



## Summons Are Harassment, 39A Must Be Scrapped: RGP's Manoj Parab

Parab Appears Before Panaji Police; Alleges Govt Trying to Silence Protesters, Claims Old Goa Tops Land Conversions Under 39A .

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Allegations of political vendetta and misuse of police machinery intensified on Monday after Advocate Amit Palekar and Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) President Manoj Parab accused the state government of escalating tensions during last week's 39A protest



and targeting activists through legal action. Addressing the media, Adv Amit Palekar alleged that the police escalated

the situation during the 39A protest held at Dona Paula. He claimed that the unlawful assembly case was filed by the

state "on its own" and further alleged that the offence was registered at the behest of the Chief Minister.

"The protest was peaceful. The escalation happened because of the police action," Palekar said, terming the case politically motivated. Meanwhile, RGP President Manoj Parab

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## Rane Supporters Call Him "God", Say "We Are Not Cattle" Amid 39A Row



### Team Goemkarponn

**Panaji:** Supporters of TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane on Monday condemned the morcha taken to his private residence over the controversial Section 39A of the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act, strongly backing the minister.

In a show of loyalty, some supporters described Rane as "God" and expressed unwavering faith in his leadership.

Reacting to criticism against him, they asserted, "We are not cattle," stating that they stand by the minister out of conviction and not compulsion.

## Bomb Threat at Passport Bhavan in Patto Turns Out to Be Hoax

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** A bomb threat reported at the Passport Bhavan building near the GSIDC complex at Patto on Monday morning was later confirmed to be a hoax by police officials. According to sources, a bomb threat call was received at around 10:39 am, triggering immediate security measures. Fire personnel from the Panaji Fire Station, along with police and other emergency authorities, rushed to the spot following the alert. The building was



thoroughly searched by security agencies. After an extensive inspection of the premises, officials confirmed that no suspicious items were found and declared the area safe. Normalcy was restored shortly after the clearance. Further details regarding the source of the hoax call and investigation into the matter are awaited.

## Goa Targets 168 Libraries; 20 Completed as CM Inaugurates Ponda E-Library

### Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday said the Government of Goa is working towards establishing 168 libraries across the state, with 20



already completed, as he inaugurated the renovated

Municipal Library and E-Vachanalaya (E-Library)

facility at Ponda Municipality. The project has been implemented under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment and aims to strengthen children's

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## Summons Over 39A Protest a Political Conspiracy: Adv Amit Palekar

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Advocate Amit Palekar has termed the summons issued by the Panaji Police to various protesters and political

leaders in connection with last week's 39A protest as a "political conspiracy." Addressing the media, Palekar alleged that the move is an attempt to silence voices

that raised concerns during the protest. He claimed that those who participated in the agitation were exercising their democratic right to express dissent and



question the government.

## India Calls for Restraint as West Asia Crisis Intensifies

MEA urges dialogue and civilian safety amid expanding military action

**New Delhi:** India has expressed deep concern over the rapidly escalating conflict in West Asia, calling on all parties involved to avoid further escalation and place the safety of civilians at the forefront. Responding to

the latest developments, the Ministry of External Affairs emphasised the need for restraint, dialogue, and diplomatic engagement to prevent the situation from spiralling further out of control. In an official statement, the



ministry urged all sides to de-escalate tensions through peaceful means and stressed that respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations remains essential for long term regional stability.

## "I Got Him Before He Got Me," Says Trump After Joint Strike

Former US president links Khamenei's death to alleged assassination plots amid surging West Asia tensions

**New Delhi:** Former United States President Donald Trump has made a dramatic claim following the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,

stating that he acted before alleged threats against his own life could be carried out. Trump said Khamenei had tried to have him assassinated on two occasions and that

recent joint military action ended that threat first. Trump's remarks came days after Khamenei was killed during coordinated strikes carried out by the United States and Israel.



# Election Countdown Puts BJP on the Defensive

With elections barely eight to ten months away, the political mood in Goa is beginning to shift. Development projects once pushed with confidence are now being presented with caution. Assurances are being made. Consultations are being promised. And in some cases, governments are stepping back altogether. The recent assurance that no project will be imposed on Mirabag villagers against their will reflects this changing political reality.

The statement came in the wake of protests against a proposed bandhara, with villagers fearing flooding and damage to their homes and livelihoods. As tensions escalated, political leaders moved quickly to calm the situation, promising that projects lacking public support would not be pursued.

Such assurances are not unusual in a democracy. Governments must listen to the people, especially when concerns about displacement, environmental impact or livelihoods are raised. But the timing of these reassurances is significant. When elections are close, even minor agitations take on larger political consequences. A small protest can quickly turn into a wider movement, drawing opposition support and public attention. Goa's recent political history offers clear lessons. The agitation over Section 39A demonstrated how sustained protests can reshape public discourse and force governments into defensive positions. What began as a policy issue evolved into a broader political movement, energising opposition parties and mobilising citizens across constituencies.

Similarly, the Unity Mall protest in Chimbel showed how localised resistance can become a symbol of larger dissatisfaction. Infrastructure and development projects often appear straightforward on paper, but on the ground they affect communities in immediate and visible ways. When residents feel excluded from decision-making, opposition becomes inevitable. Political parties have clearly taken note. The current approach

*The Mirabag issue highlights a broader challenge facing Goa. Development is necessary, but it must balance environmental concerns, local livelihoods and public sentiment. Achieving that balance requires careful planning and open dialogue, not last-minute interventions triggered by protests.*

*As the election season approaches, more such situations are likely to arise. Political parties will tread carefully, aware that every decision carries electoral implications. Agitations will not simply be administrative challenges; they will be political tests.*

appears less confrontational and more conciliatory. Instead of pushing projects forward and dealing with resistance later, the emphasis now is on consultation and reassurance. Leaders are keen to show that they are listening, even if it means slowing down or reconsidering development plans.

This is not merely about goodwill. It is about political survival. Elections in Goa are often closely contested, and even a small swing in public opinion can change outcomes. Agitations have the potential to influence voters beyond the immediate area where they occur. A protest in one village can resonate across constituencies, especially when it touches on broader themes such as land, livelihoods and environmental protection.

For the ruling party, the risk is clear. Allowing agitations to grow unchecked could create

a perception of arrogance or insensitivity. In a state where local identity and community ties remain strong, that perception can be politically damaging. By stepping in early and offering assurances, the party hopes to prevent small issues from becoming major controversies.

At the same time, this raises questions about the consistency of governance. Development projects often take years of planning and investment. When decisions are altered or delayed due to political pressure, it can create uncertainty for both communities and planners. While public consultation is essential, it must be meaningful and timely, not simply a response to protests.

There is also the question of trust. Assurances given during periods of unrest or ahead of elections are often viewed with scepticism. Villagers want clarity, not just promises. If projects are to be reconsidered, the process must be transparent. If they are to proceed, communities must be genuinely involved in decision-making.

The Mirabag issue highlights a broader challenge facing Goa. Development is necessary, but it must balance environmental concerns, local livelihoods and public sentiment. Achieving that balance requires careful planning and open dialogue, not last-minute interventions triggered by protests.

As the election season approaches, more such situations are likely to arise. Political parties will tread carefully, aware that every decision carries electoral implications. Agitations will not simply be administrative challenges; they will be political tests. In the months ahead, the real question will be whether this new caution represents a genuine shift towards participatory governance or merely an election-season strategy. Voters, after all, have seen such cycles before. Once elections pass, the true measure of commitment will become clear.

For now, one thing is certain. With elections on the horizon, no party can afford to ignore the voice of the people. And in Goa, that voice is often heard loudest on the streets.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Preparedness Is Key in Times of Crisis

The Goa government's assurance that it is closely monitoring the ongoing conflict in West Asia and that no Goans have been reported stranded so far comes as a relief to many families. With a significant number of Goans living and working in the Gulf region, any instability there naturally causes concern back home. While the present situation may appear under control, international conflicts can escalate quickly and without warning. Travel disruptions, sudden airspace closures and communication difficulties can leave people stranded and anxious within a short span of time. In such situations, advance preparation becomes crucial. The government would do well to remain proactive by setting up dedicated helplines and ensuring that Goans abroad and their families have access to timely updates. Clear communication can prevent panic and confusion, especially for those who may be planning to travel in the coming weeks. Goa has seen in the past how global crises can affect its expatriate population. Many families depend on relatives working overseas, and even temporary disruptions can create uncertainty. Preparedness and coordination with the relevant authorities can make a significant difference if the situation worsens. It is reassuring that there are no reports of Goans in distress at present. However, this period of calm should be used to strengthen systems and response mechanisms. Being prepared is always better than reacting in haste when a crisis unfolds.

-Ashley D'Souza, Calangute

### Ensure Safe Return of Goans from the Middle East

With tensions rising across the Middle East due to the ongoing conflict, there is growing concern among families in Goa who have relatives living and working in the region. A large number of Goans depend on employment in Gulf countries, and any escalation in violence or disruption of travel routes can put them at risk or leave them stranded without warning. Even if there are currently no confirmed reports of Goans in distress, the situation remains uncertain and can change rapidly. In times like these, the government must act with foresight and preparedness. Many families in Goa are anxious and waiting for reassurance that their loved ones will be safe if the situation worsens. The authorities should consider putting systems in place to assist Goans who may wish to return home. A dedicated helpline, coordination with embassies, and clear public communication would go a long way in reducing panic. Those working abroad should also be given guidance on what steps to take if flights are disrupted or local conditions become unsafe. Goa has a long history of migration to the Middle East, and many households depend on relatives working there. Their safety must remain a priority. If evacuation becomes necessary, timely action will be crucial in ensuring that Goans return home safely. At a time of global uncertainty, preparedness and quick response can make all the difference. The government must remain vigilant and ready to assist its people abroad.

-Farmina Pereira, Carmona

## Goa NRI Commission Monitors West Asia

■ Confirms No Serious Impact On Goans

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa NRI Commission has stated that it is closely observing developments in West Asia and has received only two minor inquiries regarding Goans in the affected countries, with no reports of serious issues. NRI Commissioner Adv. Narendra Sawaikar said he has been in touch with the Goan community in Dubai and



other Gulf nations, who have confirmed that the situation is currently stable and under control. He urged citizens to avoid spreading unverified or

sensational information. "According to locals, there is no immediate cause for concern. Authorities are issuing safety guidelines, which residents are advised to follow carefully," Sawaikar added. The Commissioner appealed to Goans residing in the Gulf, as well as their families in Goa, to stay calm, remain vigilant, adhere to official advisories, and refrain from unnecessary travel. He emphasized that there

is no report so far of any Goan being stranded. Sawaikar also confirmed that the NRI Commission is maintaining regular contact with officials in Dubai and the Union Ministry of External Affairs to ensure the safety and well-being of Goans in the region. The Commission assured that it will continue coordinating with relevant agencies and provide timely assistance if required.



## HC upholds Rs 2.5 crore award in Mandovi Bridge dispute

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Nearly 40 years after the contract for the new Mandovi Bridge was signed, the Bombay High Court at Goa has dismissed the State government's appeal challenging an arbitral award that directs it to pay over Rs 2.5 crore, along with interest, to M/s U P State Bridge Corporation Ltd. Justice Suman Shyam, in a judgment delivered on Friday, upheld the Principal District Judge, North Goa's earlier decision, which had rejected the State's objections under Section 34 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The dispute traces back to a 1987 contract for constructing the new Mandovi Bridge on NH-17. Although the agreement

was signed on February 21, 1987, and the bridge was inaugurated on July 23, 1992, span 11 collapsed on October 14, 1990, during construction. Conflicts arose during the project execution, leading the parties to approach a three-member arbitral tribunal as stipulated in the contract.

On August 8, 1997, the tribunal ruled that the State must pay over Rs 1.31 crore for claims and Rs 1.20 crore in interest up to the award date, in addition to further interest at 18 percent. The tribunal also addressed insurance claims and the return of bank guarantees. The State's attempt to challenge the award was initially rejected as time-barred by the Principal District Judge in 2001, a decision later upheld by the High Court.

## Goa CM Announces Big Boost For Group Farming, Agriculture Sector In State Budget

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has unveiled plans for major financial allocations in the upcoming State Budget to support group farming and the overall development of the agriculture sector, reinforcing the state's vision of a self-reliant Goa. Speaking at the launch of the Group Farming Scheme in Surla, Sawant emphasized the goal of achieving



100 percent agricultural self-sufficiency within the next ten years. He stressed that agriculture will play a pivotal role in Goa's economy, reducing over-reliance on tourism

and mining. Highlighting the importance of farmers in the state's growth strategy, the Chief Minister called for a move toward collective farming and modern agricultural methods. He underscored the government's objective to empower farmers as entrepreneurs, ensuring better incomes and long-term financial stability. Noting that nearly 18,000 hectares of khazan land remain uncultivated, Sawant urged especially young farmers to bring

fallow land back into productive use. He assured landowners that the group farming model would not affect ownership rights and that no land would be forcibly acquired, while cautioning against leasing agricultural land for non-farming purposes. Sawant also called for sustainable farming practices, including organic cultivation, modern irrigation, mechanization, and adoption of technology to boost productivity.

## Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority Reconstituted After Two Months

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** After nearly two months of inactivity, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has reconstituted the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA), with the Secretary (Environment) appointed as its Chairperson. The new committee has been formally notified on February 26 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and will serve a three-year term. The GCZMA had remained non-functional since the previous committee's term ended on December 26, 2025. The reconstituted authority includes senior officials as ex-officio members, such as the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Directors of Panchayats,

Tourism, Industries, Urban Development, Fisheries, and Settlement & Land Records, Chief Engineer of Water Resources, and the Member Secretary of the Goa

The Director and Ex-Officio Joint Secretary (Environment & Climate Change), Goa, will act as the Member Secretary.

The GCZMA is responsible for reviewing project proposals in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) areas, monitoring adherence to CRZ

State Pollution Control Board. In addition, the Centre has appointed expert members from academic and technical fields, including representatives from the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), public works engineers, scholars, and environmental NGOs.

guidelines, regulating development activities, and taking action against violations. The authority is also empowered to issue directives, exercise powers under the Environment Act, and oversee cases of non-compliance to ensure sustainable coastal management.



## Goa panchayats express concerns ahead of deposit refund scheme rollout

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** With just a month remaining for the launch of Goa's Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS), apprehension and confusion are surfacing at the local level, even as the government pushes to set up one Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) in every village panchayat. In a recent memorandum to Block Development Officers (BDOs), Director of Panchayats Mahadev Araundekar instructed all panchayats to "extend full cooperation" for the installation of RVMs on their premises.

The move comes amid growing uncertainty among traders, citizens, and village representatives over the rapid implementation of the DRS, which is being touted as India's first scheme of its kind.



"The DRS is intended to create a structured and accountable system for collecting and recycling designated packaging materials with the active participation of all stakeholders. Each panchayat will host one Reverse Vending Machine," Araundekar stated in his communication to the BDOs. However, several sarpanchas said they were unaware of the scheme or its operational details. Assagao Sarpanch Hanumant Naik admitted he was "completely in the dark" about the plan and stressed that any such initiative must first be discussed in

the gram sabha. Naik highlighted existing waste management challenges in his panchayat, warning that implementing the DRS could overburden local administration. "The government should assign its own staff to manage the RVM. Otherwise, it will add extra work for the panchayat," he said, while also pointing out potential inconvenience to the public due to queuing and extra time spent.

Parra Sarpanch Daniel Lobo echoed similar concerns, noting that although some residents had asked him about the scheme, detailed discussions or guidance had not reached him.

## Man Stabbed Near Baga Circle Over Money Dispute

■ Accused Arrested; Further Investigation Underway.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**CALANGUTE:** Calangute police have registered an offence in connection with a stabbing incident reported near Baga Circle on March 1. According to police, the complaint was filed by Sunil Rathod (23), originally from Agra, Uttar Pradesh, currently residing near the Electricity Department



at Candolim. In his complaint, Rathod stated that at around 12.30 pm, the accused, identified as Samir Singh Rajput (31), originally from Rajasthan and presently residing in Calangute, allegedly abused his friend Karan Magare using filthy language over a

monetary dispute. Police said the altercation escalated when the accused allegedly approached from behind and stabbed Magare in the back with a kitchen knife, causing serious bleeding injuries. The injured was rushed for medical treatment, while the accused has been booked under relevant sections of law. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Vishwajit Dhavlikar.

## Two Grievously Injured In Borim Road Accident

■ Wagon R Driver Booked For Rash And Negligent Driving.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PONDA:** Ponda police have registered an offence following a road accident reported near the old panchayat at Borim on February 28. According to a state complaint filed by ASI Rohidas Bhomkar of Ponda Police Station, the incident occurred at around 3 pm when the accused driver, identified as Saju Phadte, a resident of Borim, Ponda, was allegedly driving his



Wagon R car in a rash and negligent manner from Ponda towards Margao. Police said that upon reaching near the old panchayat at Borim,

the car allegedly collided with an oncoming Activa scooter. As a result of the impact, the scooter rider, Tejas Kamat, a resident of Volvoi, Ponda, sustained grievous head injuries, while the pillion rider, Kirti Gaonkar, a resident of Collem, Sanguem, suffered grievous injuries to her left hand. An offence has been registered, and further investigation is being conducted by ASI R. Bhomkar of Ponda Police Station.

## Cansaulim Man Dies After Succumbing To Injuries In Sernabatim Accident

■ The victim was undergoing treatment at GMC Bambolim

**Team Goemkarponn**

**COLVA:** A 33-year-old man from Cansaulim succumbed to injuries sustained in a self-accident earlier last month, police said.

According to information received from the Casualty Police at Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC) Bambolim on March 1 at around 10.34 am, Baven Anthony Antao (33), a resident of Cansaulim, Salcete, passed away while undergoing treatment.

During inquiry at GMC, the deceased's mother, Brenda Antao, informed police that her son had met with a self-accident on February 22 at about 12.15 pm near Bandar, Sernabatim. He was travelling on his Activa scooter from Sernabatim



towards Colva when the accident occurred, resulting in injuries.

Locals shifted him to District Hospital, Margao, in a 108 ambulance, from where he was later referred to GMC Bambolim for further medical care.

In connection with the incident, Colva Police Station had registered a motor vehicle accident case on February 27. The victim subsequently succumbed to his injuries during treatment. Further inquiry is being conducted by PSI Nikhil Khajnekar of Colva Police Station

## Woman Cheated Of Mangalsutra On Pretext Of Religious Ritual In Pernem

■ Accused Allegedly Took 40-Gram Ornament Worth Rs 3 Lakh

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PERNEM:** Pernem police have registered a case of cheating following a complaint lodged by Vithal Arolkar (65), a self-employed resident of Kiranpani, Palyem in Pernem. As per the complaint, the incident dates back to February 20 at around 11 am, when the accused, identified as



Santosh Malkar, a resident of Mangaon, Maharashtra, allegedly induced the complainant and his family members on the pretext of performing religious rituals

to cure the illness of the complainant's daughter. During the course of the ritual, the complainant's daughter reportedly placed her 40-gram mangalsutra, valued at approximately Rs 3 lakh, inside a steel tin as instructed. Police said the accused allegedly dishonestly removed the mangalsutra from the tin and replaced it with an

empty container, while directing the family not to open it for 21 days as part of the ritual. When the family later realised that the ornament was missing, they approached the police and filed a complaint. An offence was registered on February 28 at 10.33 pm, and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Sarvesh Sawant.

## Tourist's Valuables Worth Rs 2.37 Lakh Stolen From Palolem Guesthouse

■ Laptop, Jewellery, Cash Among Items Reported Missing

**Team Goemkarponn**

**CANACONA:** Canacona police have registered a case of theft following a complaint lodged by Nidhi Lahoti, a resident of Canacona originally from Gurgaon, Haryana. As per the complaint, the incident occurred



on February 28 prior to 7.39 am at Palolem Casa, Ourem, Palolem in Canacona. Unknown

persons allegedly gained entry into the complainant's room and decamped with several valuables. The stolen items include a Mokobara tan-colour bag, a Mirragio fanny pack, an HP laptop along with its charger, Sennheiser earphones, Swarovski jewellery, cash

amounting to Rs 3,500, as well as an Aadhaar card and driving licence. Police said the total loss has been estimated at Rs 2,37,299. An offence has been registered, and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Babu Dessai of Canacona Police Station.

## Truck Intercepted At Mpa Gate; Three Booked For Forgery And Attempted Theft

■ Vehicle Allegedly Loaded Iron Pellets Instead Of Coal Using Fake Weighment Slip.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**MORMUGAO:** Mormugao police have registered an offence following a complaint filed by SI/ Exe Baburao Bhimrao

Gawhad, In-Charge CIW, CISF Unit, MPA Goa, regarding an alleged attempt to forge documents and transport iron pellets illegally from the port premises. As per



the complaint, the incident occurred on February

26 at around 7.30 pm at the DPC Gate of the Mormugao Port Authority (MPA). The accused have been identified as Asif Babasaheb Dambal, a resident of Belgaum,

Karnataka and driver of the truck, Suresh Lad, a resident of Xeldem, Tillamol, Quepem and owner of the truck, along with other unknown persons.

# Mirabag Villagers Mark Shigmo At Protest Site, Resolve To Continue Festivities Amid Stir

Team Goemkarponn

**MIRABAG:** Even as their agitation against the proposed bandara project on the Zuari River intensifies, villagers of Mirabag have ensured that their centuries-old Shigmo traditions remain uninterrupted. Traditionally, during Shigmo, 'Mel' troupes move from house to house in the village, where families welcome



them with specially prepared meals. This year, however, with a large number of women actively involved in the ongoing protest, it became difficult

for households to organise the customary feasts. Refusing to let the movement disrupt their cultural practices, the protesters shifted the kitchen to the agitation site itself. Food was prepared collectively at the venue and served to the visiting Mel groups, blending celebration with resistance. Villagers asserted that their cultural identity and their

protest are inseparable. They announced that all forthcoming festivals will be observed at the demonstration site until the controversial bandara project is withdrawn in its entirety. Reiterating their stand, the protesters maintained that their agitation will remain peaceful and united, and that they will persist with their movement until their demands are met.



## Upasnagar residents protest highway works, demand underpass

Team Goemkarponn

**UPASNAGAR:** Tension prevailed at Upasnagar as several residents gathered to protest against the ongoing highway flyover works, demanding an underpass and alleging that the project was planned without taking locals into confidence. Protesters claimed that neither the area MLA Anton Vas nor the residents were properly consulted before finalising the design of the flyover. Holding placards and raising slogans, residents expressed shock over what they described as a lack of proper planning. They said repeated representations had been submitted to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

and to MLA Anton Vas, but their concerns remained unresolved. Social worker Achut Naik, a resident of the area, said the absence of an underpass would force people to travel over one kilometre and take a long detour to reach the opposite side of the road. "Senior citizens, school children and daily commuters will be the worst affected. The present design is not only inconvenient but also risky. It could turn this stretch into an accident-prone zone," he said. Residents pointed out that several schools and temples are located in the vicinity and warned that movement would become extremely difficult if the flyover works continued without incorporating an underpass.

## Alcoholics Anonymous holds mega awareness campaign at Zuarinagar shelter home

Team Goemkarponn

**ZUARINAGAR:** A mega awareness campaign on alcohol addiction was organised at the Zuarinagar Shelter Home on Sunday morning, with members of Alcoholics Anonymous reaching out to the people on the need for early intervention, counselling



and community support to overcome addiction. The programme focused on educating residents about the harmful effects

of alcohol and drug dependence on physical and mental health, family life and financial stability. Speakers explained how

addiction often leads to health complications, strained relationships, job loss and social isolation, stressing that recovery is possible with timely help and sustained support. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous shared personal recovery experiences, offering hope and encouragement to those battling addiction.



## Goa CM Launches Community Farming & Farmer Excellence Initiative At Surla

Team Goemkarponn

**SURLA-SANKHALI:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant inaugurated the Community Farming & Farmer Excellence initiative at Surla in Sankhali, marking the rollout of a flagship programme aimed at strengthening collective farming practices in the State. The initiative, implemented by the Directorate of Agriculture, seeks to promote community-based farming models and ensure optimal utilisation of agricultural land to enhance productivity and sustainability.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief

Minister underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in agriculture and highlighted the government's focus on empowering farmers through innovation-driven practices. On the occasion, progressive farmers were felicitated in recognition of their innovation, commitment and significant contribution to advancing modern agricultural methods in Goa.

Among those present were ZP Member Sunder Naik, Sarpanch Suchita Gavkar, Director of Agriculture Sandeep Fol Dessai, Pandurang Puttikar, along with progressive farmers and local representatives.

## Ahraz Mulla Resigns From NSUI After 11 Years, To Take Up Larger Role In Congress

Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** Senior student leader Ahraz Mulla has resigned from the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) after 11 years of service, stating that he intends to take on larger responsibilities within the Congress Party ahead of crucial elections in Goa.



In a press release issued

on Sunday, Mulla said his decision comes at a time when the Congress is preparing for significant political responsibilities, including the upcoming Goa Assembly elections and the Ponda by-elections. Mulla has served the National Students' Union of India in key capacities, including

as State President and later as National General Secretary. He described his tenure in the student wing as an important phase of his political journey, which provided him with valuable experience and the opportunity to work closely with students and youth across the country.

## Amit Patkar Announces Educational Support for 10 SC Students Across Goa

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** In a significant step towards promoting educational empowerment and social justice, Amit Patkar, President of the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee, has announced that he will personally support the

education of 10 deserving Scheduled Caste (SC) students from across Goa. Speaking on the initiative, Amit Patkar stated that education is the most powerful tool to uplift communities and create equal opportunities for all.

He emphasised that many bright students



from SC communities face financial constraints, and this initiative aims to ensure that deserving students can pursue their dreams without interruption.

"This is a small but sincere effort to support talented SC students who deserve a fair chance to succeed. Our

responsibility as a society is to stand with those who need encouragement and opportunity," Amit Patkar said. The initiative will cover educational expenses for selected students, with priority given to meritorious candidates from economically weaker backgrounds across Goa.

# West Asia Tensions Ground Hundreds of Flights, Disrupt Indian Air Network

■ Airspace closures force mass cancellations as airlines brace for prolonged uncertainty.

**New Delhi:** Escalating hostilities in West Asia have severely disrupted air travel, leading to widespread flight cancellations by Indian and international carriers and leaving thousands of passengers stranded across major airports. The conflict, sparked by recent Israel and United States strikes on Iran followed by retaliatory action from Tehran, has resulted in extensive airspace restrictions that continue to ripple through global aviation networks.

On Sunday, March 1, at least 350 flights operated by Indian airlines were cancelled nationwide. The disruption followed a difficult February 28, when more than 400 flights were



scrapped at Delhi alone as tensions intensified. Airlines now anticipate that a minimum of 300 additional flights could be affected on March 2 as rerouting challenges, safety concerns, and operational constraints persist. India's civil aviation authorities have advised passengers to stay in close contact with their respective airlines and verify flight schedules before travelling.

Coordination is ongoing between airlines, airport operators, and other stakeholders to manage passenger assistance and monitor the evolving situation. Major hubs such as \*Indira Gandhi International Airport, \*\*Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, and \*\*Kempegowda International Airport\* witnessed scenes of congestion and distress

as travellers faced last minute cancellations and limited rebooking options. The situation worsened following the suspension of flights by Indian carriers to several West Asian destinations after advisories issued by the \*Directorate General of Civil Aviation\*.

Among Indian airlines, \*Air India\* has halted services to and from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Qatar until late March 2, citing safety and operational reasons. The airline has also cancelled select Europe bound flights, including routes linking Amritsar, Delhi, Birmingham, Zurich, and Copenhagen, along with corresponding return services.



## Goa Tourism Draws Strong Industry Interest at SATTE 2026

■ Regenerative tourism vision and diversified offerings earn widespread trade appreciation

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa Tourism concluded a highly successful participation at SATTE 2026, held at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, with sustained interest from domestic and international tourism stakeholders across the three day exhibition. The Goa pavilion remained a focal point for buyers, tour operators, destination management companies, and travel trade professionals, reflecting growing confidence in the State's evolving tourism strategy. Throughout the event, the Goa Tourism delegation engaged in a wide range of business to business meetings and strategic discussions aimed at expanding partnerships in key source markets. Conversations centred on experiential travel, spiritual and cultural circuits, hinterland exploration, wellness retreats, adventure tourism, and year round offerings aligned with Goa's Regenerative Tourism roadmap. The consistent footfall and quality interactions highlighted a shift in perception, with stakeholders showing interest beyond traditional beach tourism. The Goa pavilion also featured strong participation from the private sector, with around 82 co exhibitors

including hoteliers, tour operators, and destination management companies showcasing their products alongside the State delegation.

This collective presence allowed Goa to present a comprehensive and integrated tourism portfolio, combining government initiatives with industry led experiences. Tourism Minister Rohan A. Khaunte said the response at SATTE 2026 underlined Goa's positioning as a progressive and resilient destination. He noted that the growing acceptance of the Regenerative Tourism approach demonstrates how community engagement, cultural preservation, environmental responsibility, and economic growth can move forward together. The partnerships strengthened at the exhibition are expected to support long term sustainable growth. Director of Tourism Kedar Naik highlighted SATTE as an important platform for meaningful industry engagement, adding that the interest shown in Goa's evolving tourism model reflects its appeal beyond conventional travel narratives. Marking the successful participation, Goa Tourism received a participation memento in recognition of its active presence.

# India Has the Scale and Talent, Now Esports Gets Its First National League

■ Indian Super Gaming League to debut as a franchise based competition with eight teams and nationwide qualifiers.

**New Delhi:** India's esports ecosystem took a decisive step forward with the announcement of the Indian Super Gaming League, the country's first franchise based national esports competition. The league is scheduled to launch its inaugural season later this year and is designed to introduce long term structure, continuity, and professionalism to competitive gaming in India.

The unveiling marked a high profile moment for the industry, bringing together founders, policymakers, and



prominent figures from sports and entertainment. Among those present were ISGL founders Santanu Basu and Gautam Badalia, Andhra Pradesh Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, along with actors and sports franchise stakeholders Ranbir

Kapoor and Abhishek Bachchan.

Organised by LetsGameNow, ISGL is built around permanent team ownership and a season based competitive format. This approach moves Indian esports beyond one off tournaments toward a city

aligned league system similar to mainstream professional sports. The competition will be preceded by a multi city national qualifier circuit aimed at identifying emerging talent from across the country, culminating in a grand finale in Visakhapatnam.

The league will launch with eight founding teams backed by established sports franchises and organisations, including Mumbai City FC, FC Goa, Chennaiyin FC, Kerala Blasters FC, Inter Kashi, Puneri Paltan, Bangalore Bhargavas, and Andhra Agneyas.

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## Summons Are Harassment, 39A Must Be Scrapped: RGP's Manoj Parab

appeared before the Panaji Police Station on Monday after being summoned in connection with last week's protests against 39A in the capital city. Speaking to reporters

outside the police station, Parab termed the cases filed against protesters as "harassment" and a waste of time.

He said such actions were not new and recalled

similar instances during the IIT protest, alleging that the government was attempting to threaten and silence those raising their voices against controversial policies.

## Goa Targets 168 Libraries; 20 Completed as CM Inaugurates Ponda E-Library

and adolescent libraries while building a strong digital infrastructure. Highlighting the broader vision, Sawant said, "We have set a target of 168 libraries across Goa to

promote digital learning and strengthen access to knowledge. So far, 20 libraries have been completed, and work is progressing in other areas." He added that

the upgraded facility at Ponda will benefit students preparing for competitive exams, youth seeking study spaces, and senior citizens in need of a dedicated reading environment.

# “Protection of Civilians Is Paramount”: Modi Discusses West Asia Crisis With Netanyahu

■ India calls for restraint, dialogue, and an early end to hostilities amid rising regional tensions.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the security situation in West Asia continues to deteriorate following recent military developments. The discussion focused on regional stability and India's concerns over the escalating conflict. During the call, Prime Minister Modi conveyed India's deep concern over the unfolding situation and underlined that the protection of civilians must remain the foremost priority. He stressed that continued hostilities risk further humanitarian suffering and instability across the region. India,



he said, firmly supports efforts aimed at de-escalation and reiterated the need for an early cessation of violence through dialogue and diplomacy.

The Prime Minister emphasised that sustainable peace can only be achieved by respecting sovereignty, exercising restraint, and ensuring that civilian populations are shielded from the impact of military

actions. He also conveyed India's position that diplomatic channels must remain open to prevent the conflict from widening further. The conversation took place against the backdrop of intensifying tensions following recent strikes involving Israel, the United States, and Iran. Reports of targeted attacks and retaliatory actions across multiple locations have heightened fears of a broader

regional confrontation. Developments in and around Tehran, along with responses from allied groups in the region, have added to the uncertainty and volatility of the situation. India continues to closely monitor the evolving crisis and has maintained regular contact with stakeholders in the region. The government has consistently advocated restraint and urged all parties involved to prioritise humanitarian considerations over military escalation. Ensuring the safety of civilians, safeguarding regional stability, and preventing further loss of life remain central to India's diplomatic engagement.



## Army Responds Swiftly After Drone Sighted Near Line of Control

■ Second drone-related incident reported in Poonch sector within three days

**New Delhi:** The Indian Army opened fire after detecting a suspected drone activity along the Line of Control in the Digwar sector of Poonch, Jammu and Kashmir, on Sunday, heightening security alert in the border region. The aerial object, believed to have originated from Pakistan, was spotted hovering close to the international boundary for several minutes before troops responded. According to security inputs, alert Army personnel fired around a dozen rounds toward the drone after it was detected near the Line of Control. The firing was carried out as a precautionary measure to deter any potential cross border surveillance or hostile activity. The drone's movement was closely monitored throughout the incident, and additional forces were placed on heightened vigilance in the area. This incident marks the second such occurrence in the past three days in which Indian troops have opened fire following the detection of suspicious drone movement from

across the border. Repeated sightings have raised concerns among security agencies about possible reconnaissance attempts or efforts to drop contraband, weapons, or communication equipment in forward areas.

Security forces have further intensified patrolling and surveillance along vulnerable stretches of the LoC, particularly in areas that have previously witnessed drone intrusions. Advanced monitoring systems, including night vision devices and radar based detection equipment, are being actively used to track any aerial movement near the border. Officials indicated that while no damage or casualties were reported, the incident underscores the continuing security challenges along the frontier. The Army remains on high alert and is maintaining a robust defensive posture to counter any threat to national security. Authorities reiterated that strict countermeasures are in place to respond swiftly to any violations along the LoC.

# “People Want Change”: Modi Accuses DMK of Corruption and Failed Governance

■ Prime Minister targets ruling party during Madurai visit, highlights development gaps and welfare delays.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a sharp political attack on the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam during a public address in Madurai, asserting that the people of Tamil Nadu were disillusioned with the current state government and seeking a credible alternative. Addressing a large gathering, the Prime Minister said



public sentiment in the state clearly reflected

dissatisfaction with what he described as unfulfilled promises and widespread corruption. He stated that governance failures under the DMK had eroded public trust and added that the National Democratic Alliance was increasingly being viewed as the preferred option by voters. The Prime Minister also criticised the DMK's earlier alliance with the

Indian National Congress, accusing both parties of neglecting Tamil Nadu's vast coastal and infrastructure potential when they governed together. He said key projects such as the Maduravoyal elevated corridor and the Thoothukudi trans shipment hub remained stalled for years and existed largely on paper.

# “We Are Natural Partners,” Says PM Modi as India and Canada Set \$50 Billion Trade Goal

■ Bilateral talks outline next phase of economic, energy, and strategic cooperation by 2030

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday announced that India and Canada have agreed on an ambitious roadmap to raise bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030, marking a significant step in strengthening ties between the two countries.

The announcement came after high level discussions with Canadian

Prime Minister Mark Carney during his first official visit to India. Describing the visit as a milestone in India Canada relations, Prime Minister Modi highlighted the growing alignment between the two nations across economic, strategic, and people to people domains. He recalled the warm reception extended to



him at the G7 Summit in Canada last year and said the same spirit of

partnership was reflected in the current talks. Both leaders agreed that

India and Canada are natural partners with complementary strengths and shared democratic values. A key outcome of the discussions was the decision to fast track negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, aimed at unlocking greater trade and investment flows. Prime Minister Modi noted that

Canadian pension funds have already invested over USD 100 billion in India, underlining strong investor confidence. Business leaders from both sides are expected to meet soon to explore further opportunities in manufacturing, infrastructure, and innovation. Energy cooperation featured prominently in the talks.

# 'Instinct Over Data': Gambhir Praises Samson's Calm Chase at Eden Gardens

■ Gambhir lauds 'world-class' knock as India overcome early blows to outclass West Indies at Eden Gardens.

**New Delhi:** India's title defence regained momentum on Sunday as the team booked a place in the T20 World Cup semifinals for the third consecutive edition with a gripping five wicket win over West Indies at Eden Gardens. Chasing a demanding target of 196 in a high pressure Super 8 encounter, India showed composure and adaptability to seal victory in the final over.

While the contest turned into a run fest, India's bowlers deserve credit for keeping the West Indies total below the 200 mark on a surface that strongly favoured batting and against an opposition known for its explosive form. That effort proved decisive as the chase unfolded under



mounting pressure.

India's reply suffered an early setback with both openers departing inside the first five overs, leaving the side in a precarious position. It was then that Sanju Samson took control. Displaying maturity and assurance, the wicketkeeper batter crafted an unbeaten 97, guiding the innings through fluctuating phases and steering India home in a tense finish. The

knock carried special significance for Samson, who had endured a challenging period in recent months, losing his opening slot twice and featuring sparingly earlier in the tournament. With India adjusting their batting order to counter early spin threats, Samson was recalled at a critical moment and responded with an innings that underlined his value.

India head coach

Gautam Gambhir praised Samson's effort, describing him as a world class player who finally showcased his full potential when the team needed it most. He highlighted the calm nature of the innings, noting that Samson relied on classical shot making rather than brute force, remaining in control throughout the chase. Gambhir also pointed to Samson's improved movement and confidence, stating that his form in practice had always been encouraging despite a difficult run in the recent series against New Zealand. He added that both Samson and Ishan Kishan offer valuable flexibility to Indian cricket due to their dual skills.



# Power Panthers Seal Title with Authority Under Lights

■ Seven wicket win over Dhadsakhal crowns champions in junior showdown

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Power Panthers Porvorim produced a composed and commanding performance to lift the Junior Cricket Championship, defeating Dhadsakhal Stars by seven wickets in the final played under floodlights at the 1919 Cricket Stadium in Verna on Saturday. The tournament, organised by Oxford Cricket Club, concluded with an entertaining contest that showcased the depth of emerging cricket talent in the state. Batting first after losing the toss, Dhadsakhal Stars posted a competitive 191 for 9 in their allotted 25 overs. Pranjal Singh anchored the innings with a fluent 72 off 50 balls, displaying maturity and clean stroke play. Adeep Prabhu Misquin added valuable runs in the middle order with 49, while Pranjul Yadav remained unbeaten on 34 to push the total close to the 200 mark. For Power Panthers,

Anurag Bahadur delivered a decisive spell, claiming three wickets for 27 runs, while Bavesh chipped in with two key dismissals to prevent a late surge. In reply, Power Panthers Porvorim approached the chase with confidence and clarity. Sahil Metri led the charge with a magnificent century, scoring 100 off 71 balls, combining patience with controlled aggression. He found strong support from Samaan Manjrekar, who struck a well paced 50, ensuring the required rate never became a concern. The Panthers reached 192 for 3 in 22 overs, sealing the title with authority and underlining their dominance throughout the tournament.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by distinguished guests including Adv. Iftikhar Agha, Darshan Misal, Anup Vernekar, and Vinvi Gurav, along with chief organiser Romeen Mulam and members of the organising committee.

# 'A Moment I Will Always Treasure': Sanju Samson Reflects on Eden Gardens Masterclass

■ Unbeaten 97 under pressure seals India's semifinal berth in the 2026 T20 World Cup.

**New Delhi:** Sanju Samson's emotional celebration at Eden Gardens became one of the defining images of India's 2026 T20 World Cup campaign. After striking the winning boundary in a must win Super 8 clash against



West Indies, the Indian batter removed his helmet,

dropped to his knees, and offered a quiet prayer with folded hands. The gesture captured the weight of a journey marked by uncertainty, resilience, and long awaited redemption. Samson's unbeaten 97 guided India to a five wicket victory in a tense

chase of 196, a result that also confirmed their place in the tournament semifinals. The innings came at a crucial time in his international career, following months of fluctuating roles and the loss of his preferred opening slot.

# Oxford Seal Third Place With Commanding Chase

Vishesh Behl's explosive knock powers dominant playoff victory.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Oxford Cricket Club finished their Junior Cricket Championship campaign on a high by clinching third place with a convincing six wicket win over Ghumtreshwar on Saturday.

The third place playoff was played at the 1919 Cricket Stadium, where Oxford showcased superior batting depth and disciplined bowling to close the tournament

confidently. Batting first, Ghumtreshwar struggled to build sustained momentum and were bowled out for 150 in 24.4 overs.

Parth Sankpal emerged as the top scorer with a steady 44, while Rehan Hubali added 34 and Sachin Bora chipped in with 25. Despite a few promising partnerships, Ghumtreshwar failed to capitalise in the latter stages as wickets fell at regular intervals.

# Last-Ball Drama and Clinical Chase Mark GSB Unity Cup Sunday

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Two tightly contested encounters lit up Sunday's action in the GSB Unity Cup 3.0 as K.K. Strikers and Madgaon Royals CC registered important victories at the MCC Ground. The matches, organised under the aegis of the Goa GSB Sports and Charitable Trust, showcased thrilling finishes, steady batting performances, and disciplined bowling. In the opening fixture, K.K. Strikers produced



a dramatic chase to overcome Rising Stars of Ponda by five wickets. Batting first, Ponda posted a challenging 164 for eight in 20 overs. Sanat Mhapne anchored the innings with a composed 48, while Ved Mahambre added momentum with a brisk 44. Venkat Biche's contribution

further strengthened the total, though the Strikers' bowlers kept things in check. Ramnath Prabhu Bam, Akshay Dalvi and Aditya Dalal claimed two wickets apiece, preventing the batting side from accelerating freely in the latter stages. The chase turned into a thriller.

Viraj Puranik played a defining knock, scoring 52 from 32 balls with seven boundaries and a six, setting the platform for a late push. With the pressure mounting in the final over, Nikit Naik Dalal held his nerve, remaining unbeaten on 41 off 28 deliveries.

**K.K. Strikers and Madgaon Royals notch crucial wins to stay in contention**