

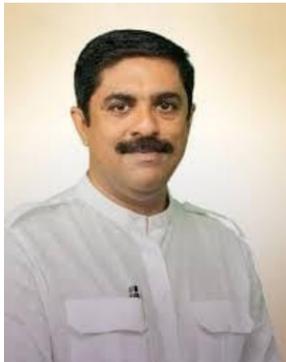


## Manoj, Vijai Trade Charges Over TCP Row

### War Of Words Intensifies Over Section 39A As Leaders Clash On Protest Methods And Land Conversions.

#### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** A sharp exchange of words erupted between activist Manoj Parab and Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai amid the ongoing agitation against Section 39A of the TCP Act, with both leaders taking firm positions on land conversions and the manner in which protests are being conducted. Sardesai said he supports the movement against what he described



as anti-Goan laws but stressed that people's agitations must be carried out responsibly and within democratic limits.



"People's movements must be responsibly led. As elected representatives, we are duty-bound to ensure

discipline and safety. I stand with the movement against anti-Goan laws. However, no consultation was held before decisions were announced at Azad Maidan, and I cannot support marching to anyone's private residence. Democracy cannot descend into intimidation," Sardesai said.

He also condemned the alleged manhandling of an MLA during the

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## Viresh Borkar Resumes Protest at Azad Maidan After Hospital Discharge



**PANAJI:** St Andre MLA Viresh Borkar has resumed his protest at Azad Maidan against TCP Section 39A after being discharged from hospital following health concerns during the agitation. Borkar was admitted to Campal Clinic Hospital after his health deteriorated during the ongoing protest. After treatment, he was discharged with doctors advising him to

take adequate rest and remain well hydrated. Despite medical advice, Borkar returned to Azad Maidan to continue the agitation against Section 39A, reiterating his stand against the controversial provision. Sources said doctors had advised the MLA to avoid exertion and ensure proper hydration, but Borkar chose to rejoin the protest soon after his discharge.

## Goa Should Become Innovation Capital of India: CM Sawant

#### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant said that Goa should emerge as the innovation capital of India, urging young people to focus on creativity and new ideas that can drive the state's future growth. Addressing a gathering, the Chief Minister encouraged youth to move beyond traditional employment goals and work towards becoming job creators and innovators. He said young people



should develop new ideas and solutions that contribute to the state's development, emphasizing that they should not remain only job seekers but also become

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## Mhaje Ghar Beneficiaries Need Not Worry, Says CM

■ Griha Adhar scheme benefits 1.80 lakh women; assistance credited monthly

#### Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant said that several beneficiaries have already received

orders under the Mhaje Ghar housing scheme and assured that people need not worry about cases filed in connection with the scheme. He stated that

the government would look into such cases and ensure that houses are registered in the names of eligible beneficiaries. Addressing a function,



the Chief Minister said

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## 78 Candidates File 80 Nominations for CCP Polls

■ Contest Likely in All 30 Wards as Nomination Process Concludes

#### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** A total of 78 candidates have filed 80 nominations for the upcoming Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) elections, with contests expected across all 30

wards, according to the official nomination report. Nomination CCP 2026. The highest number of candidates has been recorded in Ward



XXVI (General) with five candidates filing nominations, while Wards I, XI and XXIV have four candidates each, indicating keen competition in these areas. Most wards have two to three candidates

in the fray, reflecting a moderate contest across the capital city. In Ward XII, candidate Brijesh Kavlekar has filed two nominations, contributing to the total of 80 nominations despite 78 candidates contesting the polls.

## "It Will Be a Very Good Thing If UCC Is Implemented Across the Country": RSS Chief

■ Mohan Bhagwat Backs Nationwide Rollout Modelled on Uttarakhand Law.

**New Delhi:** Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has voiced support for implementing the Uniform Civil Code across India, suggesting it should follow the framework adopted by Uttarakhand. He described the move as beneficial for the nation



and conducive to greater

social cohesion. Speaking at a former servicemen's dialogue in Dehradun to mark the centenary year of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bhagwat said the introduction of a Uniform Civil Code would be a positive development for the country.

## Canada Moves to Revoke Tahawwur Rana's Citizenship Ahead of PM Carney's India Visit

■ Federal Court to Decide Fate of 26/11 Accused as Ottawa Seeks Diplomatic Reset

**New Delhi:** The Canadian government has initiated proceedings to revoke the citizenship of Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. The development comes just days before Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is scheduled to



visit India on February

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# The Growing Revolt Over Land and Development in Goa

Goa is in the midst of a season of protests. Across the state, citizens are opposing projects that on paper appear unrelated. A jetty in Curchorem, a bandhara at Mirabag, land conversions under Section 39A of the Town and Country Planning Act, and the proposed Unity Mall project have all triggered local resistance. Each issue has its own context. Yet taken together, they point to something larger unfolding across Goa: a widening public distrust of how development decisions are being made.

What is striking is not just the number of protests but their intensity. Villagers who rarely participated in public demonstrations are now organising marches and public meetings. Environmental groups, residents' associations and political activists are finding themselves on the same platforms. The protests are no longer isolated local disputes. They are becoming expressions of a broader anxiety about the future of the state.

At the heart of most of these conflicts is land. In a geographically small state like Goa, land is finite and deeply contested. Every field converted into a settlement and every hill opened to construction feels like a permanent loss. For many communities, land is not simply property. It is tied to livelihoods, water sources and traditional village structures. When zoning changes take place, villagers often see them as irreversible decisions taken without their consent.

This is why Section 39A has become such a flashpoint. What may appear to be a technical planning provision is widely viewed by citizens as a mechanism that allows land use changes with minimal public scrutiny. The controversy has gone beyond individual applications and turned into a larger debate about who controls Goa's land and in whose interest decisions are taken.

The same anxieties are visible in protests against infrastructure projects. The jetty proposal in the Curchorem area has drawn resistance from villagers who fear increased industrial activity and environmental damage. Whether those fears are fully justified or not,

*This is why Section 39A has become such a flashpoint. What may appear to be a technical planning provision is widely viewed by citizens as a mechanism that allows land use changes with minimal public scrutiny. The controversy has gone beyond individual applications and turned into a larger debate about who controls Goa's land and in whose interest decisions are taken.*

*The same anxieties are visible in protests against infrastructure projects. The jetty proposal in the Curchorem area has drawn resistance from villagers who fear increased industrial activity and environmental damage.*

they reflect a deep suspicion that infrastructure projects often serve interests beyond the local community. The Mirabag bandhara project has generated similar concerns. Projects presented as public utilities are often viewed with scepticism when their long term beneficiaries are unclear. Conflicting information and shifting explanations only deepen that mistrust. In such an environment, even beneficial projects struggle to gain acceptance.

The opposition to the Unity Mall project reflects another dimension of dissent. Residents worry not just about environmental impact but also about the strain on infrastructure and the changing character of their localities. Development in Goa is rarely judged only on economic grounds. It is also judged

on whether it fits into the existing social and ecological landscape.

What ties these movements together is a growing perception that decisions are being made first and explained later.

Public consultations often come after plans are already drawn up. Technical presentations and official assurances do little to convince communities that feel excluded from the process. When people believe that their objections will not alter the outcome, protests become the only language left.

Goa's history also plays a role in shaping these reactions. The state has seen decades of disputes over mining, land deals and large projects. Each new proposal is viewed through the lens of past controversies. Even unrelated projects inherit the distrust created by earlier ones.

This does not mean that Goans are opposed to development. The state's economy has long depended on tourism, infrastructure and investment. What people increasingly demand is participation. They want to know what is being planned, why it is being planned and how it will affect their lives.

In a small state, the effects of development are immediate and visible. A new road changes traffic patterns overnight. A large project transforms entire neighbourhoods. Decisions cannot remain abstract when their consequences are so close to home.

The protests unfolding across Goa are therefore not just about jetties, malls or planning laws. They are about the relationship between citizens and the state. They reflect a demand for transparency, consultation and accountability.

If there is a lesson in the current wave of dissent, it is that development cannot simply be announced and implemented. It has to be explained and negotiated. Without that process, even well intentioned projects will face resistance.

Goa today is witnessing more than a series of local agitations. It is experiencing a broader assertion by citizens who want a greater say in how their state evolves. Until that demand is addressed, dissent will continue to define the conversation around development.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR Decorum Must Prevail in Public Protests

The recent protests over Section 39(A) have once again raised an important question about the balance between democratic rights and public order. While citizens certainly have the right to protest in a democracy, the appeal by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to maintain decorum is both reasonable and necessary. Protests are a legitimate way to express dissent, but they must remain within the framework of the law. Marching without permission or taking demonstrations to the doorsteps of ministers raises serious concerns about safety and personal privacy. Public representatives are accountable to the people, but they are also entitled to basic security and dignity in their private spaces. The Chief Minister has rightly pointed out that the matter of Section 39(A) is already before the courts. When an issue is under judicial consideration, it is only appropriate that discussions and decisions take place through established legal channels. Street pressure cannot replace due process. Equally important is the need for protest organisers to coordinate with authorities. Permissions and designated routes are not mere formalities. They exist to ensure that protests remain peaceful and do not inconvenience the general public. Goa has a long tradition of peaceful civic engagement. It is in everyone's interest that this tradition continues. Protestors must ensure that their actions strengthen democracy rather than disrupt law and order.

-A Concerned Citizen

## Tourists Must Respect Goa's Homes

The recent viral video showing tourists crowding outside a heritage home in Fontainhas for Instagram photos is disturbing but not surprising. The visuals show visitors ignoring clear "No Photography" signs and treating a private residence like a public attraction. Tourism is vital to Goa's economy, and locals have always welcomed visitors. But there must be limits. A residential neighbourhood is not a theme park, and people's homes are not photo backdrops. For residents, this is not a holiday destination but a place where families live, work, and seek peace. Fontainhas is known for its heritage houses and narrow lanes, which were never meant to handle crowds gathering outside private homes at all hours. When tourists lean on compound walls, move plants, and block entrances just to take pictures, they cross the line from tourism into intrusion. What is most worrying is the growing lack of civic sense. Despite warning signs and repeated appeals, many visitors continue to behave as if everything in Goa exists for their entertainment. This attitude only deepens resentment among locals and harms the very tourism industry that people depend on. Authorities must step in to regulate tourist movement in heritage areas, but responsibility also lies with visitors. Respect for local communities is the foundation of responsible tourism. If tourists want Goa to remain welcoming, they must learn a simple lesson: admire its beauty without disturbing the people who call it home.

-Seby Martins Mala, Panaji

## After NGT Reprimand, State Orders Immediate Sealing of Illegal Coastal Jetties

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Following sharp criticism from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) over failure to control unauthorised jetty operations, State authorities have initiated action by directing the immediate closure of all jetties functioning without valid approvals along Goa's coastline.

In an order dated February 18, Sachin Desai, Director of Environment and Member Secretary of the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA), instructed the Deputy Collector and Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Bardez to promptly seal all jetties operating without the necessary clearances. The directive makes



it clear that such jetties will not be permitted to resume activities unless they obtain mandatory approvals under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) regulations. Authorities have been asked to submit a compliance report within 48 hours.

The development comes less than a month after the NGT strongly criticised the GCZMA for what it described as an indifferent approach towards violations.

The Tribunal was hearing a petition filed by Dikshay Phadte, who had alleged that multiple jetties were operating without required CRZ permissions.

During the hearing, the NGT expressed displeasure over the regulator's failure to halt operations of six identified illegal jetties. It emphasised that operations should have been stopped immediately and warned that continued delay could

lead to monetary penalties against the authority.

The Tribunal observed that merely issuing show-cause notices did not amount to compliance with its previous orders, underscoring that decisive enforcement action was required.

In his plea, Phadte highlighted concerns about environmental damage and regulatory breaches caused by unapproved jetty operations along ecologically sensitive coastal stretches.

The issue of unchecked jetty activity has surfaced repeatedly in recent years, with environmental groups and local residents raising alarms over its potential impact on fragile coastal ecosystems.

## Goa Govt Shelves 'Aarti Ghat' Project at Naroa After Local Opposition

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Goa government has decided to abandon the proposed 'Aarti Ghat' project at Naroa in Bicholim, following protests by local residents. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured that the initiative will not move forward.

"Aarti Ghat, which was scheduled to begin at Naroa from May, has been scrapped. The Chief Minister has assured us it will not take place," MLA Rajesh Faldesai told reporters after meeting the CM at his official residence on Monday evening. The decision comes after residents from Divar, Naroa, Akhada, Vanxim,



and neighboring villages staged a protest at the site on Sunday, highlighting the cultural and religious importance of the land. Protestors argued that the area has been used as a crematorium for generations and must be preserved, warning that commercial development could disrupt centuries-old traditions.

## HC Orders Immediate Enforcement of Supreme Court Construction Guidelines

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Bombay High Court at Goa has instructed all relevant authorities to promptly enforce the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court concerning construction approvals and associated procedures. The direction came while disposing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Agnelo Baretto. A Division Bench comprising Justice Suman Shyam and Justice Amit Jamsandekar ruled that the apex court's judgment, along with subsequent circulars issued by State authorities, must be implemented strictly and without deviation. During the proceedings, Advocate Sahil Sardesai, appearing for the petitioner, argued that despite circulars issued by the Directorate of Panchayats, the Urban Development Department, and the Chief Town Planner in 2025 and January 2026 to give effect to the Supreme Court's December 17, 2024 ruling, the authorities had failed to take meaningful action. He



urged the court to direct the government to ensure immediate compliance with those directives. Representing the State, Additional Government Advocate Akshata Bhat informed the Bench that the government had no objection to such an order being passed. After examining the Supreme Court's judgment and the three related circulars, the High Court observed that the petitioner's request was justified and could be granted.

The Bench accordingly disposed of the petition, directing all concerned departments to take immediate steps to enforce the Supreme Court's December 17, 2024 order, as well as the circulars dated May 9, 2025 and January 14, 2026, "in letter and spirit."

## Social Welfare Dept Directs Officials to Use 'Scheduled Castes' Instead of 'Harijan' in Records

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Social Welfare Department has issued instructions to all government offices, public sector undertakings, autonomous institutions, municipalities and panchayats to discontinue the use of the term "Harijan" in official communication and documentation, and to replace it with "Scheduled Castes." The move follows concerns raised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which took serious note of the continued use of caste-identifying and

potentially derogatory terminology in official records.

The Commission flagged references not only in correspondence but also in the naming of villages, localities, settlements and hamlets.

In a circular issued by Director of Social Welfare Dipak Desai, all Heads of Departments (HODs) have been directed to avoid using the word "Harijan" in any formal communication or records going forward.

The circular states that it has come to the government's attention that several departments, corporations, educational institutions, local bodies and panchayats continue to use the term while referring to members of the Scheduled Caste community.

It notes that the NHRC has taken a serious view of this practice, particularly in the context of official documents containing caste-indicative expressions.

According to the directive, continued usage

of the term is considered discriminatory toward the Scheduled Caste community. Authorities have therefore been instructed to refrain from employing the word "Harijan" in any official correspondence, notifications or records, and to use "Scheduled Castes" in all future communications instead.

The department has called for strict compliance with the directive across all levels of administration to ensure that official language aligns with constitutional and human rights standards.

## Police Seek More Time to Respond to Khosla plea

Team Goemkarponn

**ANJUNA:** Goa police has requested additional time from the court to submit their response to an application filed by UK citizen Surinder Kumar Khosla, owner of the land where the popular Birch nightclub operates. The move comes in connection with the recent fire incident at the nightclub.

Khosla, who has been named as an accused



in the case registered following the blaze, challenged a proclamation order issued against him.

Such an order is typically issued when an accused is declared

absconding for failing to appear before the court or investigating authorities despite being served summons.

During the hearing, the prosecution

informed the court that a comprehensive reply was being prepared and sought time to formally place it on record.

Khosla's counsel argued that the proclamation order was legally unsustainable and requested that it be set aside. After considering the submissions, the court adjourned the matter to March 2 for further proceedings, directing the police to file their reply by that date.

# Double Rescue, Dog Bite Incidents And Medical Emergencies Keep Drishti Lifesavers On High Alert

Weekend Sees Rip Current Rescue, Stray Dog Attacks, Medical Aid And Recovery Of Missing Belongings Across Goa Beaches

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Lifesavers of Drishti Marine remained on high alert over the weekend, responding to a double rescue, dog bite incidents, medical emergencies and multiple cases of missing belongings traced along Goa's coastline.

At Morjim beach, two tourists from Maharashtra aged 27 and 54 were trapped in a flash rip current while swimming. On noticing them in distress, lifesaver Pramod Mahale rushed into the water. He was soon joined by lifesavers Tanaji and Vinod Salelkar, who arrived on a jetski and safely brought both victims back to shore.

At Majorda beach, a 52-year-old man was attacked by a stray dog



during a beach walk, sustaining bite injuries on his back. Supervisor Devendra Gaude rushed to his aid and administered first aid at the lifesaver tower. The victim was advised to seek further medical treatment.

In another incident at Benaulim beach, lifesaver Sagar Gaude was attacked by four stray dogs while on duty. One of the dogs bit his right

leg, following which he was sent to hospital for treatment. Notably, two months ago, lifesaver captain Cleyton Vaz had also been attacked by stray dogs at the same beach. Medical assistance was also extended at Palolem beach, where a 78-year-old German tourist developed breathing difficulties while seated near the shore. Lifesavers placed him in the recovery position, administered oxygen and alerted the ambulance service. He was later shifted to a government hospital in Margao for further care.

At Colva beach, a 25-year-old watersports operator sustained a leg injury after a boat engine struck him when the vessel overturned due to high waves. Lifesavers

provided on-site first aid and advised him to seek medical attention.

The weekend also witnessed several instances of lost property being recovered and returned. At Calangute beach, a missing bag found during the final patrol was handed over to police and later returned to its owners.

Another unattended bag at Colva beach was secured and returned after due verification. At Benaulim beach, lifesavers found a set of cards, including a debit card and a government ID belonging to a Kazakhstan national.

After making inquiries with shack owners and tourists and following due protocol, the cards were returned to the rightful owner.



## 45-Year-Old Man Succumbs After Fall At Residence

Body Preserved For Medico-Legal Formalities.

## Team Goemkarponn

**BAMBOLIM:** A 45-year-old man who was admitted following a fall at his residence succumbed while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College and Hospital on Monday morning.

Police informed that at around 11:59 am, a wireless message was received from the casualty police at GMC Bambolim stating that Briddhichand Vishuakarma (45), a resident of Ramnagri, San Jose de Areal and a native of Uttar Pradesh, had expired during treatment.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that the

deceased had reportedly suffered a fall at his residence and was initially taken to South Goa District Hospital, Margao. Considering the seriousness of his condition, he was referred to GMC Bambolim for advanced medical care. However, despite medical efforts, he passed away while undergoing treatment.

Police have preserved the body at GMC Bambolim to conduct medico-legal formalities to ascertain the exact cause of death. Further inquiry is being conducted by PSI Praful Giri of Margao City Police Station.



## Woman Injured After Kadamba Bus Collides With Thar Car At Mollem

## Team Goemkarponn

**MOLLEM:** A woman sustained a head injury after a Kadamba bus allegedly dashed against a Thar car at Amod Ghat road near Nandran, Mollem, on Saturday evening. According to a complaint lodged by Pandurang Haldankar, a resident of Madel, Chorao, Tiswadi, the incident occurred at around 4:00 pm while he was travelling with his friend Vrushali Painginkar, a resident of Borda, Margao.

They were proceeding from Margao towards Belgaum in his Thar car when the accident took place.

As per the complaint, after crossing the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary area and upon reaching a curve at Amod Ghat road at Nandran, a bus belonging to Kadamba Transport Corporation allegedly attempted to overtake another vehicle coming from the opposite direction in a rash and negligent manner and dashed against the Thar car. Due to the impact, the occupant of the Thar car, Vrushali Painginkar, sustained a head injury.

Collem Police have registered the case, and further investigation is being carried out by HC 4958 of Collem Police Station

## Gold Ornaments And Cash Worth Rs 1.30 Lakh Stolen From House At Ponda

## Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** In a case of housebreaking and theft reported from Vagurme in Ponda, unidentified persons decamped with gold ornaments and cash collectively valued at approximately Rs 1.30 lakh.

According to a complaint lodged by



Rasika Prabhu, a resident of Ponda, the incident

occurred between 6:00 pm on February 20 and 3:30 pm on February 22, 2026. During the intervening period, unknown accused persons allegedly gained entry into the bedroom of her house by breaking open the latch of the back door.

The accused then allegedly stole gold

ornaments worth around Rs 90,000 and cash amounting to Rs 40,000 from a cupboard kept in the bedroom before fleeing the scene.

Mardol Police have registered a case in connection with the theft. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Sushant Sangodkar of Mardol Police Station.

## Vasco police foil pre-dawn bank break-in bid; 50-year-old held red handed

## Team Goemkarponn

**VASCO:** A pre-dawn break-in attempt at a bank in Vasco was foiled after an alert patrol team caught a 50-year-old man red-handed around the premises in the early hours of Monday. At around 4:00 AM, a Vasco police patrol conducting night surveillance near the Vasco Railway Station

heard suspicious sounds from the rear side of a branch of Bank of India, close to the 'Eater Den' restaurant. On checking the spot, the team noticed a man clinging to the window grills at the back of the bank. The suspect, later identified as Rayappa Channappa Shriraganvi (50), a resident of Varunapuri, Vasco, and a native of Belagavi, Karnataka, was

dressed in a black cap, green half-sleeve T-shirt and blue track pants. On seeing the police, he attempted to flee carrying a white plastic gunny bag but was swiftly intercepted and overpowered. A search of the bag led to the recovery of a red torch wrapped in black insulation tape and an exo-blade (hacksaw) with handle, allegedly intended for cutting



through barriers. During questioning, Shriraganvi admitted that he was attempting to break into the bank to commit theft. Police stated that heightened surveillance had been maintained around banking institutions in Vasco following a similar attempted theft reported in January 2026.

# HJS Urges Administration To Halt 'Holi Parties' In Nightclubs

■ Memorandum Submitted To Additional District Collector; Action Sought Over Alleged Participation Of Minors

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Hindu Janajagruiti Samiti (HJS) has appealed to the Additional District Collector of North Goa, Prashant Parab, seeking immediate intervention to stop "Holi parties" being organised by several nightclubs and river cruises in the State in the backdrop of the upcoming Holi festival.

In a memorandum submitted to the Additional District Collector, HJS stated that certain events, including the "Hyatt Centric Holi Bash", are promoting activities such as rain dance, pool parties, Bollywood DJ performances and dhol dance, along with



the proposed serving of unlimited beer and other alcoholic beverages. The organisation alleged that children above eight years of age are reportedly being allowed to participate in the event, which it claimed could create a misleading image of the sacred Hindu festival of Holi.

The delegation that met the authorities included Goa State Organiser of HJS

Satyavijay Naik, Rajshri Gadekar of 'Ranaragini', Shubha Sawant, Hemshree Gadekar and Dilip Shetye.

HJS stated that Holi symbolises the destruction of negative tendencies and the spread of virtuous values, and alleged that commercialisation of a festival linked to religious and cultural traditions is inappropriate and may create a wrong impression among the

younger generation. Referring to the recent fire incident at a nightclub in Arpora, the organisation also urged authorities to verify whether nightclubs organising such Holi parties possess the necessary safety permissions.

Separately, HJS has filed a complaint with the Superintendent of Police, North Goa, Harish Madkaikar, seeking legal action against organisers for allegedly allowing minors to participate in the "Hyatt Centric Holi Bash", where unlimited beer is proposed to be served.

A copy of the complaint has also been submitted to the Director of Women and Child Welfare, Jyoti Desai.



# 300 Cu.M Ground Level Reservoir Inaugurated At Poinguinim

## Team Goemkarponn

**CANACONA:** A long-pending and much-awaited 300 cubic metre Ground Level Reservoir (GLR) along with a 10-kilometre conveying pipeline was inaugurated at Poinguinim on Monday, bringing major relief to residents facing persistent water supply issues in the area. The water supply project, constructed at Potkem-Welwada at a cost of over ₹1.5 crore, includes a 300 cubic metre ground level reservoir and

a 10 km pipeline network comprising 90 mm and 110 mm diameter pipes. With the commissioning of the reservoir and the new pipeline network, regular and improved water supply has now been ensured for the local wards. The project is expected to resolve the water scarcity issues faced by residents of Welwada, Potkem, Chiplim, Khawat, Galiem, Goindal, Kudal and surrounding areas under V.P. Poinguinim, significantly improving convenience and quality of life for the people.

# Resort Rio Denies Links With Sealed Big B Casino

■ Resort says casino was only a tenant; claims several crores in unpaid dues

## Team Goemkarponn

**ARPORA:** The management of Resort Rio in Arpora has clarified that it has no connection with Big B Casino, which was recently sealed by the North Goa Collectorate for failing to pay government fees reportedly amounting to ₹14 crore. In an official statement, Resort Rio stated that neither the casino nor its owner, Chitti Babu Ghanta, have any ownership, financial, operational or managerial relationship with the resort. The management emphasised that the resort has never been involved in the functioning or business decisions of the casino. According to the statement, Big B Casino had merely rented a small portion of the property

under a commercial lease agreement.

Resort Rio stressed that the arrangement was limited strictly to a landlord-tenant relationship and did not constitute any form of partnership or joint venture. The resort further revealed that the casino and its owner have



outstanding payments running into several crores of rupees, which remain unpaid despite repeated reminders. These pending amounts relate solely to obligations under the lease agreement. Resort Rio also strongly objected to any attempts to associate the hotel with the casino's operations or liabilities, stating that such claims are inaccurate and harmful to the reputation of the establishment.

# BJP vs BJP as GHRDC vice chairperson flags mass voter deletions in Vasco ahead of civic polls

## Team Goemkarponn

**VASCO:** A political storm appears to be brewing within the BJP in Vasco after Goa Human Resources Development Corporation (GHRDC) vice chairperson and Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC) councillor Deepak Naik on Monday evening questioned the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process that led to the deletion of 1,057 voters from his ward



ahead of the upcoming municipal elections. Addressing a press conference, Naik said while he supported the SIR exercise in principle, the scale of deletions in Vasco constituency had

raised serious doubts. "The press conference is only to send a message to the people and the authorities. The SIR process is a positive step by the Government. It has removed names of those

with duplicate Aadhaar cards, dual voting records, Portuguese passport holders and even deceased persons. I have supported this initiative. However, Vasco constituency has recorded the highest number of deletions among all 40 Assembly constituencies, with around 11,500 names struck off. That raises questions and creates suspicion that something may have gone wrong," said Naik.

# Complete Blackout To Be Observed During Bi-Annual 'Veeramel' Ritual In Canacona

## Team Goemkarponn

**CANACONA:** A complete blackout will be observed in designated parts of Canacona during the bi-annual spiritual ritual of 'Veeramel' scheduled to be held on Saturday, February 28, 2026. As per a public intimation issued to residents, businesses and visitors of Canacona taluka, the age-old customary ritual holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for the local community. The organisers have called for full cooperation to ensure the smooth and respectful conduct of the ceremony.



As part of the observance, a complete blackout will be enforced from 9:30 PM to 1:00 AM in certain municipal areas. During this period, vehicular movement will be strictly

prohibited on National Highway 66 (NH-66) and key stretches including Chaudi, Ponsulem, Patnem, Colomb, Palolem, Charrasta, Agonda Road and Gulem. Authorities have informed that NH-66 will remain blocked from both directions — towards Gulem and towards the Talpona Brigade side — for the entire duration of the ritual. Residents, particularly those associated with tourism-related activities such as hotels, guesthouses, homestays and rental properties, have been requested to inform their guests and tenants in advance to avoid inconvenience.



## CM Inaugurates Converge 3.0 Shiksha Udyojak Sangam Academia-Industry Summit In Taleigao

### Team Goemkarponn

**Taleigao:** Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant inaugurated CONVERGE 3.0 – Shiksha Udyojak Sangam, an Academia-Industry Summit themed “Innovation, Integrate, Impact: Building Goa’s Future Ready Changemakers,” at the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium. The summit was organised by the Goa State Higher Education Council (GSHEC) in collaboration

with the Directorate of Higher Education (DHE).

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration between academia and industry to equip students with future-ready skills and foster innovation-driven growth in Goa. He highlighted the State government’s commitment to promoting entrepreneurship, research, and skill

development among youth.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister felicitated the winners of the Young Innovators Challenge across various categories, including Poster Competition, Creative Cluster on the topic “Digitally Document Our Goan Heritage,” and TAKE 17: Short Film Event, encouraging students to leverage creativity and technology to preserve and promote Goa’s rich cultural

heritage.

Director, Directorate of Higher Education & DTE, Shri Bhushan Savaikar; Director, Department of Entrepreneurship Education & Entrepreneurship Development, Dr. Satya Ranjan Acharya; Program Director, DHE and Convenor of Converge 3.0, Dr. Niyam Marchon; along with other dignitaries, faculty members and students were present for the summit.

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## Manoj, Vijai Trade Charges Over TCP Row

protest and demanded strict action against those responsible. “The manhandling of a colleague is unacceptable and warrants immediate suspension. We must protect democracy not allow it to become mobocracy,” he added.

Responding strongly, Manoj Parab accused Sardesai of being responsible for policies that allegedly led to large-scale land conversions in the State.

“Because of 16B, Goa is losing land due to excessive land

conversions and zone changes. MLA Vijai Sardesai introduced 16B and destroyed Goa. That is why he is not with us,” Parab alleged. He further accused Sardesai of involvement in land conversions, land dealings and zone

changes. Parab reiterated that the agitation against TCP Section 39A would continue until the provision is scrapped. “All our leaders will discuss the matter and decide the next step collectively. The protest against TCP 39A will continue.

## Mhaje Ghar Beneficiaries Need Not Worry, Says CM

the Mhaje Ghar scheme is being implemented to provide housing security to deserving families and that the

government remains committed to resolving any issues faced by beneficiaries. Dr Sawant also highlighted the Griha Adhar scheme,

originally introduced during the tenure of former Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, stating that the initiative has inspired several

governments across the country. At present, around 1.80 lakh women in Goa are benefiting from the scheme.

## Canada Moves to Revoke Tahawwur Rana’s Citizenship Ahead of PM Carney’s India Visit

26, amid efforts to rebuild strained ties between Ottawa and New Delhi following tensions during the tenure of former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Rana, a Pakistan born businessman who became a Canadian citizen in 2001, is currently in custody in India. He is awaiting trial in connection with the 26/11

attacks carried out by the Pakistan based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which claimed more than 160 lives. According to Canadian authorities, the move to

revoke Rana’s citizenship is not linked to terrorism charges but to alleged misrepresentation during his citizenship application.



## Goa Maritime Conclave Focuses on Strengthening Regional Maritime Security

### Team Goemkarponn

**Vasco:** The fifth edition of the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC-26) was held at the Naval War College in Goa on February 21, bringing together naval chiefs and senior maritime representatives from 15 countries of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The meeting reaffirmed the collective resolve of participating nations to enhance cooperation in addressing evolving maritime security challenges.

The conclave was organised by the Indian Navy under the theme “Common Maritime Security Challenges in the IOR – Progressing Lines of Efforts to Mitigate Dynamic Threats.” The event underscored India’s efforts to promote structured maritime engagement and strengthen cooperative mechanisms for ensuring regional maritime stability. Discussions focused on practical measures and coordinated approaches to address shared security concerns.

Delivering the keynote address, former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd) highlighted the need for closer coordination among IOR countries in response

to changing maritime threats. He emphasised the importance of real-time information exchange and sustained capacity building, noting that challenges such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, trafficking and other cross-border maritime crimes require collective action by regional partners.

The first technical session centred on enhancing real-time maritime domain awareness and operational coordination to curb unlawful activities at sea. The second session explored ways to improve training, institutional cooperation and capability development among maritime forces and agencies in the region.

The conclave concluded with remarks from naval chiefs and delegation leaders, who shared their national perspectives on strengthening maritime cooperation. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi expressed appreciation to participating countries and emphasised the need to move from information sharing to coordinated action through greater use of technology and integrated operations under the MAHASAGAR vision.

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## Goa Should Become Innovation Capital of India: CM Sawant

entrepreneurs and innovators. Dr Sawant said the world today is being shaped by artificial intelligence, automation, deep technology and space technology, which are no longer concepts of the future but a present-day reality. Highlighting

India’s demographic strength, he noted that more than 65 per cent of the country’s population is below the age of 35, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often described Yuva Shakti as the nation’s greatest strength.

# “Where Has Rahul Gandhi Fallen Short?” Omar Abdullah Backs Congress Leader

■ J&K Chief Minister Dismisses Talk of Leadership Change Within INDIA Bloc.

**New Delhi:** In a notable endorsement of Rahul Gandhi, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has rejected suggestions of a leadership change within the opposition INDIA bloc. He asserted that Gandhi has been consistently fulfilling the primary responsibility of the Opposition by holding the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party accountable.

Responding to remarks made by senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, who suggested that Mamata Banerjee could lead the alliance instead, Abdullah made it clear that no such proposal has been formally discussed within the



bloc. He emphasized that any decision regarding leadership would have to be taken collectively by alliance partners and not based on individual opinions.

Abdullah questioned the basis for calls to replace Gandhi, asking where the Congress leader had failed in challenging the BJP. He said Gandhi has

consistently targeted the government and raised issues against it, which he described as the fundamental duty of the Opposition. According to Abdullah, electoral setbacks do not negate the alliance's responsibility to scrutinize and oppose the ruling party.

The remarks mark a significant shift in tone from Abdullah, who in

the past had criticized the functioning of the INDIA bloc and expressed dissatisfaction with certain issues raised by Congress.

A few months ago, he had even described the alliance as being on life support. His latest comments, however, signal renewed backing for Gandhi's leadership role within the opposition framework.

Abdullah reiterated that no meeting of the INDIA bloc has taken up the question of leadership change. He maintained that the matter is not on the alliance's agenda and dismissed speculation surrounding internal divisions.



# “Youth Congress Chief Held After Shirtless Protest at AI Impact Summit”

■ Uday Bhanu Chib Remanded for Four Days as Political Row Intensifies

**New Delhi:** Uday Bhanu Chib, national president of the Indian Youth Congress, has been arrested in connection with a shirtless protest staged during the AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The arrest came after nearly 15 hours of questioning at Tilak Marg police station. Police officials stated that Chib was taken into custody following multiple rounds of interrogation, alleging that he did not cooperate with investigators and attempted to mislead the inquiry. Authorities said they possess adequate evidence related to the demonstration. He was later produced before a court and remanded to four days in custody. With this development, the total number of arrests in the case has risen to eight.

The protest has triggered a sharp political confrontation. The Bharatiya Janata Party strongly criticised the

demonstration, calling it irresponsible and damaging to the country's image at a global platform. Party spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla accused the Congress of attempting to undermine India's progress, arguing that the summit had received widespread international appreciation from global leaders and prominent figures in the technology sector. He described the protest as an affront not to a political party but to the nation's achievements.

In response, leaders from the Indian Youth Congress defended their actions, maintaining that the protest was peaceful and aimed at drawing attention to concerns about the prime minister's conduct. National general secretary Sheh Narayan Ojha said the demonstration was intended to raise issues they believe have not been adequately addressed.

# “Good News” Tradition Continues as Cabinet Meets for First Time at Seva Tirtha

■ Prime Minister Recalls South Block Legacy Ahead of Shift to New PMO Complex

**New Delhi:** The Union Cabinet is set to convene at 11 am today at Seva Tirtha, marking its first meeting at the new office of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The previous meeting was held on February 13 at the Prime Minister's Office in South Block, shortly before the official shift to the new complex. During the final meeting at South Block, the Prime Minister reflected on the



historic significance of the building.

He spoke about key milestones associated with it, including the early

years after Independence. He noted that the first four cabinet meetings led by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, were held at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He also highlighted that strategies for the country's four major wars were formulated in South Block's war room, underscoring its central role in India's governance and security history. Cabinet meetings under

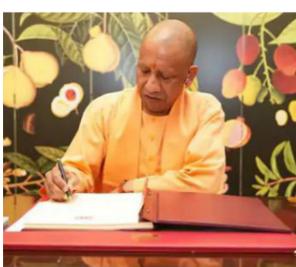
the current leadership are known not only for discussions on policy agendas but also for broader reviews of significant developments during the week.

The Prime Minister encourages ministers to share feedback and suggestions, fostering an interactive approach to governance. A distinctive feature of these meetings is the sharing of “good news” by ministers.

# From Data Centres to Green Energy, Singapore Backs UP with Rs 20,000 Crore Proposals

■ Over 20,000 Jobs Expected as Singapore Firms Back Industrial and Digital Expansion

**New Delhi:** The Uttar Pradesh government has secured investment proposals worth Rs 19,877 crore from Singapore-based companies for a range of industrial and digital infrastructure projects. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced the development during his visit to Singapore, describing the agreements as a significant step



toward strengthening the state's economy and employment landscape.

The proposed investments, finalised on the first day of the chief

minister's four day tour of Singapore and Japan beginning February 23, are expected to generate more than 20,000 jobs. The initiatives aim to reinforce Uttar Pradesh's industrial base while accelerating growth in digital infrastructure and green energy.

Among the key agreements, Universal Success Group committed Rs 6,650 crore for projects

spanning group housing, logistics parks and data centres. Golden State Capital pledged Rs 8,000 crore to establish a 100 megawatt data centre in the state, a move seen as pivotal in positioning Uttar Pradesh as a leading data centre destination in India.

In the renewable energy sector, Private Infrastructure Development Group signed an agreement to

invest Rs 2,500 crore in green hydrogen, renewable power and agri solar projects. AVPN Limited also committed Rs 2,727 crore toward renewable energy and Agri PV initiatives, supporting the state's sustainability goals.

A partnership was also formalised with ITE Education Services to enhance Technical and Vocational Education

and Training. The collaboration will focus on academic development, infrastructure upgrades, leadership training, certification and quality assurance to align the state's skill ecosystem with international standards. During the visit, Adityanath is engaging with representatives from 33 global companies across Singapore and Japan.

## “One Loss, Big Trouble: India Need Dominant Victory to Revive Semifinal Hopes”

■ Massive Win Over Zimbabwe Now Crucial to Keep Semifinal Hopes Alive.

**New Delhi:** India national cricket team find themselves in a surprisingly vulnerable position at the T20 World Cup 2026 despite suffering just one defeat in the tournament so far. After progressing through the group stage unbeaten, highlighted by a confidence boosting win over Pakistan, Suryakumar Yadav and his side faltered in their Super 8 opener with a crushing 76 run loss to South Africa national cricket team.

The heavy setback has severely damaged India's Net Run Rate, which now stands at minus 3.800, leaving them third in



Group 1. They trail leaders West Indies cricket team, who boast a healthy plus 5.350, and South Africa at plus 3.800. With the semifinal race tightening, a simple win in the remaining matches may not be sufficient. India must secure emphatic

victories to revive their campaign.

Their immediate challenge comes against Zimbabwe national cricket team in Chennai on February 26. To significantly improve their Net Run Rate, India may need to win by a margin approaching or exceeding 100 runs. If multiple teams finish level on points, NRR will determine qualification, making margin of victory critical.

For instance, if India post a total around 220 while batting first, they would need to restrict Zimbabwe to approximately 120 or below to make a meaningful impact on their

NRR. Anything less could leave them dependent on other results.

Tactical adjustments may also be on the table. With concerns over top order consistency, there are calls for changes in the batting lineup to maximise the Powerplay overs. On the bowling front, conditions at the spin friendly MA Chidambaram Stadium could encourage a strong spin combination aimed at dismantling Zimbabwe's batting.

India's path to the semifinals remains open, but only a dominant performance will shift the momentum back in their favour.

## Kyan Mavany and Tvisha Sardesai Crowned Under 14 Champions at Baale BPS Open 2026

■ Anurag Agarwal and Caetano Fernandes Shine in Masters Singles Finals

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Young talents Kyan Mavany and Tvisha Sardesai emerged as the standout performers in the Under 14 categories at the Baale BPS Open 2026, delivering commanding displays to secure their respective titles at the B.P.S. Sports Club.

In the Boys Under 14 final, Kyan completed an impressive run with a clinical 4 1, 4 0 victory over Ethan Ataide. Tvisha matched that dominance in the Girls Under 14



summit clash, defeating Bhaavya Bhoomkar 4 0, 4 2 to lift the trophy. Earlier in the semifinals, Tvisha blanked Kimberly D'sa 4 0, 4 0, while Bhaavya advanced with a 4 2, 4 0 win over Urvi Panandiker.



## Goa's Ankush Patil and Felix Dias Secure Silver at All India Doctors Badminton Tournament

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Goa's Dr Ankush Patil delivered an impressive performance at the All India Doctors Badminton Tournament, claiming two silver medals in the Men's Singles and Men's Singles 35 plus categories. Fellow Goan Dr Felix Dias also finished on the podium, earning silver in the Men's Singles 60 plus division as the tournament concluded

at the Manohar Parrikar Indoor Stadium. In the Men's Singles final, Dr Abhiram emerged champion, with Patil finishing runner up after a competitive contest. Patil once again had to settle for second place in the 35 plus category, where Dr Ketan Sinha secured the title. In the 60 plus segment, Dr Dyaneshwar Shinde defeated Dias in the final to clinch the top honour.

## Rosary College Clinches Inter Collegiate Women's Hockey Title with 1-0 Final Victory

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Rosary College of Commerce & Arts emerged champions of the Inter Collegiate Women's Hockey Championship 2025 to 26 after a hard fought campaign that concluded on February 17 at the Hockey Turf, Dayanand Bandodkar



Krida Sankool. The two day tournament was organised by Goa University and featured five participating teams. In a closely contested

final, Rosary College edged past Don Bosco College with a narrow 1 to 0 win to lift the championship trophy. The decisive goal

ensured a memorable finish for the Navelim based side after consistent performances throughout the tournament.

## Sambhaji Warriors Clinch Title at Adarsh Sports Club's Annual Cricket Tournament

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** The Adarsh Sports Club successfully hosted the seventh edition of its Annual Cricket Tournament in Mormugao, continuing a sporting tradition that has become a prominent feature of the



local cricket calendar. The event brought together players, organisers and supporters in a celebration

of competitive spirit and community engagement. This year's tournament featured three teams,

Adarsh Sports, Delta Ports and Sambhaji Warriors 2026. Over the years, the competition has served as a valuable platform for emerging cricketers from the Mormugao region, encouraging sportsmanship and nurturing grassroots talent.

## St. Xavier's College Clinches Inter Collegiate Men's Hockey Championship with 5-2 Final Win

### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** St. Xavier's College emerged champions of the Inter Collegiate Men's Hockey Championship 2025 to 26 after an impressive run in the tournament organised

by Goa University.

The four day event was held from February 17 to 20 at the Hockey Turf, Dayanand Bandodkar Krida Sankool, and featured participation from nine college teams across the state.



In a high scoring final,

St. Xavier's College

defeated Sridora Caculo

College of Commerce and Management Studies by 5 to 2 to lift the championship trophy.

The Mapusa based team displayed strong attacking play and control throughout the contest to secure a convincing victory.