



## Class IX Student Rusticated After Alleged Assault On Schoolmate In Mapusa

Victim Hospitalised; Police Send Report To Juvenile Justice Board

Team Goemkarponn

**Mapusa:** A Class IX schoolboy has been rusticated for three days by the school management after allegedly assaulting his 14-year-old classmate inside a Mapusa-based school over a dispute related to fees.

The incident reportedly took place on Thursday at around 10.30 am when the accused student allegedly took the victim to a school toilet and assaulted him. The attack was noticed after another student heard the victim's cries, rushed to the spot,



rescued him, and alerted teachers.

The injured boy was immediately shifted to the North Goa District Hospital, Mapusa, where he is undergoing treatment. Medical examinations were carried out to assess the severity of the injuries.

Later in the evening, the victim's parents lodged a complaint with the Mapusa Police. Based on the complaint, police have forwarded a report to the Juvenile Justice Board for further proceedings.

Following the incident, the school management initiated disciplinary

action and rusticated the accused student for three days. However, the victim's parents have raised concerns over the adequacy of the punishment, alleging that the accused student has been involved in similar violent incidents in the past.

They have demanded stricter action, including expulsion, citing fears for their child's safety once the student returns to school.

Police have confirmed that the matter is under investigation and further action will be taken as per procedure.



## North Goa District Magistrate Bans Fireworks Inside Tourist Establishments

Order prohibits indoor pyrotechnics at hotels, nightclubs, beach shacks and event venues for 60 days

Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** The District Magistrate of North Goa has prohibited the use, bursting, ignition or operation of fireworks and other pyrotechnic

devices inside tourist establishments across the district, citing safety concerns. The ban covers fireworks, sparklers, pyrotechnic effects, flame-thrower type devices,

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## Indian Coast Guard Busts International Oil Cargo Smuggling Syndicate in Daring Mid-Sea Operation

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has busted an international oil cargo smuggling syndicate through a meticulously coordinated sea-air operation, intercepting three vessels involved in illegal mid-sea transfer of oil off India's west coast.



Officials said the operation was carried out on 06 February 2026 after ICG's advanced surveillance systems detected suspicious movement of

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## Mapusa JMFC Court Grants Bail To Ajay Gupta In Excise Licence Forgery Case

Accused Was Booked By Mapusa Police For Allegedly Forging Documents To Obtain Licence For Birch Nightclub

Team Goemkarponn

**MAPUSA:** The Mapusa JMFC Court on Friday granted bail to accused Ajay Gupta in a case registered by the Mapusa Police for allegedly forging documents to obtain an excise licence for the Birch nightclub and cheating the authorities.

According to police



sources, Gupta was booked for submitting allegedly fabricated

documents to secure the licence, following which an offence was registered and the matter was placed before the court.

After hearing the submissions, the JMFC court allowed the bail application.

Meanwhile, in connection with the Birch nightclub fire case, another accused, Saurav

Luthra, was taken to the Mapusa District Hospital for medical examination. X-rays of his knee and ribs were conducted.

He was also examined at Asilo Hospital as part of the medical procedure. Police officials said further details in both matters are awaited as the investigations are ongoing.

## India US Trade Pact Set to Unlock 30 Trillion Dollar Market for Exporters

MSMEs, farmers and youth expected to benefit from expanded access and lower tariffs

**New Delhi:** The newly announced India United States interim trade framework is expected to open a massive 30 trillion dollar marketplace for Indian exporters, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday. The agreement is being viewed as a major opportunity for micro and small enterprises, farmers and the fisheries sector, while also creating large



scale employment for women and young people. According to the minister, the understanding reached between the two countries will significantly improve access for Indian products in the American

market. Reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods are set to be reduced to 18 percent, a move that is likely to boost exports across several high potential industries. Sectors such as textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, plastics and rubber goods, organic chemicals, home décor items, artisanal products and selected machinery are expected to gain the most from the new arrangement.

## India Condemns Islamabad Mosque Attack, Rejects Allegations From Pakistan

New Delhi calls claims baseless and urges focus on internal challenges.

**New Delhi:** India strongly condemned the deadly bombing at a mosque in Islamabad that claimed at least 31 lives, expressing grief over the loss while firmly dismissing allegations from Pakistan suggesting Indian involvement in the incident.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs described the attack as deeply tragic and offered condolences to the



families of the victims.

The government emphasised that such violence is unacceptable and that the suffering caused to innocent people deserves sincere

sympathy and attention. Responding to claims made from across the border, India categorically rejected any suggestion of a role in the blast.

The ministry stated that all such accusations were completely baseless and served no constructive purpose.

It added that attempts to shift blame outside were an unfortunate distraction from the real issues facing Pakistan.



# Goa Cannot Afford to Look Unsafe

Goa's sun soaked beaches have always been one of India's most cherished gateways to the world. Tourists come here expecting sunlit days, calm backwaters, vibrant culture and hospitality that matches the beauty of the sand and sea. But lately, a series of troubling images and incidents involving visitors being crowded, photographed without consent, and even pushed into unwanted selfies have cast a shadow over that dream. It has reached a point where the state police have rightly declared that anyone clicking photos without consent or forcing selfies with strangers, particularly foreign tourists, will be detained on the spot. This is not an overreach. It is the urgent protection of human dignity and of Goa's hard earned standing as a safe destination.

We must be clear about the stakes. Tourism is not just an industry for Goa. It is its economic lifeline. Every year, thousands of foreign travellers choose Goa over countless other global destinations because of its ease of access, its friendly vibe and its reputation for relaxed fun. But reputation is fragile. When stories and worse videos of harassment circulate, the message is unmistakable to potential visitors. Goa might not be safe or respectful. And that undermines years of effort by businesses, tourism bodies and frontline workers who have invested in hospitality and infrastructure.

The incidents that triggered this fresh police directive have a common thread. A failure to recognise personal boundaries. Beaches are public spaces, but public visibility does not erase an individual's right to privacy and respect. Pressing a stranger for a photo or a selfie because they are foreign or simply because they are present is not harmless fun. It is intrusive and disrespectful. It signals that the person being photographed is a prop rather than a human being with autonomy.

The police action is decisive precisely because words and warnings have proven inadequate. A case registered against two tourists for harassing a foreign woman on a beach was the spark that lit

*The incidents that triggered this fresh police directive have a common thread. A failure to recognise personal boundaries. Beaches are public spaces, but public visibility does not erase an individual's right to privacy and respect. Pressing a stranger for a photo or a selfie because they are foreign or simply because they are present is not harmless fun. It is intrusive and disrespectful. It signals that the person being photographed is a prop rather than a human being with autonomy.*

*The police action is decisive precisely because words and warnings have proven inadequate. A case registered against two tourists for harassing a foreign woman on a beach was the spark that lit this crackdown.*

this crackdown. The message now is firm. If consent is not freely given, photographing someone or forcing interactions will have immediate consequences.

Critics may argue that this move is reactive or that it could be used arbitrarily. That concern is valid in any system of enforcement. But the principle at stake must guide the implementation. Respect for consent and personal space. Enforcement without bias and with clear communication to visitors, both

domestic and international, can set a standard that benefits everyone.

Goa is not alone in grappling with tourism's darker side.

Destinations around the world have had to balance the flow of visitors with the rights and comfort of both tourists and local residents. What makes Goa's moment significant is that it has reached a tipping point. Lines have blurred between casual holiday behaviour and outright violation of personal boundaries. Beaches should be places of joy and relaxation, not discomfort and intrusion.

This is also an opportunity for a cultural reset. Local authorities must work alongside tourism stakeholders to make consent and respectful behaviour part of Goa's brand identity. Signage at popular beaches reminding visitors and locals alike about photography etiquette, clear helpline numbers for quick reporting, and visible beach patrols focused on safety and civility could reinforce the message that everyone, no matter where they come from, deserves dignity. The private sector also has a role. Hotels, tour operators and beach shacks should inform every traveller at check in or on arrival about respect for personal boundaries as part of standard tourist orientation. That simple step might prevent awkward, invasive and damaging behaviour before it occurs.

Most of all, Goans, hosts to the world, should take pride in an image that stands for courtesy, warmth and mutual respect. Tourists should leave with memories of sunsets and smiles, not stories of discomfort or harassment.

The police directive to detain those who violate consent on beaches is not about policing fun or restricting social interaction. It is a necessary step to protect travellers, preserve Goa's reputation and signal to the world that our beaches are places where respect matters as much as the breeze and the tide. Goans have always welcomed the world with open arms. Let us ensure our warmth is matched by respect for personal space. That is how Goa will remain not just beautiful, but safe and inviting for all.

## EDITOR'S SPEAK

### Goa's Public Healthcare Holds Its Ground

By Suraj Nandrekar

Goa's health sector is often criticised in broad strokes, sometimes without adequate context. While no public healthcare system is without flaws, Goa's model compares favourably with that of many larger states, including Delhi, particularly in terms of access, affordability and the continued centrality of government-run institutions.

One of Goa's biggest strengths lies in the depth of its public healthcare network. Primary Health Centres, community health facilities, district hospitals and the state's super speciality hospital together form a system that delivers far more than basic care. These are not token facilities meant only for minor ailments. They provide diagnostics, specialist consultations, surgeries, maternal care and emergency services, largely free of cost. This stands in sharp contrast to models that rely on small outpatient clinics as the cornerstone of public healthcare.

Much has been said about mohalla clinics elsewhere, but it is worth asking whether such facilities can replace fully equipped hospitals. While they may help reduce pressure for minor complaints, they do not offer comprehensive treatment. Goa's Primary Health Centres and district hospitals, despite staffing constraints, provide a far wider range of services. The presence of a functional super speciality hospital further strengthens the system, ensuring that advanced care is available within the public framework rather than being outsourced entirely to private hospitals.

Affordability remains another major advantage. In many states, even accessing basic diagnostics requires patients to turn to private providers, often at crippling cost. In Goa, free medicines, subsidised tests and government funded procedures continue to act as a crucial safety net. For low income families, senior citizens and those with chronic illnesses, this is not a marginal benefit. It is the difference between receiving care and postponing it.

This is not to deny the challenges. Shortages of doctors, nurses and specialists are real and persistent. Bed availability can become strained during tourist seasons, outbreaks or emergencies. Waiting times and administrative inefficiencies frustrate patients. These issues deserve attention, investment and reform, not denial. However, it is important to distinguish between strain and failure. Goa's healthcare system is under pressure, but it is functioning. Most residents have reasonable physical access to hospitals and health centres. Preventive care, immunisation and maternal health services remain strengths of the system. Compared to states where government hospitals are avoided altogether due to poor quality, Goa's facilities continue to be trusted by the public.

Another critical distinction is dependence on the private sector. In many urban centres, including national capitals, private hospitals dominate healthcare delivery. Government facilities are overcrowded and under resourced, forcing even middle class families into expensive private care. Goa has managed to avoid this trap to a significant extent. Public hospitals remain relevant, utilised and essential.

The focus now must be on strengthening what exists. Recruitment of medical professionals must be prioritised. Infrastructure upgrades should be planned realistically, not announced rhetorically. Efficiency, accountability and transparency must improve to maintain public confidence.

Goa's healthcare model is not perfect, but it is resilient. In a country where public healthcare is steadily shrinking and privatisation is the norm, Goa's continued reliance on Primary Health Centres, district hospitals and a super speciality public facility is a quiet achievement. It deserves honest evaluation, constructive reform and recognition, not blanket dismissal.



## Health Minister Orders Immediate Posting of Four Doctors at CHC Canacona

■ Hospital to be upgraded with emergency and trauma care facilities; Centre to be approached to probe rising renal failure cases.

### Team Goemkarponn

**Canacona:** Health Minister Vishwajeet Rane ordered the immediate allotment of four doctors to the Community Health Centre (CHC), Canacona, while announcing plans to upgrade the facility with comprehensive emergency and trauma care services.

Rane reviewed health infrastructure and staffing shortages during his visit to CHC Canacona, after inaugurating the reconstructed Canacona



Municipal Building. He said the objective is to ensure that accident and emergency patients no longer need to be shifted outside Canacona for treatment. Stating that his mother is a cancer patient, Rane said he understands the importance of timely treatment and patient care. "This hospital will

be upgraded so that emergency, trauma and accident cases are treated here itself," he assured.

The Health Minister informed that Kedar Naik has been appointed as Nodal Officer and will submit a gap analysis report within a month. "After the report, we will try to achieve at least 60

per cent, if not 100 per cent, of what is lacking," he said. Highlighting the Centre's role, Rane said the "double-engine government" is taking the health sector seriously, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi regularly monitors health services. He noted that teams deputed by the PMO are visiting states to assess healthcare delivery, and that the Union Budget has placed special emphasis on setting up emergency centres with additional allocations.

## Patkar Seeks Ideological Clarity From Utpal Parrikar Ahead Of Panaji Civic Polls

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** In a statement that has sparked internal discussion within the Congress ahead of the elections to the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP), Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) president Amit Patkar said that Utpal Parrikar, son of late Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, must clearly spell out his ideological position vis-à-vis the BJP.

Patkar's remarks come in the wake of Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao's recent announcement that the Congress would



extend support to a panel led by Utpal Parrikar for the upcoming CCP elections. Responding to questions from the media on whether such a move could have ideological consequences for the party, Patkar reiterated that the Congress is engaged in a direct ideological battle against the BJP.

## District Monitoring Committee Reviews Student Mental Health Measures at BITS Pilani Goa

■ Collector stresses coordinated approach as institute outlines multi-layered wellness framework

### Team Goemkarponn

**Margao:** The 3rd District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) meeting was held in South Goa under the chairpersonship of Collector and District

Magistrate Ms Egna Cleetus, with a strong focus on student mental health, safety, and institutional accountability at higher education campuses.

The meeting was attended by

Superintendent of Police (South Goa) Shri Tikam Singh Verma, Director of Higher Education Shri Bhushan Sawai, and Dean of BITS Pilani, Goa Campus Shri Suman Kundu, along with officials from

the Departments of Technical Education, Social Welfare, Health Services, Tribal Welfare, and the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Vasco.

Addressing the committee, the Dean



of BITS Pilani detailed a range of initiatives undertaken to safeguard student welfare, particularly in addressing stress, anxiety and depression-related concerns. He informed that professional

support systems have been strengthened through the engagement of counsellors, psychologists and a psychiatrist, complemented by 24x7 medical services and dedicated helplines.

## Tirumalla Tirupati Credit Society Urges Calm As Govt Reviews NOC Suspension

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** With depositors lining up to withdraw funds amid regulatory action, the Tirumalla Tirupati Multistate Co-operative Credit Society Ltd on Friday sought to reassure investors that their money remains secure, even as the institution faces scrutiny from the State government.

A delegation of the society's management, headed by chairman Gurmeet Singh Bhambrah, met Co-operation Minister Subhash Shirodkar and urged the government to withdraw show-cause notices issued to its branches and lift the suspension of its No Objection Certificate (NOC) required to operate



in Goa. Addressing the media after the meeting, Bhambrah said the issues flagged by authorities were largely procedural in nature and stemmed from staffing constraints. He said the Minister was assured that such shortcomings would be rectified and not repeated. According to Bhambrah, the society has already submitted most of the documents sought by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, with the remaining paperwork

to be furnished shortly.

"We have complied with the majority of requirements and requested the government to restore the NOC after reviewing the submissions. I don't foresee any difficulty once the process is complete," Bhambrah said. He also appealed to depositors not to panic, stressing that the cooperative functions on trust and transparency. "There is absolutely no reason for fear. Depositors will not face any problem. Our counters remain open for anyone who wishes to withdraw funds," he said, adding that even during the Covid-19 pandemic the society ensured access to deposits, including doorstep delivery where required.

## Justice Rebello Seeks Freeze On Land-Use Changes Under Section 39-A, Flags Illegal Conversions

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Former Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court and retired Bombay High Court judge Justice Ferdinando Rebello has called for an immediate suspension of all land-use change approvals granted under Section 39-A of the Goa Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act and demanded a review of every permission already issued under the provision. Writing in his capacity as convenor on behalf of Goans who have adopted a 10-point charter, Justice Rebello, in a sharply worded letter dated February 6 to



the Chief Town Planner (Planning) and the Town and Country Planning Board, described Section 39-A as "manifestly arbitrary" and alleged that it is being used to facilitate unlawful conversion of agricultural and comunidade lands under the pretext of planning permissions.

Section 39-A,

introduced through Amendment Act No. 3 of 2024, authorises the Chief Town Planner, with government directions and approval of the TCP Board, to modify the Regional Plan or Outline Development Plan for zoning changes, following a 30-day public notice and subject to the exclusion of eco-sensitive areas. Justice Rebello, however, argued that the safeguard in sub-section (2)—which claims that such changes should not alter the overall character of the plan—is merely a "colourable exercise of legislation" intended to legitimise conversions that are otherwise illegal.



# Goa Police Seize Nearly 3 Kg Ganja in Pilerne Raid, One Arrested

■ Anti Narcotic Cell conducts second major drug bust within 48 hours, reinforces zero-tolerance stance.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Continuing its intensified crackdown on narcotic offences, the Anti Narcotic Police Station (ANC), Panaji, Goa Police, has conducted another major drug raid at Pilerne in Bardez taluka, leading to the seizure of nearly three kilograms of suspected ganja and the arrest of one accused.

Acting on specific and reliable intelligence, a team from the ANC, led by PSI Francisco Xavier and working under the supervision of the Police Inspector, ANC Police



Station, Panaji, Dy. Superintendent of Police, ANC, and Superintendent of Police, ANC, Smt. Sunita Sawant, carried out a well-coordinated raid on February 6, 2026.

During the operation, the accused, identified as Banshi Dhar Sahoo, a native of Odisha, was apprehended while in illegal possession of 2.996 kilograms of suspected

ganja, valued at approximately ₹1.5 lakh.

The contraband was seized after following due legal procedures.

The accused has been arrested and booked under Section 22(b)(ii)(B) of the NDPS Act, 1985 in ANC Police Station Crime No. 05/2026.

He was subsequently produced before the Hon'ble Judicial

Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Mapusa, who remanded him to seven days of police custody.

Police officials stated that this raid marks the second successful narcotics operation by the ANC Panaji within a span of 48 hours, highlighting the sustained vigilance and proactive approach of the Goa Police in combating drug trafficking.

Goa Police reiterated its firm commitment to curb the menace of narcotic drugs and ensure a safe and drug-free environment for the people of the State.

# Man Booked for Abusing and Threatening Woman at Nuvem

■ Complaint alleges verbal abuse, intimidation and acts outraging modesty

## Team Goemkarponn

**Margao:** Maina Curtorim Police have registered a case against a man from Belloy, Nuvem, for allegedly abusing, threatening and outraging the modesty of a woman following a complaint lodged by the victim. According to police, the complainant, whose identity has been withheld, stated that the incident occurred on January 28, 2026, at around 10 am at Belloy, Nuvem. The accused has been identified as Prashant Bandodkar, a resident of Belloy, Nuvem. As per the

complaint, the accused allegedly remained on the terrace of his house and hurled abusive words at the complainant, including derogatory remarks, in the presence of her workers who were engaged in carrying out work at the site. Police said the accused's actions allegedly outraged the modesty of the complainant. The complaint further states that the accused threatened the complainant by cutting tree branches and throwing them towards her, and also allegedly instigated and provoked her over an issue of previous enmity.



# Two Arrested for Harassing Tourists at Baga Beach

■ Calangute Police take preventive action against men accused of clicking photos without consent.

## Team Goemkarponn

**CALANGUTE:** Calangute Police on Thursday took swift preventive action by arresting two men for allegedly harassing tourists and clicking their photographs without permission at Baga beach.

The accused have been identified as P. Arantha (43), son of Periyasamy, a resident of Vijayanagarapuram, Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu, and Vijay T (38), son of Subaiya Thirupathi, a resident of Venkatarajukuppam, Tamil Nadu.

According to police, the two were found engaging in objectionable behaviour

by photographing tourists without their consent and causing harassment along the popular beach stretch.

Acting promptly, Calangute Police apprehended both individuals to prevent further inconvenience to visitors. Both accused have been arrested under preventive action provisions of Section 170 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita (BNNS), 2023.

Police officials reiterated that strict action will be taken against anyone found harassing tourists, adding that such measures are essential to maintain law and order and ensure a safe and pleasant experience for visitors in the coastal belt.

# Man Caught Accepting Matka Bets Near TB Hospital, Panaji

■ Police seize cash and gambling materials; accused arrested and later released on bail.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Panaji Police registered an offence and arrested a 57-year-old man for allegedly accepting matka bets from members of the public at an open public place near

TB Hospital at Tambadi Mati, St. Inez.

The offence was registered at 6.05 pm on February 5, 2026, based on a state complaint lodged by Head Constable Anil G. Kurtikar (HC 6246) of Panaji Police Station.

According to police, the accused, Pascoal Antonio Fernandes, son of late Antonio Fernandes, a resident of H.No. 169, Tambadi Mati, St. Inez, Panaji, was caught red-handed at around 5 pm while accepting matka

bets from the public. During the operation, police seized cash amounting to ₹1,300 along with other matka gambling articles from his possession. The accused was arrested at 6.05 pm on the same day.



# Three Booked for Assault and Robbery at Nuvem

## Team Goemkarponn

**Margao:** Maina Curtorim Police have registered a case against three persons in connection with an alleged assault and robbery incident reported from Belloy, Nuvem.

The case was registered based on a complaint filed by Prashant Bandodkar, a resident of Nuvem, who stated that the incident occurred on February 3, 2026, at around 1 pm at Belloy, Nuvem.

According to the complaint, the accused — Jacob M. Thomas, a resident of Belloy, Nuvem, Srikant Tadepalli, and

Rashid Ansari, a resident of Panaji — allegedly acted with common intention and assaulted the complainant. Jacob M. Thomas and Srikant Tadepalli allegedly slapped and punched the complainant, while Rashid Ansari is accused of restraining him and further assaulting him with slaps, kicks, and fist blows when the complainant attempted to flee towards his house.

The complainant sustained injuries, including damage to his teeth, and his Vivo mobile phone was allegedly taken away during the incident.



# Saligao Police Seize Ganja Worth Rs 50,000 in Pilerne

■ One arrested during late-night narcotics operation; further probe underway

## Team Goemkarponn

**Saligao:** Saligao Police arrested a 42-year-old man during a late-night narcotics raid at Pilerne in Bardez taluka and seized suspected ganja worth approximately ₹50,000.

The offence was registered at 4.15 am on February 6, 2026, following a state complaint lodged by PSI David Costa of Saligao Police Station. Acting on specific and reliable information, police conducted a narcotics raid between 11.50 pm on February 5 and 2.30 am on February 6 near Madani, Pilerne,

Bardez, Goa.

During the operation, the accused, Kisan, son of Vijay Narayan, aged 42 years, a resident of Moica Vaddo, Pilerne, Bardez, and a native of Saidpur, Chandauli district, Uttar Pradesh, was caught red-handed in illegal possession of 531 grams of greenish-coloured fruiting and flowering tops of plants suspected to be ganja. Police said the seized contraband is valued at approximately ₹50,000. The accused was arrested at 4.32 am on February 6 and lodged in the Saligao Police Station lock-up.



# Margao Council to Act Against Staff Skipping Flag-Hoisting Ceremonies

■ Chairperson warns of strict action; concerns raised over misuse of BLO duty claims.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Margao:** The Margao Municipal Council (MMC) has decided to initiate action against municipal employees who remain absent during official flag-hoisting ceremonies, stating that such indiscipline will no longer be tolerated.

MMC Chairperson Damodar Shirodkar said a final decision on the proposed action would



be taken within the next two to three days. He also expressed concern over staff remaining absent from regular duties under the pretext of Booth Level Officer (BLO) work, which, he said, has been causing inconvenience to the

public.

To address the issue, the council resolved to write to the Election Commission and the District Collector seeking clarity on the working hours and responsibilities of employees after completion of BLO duties. The move received unanimous support from all councillors present at the meeting.

During the meeting, the council also approved the

minutes of the previous meeting and announced strict action against open dumping of garbage within the municipal limits. Citizens were urged to contact 9112228200 if waste is not collected in their areas.

Additionally, the MMC granted approval for the installation of 25 new CCTV cameras across the city and sanctioned the purchase of a new night soil tanker.

# Health Minister Reviews FDA Measures to Ensure Food and Medicine Safety

■ Focus on strengthening systems, plugging gaps and improving coordination, says Vishwajit Rane

## Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Health Minister Vishwajit Rane reviewed the measures being implemented by the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) to ensure the safety and quality of food and medicines for the people of Goa.

During the review meeting, detailed discussions were held to assess existing processes, identify gaps, and explore improved methods of functioning aimed at strengthening regulatory systems and ensuring seamless coordination among departments.

“Our vision is very clear — to safeguard the health and safety of every Goan through continuous transformation and improvement. Engaging interactions like these help us evaluate



what is working, identify shortcomings, and adopt better practices to further strengthen our systems,” Rane said. The Health Minister stressed the importance of proactive monitoring, efficient enforcement, and inter-departmental coordination to maintain high safety standards across the State. The review was conducted in the presence of FDA Director Mrs Shweta Desai, OSD to the Health Minister Dr Raj Nanda, OSD to the Health Minister Ms Frazella de Araujo, and Advisor to the Health Minister Dr Geeta Deshmukh.



# Procedural Row, Legal Threats Cloud No-Confidence Vote at MMC

■ Vice chairperson removed amid claims of clerical errors, pressure politics and rule violations.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Vasco:** A no-confidence motion passed against Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) vice chairperson Ramchandra Kamat on Friday has triggered a fresh controversy, with dissenting councillors alleging serious procedural lapses and warning of an impending legal challenge, casting a shadow over the functioning of the civic body.

The special council meeting, convened to consider the motion, quickly descended into disorder as councillors aligned with the Milind Naik panel objected to the very validity of the proceedings.

Despite protests and a walkout by some members, the motion was carried with 13 councillors voting against Kamat in the 25-member council.

At the heart of the dispute was the no-confidence motion letter, which Kamat's supporters claimed

was submitted in the name of a non-existent councillor. The letter reportedly mentioned “Ameya Naik,” a name not found in the official list of MMC councillors, prompting objections that the process was fundamentally flawed and legally untenable.

Responding to the allegation during the meeting, councillor Ameya Chopdekar clarified that he had moved the motion and that his surname was erroneously written as Naik due to a clerical mistake.

He asserted that the letter carried his correct signature and that the error did not invalidate the motion.

MMC chairperson Girish Borker ruled in favour of continuing the proceedings, stating that the explanation was satisfactory. Councillors aligned with different BJP leaders — including Vasco MLA Krishna Salkar, former MLA Carlos Almeida, and Minister Mauvin Godinho — went on to support the motion.



# CM Interacts with National Defence College Delegation on India Study Tour

■ Pramod Sawant highlights Goa's governance, development and global engagement.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant on Tuesday interacted with a delegation of the 66th National Defence College (NDC) Course, led by Brigadier Rajneesh Mohan, Secretary, NDC, as part of the Understanding India Study Tour.

The delegation comprised 15 officers, including six international officers from Kenya, Myanmar, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. The interaction offered an opportunity for an in-depth exchange of views on Goa's socio-political environment, economic development and governance framework.

“Such interactions

are extremely valuable as they promote mutual understanding, strategic cooperation and global camaraderie. Goa is proud to share its governance practices and development journey with future strategic leaders from India and friendly nations,” Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said.

The Chief Minister noted that engagements with institutions like the NDC help strengthen India's diplomatic and strategic ties while offering participants a ground-level understanding of diverse regions of the country.

Officials said the visit forms part of the NDC's broader initiative to expose course participants to India's administrative systems, regional diversity and policy challenges.



# Canacona to Get Infrastructure Development Funds on Par with Cities: Vishwajeet Rane

■ Urban Development Minister assures all-round growth as ₹11 crore reconstructed municipal building is inaugurated.

## Team Goemkarponn

**Canacona:** Assuring residents of comprehensive infrastructure development, Minister for Urban Development and Health Vishwajeet Rane on Friday said Canacona will receive Infrastructure Development Funds on par with major cities, with the government bringing improvements and upgrades “in a different way”. In the absence of Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant, Rane was speaking after inaugurating the ₹11 crore

reconstructed modern three-storey Administrative-cum-Commercial Building of the Canacona Municipal Council (CMC). Earlier, Rane, along with Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs, Tribal Welfare, Art & Culture and Canacona MLA Ramesh Tawadkar, CMC Chairperson Laxuman Pagui and GSUDA Chief Project Officer Ankush Gaonkar, cut the ribbon and lit the traditional lamp to mark the inauguration of the newly constructed municipal complex.



# India Conducts Successful Test of Nuclear Capable Agni 3 Missile

■ Launch validates operational readiness of key strategic weapon system.

**New Delhi:** India on February 6 successfully carried out the test firing of the intermediate range ballistic missile Agni 3 from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha. Officials confirmed that all technical and operational parameters of the missile were validated during the exercise.

The launch was undertaken by the Strategic Forces Command, the unit responsible for managing the nation strategic nuclear assets. Defence authorities described the test as another important milestone in ensuring the reliability and preparedness of India deterrence capabilities. Agni 3 is a nuclear



capable missile with an estimated strike range of 3,000 to 3,500 kilometres, allowing it to reach targets deep inside potential adversary territory.

The system remains a crucial element of India strategic arsenal even as newer variants from the Agni series have been developed and tested in recent years.

The missile operates on a two stage solid fuel propulsion system. After the first stage completes its burn cycle, the second stage ignites to carry the weapon further along its trajectory, providing stability and high accuracy until it reaches the designated target area.

Officials said the latest test reaffirmed the proven performance of the platform and demonstrated its continued effectiveness within the overall defence framework. Regular trials are conducted to ensure

that strategic systems remain in a high state of readiness.

India has steadily strengthened its missile capabilities over the past decade as part of its doctrine of credible minimum deterrence. The Agni family of missiles forms the backbone of this policy, offering a range of options suited to different operational requirements. The successful launch adds to the series of validated missile systems tested by India and reflects the country commitment to maintaining robust national security. Defence experts noted that such exercises play a vital role in keeping the strategic forces prepared for any future challenge



## Delhi Ranked Second Most Polluted City in January, Ghaziabad Tops List

■ Report shows PM2.5 levels in capital nearly three times above national standard.

**New Delhi:** Delhi emerged as the second most polluted city in India during January, recording a monthly average PM2.5 concentration of 169 micrograms per cubic metre, according to a new analysis. The figure is almost three times higher than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre. Ghaziabad topped the pollution chart with an average PM2.5 level of 184 micrograms per cubic metre and breached the daily national standard on every single day of the month. The findings were part of a study conducted by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, which reviewed air quality trends across the country.

The report revealed that Delhi experienced 24 days in the very poor category, three days classified as severe, two days as poor and only two days in the moderate range during January. Under Central Pollution Control Board guidelines, an Air Quality Index between 201 and 300 is considered poor, 301 to 400 very poor and 401 to 500 severe.

At the national level, 123 out of 248 cities recorded monthly PM2.5 averages above the prescribed Indian standard. None of the monitored cities managed to meet the World Health Organization recommended daily safe

limit of 15 micrograms per cubic metre, highlighting the scale of the problem. Among cities covered under the National Clean Air Programme, compliance remained weak. Of the 97 programme cities with adequate data, 46 exceeded India daily PM2.5 standard and all of them crossed the World Health Organization guideline. Besides Delhi and Ghaziabad, other heavily polluted cities included Noida, Gurugram, Greater Noida, Dharuhera, Gangtok, Singrauli, Bhiwadi and Narnaul. Uttar Pradesh and Haryana accounted for three cities each in the top ten list.

Experts have called for stronger action to address the crisis. CREA analyst Manoj Kumar suggested that the clean air programme should focus more on PM2.5 and its precursor gases such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. He recommended stricter emission norms for industries and power plants, revision of the list of non attainment cities and adoption of an airshed based strategy.

PM2.5 particles are extremely fine pollutants with a diameter smaller than the width of a human hair. These particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, posing serious risks to respiratory and cardiovascular health.

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## North Goa District Magistrate Bans Fireworks Inside Tourist Establishments

smoke generators and all similar fire or smoke-producing equipment inside establishments including nightclubs, bars and restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, resorts, beach shacks, temporary structures, event venues and other entertainment establishments.

The prohibition applies to all organisers, banquet halls, private function venues, auditorium operators and indoor establishments catering to tourists or the public. However, in exceptional cases, the District Magistrate or an authorised officer may grant prior written

permission for indoor pyrotechnics, provided the applicant submits a detailed safety and risk-mitigation plan along with all required safety compliance documents. The order will come into effect from February 8, 2026, and will remain in force for 60 days, unless withdrawn earlier.

All Deputy Collectors and Sub-Divisional Magistrates of North Goa have been authorised to verify violations of the order and to file FIRs at the concerned police stations and lodge complaints before the jurisdictional Judicial Magistrate.

## Indian Coast Guard Busts International Oil Cargo Smuggling Syndicate in Daring Mid-Sea Operation

a motor tanker operating within the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). A digital investigation revealed that the tanker was allegedly engaged in illicit transfer of oil-based cargo sourced from conflict-ridden regions and moved through international waters to evade customs duties.

Further data pattern analysis by the Coast Guard identified two additional vessels converging on the tanker, strengthening suspicion of mid-sea cargo

transfer. Acting on this intelligence, ICG ships intercepted the three vessels approximately 100 nautical miles west of Mumbai on 05 February 2026.

Specialist boarding teams conducted extensive rummaging, corroborated electronic data onboard the suspect vessels, verified shipping documents, and interrogated crew members.

These efforts established the chain of events and confirmed the modus operandi of the

smuggling syndicate.

Investigations revealed that the syndicate operated through a network of handlers based in multiple countries, coordinating illegal sale and transfer of oil cargo between sea-going vessels.

The ships were found to frequently change identities to evade detection by coastal law enforcement agencies. Preliminary inquiries indicate that the vessel owners are foreign nationals.

The apprehended

vessels are likely to be escorted to Mumbai for further investigation and handed over to Indian Customs and other law enforcement agencies for appropriate legal action.

The operation, initiated through digital surveillance and reinforced by the Indian Coast Guard's expanding maritime presence, once again underscores India's role as a net provider of maritime security and an enforcer of the international rules-based order at sea.

# Interim Trade Framework Reflects Growing Depth and Trust Between India and US, Says PM Modi

■ New agreement expected to expand markets, create jobs and strengthen global supply chains.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the announcement of an Interim Trade Agreement framework between India and the United States, describing it as a major step that highlights the maturity and momentum of relations between the two nations. He stated that the understanding reached by both sides demonstrates increasing depth, trust and dynamism in bilateral cooperation. The Prime Minister noted that the framework would open fresh opportunities for Indian farmers, entrepreneurs, micro and small enterprises, start-up innovators and the fisheries sector. According to him, the arrangement



would strengthen the Make in India initiative and generate large scale employment, particularly for women and young people across the country. He also expressed appreciation for the commitment shown by the American leadership towards building stronger economic ties with New Delhi.

Officials from both sides confirmed that work

will now continue toward finalising a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement based on the interim structure. The framework is expected to improve supply chains, encourage investment flows and contribute to broader global economic growth while supporting India's long term goal of becoming a developed nation.

The trade

understanding follows months of discussions held against the backdrop of tariff related concerns. Under the arrangement, reciprocal duties on Indian goods entering the US market are set to be reduced to 18 percent. A number of products, including generic medicines, gems and diamonds, and aircraft components, will enjoy zero tariffs, creating new export possibilities. Indian sectors such as textiles and apparel, leather goods, footwear, plastics, rubber products, organic chemicals, home décor items and select machinery are likely to benefit from expanded access.

## India Bangladesh Ties Stand Independent of Other Foreign Relations, Says MEA

■ Government reiterates commitment to stability and protection of national interests

**Panaji:** The Ministry of External Affairs has clarified that India relationship with Bangladesh functions independently and is not influenced by New Delhi ties with any other country. The government stated in Parliament that it remains alert to developments affecting national interests and takes necessary measures to safeguard them. Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh informed the Lok Sabha through a written reply that India supports a democratic, peaceful and inclusive Bangladesh. He said this position has been



consistently conveyed to the interim authorities in Dhaka during various diplomatic engagements. The minister emphasised that India closely monitors events in neighbouring nations, particularly those with implications for security and economic interests. Relations with neighbouring countries remain a top priority and are guided by mutual benefit and the prevailing situation, he added.

## Washington Map in Trade Framework Backs India Stand on Kashmir

■ Washington signal seen as setback to Pakistan territorial claims.

**New Delhi:** A newly released graphic from the United States Trade Representative Office has sent a clear diplomatic message by depicting Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India. The map, shared as part of information on the India United States trade framework, includes the entire region within Indian territory, even marking the area under illegal occupation of Pakistan as belonging to India. The depiction is being viewed as a strong endorsement of India long standing position on Kashmir.

For years Pakistan has attempted to question India sovereignty over the region, but the latest representation from Washington reflects acceptance of the political reality and dismisses unfounded territorial narratives. The



development is likely to cause discomfort in Islamabad, which has recently sought closer engagement with the American administration. Pakistan leadership has made repeated efforts to strengthen ties with Washington, hoping to gain diplomatic support on key issues.

However, the map indicates that the United States is unwilling to endorse claims that contradict internationally recognised facts. Analysts believe the move highlights the growing strategic weight of India in global geopolitics.

## Government in Regular Contact With Indians in Iran, Situation Under Watch, Says Jaishankar

■ No evacuation planned as air connectivity remains functional

**New Delhi:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar informed Parliament that the government is closely monitoring the situation in Iran and is maintaining regular communication with Indian nationals residing there. He said the Indian Embassy in Tehran remains actively engaged with citizens, including students, and continues to provide necessary guidance. Addressing lawmakers,



Jaishankar stated that the government does not presently consider Indians in Iran to be stranded as Iranian airspace is open and commercial flights are operating

normally between the two countries. For this reason, no special evacuation exercise has been initiated so far. He added that authorities would continue to review the situation and take appropriate decisions if circumstances change. The minister said an estimated 9,000 to 10,000 Indian citizens are currently spread across 16 provinces in Iran. This community includes students and

their families, workers, pilgrims, tourists, business professionals and seafarers. Indians who wish to return have been advised to use available travel options, particularly regular commercial flights. Jaishankar also referred to a recent telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi during which both sides discussed the evolving developments in and around Iran.

## PM Modi Congratulates U-19 Team, Calls Win an Inspiration

■ India record title win hailed as celebration of talent and teamwork.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday congratulated India Under 19 cricket team for winning the World Cup, describing the achievement as a proud moment for the nation and a powerful source of inspiration for young sportspersons across the country. He

praised the players for their remarkable consistency and fighting spirit throughout the tournament. In his message, the Prime Minister said India cricketing talent had once again proved its strength on the global stage. He noted that the team displayed exceptional

skill, discipline and unity from the first match to the final. The victory, he added, would encourage countless youngsters to pursue sports with greater confidence and determination. He also wished the players success in their future careers. India lifted the Under 19 World

Cup for a record sixth time after defeating England by 100 runs in the final played in Harare, Zimbabwe. The comprehensive win further strengthened India position as the most successful side in the history of the competition and highlighted the depth of emerging cricket talent in the country.





# Bumrah Illness Creates Selection Dilemma for India Ahead of USA Opener

■ Team management weighs options as T20 World Cup campaign begins

**New Delhi:** India preparations for the T20 World Cup 2026 opener against the United States have been hit by an unexpected challenge after premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah fell ill on the morning of the match. The setback has forced the team management to rethink the playing combination for the first group encounter at the Wankhede Stadium. Bumrah fitness concern has added to an already ongoing debate over the ideal batting line up. Sanju Samson position in the eleven has been under discussion following his recent form, with the think tank considering an opening pair of Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma. The selectors are weighing whether to

persist with Samson or make a change from the very first game. Tilak Varma return to full fitness has strengthened India middle order options and he is expected to bat at number three. His

availability could reduce the chances of Samson finding a place in the final eleven, though the coaching staff may still offer him one last opportunity before taking



a firm decision.

If Bumrah fails to recover in time, Mohammed Siraj is likely to step in as the pace spearhead. Siraj joined the squad as a replacement for Harshit Rana and appears to be the most ready alternative. Apart from this possible change, the team is not expected to make major alterations for the opening fixture. India enter the tournament as strong favourites, carrying the confidence of an excellent record in recent years. Since their title winning campaign in 2024, the side has remained dominant in the shortest format and

has won nine consecutive home series, including a convincing 4 to 1 victory over New Zealand just before the World Cup. The squad has successfully transitioned after the retirement of senior stars, with young talents taking greater responsibility. Abhishek Sharma explosive starts, Ishan Kishan consistent run scoring and Tilak Varma stability have given the batting unit a fresh look, while the bowling attack retains depth and variety. India are placed in Group A alongside Namibia, the Netherlands and Pakistan. With a strong balance between experience and youth, the team will aim to begin its campaign on a positive note despite the late uncertainty surrounding Bumrah.



## GFDC Begins New Chapter With First Council Meeting Led by Glenn Ticlo

■ Focus on grassroots growth, academies and coaching standards in Goa football.

**Panaji:** The Goa Football Development Council conducted its first meeting under newly appointed Chairman Glenn Ticlo, marking the beginning of a renewed approach to football development in the state.

The session outlined a broad vision aimed at strengthening grassroots programmes, improving infrastructure and building professional expertise

within the sport. Members of the council discussed several important initiatives intended to bring greater structure to football activities across Goa. A key proposal involved the appointment of a Technical Director who would guide development programmes and maintain consistent technical standards in all GFDC projects.

## Lincoln Furtado and Borkar Pair Shine on Opening Day of BPS Open Pickleball Championship

■ Veteran and mixed doubles categories witness exciting contests at Margao venue.

**Panaji:** The BPS Open Pickleball Championship 2026 began on an energetic note at the BPS Sports Club in Margao, with experienced campaigner Lincoln Furtado and the husband wife duo of Nihaal and Ruta Borkar emerging as the first title winners of the tournament. The



opening day produced competitive matches across categories and drew strong interest from players and spectators alike. Lincoln Furtado



captured the Men Singles 60 plus crown after a confident performance in the final. He defeated James Anderson 11 to 4 to secure the title and cap

an impressive run through the event. Earlier in the semi finals, Anderson had edged out Parag Joshi 15 to 12, while Lincoln overcame Savio Vales by the same 15 to 12 score line. The round robin stage also witnessed close encounters, with Anderson defeating Capt. Ravi Peris 11 to 7 and Lincoln 11 to 8.

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Delhi made an impressive start to the Senior Women One Day Cricket Tournament with a comfortable 49 run win over Goa at the JSCA Oval Ground in Ranchi. A powerful batting performance laid the platform for Delhi before their bowlers ensured the advantage was not surrendered. After opting to bat first, Delhi posted



a challenging total of 283 for 3 in their allotted 50 overs. Openers Pragya Rawat and Priya Punia gave the team a dream start, stitching together a 152 run partnership that put Goa under early pressure.



## India Legends Crowned Asian Legend Cup 2026 Champions After Beating Bangladesh

**Panaji:** India Legends completed a memorable campaign by winning the Asian Legend Cup 2026 with a convincing five wicket victory over Bangladesh Legends in the final played at the BCA Ground in Thailand. The team produced a

disciplined performance with both bat and ball to lift the prestigious title. After winning the toss, Bangladesh Legends chose to bat first but found it difficult to build momentum against a tight Indian bowling attack.

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Goa's experienced badminton players delivered an inspiring performance at the Yonex Sunrise All India Masters Ranking Badminton Tournament 2026 held in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Competing against top veterans from across the country, the Goan contingent



secured multiple medals and once again highlighted the depth of sporting talent present in the state. Dr Manju Khandeparker emerged



as one of the standout performers of the championship. Partnering with Mamta Rani Yadav, she claimed the gold medal



in the Women Doubles 60+ category after a series of confident and well controlled matches. Dr Manju added another achievement to her campaign by winning a bronze medal in the Mixed Doubles 60+ event alongside partner Dhrubajyoti Sharma. The Men Doubles 70+ competition also brought success for Goa.