



## Section 163 Move Sparks Political Row Over Mirabag Protest

■ Opposition leaders, villagers accuse Govt of curbing dissent; protesters stopped, security tightened.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** The imposition of Section 163 and prohibitory orders in Panaji ahead of the proposed Mirabag protest triggered a sharp political row on Monday, with opposition leaders and villagers accusing the government of attempting to suppress democratic dissent. Acting on a report from the Superintendent of Police, North Goa, and in view of the Model Code of Conduct for the ongoing Ponda by-election, the North Goa Collector



prohibited the assembly of five or more persons within the jurisdiction of

Panaji Police Station, particularly at Azad Maidan and adjoining

areas, where villagers had planned to stage a protest  
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## Bandhara Project Will Not Happen At Mirabag: CM Sawant

■ Chief Minister urges protesters to withdraw agitation, says his verbal assurance is binding.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant reiterated that the proposed bandhara project at Mirabag will not be taken up and appealed to protesters to call off their agitation. Sawant stated that the government has no plans to proceed with the project and assured residents that their concerns have been taken into consideration. He emphasised that his verbal assurance should be treated as



equally binding as a written commitment. The Chief Minister further said he would take full responsibility if the project is ever pursued in the future, seeking to allay fears among villagers and activists opposing the proposal.



## Nitish Kumar Steps Down from Bihar Legislative Council After Rajya Sabha Election

**Resignation follows constitutional rule against holding seats in both Parliament and state legislature.**

**PANAJI:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar resigned from his membership of the Bihar Legislative Council on Monday, weeks after being elected to the Rajya Sabha. The resignation was submitted to Council Chairman Awadhesh Narayan Singh at the Chief Minister's official residence. Kumar had been elected to the Upper House of Parliament on March 16. His resignation from the state legislature was required under the Prohibition of Simultaneous Membership Rules, 1950, which were framed under Articles 101 and 190 of the Constitution. These rules state that an individual elected to both Parliament and a state legislature cannot hold both positions for more than 14 days and  
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## CCP Opposes Digging of Newly Tarred Roads for PNG Work, Says Mayor Rohit Monserrate

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) Mayor Rohit Monserrate has stated that the civic body is not in favour of digging up newly tarred roads for laying Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections, stressing that such works would inconvenience citizens and undo recent infrastructure efforts.

Speaking on the issue, the Mayor highlighted that the

roads were recently completed after significant effort and resources, and any decision to break them again would not be in the public interest.

He underscored that the priority of the CCP remains the comfort and convenience of residents. Monserrate further said that if the implementation of PNG infrastructure leads to discomfort for the public, the corporation would oppose such works.

## Rohit Monserrate Re-Elected as CCP Mayor for Record Sixth Term

■ Vasant Agshikar Chosen as Deputy Mayor; Both Elected Unopposed.

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Rohit Monserrate has been re-elected as the Mayor of the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP), extending his tenure in a historic sixth term. With this, he continues his unprecedented run, having already completed five consecutive years in the top post. The mayoral election took place during the first meeting of the newly formed council on Monday at 11 am. As no other nominations



were filed for the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Monserrate and Vasant Agshikar were elected unopposed.

The proceedings followed the oath-taking ceremony of all newly elected corporators, marking the formal

constitution of the new CCP council. Alongside the leadership elections, the meeting also initiated the formation of key statutory committees, including the standing committee and other consultative bodies, in accordance with the City of Panaji Corporation Act.

## Fuel Contamination Detected In Well At Sancoale Church Premises

■ Authorities launch probe after locals report strong smell; MLA seeks inquiry into source of fuel seepage

**Team Goemkarponn**

**SANCOALE:** A well located within the premises of Our Lady of Health Church at Shindole, Sancoale, was found contaminated with fuel on Monday, raising concern among residents and prompting a joint inspection by authorities.



The issue surfaced after

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## Two India Bound LPG Tankers Safely Cross Strait of Hormuz Amid West Asia Tensions

**Vessels carrying 94,000 tonnes of cooking gas head to Mumbai and New Mangalore as India navigates supply challenges.**

**New Delhi:** Two Indian flagged LPG tankers have

safely crossed the **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

# Democracy at the Barricades in Mirabag.

The unfolding situation in Mirabag is no longer just about a local protest against a project. It has evolved into a larger test of how dissent is handled, how power is exercised, and how seriously democratic rights are taken when they become inconvenient.

Villagers marching towards Azad Maidan to voice their concerns were stopped by the police under prohibitory orders imposed through Section 163. The state's justification is familiar: maintaining law and order. Yet, the optics and the lived reality suggest something deeper and more troubling. When citizens are prevented from assembling peacefully, questions inevitably arise about whether the law is being used as a shield for governance or as a tool to silence it.

The protesters themselves have been consistent in their claim. They are not outsiders, not agitators parachuted into a conflict. They are local residents asserting their stake in land, environment, and future. Their assertion that they had already attempted to engage through formal channels, including approaching the police, makes the clampdown appear less like a preventive measure and more like a refusal to listen. Equally significant is the allegation of selective enforcement. Villagers have pointed out that while their movement is being curtailed, others appear to operate without similar restrictions. Whether this perception is accurate or not, it feeds into a growing distrust of institutions. Democracy cannot function on uneven ground. If rights are to be restricted, they must be restricted uniformly and transparently. Anything less invites accusations of bias and erodes credibility.

The language emerging from the protest site reflects this frustration. Terms like "dictatorship" are not used lightly. They signal a breakdown in trust between citizens and the state. Governments often dismiss

*Villagers have pointed out that while their movement is being curtailed, others appear to operate without similar restrictions. Whether this perception is accurate or not, it feeds into a growing distrust of institutions. Democracy cannot function on uneven ground. If rights are to be restricted, they must be restricted uniformly and transparently. Anything less invites accusations of bias and erodes credibility. The language emerging from the protest site reflects this frustration. Terms like "dictatorship" are not used lightly. They signal a breakdown in trust between citizens and the state. Governments often dismiss such rhetoric as exaggerated, but it rarely emerges in a vacuum.*

such rhetoric as exaggerated, but it rarely emerges in a vacuum. It is usually the outcome of repeated experiences where voices feel unheard and processes feel opaque.

The political dimension of the issue cannot be ignored either. The villagers have directly named three MLAs — Ganesh Gaonkar, Subhash Phaldessai, and Nilesh Kambli — holding them accountable for what they describe as inaction and delay. This is not just a protest against a project; it is a challenge to political representation itself. When elected representatives are

seen as absent or ineffective, the street becomes the forum of last resort.

The government, for its part, faces a delicate balance. Public order is a legitimate concern, particularly when tensions escalate. But order cannot come at the cost of participation. The right to protest is not an inconvenience to be managed; it is a cornerstone of democratic life. Curtailing it should be the exception, not the norm, and certainly not the first response. What makes the Mirabag situation particularly sensitive is its timing. With elections on the horizon, the villagers' warning of political consequences carries weight. Dissent that is contained physically often resurfaces politically. Ballots have a way of capturing what barricades attempt to suppress.

There is also a broader lesson here. Governance is not merely about decisions taken in offices; it is about how those decisions are communicated, debated, and, when necessary, contested. A project, however justified it may be on paper, cannot be pushed through if the people most affected feel excluded or unheard. Consultation is not a procedural formality; it is the foundation of legitimacy.

The current approach risks deepening divisions rather than resolving them. Moving protesters out of sight or restricting their movement does not address the substance of their concerns. It only postpones the confrontation and hardens positions on both sides.

Mirabag today stands as a reminder that democracy is not tested in times of agreement, but in moments of disagreement. The true measure of governance lies not in how efficiently it enforces order, but in how patiently it accommodates dissent.

If the state chooses to see protest as a problem, it will continue to face resistance. If it chooses to see it as feedback, it may yet find a path to resolution.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Our Romantic Getaway

For Liz and me, our last-minute weeklong holiday to France turned out to be nothing short of magical. Paris, the famed "City of Love," welcomed us with its timeless charm. We visited iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, the Louvre, Sacré-Cœur, and the Arc de Triomphe. There were quiet, romantic walks along the River Seine, leisurely shopping along the Champs-Élysées, and a memorable visit to the Palace of Versailles just outside the city. The experience was complete with indulgence in exquisite French cuisine and wine, each meal a celebration in itself. Yet, beyond the postcard-perfect sights, one of our most unusual and memorable experiences was a visit to the Cimetière du Père-Lachaise. Opened in 1804, it is the world's most visited cemetery, home to over 70,000 graves and attracting nearly 3.5 million visitors each year. Far from being sombre, it felt serene and reflective. With its Gothic tombs, winding paths, and over 5,000 trees, it offers beauty in every season, from spring blossoms to autumn hues. The cemetery is the final resting place of many renowned figures, including Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde, Édith Piaf, Rossini, and Frédéric Chopin. However, the most meaningful moment for us was visiting the Tata family grave. We paused to pay tribute to JRD Tata and his legacy, reflecting on the Zoroastrian ideals inscribed there: Humata (good thoughts), Hukhta (good words), and Huvarashta (good deeds). Our journey also took us to Le Mans for two days, where we explored the famous 24-hour racing circuit, the old town, and its historic cathedral. The trip was made even more special by the warmth and hospitality of dear friends Francisco Frois and family in Paris, and Custodio and Prisca in Le Mans. We returned to London on the Eurostar, grateful to our friend Grace Rodrigues for making the journey so comfortable and memorable. As the writer Amanda Jane Sturges once said, "Love is the food of life, travel is the dessert." This trip gave us both in abundance, leaving us with memories that will linger for a lifetime.

-Aires Rodrigues, London

### Rising Cybercrime, Lagging Preparedness

The reported 65% increase in cybercrime cases in Goa in 2025 should serve as a wake-up call for both authorities and citizens. (The Times of India) While part of this rise may be attributed to improved reporting and awareness, it also reflects a rapidly expanding threat landscape that cannot be ignored. Cybercrime is no longer confined to isolated incidents of online fraud. It has evolved into a sophisticated network of scams, including fake investment schemes, phishing, and identity theft, targeting people across age groups. With more individuals relying on digital platforms for banking, communication, and commerce, the risks have multiplied significantly. What is particularly concerning is that the response still appears largely reactive. Cases are registered after financial losses have already occurred, often leaving victims with little chance of recovery. Past data has also shown that detection and conviction rates in cybercrime cases remain low, raising questions about the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms. While efforts such as awareness campaigns and improved cyber policing are steps in the right direction, they are not enough. There is an urgent need for faster response systems, stronger coordination with banks and digital platforms, and more robust preventive strategies. Equally important is public awareness. Citizens must be educated to recognise red flags, avoid sharing sensitive information, and report suspicious activity promptly. Prevention, in the digital age, is the strongest defence. The sharp rise in cases is not just a statistic it is a warning. Unless action keeps pace with the evolving nature of cyber threats, more individuals will fall victim to crimes that are increasingly difficult to trace and even harder to undo.

-Sandeep Kamat, Panaji

# Man Arrested For Attempt To Murder Brother In Mayem Stabbing

Accused Allegedly Attacked Younger Brother With Knife During Family Dispute; Victim Undergoing Treatment At GMC Bambolim

Team Goemkarponn

**MAYEM:** A man from Mayem in Bicholim has been arrested for allegedly attempting to murder his younger brother following a family dispute late on March 29. The incident occurred between 9.30 pm and 11.10 pm at Haldankar Wadi, Mayem.

**ATTEMPT TO MURDER**

According to police, complainant Swara Mainkar, a resident of Vaiguinim, Mayem, reported that the accused Sanjay Mainkar, 41, a

driver by profession, got into a quarrel with his younger brother Sagar Mainkar at their family house. The dispute reportedly began when Sagar did not open the door for Sanjay, leading to a heated argument between the two. During the altercation, the accused allegedly stabbed

Sagar Mainkar with a knife on vital parts of his body with the intention and knowledge that the act could cause death. The victim sustained serious bleeding injuries and was immediately shifted to Goa Medical College and Hospital, Bambolim, where he is currently undergoing treatment.



## IndiGo suspends six Goa routes, cutting 32 weekly flights

Team Goemkarponn

**MOPA/DABOLIM:** IndiGo has removed six city connections from Goa as part of its Summer 2026 schedule changes, reducing a total of 32 weekly flights from the state. At Manohar International Airport (Mopa), the affected destinations include Surat (1 weekly flight), Rajkot (7 weekly), Vadodara (7 weekly), Chandigarh (7 weekly), and Bhubaneswar (3 weekly). From Dabolim airport, the airline has discontinued its Bhopal route, which operated seven times a week. Industry sources say the suspension

is driven by seasonal demand fluctuations, with passenger traffic on these routes reportedly insufficient to sustain operations during the summer. Airlines typically adjust schedules and route networks based on load factors and profitability, particularly during off-peak periods.

The temporary cuts are likely to affect connectivity between Goa and several tier-2 cities, especially for passengers who rely on direct flights.

Experts point out that such adjustments are routine, and the routes could be reinstated if travel demand increases in future seasons.

# Heavy Vehicle Ban on Chorla Ghat Raises Safety and Enforcement Concerns

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The North Goa District Collector has announced restrictions on heavy commercial vehicles, particularly multi-axle trucks, on the Chorla Ghat route until September 26 due to dangerous monsoon conditions. Officials cited sharp bends, slippery

roads, and a higher risk of accidents as the primary reasons for the move. Under the order, heavy vehicles will be barred from key areas, including NH-748 at Sanquelim, Honda, and near the Goa-Belagavi border, during daytime hours.



Limited movement will only be allowed between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am. However, residents and local authorities have expressed concerns over poor compliance with such directives. Reports suggest that large-scale illegal transportation of sand and gravel from Belagavi into

Goa continues despite earlier warnings and complaints. The lack of strict enforcement has led locals to question the effectiveness of the order. Many are now demanding immediate and firm action to ensure road safety and uphold the law, warning that the restrictions risk becoming symbolic if violations persist.



## Goa gets extension for PM-KUSUM solar projects, must speed up implementation

Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** In a boost for Goa, the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has extended the deadline for completing projects under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Utham Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme to March 31, 2027. The extension applies to projects where power purchase agreements (PPAs) or Notices to Proceed (NTPs) were issued before December 31, 2025, providing the State additional time to implement pending

solar initiatives. Goa has participated in the PM-KUSUM scheme since 2021, but progress has been slow. As of February, only 182 of the 900 sanctioned solar pumps have been installed, with another 18 under installation. The Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA), responsible for execution, had requested more time to complete the long-pending project. While the extension offers temporary relief, officials emphasized that Goa must accelerate implementation to meet the new deadline and retain its full allocation.

# Marathi activist warns Goa govt of polls fallout if language not granted state status

Team Goemkarponn

**VALPOI:** Senior Marathi Rajbhasha activist G. R. Dhavalikar has cautioned the Goa government that failing to grant Marathi co-state language status alongside Konkani by December could have electoral repercussions. Dhavalikar was speaking at the Sarvadhara Marathi Sneha Melava held on Sunday at Shri Ram Gosamvardhan Kendra in Nanus, Valpoi. The event was attended by prominent figures including Dr. Madhu Ghodkirekar, president of the Gomantak Marathi Bhasha Parishad, novelist Chandrakant Mahadev Gawas, Marathi Asmita Sattari coordinator Vijay Naik, advocate Yashwant Gawas, and Vivek Joshi. In his address, Dhavalikar highlighted that Marathi has historically played an important role in Goa's administration and education, even during Portuguese rule, yet it has



not received adequate recognition. Citing constitutional provisions, he said languages used in governance are eligible for official status. He urged greater involvement from teachers and literary figures in promoting Marathi, expressing concern over their limited participation. Dhavalikar emphasized protecting Marathi-medium schools and engaging the younger generation to strengthen the language movement. Pointing out that several Konkani movement activists had Marathi educational backgrounds

and now contribute to Marathi literature, he said, "Goa's identity lies in Konkani as a spoken language and Marathi as a language of administration." He further warned that sidelining Marathi would undermine the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the state's saint tradition, while stressing the continued cultural significance of Marathi theatre and its widespread use across India. Dhavalikar recalled past political assurances in favor of Marathi, including a resolution passed at a BJP convention in Mapusa

attended by L. K. Advani and support from former Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar. He urged Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to address the issue promptly. Vijay Naik, in his opening remarks, said the gathering aimed to unite organisations working for Marathi to devise a collective strategy. Sarita Mhajik reviewed Marathi Asmita's activities, while novelist Chandrakant Gawas highlighted the decline in Marathi teacher participation and suggested parental awareness could help revive Marathi-medium education. Other participants, including Sudesh Arlekar, Datt Buva Abhyankar, Sandeep Kelkar, Gajanan Mandrekar, Vitthal Gawade, Pournima Desai, Prof. Pournima Kerker, Pradeep Ghadi Amonkar, Vandana Joshi, Mhallu Gawas, Narayan Mahale, Vishwesh Parab, and Avit Bagle, shared their perspectives.

## Sexual Gestures And Threats: Man Booked In Bicholim

### Team Goemkarponn

**BICHOLIM:** A woman from Vathadev-Sarvan, Bicholim, has filed a complaint alleging obscene gestures and criminal threats by a local man at DC Hall, Bicholim. As per police, the incident occurred on March 27 between 5 pm and 11 pm, when the accused, identified as Balkrishna Vemekar of Bicholim Industrial Estate, allegedly made sexual gestures by

showing his middle finger and pointing towards his private parts in the presence of witnesses, thereby outraging the modesty of the complainant. Police further stated that on March 28 at around 12.15 am, the



accused allegedly called the complainant's father-in-law, Gurudas Korgaonkar,

and used filthy, abusive and sexually coloured language against the woman and her husband. He also allegedly issued criminal threats to the complainant's entire family. Police said efforts are underway to collect evidence. Notice under Section 35(3) of BNSS, 2023 has been issued to the accused. Further investigation is being carried out by LPSI Archana Sharma of Bicholim Police Station.

## Vehicle Evaluator Booked For Rs 12.95 Lakh Fraud In Vasco

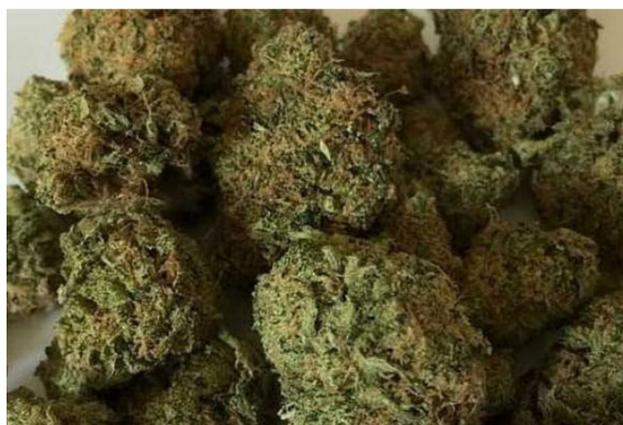
### Team Goemkarponn

**VASCO:** A vehicle evaluator working at a showroom in Chicalim has been booked for allegedly cheating the company by fraudulently selling vehicles and misappropriating the sale proceeds. According to police, Kiran Kamat, Senior Manager of Sai Service branch, Chicalim, Vasco, lodged a complaint stating that



and February 2026, the accused, Antush Bhatkal, a resident of Vasco, was working as an evaluator of vehicles for True Value at the Sai Service showroom. He was entrusted with duties related to assessment, handling, disposal of vehicles and collection of

sale proceeds. Police said the accused allegedly sold vehicles to various brokers with dishonest intention and misappropriated an amount of Rs 12,95,000 for personal use. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI David Costa of Vasco Police Station.



## Man Held With Ganja Worth Rs 11,400 In Ponda

### Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** Ponda Police arrested a man for illegal possession of suspected ganja during a late-night operation at Curti, Ponda. As per police, the action was carried out on March 29 between 1.45 am and 2.45 am based on a state complaint filed by PSI Prajyot Bakhale of Ponda Police Station. The accused, identified as Shivanand Kumbhar, a resident of Bandora,

Ponda, was caught red-handed while allegedly in possession of 114 grams of greenish dry flowery leafy substance suspected to be ganja. Police said the seized contraband is valued at approximately Rs 11,400.

A case has been registered under Section 20(b)(ii)(A) of the NDPS Act.

Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Sushant Gaonkar of Ponda Police Station.

## BITS Pilani Student Killed In Tanker-Bike Collision At Verna

### Team Goemkarponn

**VERNA:** A BITS Pilani student was killed and another seriously injured in a tanker-motorcycle collision at Upasnagar, Birla, Verna, on Saturday evening. According to police, the incident occurred on March 28 at around 5.15 pm when the accused

tanker driver, Pedro Ivo Medeira of Raia, Salcete, was proceeding from Upasnagar towards BITS Pilani. On reaching near the IAV junction, the driver allegedly took a sudden right turn to enter a company premises without ensuring safety of oncoming traffic. Police said a TVS motorcycle travelling from BITS Pilani

towards Verna collided with the rear left tyre of the tanker. The rider, Karan Narasimha Murthy of Mysore, Karnataka, and pillion rider Soham Adhikari of Shantinagar, Ponda, both students of BITS Pilani, sustained grievous injuries. Both injured were shifted to SGD, Margao, where Karan Narasimha Murthy



succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. The pillion rider Soham Adhikari was later referred to GMC, Bambolim for further medical treatment. Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Carey Fernandes of Verna Police Station.

## Security Guard Found Dead In Siolim, UD Case Registered

### Team Goemkarponn

**ANJUNA:** A 33-year-old security guard was found dead after allegedly hanging himself inside an old house at Oxel, Siolim, on Friday night.

According to police, Anjuna Police registered an unnatural death case after receiving a phone call from PHC Siolim at



around 9.30 pm on March 28 informing that a male person had been brought dead to the casualty.

Enquiry with the deceased's brother

revealed that he had visited the room and noticed his brother, Pushpendra, son of Nathu Singh, originally from Datia district of Madhya Pradesh and currently residing at Oxel, Siolim, hanging from an iron tube using a bedsheet as ligature material. With the help of a cousin, the body was lowered and shifted

to PHC Siolim, where the doctor on duty declared him brought dead.

Police conducted the scene of occurrence and inquest panchanama. The body has been preserved at GMC morgue for medico-legal formalities.

Further enquiry is in progress with PSI Ramesh Harijan of Anjuna Police Station.

## Youth Found Dead In Verna

### Team Goemkarponn

**VERNA:** A 21-year-old youth was found dead after he was discovered unconscious in a room at Verna on Sunday. According to police, information was received from PHC Cansaulim at around 12.25 pm on March 29 that one Bharat Korva, a resident of Verna and native of Jharkhand, was brought dead after being found unconscious. During enquiry, it was revealed that the



deceased and his friends had consumed alcohol till late night on March 28.

Police said the youth later went to sleep without having dinner, and in the morning his friends found him unconscious with froth from his nose.

He was immediately shifted to PHC Cansaulim, where the doctor on duty

declared him dead.

Police conducted the scene of occurrence and inquest panchanama.

The body has been preserved at SGD, Margao, for medico-legal formalities.

Further enquiry is in progress with PSI Mahesh Bhomkar of Verna Police Station.

## Man Found Dead At Home In Mapusa, UD Case Registered

### Team Goemkarponn

**MAPUSA:** A 49-year-old man was found dead at his residence in Khorlim, Mapusa, on Saturday, police said. According to police, a medical memo was received from the on-duty medical officer of the North District Hospital, Mapusa, informing that Vasudev Narvekar, a resident of Khorlim, Mapusa, was brought dead to the casualty ward



at around 10.15 am on March 29. Enquiry with relatives and friends revealed that family members attempted to wake him up, but he did not respond. He was then shifted to the North District Hospital, Mapusa,

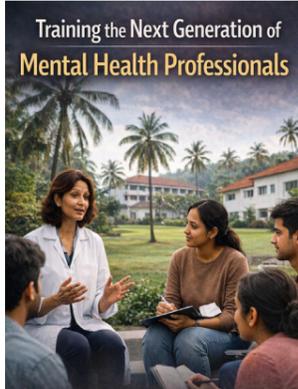
where doctors declared him brought dead.

Police said the deceased had haemoglobin-related issues and was undergoing medication, including blood-thinning treatment. An unnatural death case has been registered at Mapusa Police Station under Section 194 of BNSS. Further investigation is in progress with PSI Mangesh Palni of Mapusa Police Station.

## New Psychiatric Social Work Courses To Strengthen Mental Healthcare In Goa

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Goa is set to strengthen its mental healthcare workforce with the introduction of two new academic programmes at the Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour (IPHB) from the 2026-27 academic year. Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said building the next generation of mental



health professionals is essential to meet the

growing demand for specialised care.

He noted that since 2019, the M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work programme at IPHB has successfully trained 30 students, contributing to the state's expanding mental health workforce.

"Building the next generation of mental health professionals is essential. The M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work

programme at IPHB has already trained 30 students since 2019, strengthening our mental healthcare services. From 2026-27, the introduction of Bachelor in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work and Master in Psychiatric Social Work programmes will further enhance mental health education in Goa and prepare the future of mental healthcare," Rane said.



## Goa CM Campaigns At Nagzari, Dhavli For Ritesh Naik

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PONDA:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant held campaign meetings at Nagzari and Uma Bhavan, Dhavli, in support of BJP candidate Ritesh Naik for the Ponda Assembly by-election, interacting with citizens and community members.

At a corner meeting in Nagzari, Sawant said the campaign was receiving tremendous support from the people.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to the ideals of Antyodaya and Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas and Mission Antyodaya.

"Heartening to witness the tremendous support this campaign is receiving from the people. We remain steadfast in our

commitment to the ideals of Antyodaya and Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, ensuring inclusive growth and development for every section of society," the Chief Minister said.

Later, at Uma Bhavan, Dhavli, Sawant interacted with members of the Gujarati and Marwadi Samaj during the campaign.

He emphasised that the government continues to work towards inclusive development guided by the vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas and Mission Antyodaya.

"Our government remains committed to inclusive development guided by the vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas and Mission Antyodaya," Sawant added.

## Velsao villagers felicitate Vasco traffic police after swift action at Queeny Nagar junction

**Team Goemkarponn**

**VELSAO:** A potentially dangerous stretch at Queeny Nagar in Velsao has finally seen much-needed safety intervention, bringing relief to residents who had been grappling with a rise in accidents amid ongoing highway works.

Acting swiftly on concerns raised by villagers, the Vasco Traffic Cell, led by PI Alvito Rodrigues, along with highway authorities,



installed speed breakers at the accident-prone junction within two days. In addition to this, the traffic cell also introduced key safety measures, including dedicated road separators to regulate to-and-fro traffic, and

deployed personnel at the junction who will continue to be stationed there to monitor movement and prevent mishaps.

The prompt response drew appreciation from locals, who on Sunday came together to felicitate

the traffic officials for their timely action.

The demand for safety measures had been strongly put forward by villagers along with panch member Jim D'Souza and social worker Roquezinho D'Souza, who had highlighted the increasing risk posed by speeding vehicles and poor regulation at the junction. With highway works underway, the situation had further escalated, making immediate intervention crucial.

## National Homoeopathy Conclave "Futuro De Cancer" Held At Kala Academy

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** The 12th National Convention and Scientific Seminar "Futuro De Cancer" was held at Kala Academy, Goa, bringing together leading homoeopathy experts, practitioners and researchers from across the country. The national-level academic gathering focused on strengthening integrative healthcare approaches, with special emphasis on cancer and cardiology. The seminar served as a platform for scientific discussions and knowledge exchange, where experts shared clinical experiences, research insights and emerging trends in homoeopathy.

Deliberations highlighted the growing relevance of holistic and patient-centric approaches in modern healthcare, particularly in managing



chronic and complex diseases. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Puspapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju said healthcare is not limited to treatment alone but is deeply rooted in compassion, empathy and understanding of the human condition. He noted that homoeopathy views each patient as unique, taking into account physical, emotional and environmental factors. The Governor emphasised that the future of medicine lies in integration and

collaboration among different systems of healing, especially in areas like cancer care and cardiology where patients benefit from supportive and holistic care.

The seminar also featured scientific sessions by experts Dr Farokh Master and Dr Navin Pawaskar, who shared insights on evolving treatment approaches and the role of integrative medicine in strengthening healthcare outcomes.

## Home Voting Begins For Senior Citizens, PwDs In Ponda Bye-Election

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PONDA:** Home voting for senior citizens aged 85 and above and persons with disabilities who opted for the facility has commenced for the Ponda bye-election 2026. Polling teams are visiting residences to facilitate

voting at the doorstep, ensuring a smooth, accessible and inclusive electoral process. The initiative aims to enable eligible voters to exercise their franchise without having to visit polling stations. Election officials said the home voting process is being carried

out as per guidelines to ensure transparency while encouraging greater participation among elderly voters and persons with disabilities. The authorities reiterated that every vote matters and urged eligible voters to make use of the facility.



# Goa's Vaibhav Marathe Secures Multiple Podium Finishes at National Autocross Events

International driver impresses at INAC and Chikmagalur Gravel Fest with consistent performances across categories.

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** International motorsports driver Vaibhav Marathe from Ponda delivered an impressive performance at two major national autocross competitions held in Chikmagalur, Karnataka on March 28 and 29. Representing the All Goa Motorsports Association, Marathe competed against leading drivers from across the country and secured multiple podium finishes. At the FMSCI Indian National Autocross Championship, organised under the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, Marathe demonstrated strong



consistency and technical skill on the demanding course. He finished as first runner up in the Up to 1650cc category and secured the second runner up position in the INAC Unrestricted Open category, highlighting his ability to perform across different classes. Continuing his strong

run at the Chikmagalur Gravel Fest Autocross, the Goan driver added three more podium finishes to his tally. He finished first runner up in the Up to 1650cc category and also claimed first runner up in the Up to 2000cc category. In addition, he secured another first runner up position in the



Open Class, completing an impressive weekend on the challenging gravel terrain. Marathe's recent achievements build on a successful run at international competitions. He was a trophy winner at the INRSC 2 Asia Pacific Rally Championship held in Chennai in April 2025. Later that

year, he emerged as a championship winner at the FIA Asia Pacific Sumatera Utara Rally Championship held in Indonesia in August. Competing on demanding gravel tracks against experienced national level drivers, Marathe's consistent podium finishes across both



events underline his growing reputation in Indian motorsports. His performances have also brought recognition to Goa, strengthening the state's presence in national and international motorsport competitions. Expressing gratitude after the event, Marathe acknowledged the support of the Sports Authority of Goa, the state government, his team, sponsors and the All Goa Motorsports Association, stating that competing against top drivers continues to motivate him to improve and achieve greater success.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

## Section 163 Move Sparks Political Row Over Mirabag Protest

against the proposed Mirabag bandhara. AAP Goa President Valmiki Naik criticised the decision, alleging that the BJP government was "scared of its own shadow" and had imposed restrictions to prevent public opposition. He also took a swipe at Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant, claiming the move reflected fear of growing resistance. Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao said the people of Mirabag were protesting to protect their village and

surrounding ecosystem, but the government was creating hurdles to weaken their agitation. He termed the prohibitory orders an attempt to silence public voices and condemned the action.

Goa Forward MLA Vijai Sardesai expressed solidarity with the villagers, stating that attempts to suppress democratic protests through prohibitory orders were unacceptable and that the administration should address concerns instead of restricting peaceful

demonstrations. Meanwhile, Mirabag villagers reiterated their resolve to continue their protest at Azad Maidan despite the restrictions. They alleged that efforts were being made to suppress their democratic voice but maintained that their agitation would go ahead. Tensions also rose on the ground as police stopped a group of protesters at Mirabag in Sanvordem. Security was tightened in the area, with authorities remaining on alert as the situation continued to unfold.

## Fuel Contamination Detected In Well At Sancoale Church Premises

parish priest Fr Kenneth Teles reported a persistent strong smell in the area over the past 15 days. The matter was brought to the attention of MLA Anton Vaz on Sunday, following which immediate steps were taken to assess the situation. During the inspection, Vaz, along with police and

officials from concerned departments, examined the site and called for a detailed inquiry to determine the exact source of contamination. He stressed that identifying how fuel seeped into the well was crucial to prevent potential risks to public health and the surrounding

environment. Locals were left shocked after drawing water from the well and informally testing it, during which the presence of fuel was confirmed when the water ignited.

Residents expressed serious concern, stating that the contamination posed a potential hazard in the residential locality.

## Nitish Kumar Steps Down from Bihar Legislative Council After Rajya Sabha Election

must step down from one of them within that period. In a separate development, Nitin Nabin, national president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, also resigned as the MLA from the Bankipur constituency in Bihar as he prepares to take on his responsibilities as a member of the Rajya Sabha. In a message addressed to his supporters and party workers, Nabin described the decision as a continuation of his

public service rather than a conclusion of his political journey. Reflecting on his career, he recalled entering public life in 2006 following the passing of his father and spending nearly two decades working for the development of Bankipur and the state of Bihar. He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the opportunity to serve as a minister in the state government. Nabin also

reaffirmed his commitment to contributing to Bihar's progress in his new role at the national level. With Kumar preparing to assume his responsibilities in Parliament, political observers expect a shift in the state's leadership dynamics. The next government in Bihar is widely expected to be led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, which currently holds the largest number of seats in the state assembly.

## Two India Bound LPG Tankers Safely Cross Strait of Hormuz Amid West Asia Tensions

strategically vital Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing tensions in West Asia and are now heading toward Indian ports with a major cargo of cooking gas. According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the vessels BW TYR and BW ELM are carrying a combined cargo of nearly 94,000 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas. The shipment is

roughly equivalent to a day's supply of cooking gas for India. BW TYR is expected to arrive at Mumbai on March 31, while BW ELM is scheduled to reach New Mangalore on April 1. The tankers are among several Indian flagged vessels that have successfully navigated the narrow maritime route in recent days despite heightened tensions in

the region. Data from ship tracking sources indicates that four LPG tankers have already completed the crossing, while three more vessels remain in the western section of the strait awaiting safe passage. Earlier, the LPG carriers Pine Gas and Jag Vasant transported around 92,612 tonnes of cooking gas and reached Indian ports between March 26 and March 28.

# “Deeply Grateful to Gulf Nations for Supporting Indians During West Asia Crisis,” Says PM Modi

■ Prime Minister urges unity, warns against rumours, and calls for healthier lifestyles in Mann Ki Baat address.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed gratitude to Gulf countries for extending support to Indian citizens living in the region amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia. Speaking during the 132nd episode of Mann Ki Baat, he noted that the situation over the past month has been serious and has affected several countries. The Prime Minister acknowledged the assistance provided by nations across the



Gulf to nearly 10 million Indians residing in the region. He said these countries have ensured necessary support and

facilities for Indian citizens during the difficult period, highlighting the strong ties and cooperation between India and the Gulf region. The conflict in West Asia has continued for weeks following military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran under Operation Epic Fury, which began on February 28. The escalation led to heightened tensions across the region. In response to the developments, Iran shut the strategically significant

Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global oil transit route, triggering concerns over international energy supplies and economic stability. During his address, the Prime Minister urged citizens to remain calm and united, stressing the importance of relying only on verified information. He cautioned against the spread of rumours and politically motivated statements that could create confusion or harm the country during sensitive times.



# “Every Infiltrator Will Be Sent Back, UCC Soon in Assam,” Says Amit Shah

■ Union Home Minister promises strict action on illegal immigration and highlights development ahead of state polls.

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that Assam will soon see the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code, while also promising strict action to remove illegal infiltrators from the state. Addressing an election rally in Nalbari, he urged voters to support the Bharatiya Janata Party for a third consecutive term. Speaking at the gathering, Shah said that the government has already taken steps to curb infiltration but added that stronger measures are still required. He stated that every illegal immigrant would be identified and deported from the state if the BJP returns to power for the next five years. The Union minister accused the Indian National Congress of changing the

demographic pattern of the state through what he described as vote bank politics. According to him, several districts in Assam have become Muslim dominated due to past policies pursued by the party. Shah also criticised senior Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi, alleging that they oppose efforts to remove illegal infiltrators from electoral rolls. He said they should clarify whether they stand with infiltrators or with the people of Assam. Referring to the ongoing efforts to update voter lists, Shah said the Election Commission of India is conducting a special revision of electoral rolls to identify and remove illegal entrants.

# “Kerala Stuck Between Two Selfish Parties,” Says PM Modi Ahead of Assembly Polls

■ Prime Minister criticises Congress and Left alliances, promises development and probe into alleged scams.

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a strong political attack on the two major alliances in Kerala, stating that the state has been caught between “two selfish parties” for decades. Addressing a gathering ahead of the upcoming Kerala Legislative



Assembly Election 2026,

he accused both the ruling Left Democratic Front and the opposition United Democratic Front of prioritising vote bank politics over development. The Prime Minister said the Bharatiya Janata Party is committed to transforming the state and building what he described as a “Viksit

Keralam.” He alleged that the two alliances have alternated power for years without delivering meaningful progress for the people. According to him, the political pattern has continued for decades, with each front taking turns to govern while fundamental issues remain unresolved.

# LeT Commander Shabbir Ahmed Lone Arrested Near Bangladesh Border After Two Month Manhunt

■ Delhi Police bust cross border terror module with multiple arrests across West Bengal and Tamil Nadu

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested a senior commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba following a two month long operation that ended near the Bangladesh border. The suspect, Shabbir Ahmed Lone, was allegedly operating a terror module from a hideout near Dhaka and was wanted for recruiting youths for extremist activities across several parts of India. Security officials said the arrest came after an extensive surveillance



operation supervised by Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golcha. A special team led by senior officers tracked Lone after investigators uncovered his involvement in

recruiting individuals for terror related activities in Delhi, Kolkata and Tamil Nadu. Authorities described the pursuit as a prolonged chase that eventually led to his capture near the international border. Investigators revealed that Lone had previously been arrested by the Delhi Police in 2007 on terror charges. After being granted bail in 2019, he fled to Bangladesh and allegedly began rebuilding a network to support extremist operations.

# Congress Unveils 284 Candidates for West Bengal Assembly Elections 2026

■ Party decides to contest all 294 seats independently ahead of two phase polling in April.

**New Delhi:** The Indian National Congress on Sunday announced its first list of 284 candidates for the upcoming West Bengal Legislative Assembly Election 2026, signalling its decision to contest the polls independently across the state. Among the prominent names in the list is former West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who has been fielded from the Baharampur constituency. Former All India Trinamool Congress MP Mausam Noor, who recently joined the Congress, has been

70	75	Dumkai	Smt. Sahana Begum
71	76	Jangra	Abdul Razzaq Islam
72	77	Kamarpur	Smt. Priya Choudhury
73	78	Tehatta	Jyotirmoy Sarkar
74	79	Prasanna	Hemanta Hengur
75	80	Kulajuri	Kabir Uddin Shaikh
76	81	Narayanpur	Deben Kishor Mandal
77	82	Chandernagar	Shamshad Khan
78	83	Krishnanagar Uttar	Arghya Guin
79	84	Madhupur	Sanku Saha
80	85	Bachchanagar Dakshin	Abdul Kader Shaikh
81	86	Bantapur	Alak Chatterjee
82	87	Rangpur Uttar Dakshin	Harun Khan
83	88	Krishnanagar (SC)	Sanku Kumar Sarkar
84	89	Rangpur Uttar Purba (SC)	Nitya Singal Mondal
85	90	Rangpur Dakshin (SC)	Smt. Rita Pal Das
86	91	Chandaria	Malya Saha
87	92	Kalyani (SC)	Ashwananda Majumdar
88	93	Haridwara (SC)	Smt. Harshita Das
89	94	Bagda (SC)	Pratik Khatun
90	95	Rangpur Uttar (SC)	Hemanta Saha
91	96	Bangson Dakshin (SC)	Achint Biswas
92	97	Dangra (SC)	And Kumar Phandey
93	98	Bachchanagar (SC)	Rajat Mondal
94	100	Amlanga	Soupar Ghosh
95	103	Bajpur	Shobana Guha Roy
96	104	Malda	Pratik Kumar Kundu
97	105	Bhatnagar	Dharmendra Shaw
98	106	Basirhat	Smt. Madhura Chatterjee
99	107	Narayan	Asoka Bhattacharya (Raj)
100	108	Barampur	Banbhui Das
101	109	Chandaria	Jaydip Ghosh
102	110	Dum Dum Uttar	Dhananjoy Malia
103	111	Parbat	Sudhanshu Bhattacharya
104	112	Kamarpur	Kabir Mukherjee
105	113	Barampur	Smt. Kajant Chatterjee
106	114	Dum Dum	Smt. Suman Biswas
107	115	Parbat New Town	SK Nijamuddin

nominated from Malatipur. The party also announced several other candidates across key constituencies. These include Madhap Rai from Darjeeling, Abdul Hannan from Sujapur, Susmita Biswas

from Dum Dum, Gautam Bhattacharya from Diamond Harbour, Souvik Mukherjee from Asansol Dakshin and Prasenjit Puitandi from Asansol Uttar. The candidate list was finalised after detailed deliberations by the party leadership during a meeting of the Congress Central Election Committee. The meeting was attended by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi, along with senior leaders and representatives from West Bengal.

## “Don’t Create Unwanted Stories,” MI Coach Clarifies Suryakumar’s Impact Sub Role

■ Groin niggle kept star batter from fielding as Mumbai Indians record historic chase.

**New Delhi:** Mumbai Indians began their Indian Premier League 2026 campaign with a record breaking win over Kolkata Knight Riders, successfully chasing down a target of 221 runs for a six wicket victory at Wankhede Stadium on Sunday night. Despite the impressive performance, attention quickly turned to the use of star batter Suryakumar Yadav as an Impact Substitute during the match. The T20 World Cup winning player did not take the field, prompting speculation among fans



and observers. Addressing the issue after the match, MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene clarified that the decision was purely precautionary as Suryakumar was dealing with a minor groin niggle. According to Jayawardene, the team

management preferred to give the player extra time to recover rather than risk aggravating the issue early in the tournament. He explained that Suryakumar had already been participating in fielding drills but the coaching staff opted to

keep him off the field during the match to ensure full fitness for upcoming games. With a five day gap before the next fixture, the management felt the additional rest would be beneficial. Jayawardene stressed that the decision was purely tactical and medical, urging people not to create unnecessary speculation around the move. He emphasized that managing key players carefully throughout a long tournament is an important part of the team’s strategy.



## “KKR Fully Aware of Cameron Green’s Injury,” Says Cricket Australia After Rahane’s Query

■ Australian board clarifies allrounder is managing a back issue and expected to resume bowling soon

**New Delhi:** Cricket Australia has clarified that Cameron Green is currently recovering from a lower back injury, responding to questions raised after the allrounder did not bowl in Kolkata Knight Riders’ defeat to Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League 2026 clash at Wankhede Stadium. Green, the most expensive overseas signing in the history of the league’s auction, came under scrutiny after failing to deliver with the ball in the high scoring match where KKR were unable to defend a total of 224. The situation sparked debate about the team’s decision to invest heavily in an allrounder who could not bowl during the game. After the match, KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane

was asked about Green’s absence from the bowling attack. Responding briefly, Rahane indicated that the matter should be directed to Cricket Australia, suggesting that the national board may have advised the player to avoid bowling. The Australian cricket board later confirmed that the 24 year old allrounder is dealing with a lower back issue that requires him to temporarily stay away from bowling. Officials said the injury is currently being managed and that Green is gradually rebuilding his bowling workload while in India. According to the board, the recovery process is expected to take around 10 to 12 days before he resumes bowling duties. It also stated that the

## Double Crown Victory Marks Sandhya Melasheemi’s Dominance at Indian Masters Nationals

■ Goa shuttler shines on home turf with impressive singles and doubles triumph in the 40+ category

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa’s Sandhya Melasheemi delivered an outstanding performance at the Yonex Sunrise 48th Indian Masters Veteran National Badminton Championships held in Navelim, emerging as one of the tournament’s brightest stars. Competing in the Women’s 40+



category, the former Goa State champion and international medalist

secured a remarkable double crown, showcasing skill, determination, and

consistency throughout the competition. Melasheemi first claimed the Women’s Singles 40+ title after a thrilling three game contest against Smarika Manhas of Karnataka. The final proved to be an intense battle, with Melasheemi edging the opening game 21-19 before dropping the second 13-21. Regaining

## Avishkar More’s Blazing Fifty Seals Fourth Straight Title for PGML Kings

■ Panjim Gymkhana side dominates MCL Superstars in one sided Ramakant Verlekar Champions Trophy final

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The sixth edition of the Ramakant Verlekar Champions Trophy concluded with a commanding performance from Panjim Gymkhana Members League Kings, who defeated Margao Cricket Club Superstars to secure their fourth consecutive title under the floodlights at the Rajendra Prasad Stadium in Margao. Although the much anticipated T20 clash was expected to deliver a closely fought contest, the final turned into a one sided affair. Despite the lack of tension



on the field, the stands remained lively as cricket enthusiasts gathered in large numbers to celebrate the game and the growing tradition of the annual tournament. The

competition, organised by the Sunita Verlekar Foundation, once again brought together experienced senior cricketers and emerging young players.

## Wheelchair Category Adds Inspiring Chapter to Bandodkar Panjim Gymkhana Tennis Open 2026

■ Players with disabilities showcase determination and skill as tournament action intensifies across multiple categories

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Bandodkar Panjim Gymkhana Tennis Open 2026 witnessed an inspiring display of determination and competitive spirit as players with disabilities took centre stage in the special wheelchair open category during Saturday’s matches in Panaji. Participants in the wheelchair category demonstrated impressive skill and resilience on the court, making it one of the most unique and engaging highlights



of the state ranking tournament. Mahesh and Moises delivered a dominant performance with a 4-0 victory over Stanley and Gauresh. Melvin and Nikilesh also enjoyed a successful

outing, defeating the same pair 4-1 before registering another strong 4-2 win against Vinod and Gauresh. In another closely contested match, Vinod and Gauresh bounced back to record a 4-2 victory over Mahesh and Moises. A total of seven players with disabilities have registered to compete in the wheelchair open category this year, adding a meaningful dimension to the tournament and reflecting the growing emphasis on inclusive sporting opportunities.