh Saiyyadabade alias Bakshi, who was working as a driver, had been hired to transport the child between home and school.

The complainant stated that prior to November



2025, at different locations in Porvorim, the accused allegedly subjected the minor to inappropriate physical contact, sexual abuse and intimidation.

The child was medically examined at Goa Medical College, Bambolim, where the medical officer reportedly observed findings suggestive of sexual assault.

Police said the

accused was traced and arrested on the same day the complaint was lodged. He has been remanded to four days of police custody. Further investigation in the case is being conducted by LPSI Prajyoti Dessai under the supervision of Porvorim Police Inspector Rahul Parab.

Later on Tuesday, around 8 pm, a large number of local residents

gathered near the accused's residence in the 20 Point area of Porvorim, demanding that the accused's family vacate the locality. The residents expressed concern that such incidents adversely affect the safety and reputation of the village.

Following the gathering, Porvorim Police, led by PI Rahul Parab along with PSI Mandar and additional police personnel, rushed to the spot to prevent any breach of law and order. Panchayat members were also present during discussions with the residents. Police urged the crowd to remain calm and assured that the matter was being handled strictly as per law.

Sexual Assault, Threat Case Registered by Women Police at Colva Beach

Team Goemkarponn

COLVA: The Women Police Station, Panaji, has registered a criminal case involving allegations of sexual assault, sexual harassment and criminal intimidation following a complaint filed by a woman, whose identity has been withheld for legal reasons.

According to police, Crime No. 11/2025 was registered on December 23, 2025, at 1.38 pm under Sections 64, 74, 75



and 351 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The complaint pertains to an incident that allegedly occurred on March 20, 2025, at around 12.15 am at Colva Beach, South Goa.

As per the complaint, the accused person allegedly sexually assaulted and harassed the woman by touching her inappropriately and outraging her modesty without her consent. It

is further alleged that when the complainant confronted the accused over a false complaint purportedly filed by him at Panaji Police Station, he threatened to defame her by lodging more false cases.

Following the complaint, the Women Police Station registered the offence. Further investigation is in progress under the supervision of LPSI Manish Mardolkar, Women Police Station, Panaji.

Two 19-Year-Olds Arrested for Motorcycle Theft in Caranzalem

Team Goemkarponn

TALEIGAO: Panaji Police have arrested two youths in connection with the theft of a motorcycle reported from Caranzalem, Tiswadi.

According to police, an offence was registered on December 22, 2025, at around 9.45 pm on the complaint of Santano Cruz Fernandes, a resident of H. No. 52 near the Old Post Office, Caranzalem. The complainant stated that his black Yamaha RX100 motorcycle bearing registration number GA 01 A 9462, worth approximately ₹30,000, was stolen on December 16, 2025, at around 3.12 am while it was parked in front of his house.



During the course of investigation, Panaji Police arrested two accused persons identified as Jayden Souza (19), son of Piedade Maxim, a resident of Odlem Bhat near Dr Parab Clinic, Taleigao, and Gauraksh Gawas (19), son of Ashok Gawas, presently residing at Camralwado near Niles Furniture, Taleigao.

Further investigation in the case is in progress and is being carried out by Head Constable Satish Maje (Buckle No. 5256) of Panaji Police Station.



Elderly Bank Pigmy Collector Robbed in Bicholim; One Accused Arrested

Team Goemkarponn

BICHOLIM: Bicholim Police have registered a robbery case after an elderly pigmy collector was robbed of cash near the Kareshwar temple in Bicholim, with one of the accused being arrested following a public chase.

According to police, the complainant, Ranjit Sakhalkar (74), son of Vithal Sakhalkar, a private service employee and resident of Vishwas Nagar, Lamgao, Bicholim, has been working as a pigmy collector appointed by Canara Bank since 1973.

The incident occurred on December 23, 2025, at around 2.30 pm, near the Kareshwar temple in Bicholim, when the complainant was walking towards his residence. Police said that two accused persons, acting with common intention,

allegedly snatched the complainant's bag containing cash amounting to ₹43,090 and fled from the spot. One of the accused, identified as Amit Gujjar (20), a resident of Mapusa and native of Khandwa, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, was chased and apprehended by members of the public with the assistance of police in an agricultural field while he was attempting to escape. He was subsequently placed under arrest, and the stolen cash was recovered from his possession. The second accused, Anuraj, a resident of Madhya Pradesh, is currently at large. In this connection, Bicholim Police have registered Crime No. 169/2025 under Section 304(2) read with Section 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Further investigation is in progress.

Team Goemkarponn

MANDREM: Mandrem Police have registered an unnatural death case after an elderly man accidentally fell into a well at Chonsai, Parsem in Pernem taluka.

According to police, Mandrem Police Station registered U.D. No. 55/2025 under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) on December 22, 2025, at around 5.40 pm, following information received from Police



Constable Rajesh Padolkar (Buckle No. 6734), attached to Robot 19 vehicle.

Police rushed to the spot at Chonsai, Parsem, Pernem, where it was revealed that the

deceased, identified as Ankush Naik (82), son of Dhaku Naik and a resident of H. No. 567/A, Chonsai, Parsem, was fetching water from the well at around 1.30 pm on the same day. Due to his advanced age, he reportedly lost balance and accidentally fell into the well.

Police have stated that no foul play is suspected in the incident. Further investigation is in progress and is being carried out by PSI Sarvesh R. Sawant of Mandrem Police Station.

Man Found Dead at Korgao, Pernem

Team Goemkarponn

PERNEM: Pernem Police have registered an unnatural death case following the death of a man who allegedly committed suicide at Korgao village in Pernem taluka.

According to police sources, on December 23, 2025, at around 12.50 pm, Pernem Police received a phone call from the Sarpanch of Korgao Panchayat, Devidas Nagvekar, informing that a person identified as



Siddheshwar Gawde, a resident of Gawdewada, Korgao, had reportedly committed suicide by hanging at his residence. The deceased was

rushed to the Community Health Centre (CHC), Tuem, by his family members in a 108 ambulance, where the medical officer declared

him brought dead.

In this connection, Pernem Police have registered Unnatural Death (UD) No. 16/2025 under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). Police conducted an inquest panchanama in the presence of two panch witnesses.

Preliminary enquiry has revealed that the deceased was reportedly mentally disturbed for the past few days. Further investigation is in progress at Pernem Police Station.

Nation Watching Arpora Fire Case, Accountability Must Be Fixed: Michael Lobo

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Calangute MLA Michael Lobo has said that justice for the 25 people who lost their lives in the Arpora fire tragedy must be ensured, stressing that responsibility must be fixed and that the case is being closely observed across the country.

Commenting on the incident, Lobo said he is awaiting the outcome of the magisterial inquiry, calling it a key step in identifying those accountable and preventing similar disasters in the future. He warned that any



delays or shortcomings in the process would only weaken public trust in the system.

Raising concerns about public safety, the MLA urged stricter

oversight of indoor soundproof nightclubs. He said licences should be issued only after thorough fire safety checks by the relevant departments, adding that

entertainment venues cannot be allowed to operate at the cost of human lives.

Lobo further said the Arpora fire tragedy highlights serious gaps in the enforcement of fire safety norms. He called on authorities to adopt a zero-tolerance approach towards violations and ensure that safety regulations are implemented in both letter and spirit.

He reiterated that while justice for the victims and their families is essential, preventing such tragedies in the future must remain an equally important priority.

DM North Goa Imposes Temporary Ban on Road Digging Near Zuari Bridge Stretch

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The District Magistrate, North Goa, has imposed a temporary ban on the digging or cutting of all types of roads along the stretch from Zuari Bridge to Taj Cidade de Goa, Horizon, Dona Paula via GMC Bambolim, without prior permission from the District Magistrate.

As per the order, only applications or requests for road cutting that are emergent or urgent in nature—pertaining to essential services such as water supply, sewerage, electrical connections and similar works—will be considered. Such requests



from the general public, government departments or other agencies must be routed through the concerned departments, which will forward them to the District Magistrate, North Goa, along with proper recommendations and justifications for further action.

The order states that any person, agency or department found contravening the directive will be liable for punishment under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

The ban will come into force from December 27, 2025, and will remain effective till 10.00 am on December 28, 2025.

PM National Apprenticeship Mela to Be Held at Panaji Govt ITI on December 30



Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Directorate of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (DSDE) will be conducting the Prime Minister National Apprenticeship Mela

(PMNAM) on December 30, 2025, at the Panaji Government ITI, Altinho, Panaji, North Goa.

The apprenticeship mela will begin from 9.30 a.m. onwards and is expected to witness participation from

several public and private establishments, offering apprenticeship opportunities to local youth. Interested ITI pass-outs and other eligible local youth are encouraged to report at the venue by 9.30 a.m. for on-the-spot

registration and to avail themselves of this opportunity to build their careers through apprenticeship training.

For further information, candidates may contact Panaji Government ITI on 0832-2226333 or 9923144341.

Birch Nightclub Fire: GHRC Steps In Over Non-Payment of Workers' Compensation

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Human Rights Commission (GHRC) has issued a notice to the State Labour Commissioner over allegations that mandatory compensation has not been disbursed to the families of workers who lost their lives in the December 6 fire at the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub.

The action was taken following a complaint submitted by the Hotel Employees Federation of India (HEFI), Panaji, on December 22, which alleged non-compliance with provisions of the Employees' Compensation Act. According to the complaint, the legal heirs of the deceased workers have yet to receive the compensation they are entitled to under law.

The Commission, led



by Acting Chairperson Desmond D'Costa along with Member Pramod Kamat, has directed the Labour Commissioner to submit a detailed response and appear before the body for a hearing scheduled on January 29, 2026, at 10.30 am. The appearance may be made personally or through an authorised representative.

HEFI stated that the nightclub fire resulted in the deaths of 25 people due to severe burns and asphyxiation, including 20 employees who were working at the establishment at the time of the incident.

GCCI Announces 'Kashinath Damodar Naik – Pride of Goa Awards 2025'

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GCCI), in association with the Kashinath Damodar Naik Memorial Trust, has announced the recipients of the prestigious 'Kashinath Damodar Naik – Pride of Goa Awards 2025', instituted to honour distinguished Goans for their exceptional contributions to business, industry and entrepreneurship.

For the year 2025, two eminent personalities have been selected under the Lifetime Achievement and Entrepreneur categories.

The Kashinath Damodar Naik – Pride of Goa – Lifetime Achievement Award will be conferred on Ms. Anju Timblo, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Fomento



Resorts and Hotels Pvt. Ltd., in recognition of her outstanding leadership and long-standing contribution to strengthening Goa's hospitality sector.

A distinguished academic, Ms. Timblo topped India in the Higher Secondary Arts Examination, secured first rank in Economics from Lady Shri Ram College and later graduated in Law from Government Law College, Bombay, earning two gold medals. She began her professional journey as a law teacher in Goa and later assumed leadership roles in social and community organisations, including



serving as President of the All India Women's Conference (Goa Branch). She is the founder and president of Fomento Education and Charitable Societies, which run institutions such as the Goa College of Hospitality & Culinary Education, affiliated to Goa University, and the Dona Leonor Memorial High School.

Since 1993, Ms. Timblo has been at the helm of Fomento Resorts and Hotels Pvt. Ltd., spearheading iconic properties such as Taj Cidade de Goa – Heritage and the world-class Taj Cidade de Goa – Horizon, together forming the

largest luxury hospitality complex in Goa. Under her leadership, the luxury resort Araquila in Sindhudurg, Maharashtra, has also been commissioned, pioneering hospitality development in the region. She is widely acknowledged for her commitment to culture, education and community development, and for promoting Goan art, music, cuisine and traditions.

The Kashinath Damodar Naik – Pride of Goa – Entrepreneur Award will be presented to Mr. Sachin Lawande, President and Chief Executive Officer of Visteon Corporation, Michigan, USA. He is being honoured for his exemplary achievements as a global business leader and for bringing international recognition to Goa through his pioneering work in automotive technology.

Human Touch Foundation Seeks Inclusion of Katkari

■ Families in Goa Under Central PVTG Schemes

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Human Touch Foundation has submitted detailed representations to the Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of Goa, and the Goa State Commission for Scheduled Tribes, seeking the inclusion of Katkari (Wanarmare or Vanarmare) families residing in the state under Central Government welfare schemes meant for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

In its representations, the organisation has highlighted the continued exclusion of Katkari



families in Goa from key Central initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Janati

Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) and the Dharti Aaba

Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan. These schemes are designed to ensure that PVTG habitations across the country receive saturation-level benefits.

The Katkari community is a nationally recognised PVTG. Warmare subgroups of the community have been residing in Goa for more than four decades, with settlements in Virnoda in Pernem taluka and Nirankhal in Ponda taluka. Despite their long-standing presence and extreme socio-economic vulnerability, the families have not been covered under Central PVTG welfare programmes.

Konkani Documentary Wins Best Student

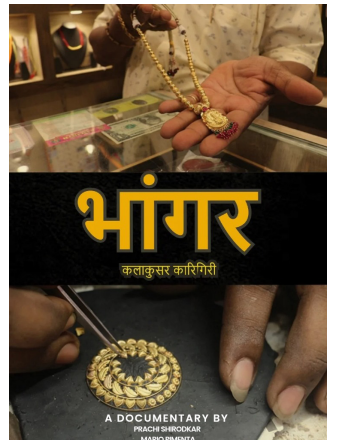
■ Film at Goa International Film Competition

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Konkani documentary Bhaangar Kalakusar Karigiri, directed by Prachi Shirodkar, has won the Best Student Documentary Award at the Goa International Film Competition (GIFC) 2025.

The award recognises emerging talent in art and cinema, a key objective of GIFC, which was established to provide a platform for young artists and filmmakers to showcase contemporary storytelling and creative expression.

Bhaangar Kalakusar Karigiri was produced as a college project under the guidance of Agnelo Raymond D'Souza at Don Bosco College,



Panaji. Prachi Shirodkar took on multiple roles in the project, serving as director, narrator and cinematographer.

The documentary focuses on the traditional craft of gold artisans in Goa, documenting the skill, labour and lived experiences of craftsmen working in a heritage driven profession.

Raponkarcho Sea Food Festival 2025 brings fishing tradition, cuisine and culture to Arambol

Panaji; December 23, 2025: The Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, will organise the Raponkarcho Sea Food Festival 2025 from December 28 to 30, 2025 at the Main Parking Area, Arambol, celebrating Goa's rich seafood heritage, traditional cuisine and vibrant cultural expressions.

The three-day festival will feature traditional Goan seafood cuisine stalls, cultural programmes and live musical performances, offering visitors an immersive festive experience rooted in local flavours and community participation. Entry to the festival will be free for all, and programmes will



commence daily from 6.00 pm onwards. The inaugural function will be held on December 28, 2025 at 5.30 pm, in the esteemed presence

of Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant along with Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Shri Rohan Ashok Khaunte; Hon'ble MLA, Saligao Constituency and Chairman, GTDC, Shri Kedar Naik; Hon'ble MLA, Mandrem Constituency and Chairman, Goa Housing Board, Shri Jit V. Arolkar; Chief Secretary, Dr. V. Candavelou, IAS; Secretary

(Tourism) Shri Sanjeev Ahuja, IAS; Director, Department of Tourism, Shri Kedar Naik and Managing Director, GTDC, Shri Kuldeep Arolkar. Speaking ahead of the festival, Shri Rohan Ashok Khaunte, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, stated that fishing has been an integral part of Goa's traditional way of life for generations

and continues to shape the State's food culture and coastal communities. He said that the Raponkarcho Sea Food Festival provides an important platform to recognise this living tradition, celebrate the skills of the fishing community, and showcase authentic Goan seafood cuisine in a festive and community-oriented setting.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Congress Eyes 27 Seats in 2027, BJP Calls Claim 'Daydreaming'

from four seats in 2020 to ten this time. Referring to the 2022 Assembly elections where Congress won 11 seats, Patkar said the upward trend gave the party confidence of crossing the 27-seat mark in the next Assembly elections. Acknowledging shortcomings within the organisation, Patkar said there were delays in candidate announcements in some areas and weaknesses at the block level. However, he credited party workers for putting in sustained effort on the ground, which he said contributed to the improved performance. Patkar also targeted the Aam Aadmi Party, claiming its influence in Goa had diminished, and alleged that AAP-backed candidates failed to perform even

in constituencies represented by its MLAs. He further accused the BJP of misusing money power, influence and state machinery during the ZP elections, while claiming that the ruling party was unable to match its earlier performance. Echoing these views, South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes said the Congress would now prioritise strengthening its grassroots presence and boosting worker morale. He said the party's focus was firmly on organisational consolidation with an eye on 2027. Reacting sharply to the Congress claims, BJP Goa president Damu Naik dismissed Patkar's projection as unrealistic. "They can continue to dream, but we are working in a practical manner.

Socorro Panchayat Issues 7-Day Eviction Notice Over Child Sexual Assault Case

Citing public safety, peace, and law and order, the Panchayat notice directs the accused family to vacate their residence in 20 Point Programme within seven days, warning of strict action in case of non-compliance. The matter came to light when the victim's mother, a resident of Mapusa, lodged a formal complaint at the Porvorim Police Station. According to the report, the accused was hired by the family for the specific purpose of picking up and

dropping off the minor child between her home and school. The complaint alleges that prior to November 2025, the accused took advantage of his position of trust. On multiple occasions at various locations in Porvorim, he allegedly: Inappropriately touched the child's private parts. Sexually abused, assaulted, and raped the six-year-old. Physically assaulted and threatened the victim to ensure her silence.

Following the registration of the FIR on December 21, the Porvorim Police acted swiftly to trace the accused to his residence at Halmen Colony, Anganwadi Nagar. The victim underwent a medical examination at the Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim. Reports from the medical officer have confirmed physical evidence consistent with sexual assault, corroborating the allegations made in the complaint.

Disqualification Petition Filed Against Arpora-Nagoa Sarpanch Roshan Redkar

In addition, the plea accuses the sarpanch of holding assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, alleging financial impropriety during his tenure.

Taking cognisance of the complaint, the Directorate of Panchayats has issued a notice to Redkar and scheduled a hearing in the matter on December 26 at 4 pm.

US to End H-1B Lottery, Introduce Pay-Weighted Visa Selection System

nationals form one of the largest groups of H-1B holders, particularly in the technology and healthcare sectors. For decades, the visa has served as a key entry point for young Indian professionals seeking careers in the US.

However, the shift to a pay-weighted system is likely to disadvantage early-career applicants and recent graduates, who typically receive lower salary offers compared to senior professionals. While the annual cap of 65,000 visas, along with an additional 20,000 for applicants holding US master's degrees or higher,

remains unchanged, the selection dynamics will be fundamentally different.

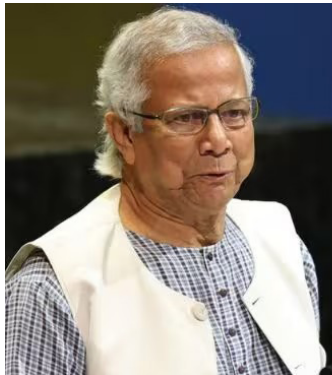
Supporters of the reform argue that it will ensure visas are granted to genuinely specialised talent and prevent misuse of the programme. Critics, however, warn that it could reduce opportunities for young skilled workers and narrow the talent pipeline that has historically fuelled innovation in the US economy. The H-1B debate has long been contentious, balancing concerns over protecting domestic jobs against industry demands for global talent.

Bangladesh Crisis Deepens as Yunus Regime Accused of Using Osman Hadi Killing to Derail Elections

■ Brother of slain student leader levels serious allegations against interim government amid rising unrest

Dhaka: Bangladesh's political turmoil has intensified following sharp allegations against the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, with the brother of slain student activist Sharif Osman Hadi accusing the administration of orchestrating his killing to derail the country's upcoming national elections.

Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent student leader and convenor of the cultural-political platform Inquilab Moncho, was shot in Dhaka on December 12. Critically injured, he was flown to Singapore for advanced treatment but succumbed to his injuries on December 18. His death has triggered widespread anger, protests and



sporadic violence across the capital, further destabilising an already fragile political environment.

Addressing a gathering of protesters at Shahbagh, Osman Hadi's brother, Sharif Omar Hadi, directly blamed the Yunus-led interim administration for the killing. He alleged that the murder was part of a deliberate attempt to create chaos and prevent the conduct of free and fair elections scheduled



for February.

"You had Osman Hadi killed and are now using this issue to derail the polls," Omar said, demanding immediate arrests and a time-bound trial of those responsible. He warned that continued delays and lack of transparency in the investigation would deepen public mistrust and push the country closer to prolonged instability.

Omar further claimed that his brother was targeted because of his refusal to align with powerful interests, stating that Osman Hadi "did not bow to any agency or foreign masters." The remarks reflect growing suspicion among sections of protesters that the killing was politically motivated rather than a random act of violence.

The death has sparked violent demonstrations in parts of Dhaka, with protesters attacking offices of media houses, cultural organisations and other institutions seen as aligned with the establishment. Security forces have been deployed in large numbers to control the situation, while curfews and restrictions have been imposed in sensitive



Thackeray Cousins Reunite After 20 Years Ahead of Maharashtra Civic Polls

■ Uddhav and Raj Thackeray bury differences to fight key municipal elections together

Mumbai: In a major political development with significant implications for Maharashtra's civic elections, cousins Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray have decided to reunite after nearly 20 years of political estrangement. The decision marks the end of a long-standing split that began in 2005 and reshapes the political landscape ahead of crucial municipal polls, including those to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

The reunion is being seen as a calculated move aimed at consolidating

the Marathi vote, which has traditionally formed the backbone of both leaders' political support. Party insiders indicate that the alliance will involve coordinated seat-sharing arrangements between Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, with both parties contesting strategically important wards across Mumbai and other urban centres.

Uddhav and Raj Thackeray parted ways two decades ago after sharp differences over leadership and the future direction of the Shiv Sena.

Victim slapped and molested when she refused to accept Instagram friend request

Bengaluru: A woman was reportedly slapped and groped by a man after she declined his friend request on Instagram, police said, in an unsettling incident that has highlighted concerns about harassment stemming from social media interactions.

According to the complaint, the victim was approached online by an individual who sent repeated friend requests and messages. When she chose not to accept the request and ignored his advances, the man allegedly tracked her down to a public place in Bengaluru.

When she encountered him in person, the accused began harassing her. He reportedly slapped her and made unwelcome physical contact before bystanders intervened and alerted nearby police. The victim sustained minor injuries and was taken

to hospital for a medical check-up.

Police said they have registered a case based on the woman's statement and are investigating the matter. The accused has been detained and will be questioned as the investigation continues.

Authorities reiterated that online interactions should never be used as a justification for harassment or assault, and urged social media users to report any threatening behaviour immediately.

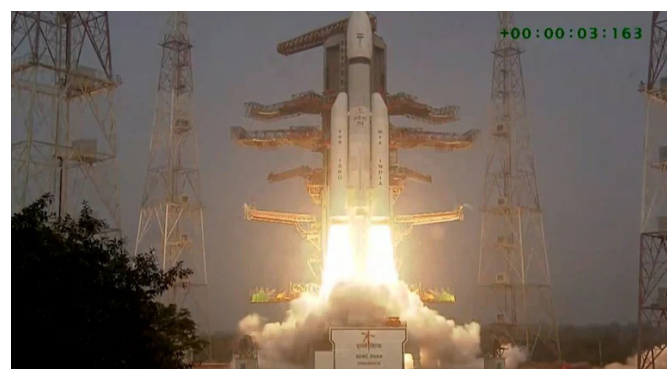
The incident has sparked concern among residents over safety in public spaces and the need for greater accountability in online communication. Police are reviewing CCTV footage from the area and urge witnesses to come forward to assist with the investigation as they work to ensure the victim receives justice.

India's 'Baahubali' Rocket Launches Heaviest-Ever Commercial Satellite

■ LVM3 places BlueBird-6 into orbit, marking major boost for India's global launch credentials

Sriharikota/New Delhi: India achieved a major milestone in its commercial space journey as the LVM3 heavy-lift launch vehicle, popularly known as the 'Baahubali' rocket, successfully placed the BlueBird-6 satellite into orbit. It is the heaviest satellite ever launched by an Indian rocket, underlining the growing capabilities of the country's space programme.

The 43.5-metre-tall LVM3 lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, carrying the 6,100-kg BlueBird-6 satellite. The mission was executed smoothly, with the satellite deployed into its designated orbit around 15 minutes after liftoff. A brief hold just before launch was undertaken as a precautionary



measure to avoid potential space debris, reflecting increased focus on orbital safety.

BlueBird-6 is a next-generation communications satellite developed to provide space-based cellular broadband connectivity directly to standard mobile phones, without the need for specialised ground equipment. The satellite is part of a new class of large, high-capacity platforms designed to expand mobile coverage,

particularly in remote and underserved regions.

The launch was carried out under a commercial agreement through NewSpace India Limited, the commercial arm of ISRO, marking another step in India's expanding role in the global satellite launch market. With this mission, the LVM3 has further demonstrated its reliability and ability to handle complex, heavy payloads, a capability limited to only a few launch systems

worldwide.

This was the eighth flight of the LVM3 and among its most significant commercial missions to date. The rocket has previously been used for high-profile national missions, including human spaceflight preparations and lunar exploration. The successful deployment of BlueBird-6 adds to its growing track record and strengthens confidence among international customers.

The mission is expected to open new opportunities for India in the competitive global launch sector, particularly for heavy commercial satellites. It also reinforces ISRO's transition from primarily government-driven missions to a more balanced model that includes commercial partnerships.

Shubman Gill's Vice-Captaincy Decision Sparks Backlash, Puts Ajit Agarkar Under Fire

■ Critics question planning and strategy after unexpected leadership move ahead of India's T20 series

New Delhi: The announcement of Shubman Gill as India's T20 vice-captain has ignited significant debate within cricket circles, with critics questioning the timing and planning behind the decision. The move has also placed Director of Cricket Ajit Agarkar in the spotlight, with some pundits arguing that the choice reflects a lack of coherent strategy by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) ahead of a crucial T20 series. Gill's elevation to the vice-captaincy was seen as a surprise to many, coming at a time when the team management appears focused on restructuring and grooming leadership options for the future. While Gill's talent and batting prowess are widely



respected, detractors argue that the decision was sudden and lacked clear communication, raising concerns about the BCCI's planning approach.

The reaction from former players and analysts has been mixed, with some expressing confusion over the timing of the announcement and its impact on team dynamics. Critics feel that making leadership

changes so close to a major series could disrupt preparation and place undue pressure on players still establishing themselves in international cricket. Questions have also been raised about whether other senior players were considered for the role before finalising Gill's appointment.

By promoting Gill, selectors appear to be signalling a shift

toward youth and a long-term leadership vision. However, detractors assert that the move should have been accompanied by transparent reasoning to help fans and players understand the broader strategy. In the absence of such clarity, speculation has grown around the decision-making process within the BCCI hierarchy.

Agarkar, who has overseen India's white-ball setup, has borne the brunt of criticism from some quarters, with commentators suggesting that the vice-captaincy announcement highlighted deeper planning issues. They argue that leadership roles should be defined well in advance to ensure stability and confidence among the squad.



Vaibhav Suryavanshi Smashes 36-Ball Century, Creates One-Day Cricket History

■ Teenage prodigy delivers one of the fastest hundreds ever in senior domestic cricket

Mumbai: In a breathtaking display of fearless batting, teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi rewrote one-day cricket records by hammering a century off just 36 balls in senior domestic cricket, producing an innings that has stunned the cricketing world.

Playing in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, the 14-year-old Bihar batter tore into the opposition bowling from the outset, showcasing extraordinary power, timing and composure far beyond his age. His hundred, among the fastest ever recorded in List A cricket, placed him second on the all-

time list for the quickest centuries by an Indian in the format and among the fastest globally.

Suryavanshi's innings was not just about speed but also sheer dominance. He reached the landmark with a flurry of boundaries and towering sixes, completely dismantling the bowling attack and shifting the momentum decisively in Bihar's favour. By the time his innings came to an end, he had scored a remarkable 190 off 84 deliveries, striking 16 fours and 15 sixes in one of the most destructive knocks seen in domestic one-day cricket.



Anthony Taylor Denies Disrespecting India After Controversial Pre-Fight Remarks

■ American boxer clarifies comments following defeat to Neeraj Goyat

New York: American boxer Anthony Taylor has broken his silence after facing backlash over remarks made ahead of his bout against Indian boxer Neeraj Goyat, firmly denying that he disrespected India or its people. The controversy erupted following Taylor's loss to Goyat by unanimous decision at a recent Misfits Boxing event. Soon after the fight, videos circulated on social media showing a heated exchange between the two boxers backstage,

including an incident in which Taylor threw a water bottle, further fuelling criticism and outrage among fans. Taylor was accused online of making derogatory comments about India in the build-up to the fight, with claims that he had insulted Indian culture, food and hygiene. Responding to the allegations, Taylor issued a clarification on social media, stating that the accusations were exaggerated and misleading.

MCC Tigers March into MCL 11 T20 Final

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: MCC Tigers sealed a spot in the final of the MCL 11 T20 cricket tournament after registering a gritty 10-run win over MCC Thunder in Qualifier 1. The victory ensured direct qualification for the final, while MCC Thunder will get another opportunity to book their place when they face the winner of the second qualifier between MCC Knights and MCC Masters on December 26.

Batting first, MCC Tigers posted a strong total of 190 for 7 in their 20 overs, built on solid contributions across the order. Chaitanya Kamat and Vaibhav Naik both scored 34, while Nikit Naik Dalal added 33 and Viraj Tar chipped in with 32. For MCC Thunder, Iftikhar Agha was the most effective bowler with figures of 2 for 30. Roshan Naik, Paul Fernandes, Sudhir Shet, Ved Mahambre, and Rohan Badve picked up a wicket

each.

In reply, MCC Thunder mounted a spirited chase and remained in contention till the closing stages before finishing on 180 for 9. Om Fadte top-scored with 38, while Roshan Naik contributed 36 and Sahil Adwalpalkar made 35. Tight bowling in the death overs proved decisive for the Tigers. Mrunmay Das led the attack with 2 for 29, well supported by Ketan Kunde, Nikit Naik Dalal, and Viraj Tar.



United Brothers, 18 Juners Register Thrilling Wins in ACL 2025-26

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Nail-biting finishes highlighted Tuesday's matches in the Advocates Cricket League (ACL) 2025-26, with United Brothers maintaining their unbeaten run after edging past Lotlikar Lions by one ball, while 18 Juners clinched their third straight victory with a dramatic one-run win over Risers.



Both matches were played at the Chicalim ground in Vasco. In the first match, Lotlikar Lions

put up a competitive 172 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs. Venkatesh Rathod anchored the innings with

a fluent 42, while Aditya Naik contributed 32 and Pankaj Naik remained unbeaten on 31. Ashish Dessai was the most successful bowler for United Brothers, finishing with figures of 2 for 35.

Chasing 173, United Brothers paced their innings well. Dattaraj Gawas top-scored with 45, setting the platform for a calm finish.