



Goa faces 65 MLD water shortfall; govt plans pipeline overhaul and capacity boost

MLAs raise concerns over supply gaps, ageing infrastructure and shortages across constituencies. Min Says, Govt to Replace 2,000 km Ageing Water Pipelines.

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Concerns over Goa's drinking water supply were raised in the Assembly as legislators flagged the widening gap between demand and supply, ageing infrastructure, and shortages in several constituencies.

MLA Venzy Viegas highlighted the demand-supply gap and sought details from the government on the state's water treatment capacity, infrastructure status and the funds utilised to strengthen the supply



system.

Responding to the concerns, Drinking Water Minister Subhash Phaldessai said that Goa currently requires around 655 million litres per day (MLD) of water but is facing a shortfall of about 65 MLD.

He attributed the



deficit mainly to ageing pipelines and road digging works that disrupt the supply network. The minister informed the House that the government plans to augment an additional 325 MLD by December this year and another 150 MLD by May, which is

expected to improve the overall water availability across the state. He also said that every water connection will be required to maintain a mandatory three-day water reserve to deal with emergencies.

Phaldessai further stated that out of Goa's 6,000-km water pipeline network, nearly 2,000 km is more than 40 years old. The government has already begun replacing 276 km of pipelines, while another 500 km will be taken up next year, with the remaining stretches to be replaced in phases.

Goa govt plans digital flow meters to curb water losses

Move aims to detect leakages and boost water revenue by nearly 30%, says Minister Subhash Faldesai

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: In a bid to reduce water losses and improve revenue collection, the Goa government is planning to install digital flow meters across the water supply network to monitor distribution and detect



leakages. Drinking Water Minister Subhash Faldesai said the proposed digital meters are aimed at tackling the issue of non-revenue water (NRW)—water that is produced but lost before it reaches

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Cold Storage Facility In South Goa To Be Commissioned Soon, Says Fisheries Minister

MLAs raise concerns over rising fish prices; govt assures support to traditional fishermen and schemes under PM Matsya Sampada Yojana

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Fisheries Minister Nilkanth Halarnkar has assured that the cold storage facility at the South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) will be commissioned soon, stating that ₹29.78 crore has already been paid and funds for the remaining work are available.

The issue was raised in the Assembly by MLA Vijai Sardesai, who criticised the delay in completing the facility. Sardesai said the cold storage unit is crucial to extend the shelf life of fish and ensure it remains affordable for Goans, rather than becoming an expensive commodity catering mainly to tourists and VIPs. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said that traditional occupations like fishing, which have been carried forward by generations of Goans,



must be promoted in a hygienic and organised manner. He added that the state government will extend support to fishermen in the current financial year.

Sardesai also raised concerns over the rising price of fish in Goa and sought details from the government on the causes behind the price increase as well as the proposed subsidised fish scheme for consumers.

CM Urges Public Not To Panic Over LPG Shortage, Says Situation Will Normalise Soon

Commercial LPG supply affected; domestic cylinders available, says Pramod Sawant

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Thursday appealed to the public not to panic or hoard LPG cylinders, assuring that the situation will be normalised within

about 25 days.

The issue was raised in the Assembly after Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao expressed concern over the shortage of LPG cylinders in the state. Alemao said people were worried as long queues

were seen outside LPG agency outlets, with many residents trying to secure cylinders amid fears of a shortage. Several MLAs also raised concerns regarding the availability of LPG cylinders across the state.



Kedar Raises Majhe Ghar Deadline Issue, CM Assures 1-Year Extension

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Saligao MLA Kedar Naik today raised concerns in the Goa Legislative Assembly over the April 3, 2026 cut-off date for accepting

applications under the Majhe Ghar housing scheme, pointing out that many applicants are yet to receive required consent letters from Comunidades. Raising the matter during

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DRS Triggers Debate in Assembly; CM Assures Rollout Only After Stakeholder Confidence

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The proposed Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) sparked a debate in the Goa Legislative Assembly on Thursday, with several legislators raising concerns about its possible impact on consumers, businesses and waste management systems. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant informed the House that the DRS has been successfully implemented in around 50 countries worldwide and is currently being run on a trial basis in Kedarnath. He said the Goa



government is studying the model but assured that the scheme will be implemented only after taking all stakeholders into confidence, especially considering its implications for shop owners and other businesses.

Blocking Escort Websites Is Only the Beginning

The Goa government's decision to block more than 500 escort service websites may appear like a strong and decisive crackdown. But it also raises an uncomfortable question: why has it taken so long for authorities to confront a problem that has existed in plain sight for years?

The Chief Minister recently informed the Assembly that hundreds of URLs promoting escort services have been blocked and cases registered against operators. The move is meant to curb illegal online activity and protect the image of the state. On the surface, the action is welcome. Goa cannot afford to allow its tourism reputation to be linked with a thriving digital marketplace for escort services. But for those who have followed the issue closely, this is hardly a new problem.

Escort service websites connected to Goa have existed for well over a decade. In fact, the issue first began surfacing prominently around the late 2000s, when tourism-related websites started openly advertising companionship services to visitors planning holidays in the state. These platforms operated with remarkable visibility. A simple online search would reveal pages displaying photographs, contact numbers and promises of "exclusive companionship" for tourists visiting Goa.

The model was straightforward. Customers would browse profiles online and make contact through phone numbers or messaging platforms. Once the initial conversation took place, arrangements would be made through intermediaries. Often, the websites themselves were not even based in Goa. Servers, operators and call centres were located elsewhere, while the actual network of agents functioned locally.

This structure made the trade particularly difficult to control. Even if police managed to track down a local contact or shut down a website, new ones would quickly emerge. The internet allowed operators to stay one step ahead of enforcement agencies.

Yet the persistence of these websites over the years also points to something else: a long period of official indifference. From time to time, the issue would surface in public

From time to time, the issue would surface in public discussions. There were occasional police raids, isolated arrests and debates in the Assembly. But there was rarely any sustained or coordinated effort to tackle the digital ecosystem that enabled the business to flourish.

Meanwhile, the websites continued to target tourists planning their trips to Goa. The state's reputation as a relaxed holiday destination, known for its nightlife and beaches, made it an easy market for such online services.

There is also another dimension to the problem. Not every escort website necessarily leads to an actual service. Many operate as elaborate scams. Customers are asked to make advance payments for bookings, registration or security deposits. Once the money is transferred, the operator disappears. In such cases, the real victims are not just those being exploited by the trade, but also unsuspecting customers who are cheated online.

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advance payments for bookings, registration or security deposits. Once the money is transferred, the operator disappears. In such cases, the real victims are not just those being exploited by the trade, but also unsuspecting customers who are cheated online. This makes the issue not just a matter of morality or tourism image, but also a cybercrime concern. Blocking hundreds of websites is therefore an important step. It signals that the government is finally acknowledging the scale of the problem.

However, it would be unrealistic to assume that this action alone will solve it. Websites can be created within minutes. Operators can shift to new domains, move to foreign servers or simply migrate to encrypted messaging apps and social media platforms. The digital world evolves far faster than traditional law enforcement systems. What Goa needs is not just occasional crackdowns but a sustained strategy. Cyber monitoring must become continuous rather than reactive. Authorities will need to track patterns, identify networks and work with national cybercrime agencies to follow the money trail.

Equally important is action against local facilitators. Online platforms may operate from outside the state, but the networks that enable them often rely on individuals on the ground.

At the same time, transparency is crucial. The government should regularly disclose how many sites are blocked, how many cases are registered and what progress is made in prosecutions. Public awareness also plays a role in discouraging both illegal operators and potential customers.

Goa's tourism economy has always attracted parallel industries that thrive in the shadows. Ignoring them does not make them disappear. It simply allows them to grow stronger and more sophisticated.

The recent crackdown is therefore a step in the right direction.

But it should also serve as a reminder that problems left unattended for years rarely vanish. They evolve, expand and become harder to control. Blocking websites may be the beginning of the fight, but it cannot be the end of it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Voting secrecy breached in CCP Elections?

By Sandeep Heble

I was surprised - shocked rather - when I went to vote this morning in the CCP elections, only to find the ballot papers being serially numbered. This has been done in the past too, but after citizens had repeatedly voiced serious concerns about how such numbering compromises the secrecy of the vote, one would have expected the Election Commission and other concerned authorities to take cognizance and correct the practice. Alas, it was not meant to be. Once again, they have shown how partisan and indifferent they can be. This comes on top of a highly questionable delimitation exercise where wards and reservations appeared to be decided arbitrarily, without any transparent rotational or rule-based process. If in the capital city, under the full glare of the media and the watch of the courts, voters cannot even be assured of the basic secrecy of their vote, then let us stop pretending. This is not a proper democracy - it is a carefully managed illusion of one. Indian courts have repeatedly emphasised that free and fair elections are part of the basic structure of the Constitution, and any system which creates doubt about secrecy violates the spirit of these rulings. The secrecy of the vote was clearly being compromised here yet again, a possibility or perception of traceability, which itself could undermine the process of free and fair voting.

It is time the media, the courts, the opposition, and every watchdog of democracy wakes up and confronts this openly. The secrecy of the voter is non-negotiable. Without secrecy, there is no democracy - only fear, pressure, and manipulation. So who has authorized this practice? Why has the Election Commission allowed it to continue despite public objections? How can governments preach democratic values while permitting a voting system where ballots can be traced? And how are the courts allowing such procedures to continue in full public view while we are told that we live in a democratic republic?

These questions must be asked loud and clear, relentlessly, and uncomfortably - because until they are answered, the claim of democracy itself stands exposed as a farce. If there is no secrecy, there is no democracy. The numbering of ballot papers makes Goa and India exactly that - a democratic farce. This needs to change.



Goa plans scientific study to assess carrying capacity of tourist hotspots

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: The Government of Goa is preparing to conduct a scientific assessment to determine how many visitors its key tourist destinations can sustainably accommodate, as the state witnesses a steady rise in tourist arrivals. In a written reply tabled in the Goa Legislative Assembly, Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte said the tourism department is in the process of appointing a consultant to carry out the study across major coastal belts and heritage



locations. The proposed exercise will analyse the pressure that increasing tourist numbers place on critical infrastructure such as water supply, electricity networks, waste management systems and road traffic. The findings are expected to help the government formulate policies to

regulate visitor flows and support sustainable tourism planning. Data presented in the Assembly shows that Goa received more than 1.08 crore tourists in 2025, indicating a strong rebound in the tourism sector. Of this total, 1,02,84,608 were domestic travellers, while 5,17,802 were

international visitors. Domestic tourism has grown significantly in recent years, rising from 33.08 lakh visitors in 2021 to over one crore in 2025. International arrivals have also recovered, increasing from 22,128 in 2021 to more than five lakh last year. The largest number of foreign tourists came from the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, France and Kazakhstan. Khaunte said the figures reflect the resilience of the tourism sector despite concerns that negative or misleading social media narratives could affect the state's image.



Goa Targets Illegal Garbage 'Black Spots'

■ New Solid Waste Rules to Take Effect in April.

Team Goemkarponn

Porvorim: The Goa government has launched a strategy to identify and eliminate "black spots" areas prone to illegal garbage dumping across the state, while preparing to implement stricter waste management rules from April. In a written reply in the Goa Legislative Assembly, Waste Management Minister Atanasio Monserrate said the government has currently identified 13 vulnerable dumping locations across the state, including four in North Goa and nine in South Goa. While local bodies are responsible for door-to-door waste collection and preventing littering under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, the Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC) has taken up the task of clearing waste along National Highways

and Major District Roads. Officials said cleaning operations at these high-risk dumping sites have been intensified and are now being carried out on an alternate-day basis to prevent the accumulation of garbage. To curb illegal dumping, the state has also strengthened enforcement measures. Individuals and establishments caught dumping waste illegally can be fined ₹2,500 under the Goa Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act, 1996. Joint enforcement drives are being conducted by the Goa Waste Management Corporation in coordination with the Goa State Pollution Control Board and the Goa Police. The Goa State Pollution Control Board is also enforcing the ban on single-use plastic through market inspections and raids, with directions issued to local police and panchayat authorities to ensure compliance.

Goa Tightens Oversight on Tribal Fund Usage

■ Departments must follow NITI Aayog guidelines for Tribal Sub Plan spending.

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Porvorim: The Goa government has directed all state departments to strictly follow guidelines issued by NITI Aayog for planning and utilisation of funds under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), in a move aimed at ensuring that allocations meant for Scheduled Tribes reach the intended beneficiaries.

Informing the Goa Legislative Assembly, Tribal Welfare Minister Ramesh Tawadkar said an order issued on February 5, 2026 mandates all line departments to obtain prior approval from the Tribal Welfare Department before proposing any new schemes, amendments or development projects under the TSP. Under the directive, the Tribal

Welfare Department has been empowered to review proposals and suggest modifications wherever necessary to ensure that projects deliver direct and measurable benefits to the Scheduled Tribe population.

The decision comes amid legislative scrutiny over the utilisation of TSP funds. The issue was



raised in the Assembly by Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardessai, who sought clarification on whether such funds had been diverted in the past for non-plan expenditures or establishment costs.

68 Poultry Units Shut in Goa Over Health Violations

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Porvorim: The Goa government has shut down 68 poultry establishments across the state over the last two years following inspections that revealed multiple health and hygiene violations. In a written reply to a Legislative Assembly question by MLA Viresh Borkar, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said the enforcement action was carried out by the Directorate of Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) as part of a crackdown on poultry outlets selling products beyond their shelf life. According to the minister, inspections and raids conducted during the period led to the closure of 68 poultry establishments



for non-compliance with food safety norms. Authorities also initiated one prosecution and recovered ₹57,000 in fines and penalties from violators. Rane stated that the inspections are monitored through the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's Food Safety Compliance System (FOSCOS) portal, which follows a risk-based inspection system.



GMOA Meets Digambar Kamat, Submits Maritime Sector Demands

Team Goemkarponn

Porvorim: A delegation from the Goa Maritime Officers Association (GMOA) met Ports Minister and Captain of Ports Digambar Kamat at the Goa Assembly Complex in Porvorim on Wednesday to discuss key issues concerning the development of the maritime sector and the welfare of seafarers in the state. During the meeting, the delegation

briefed the minister on the association's objectives and initiatives aimed at strengthening unity and professional growth among maritime officers. The members also invited Kamat to visit the GMOA office in Comba, Margao. The association submitted a memorandum highlighting two major demands. The first was the establishment of a full-fledged Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) office in Vasco.

MLA Sankalp Amonkar Raises Concern Over Steep Hike in Minimum Land Rates in Mormugao

Team Goemkarponn

Porvorim: Concern was raised in the Goa Legislative Assembly over a sharp increase in the revised minimum land rates in Mormugao taluka, with MLA Sankalp Amonkar claiming the hike has placed land purchases beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Amonkar drew the attention of the House to what he described as a steep and sudden revision in the minimum land rates across several areas of the taluka. According to Amonkar, the revised rates in certain localities



have increased sharply, ranging from 597 per cent to as high as 2,857 per cent compared to the earlier valuations. The issue was addressed to Revenue Minister Atanasio Monserrate. Amonkar stated that the steep revision has made it extremely difficult for common people to purchase land in the taluka.

Gold Chain Worth Rs 9.2 Lakh Stolen During Gulal Festival At Zambaulim Temple

■ Devotee attending annual festival at Shri Damodar Temple targeted by unknown thief

Team Goemkarponn

Quepem: A gold chain worth approximately ₹9.2 lakh was allegedly stolen during the annual Gulal Festival at the Shri Damodar Temple in Zambaulim on March 10. According to police, the complaint was lodged by Shailesh Gad, a resident of Porvorim. He stated that



the theft occurred between 3:30 pm and 3:45 pm near the temple premises

while he was attending the festival. Unknown accused persons allegedly stole a gold chain along with a gold pendant weighing around 51 grams during the crowded festivities. Police have registered the case, and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Yogesh Gaonkar of Quepem Police Station.

House Break-In Reported In Sanguem; Gold And Cash Stolen

■ Thieves break into locked house at Villian, decamp with valuables worth ₹1.65 lakh

Team Goemkarponn

Sanguem: A house break-in was reported at Villian in Sanguem after unknown persons allegedly broke into a locked residence and decamped with gold ornaments and cash.

According to police, the complaint was lodged by Manisha Naik, a resident of Villian, Sanguem. The incident occurred on March 10 between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm when



the house was reportedly locked. Unknown accused persons allegedly broke the lock of the main door to gain entry into the house and later opened a metal cupboard inside the

residence.

The accused reportedly stole a gold bracelet weighing about 4 grams, four finger rings weighing around 8 grams, a gold pendant of about 1 gram, and a pair of earrings weighing approximately 2 grams, collectively valued at around ₹1.5 lakh. The accused also decamped with cash amounting to ₹15,000. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Kavita Rawat of Sanguem Police

Rash Driving Accident Injures Two In Loutolim

■ Baleno driver loses control, crashes into oncoming scooter at Zoriwado.

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Curtorim: Two persons were injured after a car allegedly driven in a rash and negligent manner collided with a scooter at Zoriwado in Loutolim on March 6. According to police, the complaint was filed by ASI Jitendra Gaonkar of Maina Curtorim Police Station. The accident occurred around 1:20 pm when the accused driver, identified as Libarata L. Gomes, a resident of Loutolim, was driving a Maruti Baleno from Ambora towards Loutolim Market. Police said that upon reaching Zoriwado, the



driver allegedly lost control of the vehicle, swerved to the opposite side of the road and crashed into an oncoming Axtiva scooter that was travelling from PHC Loutolim towards Orgao. As a result of the collision, the scooter rider Jhon Bosco Fernandes of Orgao, Loutolim sustained grievous injuries, while the pillion rider Jervis Simon Fernandes suffered simple injuries.

Tourist Police Recover Stolen Bag At Colva Beach

■ 2 suspects detained; mobiles and cards worth ₹1.64 lakh recovered

Team Goemkarponn

Colva: The Tourist Police Unit personnel on patrolling duty at Colva Beach recovered a bag containing valuables reportedly stolen from a tourist on Wednesday evening. According to



police, at around 4:30 pm on March 11, the patrolling staff noticed two suspicious

persons carrying a bag at the beach. On questioning and searching the suspects, the police recovered three mobile phones and two RuPay prepaid cards from the bag. The tourist who had reported the bag missing was called to the spot and

he identified the bag along with the belongings as his. Police said the recovered items are collectively valued at approximately ₹1.64 lakh. The suspects along with the recovered property were handed over to Colva Police Station for further necessary action.

Ganja Seized From Two Undertrial Prisoners In Colvale Jail

■ Authorities recover suspected cannabis worth ₹35,000 during action inside Central Jail

Team Goemkarponn

Colvale: Authorities seized suspected ganja from two undertrial prisoners lodged at the Central Jail in Colvale

during a recent operation. According to sources, undertrial prisoner Dilip Saha was found in possession of a grass-like substance suspected to be ganja weighing around

143 grams, valued at approximately ₹15,000

In a separate case, another undertrial prisoner, Mohammad Salman, was found with a grass-like substance

suspected to be ganja weighing about 201 grams, estimated to be worth ₹20,000. Further legal action is expected to be initiated in connection with the seizure.



Andhra Pradesh Man Found Dead In Margao Hospital

■ 54-year-old had arrived in Goa for work, complained of fever before being declared brought dead.

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: A 54-year-old man from Andhra Pradesh was declared brought dead at the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH) in Margao on March 11. According to police, a phone call was received at around 10:18 am from the casualty police at the hospital informing that Amara Appanna, a resident of Colva and

native of Andhra Pradesh, had been brought to the casualty but was declared dead on arrival. During inquiry, police spoke with the friends of the deceased who stated that Appanna had come to Goa on March 10 for work. Later in the night, he reportedly complained of high fever and was taken to the hospital for treatment. However, upon arrival

at the casualty, doctors declared him brought dead. Police conducted an inquest panchanama over the body and referred it for post-mortem examination at the South Goa District Hospital. The autopsy conducted by the police surgeon certified that the cause of death was "disseminated tuberculosis in a person with diseased heart and liver."



Unidentified Man Found Dead In Abandoned Vehicle Near Mardol Temple

■ Beggar and chronic alcoholic often seen sleeping in the vehicle, police say

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: An unidentified man aged around 30 to 40 years was found dead inside an abandoned vehicle near the parking area behind Mahalasa Temple in Mardol, Ponda, on March 10. According to police, a call was received at around 9:04 pm from the Medical Officer of the Primary Health Centre



(PHC) Marcaim informing that an unknown male had been brought dead to the casualty by the 108 emergency service after he was found lying in a vehicle near the temple

parking area. Police visited the spot and conducted a scene of unnatural death (UD) occurrence panchanama. During inquiry, it was revealed that the deceased was a beggar and a chronic alcoholic who was often seen sleeping inside the old abandoned vehicle and sometimes on the footpath at Mardol market during night hours.

Tanavade Raises Issue Of Including Goa's Tenant Farmers Under PM-KISAN

■ Only 6,000 of state's 52,000 farmers currently benefit due to land ownership criteria.

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade on Wednesday raised the issue of including tenant farmers from Goa under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme through a Special Mention in Parliament. Tanavade said the flagship scheme of the Government of India has played a significant role in providing income support to farmers across the



country and strengthening the agricultural sector. Highlighting the situation in Goa, he pointed out that the state has around 52,000 cultivating farmers.

However, due to the eligibility requirement of land ownership, only about 6,000 farmers are currently benefiting from the scheme. Referring to provisions of the Goa Agricultural Tenancy Act, 1964, Tanavade said tenant cultivators enjoy rights equivalent to landowners for cultivation and are treated as deemed owners under state law. These farmers are also eligible for several agricultural schemes implemented by

the state government. He further noted that more than 20,000 farmers in Goa are registered as tenant farmers, inheritors of tenants, or under similar categories. Tanavade emphasised that extending PM-KISAN benefits to tenant farmers would significantly broaden the scheme's reach and provide relief to a large number of small and marginal farmers, who constitute over 80 per cent of Goa's agricultural community.



Schools In Goa To Hold Shorter Classes In April For Higher Grades

■ Directorate of Education issues academic schedule for 2026-27, sets timelines for exams and results

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Directorate of Education, Goa has instructed schools across the state to conduct limited classroom hours in April for students of Classes 6 to 10 and Class 12 as part of the academic calendar for 2026-27. According to a circular issued by Director Shailesh Zingde, the new academic year for these classes will begin on April 1. However, schools have been directed to limit daily teaching hours to a maximum of three and a half hours during the month. The

department has also outlined schedules for examinations and results for the current academic year. Students of Classes 5 to 9 will be given a break from March 13 to March 30, while schools must declare the annual examination results for Classes 5 to 9 and Class 11 by March 31. For primary sections, Classes 1 to 4 will continue regular classes until March 27. Their examinations will then be held between March 30 and April 2. The results for students up to Class 4 are scheduled to be announced on April 30, 2026.

Goa To Expand Medical Screening Across PHCs, CHCs

■ Plan also underway to upgrade Pernem Health Centre into Sub-District Hospital.

Team Goemkarponn

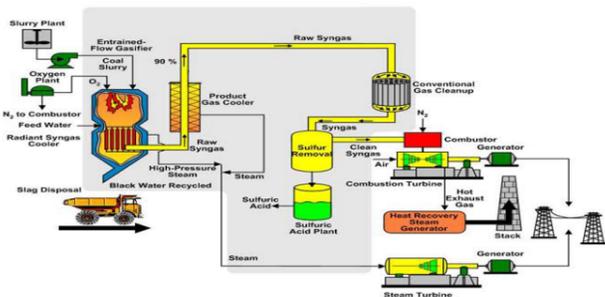
Panaji: Health Minister Vishwajit Rane has said the Goa government is strengthening preventive healthcare by expanding comprehensive medical screening services,

including cancer screening, across all Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) in the state. Rane said the initiative aims to ensure early detection of diseases and improve accessibility

to healthcare services at the grassroots level. "Healthcare must begin with early detection and accessibility, not just treatment. We are taking a decisive step to strengthen preventive healthcare in Goa by



expanding comprehensive medical screening services—including cancer screening—across all PHCs and CHCs," he said.



Trial Run Of 10-Tonne Gasification Plant Begins At Sonsodo

■ Waste-to-energy facility to convert plastic and mixed waste into oil and gas.

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: After a delay of over two months, the trial operations of a 10-tonne gasification plant commenced at the Sonsodo Waste Management Complex on Wednesday. The trial run began after the Goa State Pollution Control Board granted Consent to Establish the facility earlier this week. The plant,

being operated by Pune-based GD Environmental Pvt Ltd, is designed to process plastic and other waste materials and convert them into oil and gas through a gasification process. Company Director Ajit Gadgil, speaking to the media at the site, said the generation of oil and gas from waste is key to ensuring the commercial sustainability of the project.

Bhagwat Saptah Program begins in Vasco for the first time in the city's history

■ Attracts huge crowds of devotees from Mormugao Taluka

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: A Bhagwat Saptah Gyan Yajna began at the Baina Maruti Temple in Vasco on March 9, marking the first time such a week-long spiritual programme is being organised in the city. The



religious event, scheduled to continue until March 15,

2026, has been organised by members of the Sambhaji Nagar Brahman Samaj and Hindu community, who have jointly taken the initiative to conduct the Bhagwat Saptah for the spiritual welfare and well-being of residents in the area.

DKA Confers Bonaventure D'Pietro Book Award On 'Dhage'

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Dalgado Konknni Akademi (DKA) conferred the Bonaventure D'Pietro Book Award on the book Dhage written by Fr. Roman Rodrigues during a programme that also featured a story writing workshop for participants. Dr. Prakash Parienkar, Associate Professor and



Vice Dean (Research), Discipline of Konkani at the Sheno Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University,

attended the event as chief guest and resource person for the workshop. Other dignitaries present included Fr. Myron

Story writing workshop held to promote Romi Konkani literature

Jeson Barreto, President of DKA; Anthony San Fernandes, Vice-President; Agnelo Borim, Secretary; and Willy Goes, Treasurer. Rodrigues, a noted Konkani language expert and writer, was honoured for his book Dhage, a thought-provoking collection of essays exploring relationships, love and self-discovery.

“Strength in Sisterhood”: Women Living With HIV Celebrate Courage And Solidarity On Women’s Day

■ Human Touch Foundation Hosts Empowerment Gathering In Margao For Women Across Goa

Panaji: Around 40 women and young girls living with HIV from different parts of Goa came together for a special gathering organised by Human Touch Foundation to mark International Women’s Day. The event, titled “Strength in Sisterhood: Celebrate • Empower • Rise,” was held at Shantidham near Zalor Beach in Margao on March 8, creating a supportive space for participants to connect, reflect and celebrate resilience. The programme focused on empowerment, open dialogue and community support. Participants were



encouraged to share personal experiences and discuss challenges faced by women living with HIV, including social stigma, access to healthcare and awareness of welfare schemes. The gathering also aimed to strengthen bonds among participants and build a sense of solidarity within the community. One of

the key sessions of the programme focused on rights and justice. Celina Menezes, Lead for Advocacy and Social Protection at Human Touch Foundation, spoke about legal safeguards and healthcare rights available to people living with HIV under the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017. She

highlighted the importance of understanding these protections and encouraged participants to make use of social welfare schemes designed to support them. She also emphasised the role of strong community networks in helping individuals navigate challenges and access available resources. Several participants shared personal stories of resilience and perseverance, speaking about the struggles they have faced and the strength they have drawn from treatment, family support and community connections.

Centre Cracks Down On LPG Black Market As War Rumours Trigger Panic Buying

New Delhi: The central government has directed states and Union territories to closely monitor LPG supplies and take strict action against hoarding and black marketing amid rising concerns over possible disruptions linked to tensions in West Asia. Authorities have also been asked to counter rumours about shortages and maintain law and order to prevent panic among consumers. The advisory



comes after speculation about supply disruptions triggered fears that LPG cylinder availability could be affected due to the ongoing conflict involving Iran, the United

States and Israel. The situation has drawn attention because the Strait of Hormuz remains a crucial shipping route through which a large share of India’s LPG

imports from West Asian countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar pass. To manage the situation, the Ministry of Home Affairs has established a round the clock control room involving officials from the information and broadcasting ministry as well as the petroleum and natural gas ministry. Authorities said the aim is to ensure smooth distribution and prevent misinformation about LPG availability.

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Goa govt plans digital flow meters to curb water losses

consumers due to leaks, theft, or metering inaccuracies. Faldesai informed that tenders had earlier been floated for the installation of around 800 flow meters, but the devices were never installed, resulting in continued difficulties in monitoring the distribution network. The minister said the government now plans to introduce new digital flow meters that will help authorities

accurately track water flow at different points in the supply system. This will enable officials to identify leak-prone areas and plug losses in the pipeline network more effectively. According to Faldesai, the use of digital monitoring technology is expected to significantly improve water management and could increase water revenue by nearly 30 per cent by reducing losses and improving billing efficiency.

Kedar Raises Majhe Ghar Deadline Issue, CM Assures 1-Year Extension

Zero Hour, Naik stated that a large number of consent letters are still pending with the Comunidades and the Administrator of Comunidades, making it difficult for eligible applicants to complete their documentation before the deadline. He urged the government to extend the cut-off date, stating that delays in obtaining

consent letters are beyond the control of applicants and could deprive several families of the scheme’s benefits. Responding to the concern, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant assured the House that the Majhe Ghar scheme will be extended for one more year, providing relief to applicants who are awaiting completion of formalities.

Goan Creator Mario Pimenta Wins National Reel Competition With Inspiring Women’s Story

■ Video Highlighting A Goan Woman’s Contribution To Cinema Earns Top Honour



Women’s Day. According to the results announced by the organisers, Pimenta finished in first place, followed by Pranali Jagtap in second position and Sweta Gole in third place. The Reel and Video Making competition featured several creative themes including “Untold Her Story – Real

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goan content creator Mario Pimenta secured first place in a national level Reel and Video Making competition organised by the Bharati Vidyapeeth Centre for Distance and Online Education in Pune, Maharashtra. The competition was held to mark International Women’s Day and attracted entries from participants across the country.

The contest invited creators to produce short videos and written submissions centred on themes of women’s empowerment, inspiration and personal transformation. Mario Pimenta won the top position in the Reel and Video Making category for his entry titled “Untold Her Story – Real Woman Inspiration Video.” For the competition, he focused on the journey of an inspiring woman from Goa who has made notable contributions to Goan cinema.

Through his video, he sought to highlight her dedication and work in the film industry, believing that her achievements deserved wider recognition.

The project celebrated her story and acknowledged the impact she has made in the Goan film community, reflecting the spirit and message of International

Woman Inspiration Video,” “One Minute Documentary – Self Love and Confidence Transformation,” and “Who Am I Without Limits?” Participants were encouraged to present powerful stories that reflect the strength, identity and achievements of women. In addition to the video contest, the event also hosted a write up and article writing competition.

Topics included “Women Wellness Routine,” “Before vs After Empowerment Transformation Story,” and “Breaking Barriers: Redefining the Modern Woman.”

The organising institution, Bharati Vidyapeeth Centre for Distance and Online Education, is recognised by the University Grants Commission and has received a high accreditation rating from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

It is also approved by the All India Council for Technical Education and the Ministry of Education. Pimenta’s national level victory is being seen as a proud moment for Goa’s creative community, highlighting the region’s storytelling talent while bringing attention to inspiring figures who have contributed significantly to Goan cinema.

Iran Allows Indian Ships Through Hormuz As India Weighs Naval Escorts For Tankers

■ Government Weighs Military Protection For Merchant Vessels While Pursuing Diplomatic Assurances.

New Delhi: India is considering the deployment of naval escorts for commercial vessels linked to the country that are currently stranded near the Strait of Hormuz as tensions in West Asia continue to disrupt one of the world's busiest energy corridors. Around 40 ships carrying more than 1,100 Indian seafarers are believed to be affected by the crisis in the Persian Gulf region. Many of these vessels are waiting near



waters close to Iran and the Gulf of Oman as the conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel escalates. High level discussions are underway within the Prime Minister's Office

under the supervision of National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. Officials are closely monitoring the situation and assessing whether warships from the Indian Navy should escort merchant vessels through

the volatile maritime corridor. Indian shipowners have approached the government seeking naval protection for tankers and cargo vessels operating in the high risk zone. Authorities are reviewing these requests while also exploring diplomatic solutions to ensure safe passage without the need for military intervention if possible. Officials indicated that some ships are attempting to negotiate transit directly with Iranian authorities.



“Won't Leave Them Stranded”: Modi Assures Support For Indians In Gulf Amid West Asia Crisis

■ Prime Minister Accuses Opposition Of Spreading Fear, Says Government Working Round The Clock To Protect Citizens Abroad

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday assured that the government will not abandon Indians living or working in Gulf countries as tensions escalate in West Asia. Addressing a public gathering in Kerala, he said authorities are making every possible effort to assist citizens affected by the ongoing crisis. Referring to the conflict involving Iran, the Israel and the United States, the Prime Minister noted that a significant number of Indians, including many from Kerala, are employed

across Gulf nations. He assured that the government remains committed to ensuring their safety and welfare. Modi said Indian embassies and diplomatic missions in the region are working continuously to provide assistance and respond to any emergencies. He also expressed appreciation for Gulf countries that are supporting Indian nationals during the tense situation. The Prime Minister added that India has a strong track record of protecting its citizens abroad during conflicts and emergencies.

“No Bias In My Actions, Adequate Time Given To Both Sides”: Om Birla Rejects Opposition Allegations

■ Lok Sabha Speaker Defends Conduct After Resolution Seeking His Removal Is Defeated.

New Delhi: Om Birla rejected allegations that the Leader of the Opposition was not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha, asserting that his actions as Speaker were impartial and that adequate time had been provided to

both the government and the opposition during parliamentary proceedings. His remarks came after a resolution seeking his removal as Speaker was defeated through a voice vote in the House following a tense debate. Responding to

criticism raised during the discussion, Birla expressed gratitude to members who supported him as well as those who raised concerns about the functioning of the Chair. He acknowledged that members had voiced issues related



to transparency and parliamentary conduct, saying he welcomed constructive criticism regarding his responsibilities as Speaker.



Trump Launches 'Section 301' Trade Probes Targeting India, China And 14 Other Economies

■ Investigations Could Lead To New Tariffs As US Seeks Action Against Alleged Unfair Trade Practices

New Delhi: The administration of Donald Trump has launched new investigations into trade practices of 16 major partners, including India and China, as part of an effort to reintroduce tariff pressure following a recent legal setback. The probes are being conducted under the Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which

allows the United States to impose tariffs or other penalties against countries accused of unfair trade policies. Officials said the investigations could lead to fresh tariffs against several economies by the summer. Along with India and China, the potential measures may target the European Union, Japan, South Korea and Mexico.

Over 500 Indians Evacuated From Qatar As Middle East Conflict Intensifies

■ Additional Flights Arranged As India Steps Up Assistance To Citizens In West Asia

New Delhi: More than 500 Indian nationals stranded in Qatar have been evacuated to New Delhi and other destinations as tensions continue to rise across the Middle East. The



evacuation took place on commercial flights

operated by Qatar Airways, helping many



citizens return home safely amid growing security concerns in the region. The Indian mission in Doha confirmed that the passengers travelled on flights departing on March 11.

108 Maoists Surrender In Bastar With Rs 3.95 Crore Bounty As Crackdown Enters Final Phase

■ Mass Laydown Of Arms Leads To Huge Recovery Of Cash, Gold And Weapons In Major Breakthrough

New Delhi: In a major breakthrough in the ongoing anti insurgency campaign in central India, 108 Maoists surrendered in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on Wednesday. The surrendered cadres



collectively carried a government bounty of nearly ₹3.95 crore, marking one of the largest mass surrenders by Maoist fighters in recent years. The development comes just weeks before the March 31, 2026

deadline set by Amit Shah to eliminate Maoist activity in the country. Security officials view the surrender as a significant step in weakening the long standing insurgency that has affected parts of central India for decades.

RCB vs SRH To Open IPL'26 On March 28 As First Phase Schedule Is Announced

■ 20 Matches Across 10 Venues Confirmed As T20 League Returns With Double Headers

New Delhi: The first phase schedule of the Indian Premier League 2026 season has been officially announced, with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru set to face Sunrisers Hyderabad in the opening match on March 28. The contest will be played at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

The 19th edition of



the world's most popular T20 cricket league will begin with the champions starting their title defence at home. A total of 20 matches will be played

during the first phase of the tournament across 10 venues including Bengaluru, Mumbai, Guwahati, New Chandigarh, Lucknow,

Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

The competition will feature four double header days. Afternoon matches will begin at 3:30 pm IST, while evening fixtures will start at 7:30 pm IST.

Following the opening clash, Mumbai Indians will take on Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on March 29.

Praveen Kumar Soars To Gold With 1.96m Jump As India Dominate Para Athletics Grand Prix

■ Hosts Secure Multiple Medals On Opening Day With Strong Performances Across Events.

New Delhi: India made a powerful start at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix as star high jumper Praveen Kumar clinched gold in the men's T44 high jump event. The 2024 Summer Paralympics champion cleared 1.96 metres to comfortably secure the top podium position. Fellow Indian athletes also impressed in the event, with Unni Renu taking silver after clearing 1.86 metres and Banti claiming bronze with a jump of 1.83 metres, completing an Indian dominated podium. India achieved another clean sweep in the men's T42 high jump. Shailesh Kumar won gold with a leap of 1.84 metres, while Ramsingbhai Gov Padhiyar secured silver with 1.65 metres and Lokesh Mantra finished with bronze after clearing 1.60 metres. In track events, Preeti Pal delivered a strong performance in the women's 100 metres T35 and T37 category. The



double bronze medallist from the Paris Paralympics clocked 14.46 seconds to win gold, ahead of Margarita Mataeva and Karina Machulskaja who finished second and third respectively. The medal added to Preeti Pal's growing list of achievements after her silver at the previous world championships. India also dominated several field events. Monu won gold in the men's discus throw F11 and F12 with a throw of 34.30 metres, while Praveen Sharma and Sanjay Reddy Neelam secured silver and bronze.

"Nothing Else Matters More Than This Trophy": Gambhir's Message After India's T20 World Cup Triumph

■ Suryakumar Yadav Reveals Dressing Room Speech As India Clinch Record Third Title.

New Delhi: Captain Suryakumar Yadav has revealed the powerful message delivered by head coach Gautam Gambhir after India national cricket team secured a historic victory in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final. India defeated New Zealand national cricket team by 96 runs in the title clash in Ahmedabad to lift



their third T20 World Cup trophy and successfully defend the title. According to Suryakumar, Gambhir addressed the team in the

dressing room with the World Cup trophy placed at the centre, reminding players of the lasting value of the achievement.

He stressed that while teams may win many bilateral series, the glory of a World Cup triumph remains unforgettable. Suryakumar said the coach had limited chances to smile during the early stages of the tournament but appeared delighted with the team's aggressive batting approach later in the competition.

Tanisha Singh's Unbeaten Century Powers Delhi To 7 Wicket Win Over Goa

■ Goa Finish Fifth In Group After Women's U23 Elite One Day Trophy Defeat

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: A magnificent unbeaten century from Tanisha Singh guided Delhi women's cricket team to a comfortable seven wicket victory over Goa women's cricket team in the Women's Under 23 Elite One Day Trophy.

The match was played at the Ayush Cricket Academy Ground 1 in Dehradun on Wednesday. Batting first, Goa posted a competitive total of 198 for 7 in their allotted 50 overs. Harshita Yadav led the scoring with a brisk 47 runs from 45 balls that included ten boundaries. Captain Tanaya Naik anchored

the innings with a steady 44 off 93 deliveries, while wicketkeeper Tanisha Gaikwad contributed 31 runs from 48 balls. Additional support came from Swarali Kasar who scored 25 runs, and Palak Arondekar who remained unbeaten on 29 to help Goa reach a respectable total. Among the Delhi bowlers, Madhu delivered an impressive spell, claiming three wickets for 32 runs in her ten overs.

Parunika Sisodia took two wickets, while Bharti Rawal and Tanisha Singh picked up one wicket each. Chasing 199, Delhi had an early setback when Mansi Sharma was dismissed for just

four runs. However, captain Tanisha Singh steadied the innings with a commanding performance. She produced an outstanding unbeaten knock of 100 runs from 89 balls, striking 13 boundaries.

Singh found strong support from Vanshika Lila, who scored 53 runs from 53 deliveries. The pair built a crucial 106 run partnership for the third wicket that effectively sealed the match for Delhi. Monika later added an unbeaten 10 runs as Delhi reached 201 for 3 in 38.3 overs. For Goa, Metali Gawandar claimed two wickets, while Pooja Kalel picked up one.

Yash Gadekar's Unbeaten 93 Guides Dominant Chase In Goa University Inter Collegiate Cricket Championship

■ Pradnesh Gaonkar's 119 In Vain As DM's College Assagao Seal 10 Wicket Win.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Men's Inter Collegiate Cricket Championship for the 2025 to 26 academic year organised by Goa University continued with competitive matches at the Goa University Cricket Ground in Taleigao. On the sixth day of the championship, Dnyanprassarak Mandal's College and Research Centre, Assagao recorded a convincing 10 wicket victory over Narayan Zantye College, Bicholim in the first match of the day. After winning the toss, Narayan Zantye



College chose to bat first and posted a total of 172 for 9 in their 20 overs. The highlight of the innings was a remarkable knock by Pradnesh Gaonkar, who scored an impressive 119 runs from 53 balls. Vishal Kavlekar contributed 20 runs from 26 deliveries. For DM's College, Rohan Zantye

delivered an outstanding bowling performance, taking 3 wickets for 7 runs, while Rayyan Shah claimed 2 wickets for 25 runs. Chasing the target, DM's College produced a dominant batting display. The opening pair comfortably guided the team to 178 without losing a wicket in just 13.5 overs.