



No Fuel Shortage In Goa Despite Gulf Tensions

Officials Say State Supplies Secure, Public Urged Not To Panic

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Amid apprehensions that the ongoing conflict in the Gulf could disrupt fuel availability, a senior official linked to fuel distribution operations in Goa has

clarified that the State's supply remains unaffected and adequate stocks are in place.

The official, associated with a major fuel depot, stated that Goa's petroleum products are sourced from domestic

refineries and not directly from regions impacted by the conflict. He explained that refined fuel is supplied from facilities located in Mumbai, Mangalore, Paradeep and other parts of India through established inland

logistics networks.

"There is no reason for concern regarding fuel availability in Goa. Our supply chain is domestic and functions independently of the conflict zone," the official

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MLA Vijai Sardesai Tables Bill For Protection Of Goa's Rivers

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa Forward Party chief Vijai Sardesai has introduced The Goa (Protection of Rivers) Bill, 2026, seeking to establish a structured legal mechanism for safeguarding rivers across the state.

The proposed legislation outlines the formation of a three-tier Goa River Protection Authority that would be tasked with monitoring, regulating and guiding conservation initiatives related to river ecosystems. The authority is envisaged as the nodal body to coordinate river management efforts at multiple levels.

The Bill also proposes formally designating certain waterways as "Protected Rivers" and creating River Conservation Zones



to shield ecologically sensitive stretches from degradation and unchecked development.

To address pollution and environmental damage, the draft law suggests strict penalties for violations, aiming to deter activities that threaten the health of river systems.

The initiative is designed to reinforce environmental safeguards and promote the sustainable management of Goa's water resources in the long term. The Bill is expected to be taken up for further discussion in the Assembly in the coming days.

Bedridden Woman Dies In House Fire At Chinchinim

Team Goemkarponn

CHINCHINIM: A 70-year-old bedridden woman lost her life in a devastating fire that broke out late Monday at a rented accommodation in Chinchinim.

According to Cuncolim Police Inspector Diogo Gracias, the elderly woman was unable to escape due to her medical condition when the blaze



engulfed the room.

Her brother, who was staying with her, managed to flee but sustained burn injuries in the incident.

The siblings were residing together in a

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Villagers play with showers of glowing sparks during the traditional Sheni Uzzo ritual at Malkarne in Sanguem. Lit cow dung cakes send embers into the night as participants move through the sparks in a display of faith and endurance.

700 Tankers Stalled at Hormuz as Prolonged Conflict Threatens India's Fuel Security

■ Government Reviews Options as Oil Flows Plunge and Global Energy Markets Reel

New Delhi: A severe disruption in global oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz has intensified concerns over India's fuel security, as hundreds of tankers remain stranded and crude flows drop sharply amid escalating conflict in West Asia.

Shipping data indicates that traffic through the strategic waterway has slowed dramatically. On March 1, only three tankers carrying about 2.8

million barrels transited the strait, a steep fall from the average daily movement of nearly 19.8 million barrels this year. By early March 2, just two small vessels were reported to have crossed the main channel. Although the strait has not been officially closed, operations have nearly ground to a halt.

Around 706 non Iranian tankers are currently waiting on either side of the passage,



including crude carriers and product vessels, while dozens more remain inside the Gulf without confirmed destinations. Many others are idling in the Gulf of Oman as uncertainty deepens.

Energy markets **CONTD TO PAGE 06...**

1 Kg Ganja Worth ₹1.2 Lakh Seized In Midnight Raid At Navelim

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO : Police seized approximately one kilogram of ganja valued at ₹1.2 lakh during a midnight narcotics raid at Navelim on March 2.

The operation was carried out by a team from Margao Police Station as part of ongoing efforts to curb the sale and distribution of illegal drugs in the region.

According to police sources, the contraband was seized during the raid conducted in the early

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"Wars Can Be Fought Forever": Trump Says US Armed Forces Are Fully Stocked for Extended Conflict

■ Former President Asserts America Has "Virtually Unlimited" Mid Tier Weapons Amid Israel Iran Tensions

New Delhi: Former US President Donald Trump has declared that the United States is equipped with what he described as a virtually unlimited supply of medium and upper medium grade weapons, asserting that the country is well prepared for a prolonged military conflict if required.

In a message posted on Truth Social, Trump stated that US stockpiles



of mid level munitions have never been stronger. He said current reserves are sufficient to sustain long running wars and claimed these weapons surpass the quality of comparable arms held by

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Illegal Rentals and the Cost of Weak Enforcement

The fatal accident at Assagao on February 23 has once again drawn attention to a problem that has been allowed to grow quietly on Goa's roads. A complaint filed by the All Goa Rent A Cab Owners' Association at the Anjuna Police Station alleges that two vehicles involved in the mishap were operating illegally as rental taxis. One was reportedly a Mahindra Thar using a changed taxi number plate, while the other, a Hyundai i20, was allegedly registered as a private vehicle but used for commercial purposes. The details will ultimately have to be established through investigation, but the larger issue raised by the incident is difficult to ignore.

Illegal rent-a-cab operations have become an open secret in Goa, particularly in tourist-heavy areas such as Assagao and the surrounding belt. Private vehicles are frequently hired out without commercial permits, often at lower rates than licensed operators can afford to offer. While this may appear convenient and economical for tourists, it creates a parallel system that operates outside regulatory oversight.

The consequences of such a system extend far beyond unfair competition. Licensed rent-a-cab operators must comply with permit regulations, insurance requirements, vehicle fitness checks and taxation rules. These requirements exist not merely as bureaucratic hurdles but as safeguards intended to ensure passenger safety. Vehicles operating illegally often bypass these checks, raising serious concerns about insurance validity, driver accountability and vehicle condition. When accidents occur, as in this recent case, these gaps can complicate both criminal liability and compensation claims.

For authorised operators, the situation is equally troubling. Associations representing legitimate businesses have long complained that illegal



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rentals erode their livelihoods. Operators who follow the law find themselves undercut by those who avoid permit fees and regulatory compliance. Over time, this weakens the formal sector and encourages more individuals to enter the illegal market, creating a cycle that becomes increasingly difficult to control.

The association's demand for a thorough investigation is therefore justified. Determining whether the vehicles involved were operating in violation of permit norms is essential not only for assigning responsibility in this particular case but also for sending a broader

message. Enforcement actions that follow accidents alone are not enough. If illegal rentals continue to operate openly, it suggests a gap between regulations on paper and enforcement on the ground.

Part of the problem lies in the ease with which vehicles can be repurposed for commercial use without detection. Changing number plates or informally hiring out private vehicles is not a complex operation. Without regular checks and coordinated enforcement between transport authorities and the police, such practices can continue largely unchecked. Technology, including digital permit verification and routine roadside inspections, could help close this gap if implemented consistently.

There is also a need for clarity among tourists, many of whom may not realise that they are hiring unlicensed vehicles. Visitors often assume that any vehicle offered for rent is operating legally. Greater awareness, combined with visible enforcement, would make it harder for illegal operators to function in plain sight.

Ultimately, the issue is not simply about one accident or two vehicles. It is about the credibility of the regulatory framework governing transport services in Goa. Laws and permit systems exist for a reason, but they serve little purpose if violations carry minimal risk of detection or penalty.

If the investigation into the Assagao accident leads to meaningful action, it could mark an important step toward restoring confidence among both passengers and legitimate operators. If not, the tragedy will become just another entry in a growing list of warnings that went unheeded. Illegal rentals are no longer a minor inconvenience. They are a public safety issue, and addressing them requires sustained and visible enforcement rather than reactive measures after lives have already been lost.

LETTERS

Ground Reality Matters More Than Protests

Recent protests over 39A have led some in the Opposition to predict political damage for Health Minister Vishwajit Rane. However, such conclusions ignore the political realities of Goa, where voters have historically placed greater trust in individuals who remain accessible and responsive to their needs.

In Goa, electoral support is often built on personal connections rather than party lines alone. People tend to stand by leaders who assist them in times of need, whether it involves healthcare, local issues or government services. This culture of personal outreach has long shaped voting patterns across constituencies, and it continues to remain a decisive factor during elections.

Vishwajit Rane has maintained a strong presence among his constituents, and many have benefited directly from his interventions. Such grassroots engagement cannot be easily overshadowed by protests, which may be visible and vocal but do not always reflect the broader public mood.

It is also worth noting that Goa's political history shows a consistent pattern where the party in power at the Centre often finds support in the state. Voters tend to favour alignment as it is seen to benefit development and administrative coordination.

For these reasons, assuming that the recent protests will significantly influence electoral outcomes may be premature. Ultimately, it is the day-to-day connection between elected representatives and the people that continues to shape the verdict at the ballot box.

- Anthony D'Souza, Porvorim

Forged Land Records Are the Root of Goa's Planning Crisis

The growing disorder in land use and development across Goa cannot be understood without examining the questionable foundation on which many land titles rest. The widespread reliance on Record of Rights such as Form I and XIV, or property cards, in cases where no lawful State grant exists has created a system that is deeply vulnerable to manipulation and abuse.

Where land has not been granted by the State under the provisions of the Goa Land Revenue Code, these records cannot by themselves establish lawful ownership. In many instances, they appear to function as little more than administrative entries that have gradually been treated as proof of title. This has opened the door to destructive and unregulated development that would otherwise not be legally permissible. The laws governing land use in Goa were never meant to operate on uncertain or improperly created records. Proper tenure can arise only through a valid State grant followed by the lawful conferment of occupancy rights and the payment of land revenue. Without this legal foundation, enforcement becomes weak and open to challenge.

It is also important to remember that the laws in force prior to Liberation were specifically protected by Parliament and continue to hold relevance even today. Yet these protections become meaningless if the very basis of land ownership is questionable.

If Goa is to prevent further damage to its land and heritage, there must be a serious re examination of these records. Without addressing this root problem, no meaningful reform in land use regulation will be possible.

- Sebastian Fernandes, Margao

Goa SEC Launches Ward Delimitation Ahead of April Municipal Elections

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa State Election Commission (SEC) has commenced the ward delimitation process in preparation for the upcoming municipal elections, which are scheduled for April.

The move marks the official start of the election preparations for all 11 municipal councils in the

Statae.

Election Commissioner Menino D'Souza, in an official order, directed the division of municipal areas into wards for the councils of Pernem, Valpoi, Bicholim, Mapusa, Mormugao, Margao, Cuncolim, Quepem, Canacona, Curchorem-Cacora, and Sanguem.

Deputy collectors and mamlatdars have been



appointed as Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) to assist in the delimitation process.

The term of the current

municipal councils is set to expire in April, making the timely completion of preparations essential.

While Goa's municipal elections are officially conducted on a non-party basis, political parties, including the ruling BJP and opposition groups, are expected to support candidate panels, adding significant political weight to the polls.

Supreme Court Issues Notices in Siolim Oxel Spring Luxury Villas Case; April Hearing Set

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In a key development for Siolim residents, the Supreme Court has issued notices to all relevant parties, including State Government departments, in a petition challenging the construction of luxury villas near the historic Oxel spring. The matter is scheduled for hearing in April.

The Special Leave Petition (SLP) was filed by local resident Suraj Chodankar and environmental activist Avertino Miranda, following the dismissal of their earlier plea by the Bombay High Court at Goa, which had contested the approvals granted for the project.

The dispute centers on the proposed development of eight residential villas, each featuring a private swimming pool, located within 34.5 metres of the 363-year-old Oxel spring — a perennial water source that has



traditionally supplied sections of Siolim village.

In their petition, the appellants argued that the project threatens the delicate ecosystem around the spring. They warned that excavation, construction, and increased groundwater use could disturb the natural flow of the spring and cause irreversible damage to local biodiversity.

"The spring is not just a water source but an integral part of the village's ecological and cultural heritage. Any interference in its vicinity could have lasting consequences," one petitioner said, welcoming the apex court's notice.

Villagers have previously staged protests against the project, citing concerns over water security.

South Goa Collector Submits Report on BITS Pilani Student Suicide



Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: South Goa Collector Eгна Cleetus, IAS, has submitted a report to the state government regarding the suicide of a 20-year-old female student at BITS

Focus on Campus Mental Health Intensifies

Pilani's Goa campus on February 1, marking the sixth student death at the institute within a year.

The student, originally from Bengaluru, reportedly ended her life on campus, reigniting concerns over student welfare and mental health at the prestigious institution.

Collector Cleetus said her report outlines the circumstances of the recent death as well as the measures taken by the institute following previous

incidents.

"I have submitted a detailed report to the government covering the student's death and the steps implemented by the BITS Pilani administration since the fifth student death last year," she said.

As the head of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC), Cleetus noted that the institute has introduced several initiatives in line with the Supreme Court's guidelines on student

mental health. BITS Pilani has reportedly engaged clinical psychologists, therapists, and a psychiatrist to provide stronger mental health support on campus.

"The DLMC is satisfied with the steps taken by the BITS administration in accordance with the Supreme Court's directives. The Committee will continue to periodically review these measures to ensure the well-being of students," she added.



Chief Minister Pramod Sawant chaired a pre-Budget meeting with Secretaries and Heads of Departments, outlining a roadmap focused on inclusive growth, infrastructure development, welfare measures, employment generation and sustainable development for a stronger Goa.

Churchill Alemao Meets AAP Leader Atishi Marlena, Keeps Political Plans Under Wraps

Team Goemkarponn

VARCA: Former Goa Chief Minister Churchill Alemao on Monday revealed that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and Goa desk in-charge Atishi Marlena recently visited him to discuss politics and broader issues concerning the State.

Speaking to the media, Alemao said he has not yet finalized his political plans. "Several leaders have approached me, but I will take a decision at the right time," he added.



The meeting at Alemao's Varca residence last week had sparked speculation in political circles, coming shortly after AAP Benaulim MLA and Churchill's long-time rival Venzy Viegas warned the party leadership that he and fellow MLA Cruz

Silva might explore an alternative political path if a united opposition front does not take shape in Goa.

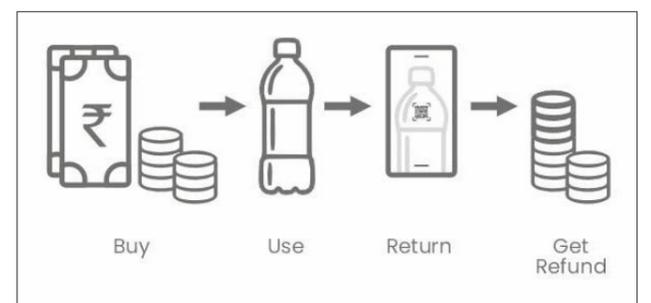
Reflecting on his political journey, Churchill stressed the importance of people over elections. "The people of Benaulim have repeatedly placed their trust in me, and I have been similarly honoured by the residents of Navelim. It is because of their support that I had the privilege of becoming Goa's first Catholic Chief Minister," he said.

Goa Extends Registration Deadline for Producers Under Deposit Refund Scheme to March 15

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Goa government has extended the registration deadline for Producers, Importers, and Brand Owners (PIBOs) under the upcoming Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) to March 15, following slow compliance and growing apprehension from certain industry segments.

The original deadline of February 28 was missed by several manufacturers and traders, prompting authorities to allow additional time to complete the mandatory registration process. The DRS, scheduled to take effect from April 1, aims to regulate the collection and refund of deposits on non-biodegradable beverage containers, including glass bottles, cans, and certain types of plastic packaging. PIBOs will be required to register with the designated authority and adhere to the scheme's collection and refund protocols.



Officials said the extension is meant to ease onboarding and encourage broader participation. However, industry insiders suggest the move highlights underlying operational challenges in implementing the framework. "The slower response is largely due to stakeholders seeking clarity on compliance procedures, financial obligations, and the tax treatment of refundable deposits," said a senior official involved with the rollout. "This extension ensures that no eligible entity is excluded."

Some traders, however, interpret the delay as indicative of

hurdles in the scheme's rollout. "If the system were fully prepared, registrations would have been completed on time," said a manufacturer requesting anonymity. "Smaller players, in particular, are unsure about documentation requirements and how the deposit system will impact their finances."

The government has faced criticism from parts of the liquor and beverage industry, with concerns raised over the legal and logistical structure of the DRS. Questions have also emerged about whether the refundable deposit could complicate pricing strategies and compliance filings.

Drunken Brawl On Moira Road Ends In Assault, Trespass Case

Team Goemkarponn

MOIRA: A case of public nuisance, assault and criminal trespass has been registered at Moira in Bardez after a drunken altercation allegedly escalated into threats and violence near a residential area.

According to police, the incident occurred on March 1 at around 7 pm near a house close to Bank of Baroda at Moira. Complainant Sunil



Dahiya, a resident of Moira, alleged that the accused, identified as Suryanath Bhogan of Calizor, Moira, along with another person acting with common intention, consumed alcohol in an open public place and created a nuisance. The

accused allegedly abused the complainant and his friends, including women, using filthy language and threatened them with dire consequences while they were walking on the public road. The complaint further states that the accused insulted the modesty of the women present during the altercation.

When the complainant intervened, one of the accused, identified as Suryakant Bhogan,

allegedly assaulted him by banging his head against the complainant's body. It is further alleged that both accused later criminally trespassed into the complainant's residence, banged on the main entrance door and issued death threats while making gestures to assault him.

Police have registered an offence in the matter, and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Bablo Parab.

Minor Girl Allegedly Kidnapped From Cuncolim; Man Booked

Team Goemkarponn

CUNCOLIM: Police at Cuncolim have registered a kidnapping case following a complaint filed by the mother of a minor girl whose name has been withheld.

According to police sources, the complainant, a resident of Cuncolim originally from Chhattisgarh, reported that on February 28 at around 10 pm, the accused, identified as



Edwin Ronata, a resident of Taleigao-Caranzalem originally from Karnataka, allegedly kidnapped her minor daughter from her lawful guardianship within the jurisdiction of Cuncolim Police Station.

Fortuner-Activa Collision On Parra-Assagao Road; Two Injured

Team Goemkarponn

PARRA: Two persons were injured following a collision between a Toyota Fortuner and an Activa scooter on the Parra-Assagao road.

According to initial information, the accident occurred when the Activa rider allegedly entered from the wrong side of the road and collided with the Fortuner. Sources further stated that the scooter rider was suspected to be under the influence of alcohol at the time of the



incident.

Both the rider and the pillion rider of the scooter sustained injuries in the collision and were shifted for medical treatment. The extent of their injuries was not immediately known.

Police have taken note of the incident, and further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact cause of the accident.

Truck Driver Found Dead Near Colvale Service Road

Team Goemkarponn

COLVALE: A 59-year-old truck driver from Uttar Pradesh was found dead after allegedly dying by suicide near the Colvale-Karaswada service road on Sunday evening.

According to police, information was received at around 6.46 pm on March 1 from Robot-16 staff that a man had hanged himself from a tree branch after climbing onto the rooftop of a vehicle carrier truck bearing registration number UP 70 FT 4301. The truck was parked



on the left side of the Colvale-Karaswada service road opposite Om Sai Restaurant.

Upon reaching the spot, police found the deceased identified as Pappu Singh, son of Bharat Singh, aged 59 years, a resident of Gram

Nagala Lekhraj Bharaul, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh. He was employed as the driver of the truck, which was loaded with Yamaha Fascino scooters meant for delivery to Pratik Motors at Duler, Mapusa.

Police said the deceased allegedly used

a white gamcha (towel) as ligature material and hanged himself from a tree branch after climbing onto the roof of the truck.

A scene of unnatural death (UD) panchanama and inquest panchanama were conducted in the presence of two panch witnesses. The body has been preserved at the morgue of Goa Medical College, Bambolim, for post-mortem examination.

Police have informed the family members of the deceased. No foul play is suspected, and further investigation is in progress.

Rash Overtaking Leads To Collision; Three Injured In Quepem

Team Goemkarponn

QUEPEM: Three persons sustained injuries after a motorcycle allegedly being ridden in a rash and negligent manner collided with a scooter at Quepem.

According to a state complaint filed by ASI Sandeep Velip of Quepem Police Station, the accident occurred on February 27 prior to 12.20 am on the internal canal road from GCQ College, Quepem, towards the main road connecting Quepem to Curchorem.

Police said the accused rider, identified as Tanesh Naik of Xeldem, Quepem, was proceeding along with a pillion rider when he allegedly attempted to overtake another vehicle.



During the manoeuvre, he is reported to have swerved to the wrong side of the road and collided with a Pleasure scooter.

As a result of the impact, the scooter rider, Ashloy Anthony Noronha of Xeldem, and pillion rider Ashnida Fernandes of Borimol, both from Quepem, sustained injuries. The accused rider also suffered injuries in the accident.

Police have registered a case of rash and negligent driving, and further investigation is being carried out by ASI Sandeep Velip of Quepem Police Station.

Belarus National Woman Found Dead After Falling Ill In Morjim

Team Goemkarponn

MANDREM: A 64-year-old Belarus national was declared brought dead at Goa Medical College on Monday after she reportedly fell ill while staying in Morjim.

According to police, Mandrem Police Station registered the case on March 2 at 2.28 pm after receiving a wireless



message from the Casualty Police at GMC Bambolim informing that a foreign national had been brought dead.

Enquiries revealed that the deceased, identified as Mrs Natalia Hil, wife of

Ivan Satsuta, was staying at Shaan Coco Palms Beach Resort located at Vithaldas Wadda on Little Morjim Beach Road in Morjim, Pernem. She was residing there along with her husband.

Police said that on March 2, she reportedly began shivering and feeling uneasy at the resort. She was shifted by a 108 ambulance to

North Goa District Hospital and later referred to GMC Bambolim for further treatment. However, upon examination, the on-duty medical officer at the casualty ward declared her brought dead.

Police have stated that no foul play is suspected in the matter. Further enquiry is being conducted by PSI Laximan Dessai of Mandrem Police Station.

Unidentified Man Found Dead At La Campala Ground In Panaji

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: An unidentified male was found lying dead at Red Rosary ground at La Campala in Panaji on Sunday evening.

According to police, a

phone call was received at around 4.45 pm from PCR Panaji informing that a man was lying motionless at the ground. Police personnel rushed to the spot and conducted preliminary enquiries

with locals; however, the identity of the deceased could not be established.

Police stated that no incriminating articles were found at the scene.

An unnatural death case has been registered



at Panaji Police Station under Section 194 of the BNSS, and further investigation is being carried out by LPSI Sapna Gawas.

Drishti Marine Lifesavers Aid 7-year-old Boy in Dog Bite Case at Colva

Rescue Five Persons from Drowning Over the Weekend

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Drishti lifesavers quickly responded to a seven-year-old boy's call for help at Colva beach, after he was attacked by a dog, even as the lifesavers also managed to carry out three single rescues, one double rescue and also attended to two instances requiring medical assistance for beachgoers and locating a child missing at Baga beach.

Arambol beach: Drishti Marine lifesavers saved two lives at the Arambol sweetwater lake in separate incidents. In the first case, lifesaver Vishnu Kunal carried out a single rescue using a rescue tube after a 46-year-old man swam deep into the



lake and began drowning. In a second incident, on-duty lifesaver Harshad Chandekar rescued a 36-year-old tourist from Maharashtra, who had ventured into the water despite being a weak swimmer, and brought him safely back to the bank.

Ashwem Beach: A 13-year-old Russian tourist was rescued after she got caught in a low-tide flow rip while

enjoying the waters off Ashwem beach. She was spotted in distress by lifesaver Hiren Keluskar, who rushed towards her in a rescue boat and secured her. Lifesaver Nagesh soon arrived on a jetski and brought her safely back to shore. No first aid was required. At the same beach, a beach waiter approached on-duty Drishti Marine lifesavers, when a male

guest showed no sign of movement, while seated on a chair. The lifesavers rushed to the restaurant with oxygen and administered CPR for about 45 mins till the 108 ambulance and its personnel took the individual away for further medical attention.

Baga beach: A four-year-old boy was found at the beach, by beach marshal Nilofer Usgaonkar and lifesaver Lokesh Tanwar. They took charge of the child and immediately called for a search for his guardians. After identifying his parents, the child was handed over to his parents in the presence of Goa Police personnel after following identity protocol.



Goa barge owners submit budget inputs to Chief Minister

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: The Goa Barge Owners' Association on Friday submitted its inputs for drafting the State Budget for the financial year 2026-27 to Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant during a meeting held in Panaji.

The delegation was led by Association President Chandrakant K. Gawas and included Executive Committee members Rahul Naik and Mahendra Parsekar. The representatives handed over a detailed memorandum outlining key recommendations concerning the inland water transport and barge industry in Goa.

According to the Association, the proposals were aimed at strengthening the barge sector and addressing issues faced by operators, particularly in the backdrop of fluctuating mining activities and operational challenges. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Chief

Minister for granting them an opportunity to present their suggestions ahead of the upcoming budget.

Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant appreciated the representation and assured the members that the recommendations would be examined for possible inclusion in the forthcoming State Budget. He also acknowledged the role of the barge industry in supporting Goa's economy and employment generation. The Association, in its statement, thanked the Government for its continued support to the sector and referred to the upgradation of Brittona School, stating that such initiatives would help create skilled manpower for the industry. President Chandrakant K. Gawas said the interaction was constructive and expressed hope that the concerns and suggestions of barge owners would receive due consideration in the budgetary process for 2026-27.

MLA Anton Vas announces the First-ever Cortalim Shigmotsav to be held on March 8

Team Goemkarponn

CORTALIM: Cortalim MLA Anton Vas on Monday announced that the first edition of Cortalim Shigmotsav 2026 will be held on March 8 at Bantantulo Khuris, NH-66, Cortalim from 3.30 pm onwards,

Addressing mediapersons in the presence of members of Cortalim Kala Kendra and Cortalim Nagrik Shigmotsav Samiti, Vas said the event is being



organised following a strong public demand for a Shigmotsav celebration in the constituency.

Vas recalled that two years ago he had organised Carnival celebrations in Cortalim

for the first time as an experiment. "When we introduced the Carnival in Cortalim two years ago, it was an experiment. The response we received was tremendous and beyond expectations.

Encouraged by that support, we successfully held the second edition this year as well. Seeing the enthusiasm of the people, there was a strong demand to also organise Shigmotsav here," he said. He added, "Many residents from Cortalim usually travel to Vasco and Margao to watch the Shigmotsav parades. People expressed that they wanted such a vibrant celebration in their own constituency.

Street Providence Trust inaugurates old age home, dispensary in Manipur

Team Goemkarponn

SINGNGAT (MANIPUR): Trustees of the Street Providence Trust, Goa inaugurated an old age home-cum-medical dispensary for widows in collaboration with St Thomas Parish, Singngat on February 27, marking a significant step in extending care and medical support to vulnerable women in the region.

The facility was inaugurated in the presence of chief guest



Chinlunthang, MLA of 60 Singngat Assembly Constituency, and guest of honour Dharun Kumar, Deputy Commissioner of Churachandpur district. The home received blessings from Most Rev Dr Linus Neli, Archbishop of Imphal. Among the special invitees were Rev

Fr Varghese Vellikakam, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Imphal; Haukholien Munluo, Chief of Singngat; Samuel Lhungdim, SDO Singngat; Rev Fr Athanasius Mung, Parish Priest; and Dr Steve M Tungnung, Medical Officer In-Charge, Singngat.

Centuries-old Holi rituals draw devotees to Khapreshwar temple in Vasco

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: Devotees from across Vasco and other parts of Goa gathered at the Khapreshwar Temple at Belabai on Monday to observe the centuries-old tradition of offering coconuts and flowers to mark the commencement of Holi festivities in the area.

The ritual, believed to have been followed for over 130 years, continues to attract large numbers of people every year on the eve of Holi. As part of



the ceremony, devotees offer coconuts to the deity and seek blessings for peace and prosperity.

A unique feature of the celebration is the 'gharaane' prayer

performed by the temple priest. It is believed that the ritual prayer helps cleanse individuals of negative energy and ward off evil influences.

Factory Activity Climbs to Four Month High as Domestic Demand Drives Growth

February PMI Rises to 56.9 While Export Momentum Eases

New Delhi: India's manufacturing sector expanded at its fastest pace in four months in February, supported by strong domestic demand even as export growth softened, according to the latest survey data.

The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S and P Global, rose to 56.9 in February from 55.4 in January. Although the reading was slightly below the preliminary estimate of 57.5, it remained well above the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction, signalling sustained growth in factory activity.

The improvement was largely driven by robust domestic orders, which increased at their strongest rate since October. Production



volumes also rose at the quickest pace in four months, with manufacturers citing efficiency gains, steady demand and investments in technology as key contributors.

India's broader economic outlook remains resilient. The economy recorded growth of 7.8 per cent in the October to December quarter, supported by a 13.3 per cent expansion in manufacturing output. For the full fiscal year

ending in March, growth is projected at 7.6 per cent.

While domestic indicators were upbeat, export performance showed signs of moderation. New export orders expanded at their slowest pace in 17 months, reflecting ongoing uncertainty in global trade conditions.

The survey period followed a reduction in United States tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent, although fresh global tariff

measures announced by President Donald Trump have added to external headwinds.

Input cost inflation remained stable compared to January. However, manufacturers increased selling prices at the fastest rate in four months, taking advantage of firm domestic demand to pass on higher costs.

Employment in the sector rose to a four month high, though the pace of hiring was modest. Only a small proportion of firms reported adding staff, while most maintained existing workforce levels.

Business confidence about the year ahead strengthened to its highest level in four months, underscoring expectations of continued economic momentum despite softer external demand.



Petrol, Diesel Prices Likely to Stay Unchanged Despite Global Oil Surge

Government Adopts Calibrated Approach as Crude Climbs After Iran Strikes

New Delhi: Retail prices of petrol and diesel in India are unlikely to see an immediate increase despite a sharp rise in global crude oil rates following recent military strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliatory actions.

International oil markets reacted strongly to the escalation, with Brent crude climbing nearly 9 per cent to around 80 dollars per barrel. US traded crude also rose 8.6 per cent to about 72.79 dollars from roughly 67 dollars at the end of last week. The surge has revived concerns about supply disruptions and higher energy costs worldwide.

However, domestic pump prices are expected to remain stable in the near term. Fuel rates have been unchanged since April 2022, with state owned oil marketing companies absorbing losses during periods of elevated crude prices and rebuilding margins when global rates moderate. Industry sources indicate that unless there is a prolonged and steep spike in crude prices, retail rates are unlikely to be revised immediately.

India imports nearly 88 per cent of its crude oil requirements, making it vulnerable to sustained volatility in international markets. The three major public sector fuel retailers, Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, reported a combined profit of Rs 23,743 crore in the December quarter of the current financial year, reflecting improved margins during periods of softer crude.

Concerns have also resurfaced around the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for nearly half of India's oil imports. Disruptions or insurance constraints affecting tanker movement through the region could add pressure to supply chains.

Amid the evolving situation, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri reviewed the supply position of crude oil, LPG and other petroleum products. The government has reiterated that it is closely monitoring developments and will take necessary steps to ensure availability and affordability for consumers.

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No Fuel Shortage In Goa Despite Gulf Tensions

said, adding that large tankers transport refined products through well-established channels to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

He further noted that Indian refineries rely on diversified crude sourcing strategies, reducing vulnerability to geopolitical disturbances. According to him, refiners maintain procurement arrangements with

multiple countries and have contingency plans to address sudden disruptions in global markets. Responding to speculation about potential shortages, the official emphasised that India maintains both operational and strategic reserves to deal with emergencies. He pointed out that buffer stocks are typically maintained to cover extended periods,

ensuring continuity of supply even during international crises.

Reiterating that there is no shortage scenario in Goa, he appealed to residents not to engage in panic buying or stockpiling based on rumours. Authorities, he added, are closely monitoring distribution to ensure smooth availability of fuel at petrol pumps across the State.

1 Kg Ganja Worth ₹1.2 Lakh Seized In Midnight Raid At Navelim

hours. Further details regarding the accused and the circumstances of the seizure were being ascertained at the time of filing this report.

The raid was conducted under the supervision of the Police Inspector of Margao Town Police Station, with overall supervision by the SDPO, Margao, and the Superintendent of Police, South Goa. Further investigation is in progress.

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Bedridden Woman Dies In House Fire At Chinchinim

rented premises when the fire erupted.

Personnel from the Cuncolim Fire Brigade rushed to the spot and brought the flames under control, but the woman

had already succumbed.

Police have shifted the body to the South Goa District Hospital mortuary for further formalities. The exact cause of the fire is under investigation.

700 Tankers Stalled at Hormuz as Prolonged Conflict Threatens India's Fuel Security

reacted swiftly. Brent crude prices surged close to 10 per cent to about 80 dollars a barrel, while European gas prices spiked sharply following reported attacks on key energy facilities in the region. War risk insurance premiums have risen and

freight rates are climbing, adding further pressure to global fuel prices. For India, which depends heavily on Gulf crude, the disruption presents immediate challenges. Officials in New Delhi are reviewing contingency measures to safeguard domestic supply.

These include possible curbs on fuel exports, increased sourcing from alternative suppliers and demand management steps if the crisis persists. Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri recently reviewed the supply situation and reiterated that the

government is closely monitoring developments to ensure availability and affordability of petroleum products. India imports a significant share of its LPG requirements from the Gulf, making it particularly vulnerable to prolonged disruption.

"Wars Can Be Fought Forever": Trump Says US Armed Forces Are Fully Stocked for Extended Conflict

other nations. According to him, conflicts could be carried on indefinitely using these supplies alone. While expressing confidence

in the availability of mid tier weaponry, Trump acknowledged that stock levels of the most advanced arms are not yet at his desired level. He

noted that although the United States maintains a solid supply of high end systems, additional top grade weapons are stored in overseas

locations and could be accessed if needed. Trump also directed sharp criticism at former President Joe Biden over the handling of military

inventories. He accused Biden of transferring large quantities of advanced equipment to Ukraine without adequately replenishing domestic

reserves. Trump claimed that billions of dollars worth of sophisticated weaponry had been provided abroad without ensuring replacement at home.

“Our Goal Is USD 50 Billion in Trade by 2030”: India and Canada Deepen Strategic Partnership

■ Uranium Deal and Critical Minerals Pact Mark Major Push to Expand Energy and Economic Cooperation

New Delhi: India and Canada have moved to significantly strengthen their bilateral relationship with a series of key agreements covering uranium supplies, critical minerals and a broader economic partnership framework.

During talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, the two sides agreed to expedite negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Both leaders set an ambitious target of raising bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030, signalling a renewed focus



on unlocking untapped commercial potential.

A central outcome of the discussions was a USD 2.6 billion agreement for uranium supplies from Canada to India. The deal is expected to provide long term support to India's expanding civil nuclear energy programme.

In addition to nuclear cooperation, both sides explored collaboration in small modular reactors, renewable energy and advanced technologies.

Canada's extensive reserves of critical minerals and rare earth elements were also a focal point. The newly signed partnership aims

to strengthen supply chains essential for clean energy technologies, electric vehicles and high end manufacturing. The agreement covers the development, processing and secure sourcing of these materials to ensure stability and sustainability in future industries.

Beyond energy and trade, the two countries underscored the importance of enhancing defence and security ties. Plans include greater military exchanges, maritime cooperation and the establishment of a dedicated India Canada defence dialogue mechanism.



Government Reviews Fuel Supply as Global Crude Prices Surge Amid West Asia Tensions

■ Petroleum Minister Assesses Availability of Oil, LPG and Key Products as Markets React to Iran Strikes

New Delhi: With tensions escalating in West Asia, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas conducted a high level review on Monday to assess the availability of crude oil, LPG and other essential petroleum products across the country. The meeting, chaired by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister, was attended by senior ministry officials and representatives of public sector undertakings. The review focused on

evaluating current supply levels and preparedness in light of growing instability in the Middle East. In an official statement, the government said it is closely tracking developments and remains committed to ensuring that critical petroleum products remain accessible and reasonably priced. Authorities emphasised that all necessary measures would be taken to maintain supply stability and protect consumers from undue volatility.



“Symbolic Political Critique, Not Violence”: Delhi Court Grants Bail to Youth Congress Protesters

■ Judge Says Pre Trial Detention Cannot Become Punishment Without Conviction

New Delhi: A Delhi court has granted bail to nine members of the Indian Youth Congress who were arrested following a protest at last month's AI Impact Summit, holding that their actions amounted to political dissent rather than criminal conduct.

Judicial Magistrate First Class Ravi of the Patiala House Court ordered the release of the activists, observing that the demonstration did not constitute organised crime or repeated violent behaviour. In a detailed ruling, the court described the protest as a symbolic expression of political criticism during a public event. According to the

order, the participants wore T shirts bearing images and slogans critical of the leadership and raised chants that were not communal or inflammatory in nature. The court noted there was no evidence of damage to property, disruption causing panic among delegates, or disorderly conduct. It further recorded that the protesters exited the venue in an orderly manner under escort. The judge emphasised that extended detention before trial, without compelling investigative reasons, would infringe upon the right to personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

“Silence Is Not Prudence, It Is Abdication”: Sonia Gandhi Questions Government's Response to Khamenei Killing

■ Congress Leaders Say India Must Reaffirm Commitment to Sovereignty and International Law

New Delhi: As the conflict in West Asia entered its fourth day, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi criticised the Indian government's response to the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in a joint United States and Israel strike.

In an opinion

article published in The Indian Express, Gandhi described the assassination of a sitting head of state during ongoing negotiations as a serious rupture in international relations. She wrote that Iran confirmed the killing on March 1 following a targeted strike carried out a day earlier.

According to her, New Delhi's restrained reaction was as striking as the event itself.

Gandhi argued that the government did not explicitly condemn the assassination or address what she termed a violation of Iranian sovereignty. She noted that the Prime Minister's



Office issued a brief condolence message that avoided reference to the circumstances of the death, and that no further clarification followed despite strong global reactions.

Safety of 90 Lakh Indians Takes Priority as Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews West Asia Crisis

■ Government Activates Helplines and Prepares Contingency Plans Amid Escalating US Iran Israel Conflict

New Delhi: Amid the deepening conflict in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired an emergency meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to assess the situation, with particular focus on the safety of nearly 90 lakh Indian nationals residing in the region.

The high level meeting lasted three hours and followed a sharp military escalation after

coordinated airstrikes by the United States and Israel on Iran. Tehran responded by targeting American allies in the Gulf, including areas in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, significantly widening the scope of the confrontation.

India's top decision making body was extensively briefed on the evolving security landscape and the risks posed to the large Indian



expatriate community across the Middle East. The committee expressed serious concern over their safety and reviewed the mounting logistical challenges caused by the crisis. Airspace closures in several countries led to the cancellation of around 350 international flights operated by Indian carriers

in a single day. The panel also discussed concerns relating to Indian students scheduled to appear for key examinations and the potential disruption of maritime trade routes, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for India's energy imports and commercial shipping.



“This Takes the Weight Off His Shoulders”: Gavaskar Hails Samson’s Match Winning 97

■ **Legendary Batter Says India Star’s Knock Ends Ups and Downs in T20 World Cup Thriller**

New Delhi: Batting great Sunil Gavaskar has heaped praise on Sanju Samson after the wicketkeeper batter guided India to a dramatic victory over the West Indies cricket team in the T20 World Cup 2026 Super 8 stage.

In a high pressure contest in Kolkata that effectively served as a quarterfinal, India chased down a challenging 196 to secure a semifinal

birth. The team stumbled early with two quick wickets, but Samson anchored the innings with a commanding unbeaten 97 off 50 deliveries. His knock, studded with 12 boundaries and four sixes, steered India to a five wicket win and earned him the Player of the Match award. Gavaskar described the innings as a defining moment in Samson’s career, noting that the performance lifted not only the player’s burden but also that of supporters who have long

backed his talent. He pointed to the fluctuations in Samson’s journey, saying fans have shared in both his highs and lows and were eager to see him succeed on the big stage. The veteran added that although Samson fell just three runs short of a century, the impact of the innings remained immense. He suggested that another three figure score could be on the horizon given the confidence this knock would provide. India will next face the

England cricket team in the semifinal in Mumbai. Reflecting on the chase, Gavaskar highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum and minimising dot balls in T20 cricket. He emphasised that having a settled batter at one end allows partners to rotate strike effectively, ensuring the scoreboard keeps moving. For Samson, the innings marked a powerful response after a lean run of form and reaffirmed his value to the side at a crucial stage of the tournament.

Gukesh’s Late Blunder Hands Abdusattorov Another Win in Prague

■ **Dutch Grandmaster Van Foreest Surges Ahead as All Games End Decisively**

New Delhi: World Champion D Gukesh endured another setback at the Prague International Chess Festival, suffering a painful defeat to long time rival Nodirbek Abdusattorov after letting a promising position slip.

For the fifth consecutive day, fortunes refused to turn in Gukesh’s favour. Just a month after losing to Abdusattorov at the Tata Steel Masters from a stable position, the Indian grandmaster once again faltered despite controlling much of the game. Playing with the black pieces, Gukesh adopted a fresh approach in the opening and quickly put pressure on the white king. His aggressive strategy created structural weaknesses and, for a significant phase of the middlegame, he appeared firmly on course for his first victory in the Masters section.

However, time pressure proved decisive. As the first time control approached, Gukesh made a critical error that shifted the balance.



Although Abdusattorov momentarily allowed chances to swing back, another late blunder from Gukesh enabled the Uzbek to push a decisive pawn and seal the result.

The tournament witnessed decisive outcomes across all boards in the 10 player round robin. Jorden van Foreest continued his impressive run, defeating Hans Niemann to register his fourth win in five games and climb to 11th in the live world rankings. Defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram suffered his third defeat, going down to Spain’s David Anton Guijarro.

Czech star David Navara maintained his strong form with a hard fought victory over Nodirbek Yakubboev, while Parham Maghsoodloo overcame Germany’s Vincent Keymer.

“For Many Years, We Only Spoke About Certain Contributions”: Gambhir Backs Team First Approach

■ **India Coach Says Dube’s Late Boundaries Were as Crucial as Samson’s 97 Against West Indies**

New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir has underlined his team first philosophy following Sanju Samson’s match winning 97 against West Indies, insisting that smaller contributions

deserve equal recognition. Reflecting on the victory, Gambhir pointed to the decisive role played by Shivam Dube, whose two boundaries in the penultimate over proved vital in sealing the chase.

He argued that without those crucial hits, the spotlight may not have shone as brightly on Samson’s knock.

According to Gambhir, Indian cricket has often focused only on headline



making performances while overlooking the efforts that quietly tilt games in a team’s favour.

AIFF Invites Bids for 15 Year Commercial Rights of ISL and Women’s Leagues

■ **Federation Offers Separate Packages for Men’s and Women’s Club Competitions from 2026 Season**

New Delhi: The All India Football Federation has invited bids for the long term commercial rights of its men’s and women’s club competitions, seeking partnerships for a minimum period of 15 years starting from the 2026 to 2027 season.

The federation has structured the tender into two distinct packages. Package A includes the Indian Super League, which serves as the top tier men’s competition, along with the Federation Cup, the country’s premier domestic knockout tournament. Package B covers the Indian Women’s League and its



second division, with an option for the successful bidder to incorporate a proposed Women’s Federation Cup in the future.

Notably, the Request for Proposal does not include the recently renamed Indian Football League, formerly known as the I League.

Interested entities must purchase the RFP document for Rs 2.5 lakh directly from the federation, as it will not be made publicly accessible.

Kit Mix Up Disrupts India Women’s AFC Asian Cup Preparations

■ **Players Flag Morale Concerns After Receiving Incorrectly Sized Training Jerseys**

New Delhi: The India women’s national football team have encountered an unexpected hurdle ahead of their AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2026 opener, after receiving incorrectly sized training and match kits during their preparations in Australia.

The Blue Tigresses are set to begin their campaign against Vietnam women’s national football team in Perth on March 5. However, their final build up has been disrupted by a logistical error involving apparel sent by the All India Football Federation.

Initially, the delay in receiving the kits was attributed to permit related issues. When the consignment finally arrived at the team hotel, it emerged that a majority of the jerseys were too



small, reportedly because they had been produced for an age group side rather than the senior squad. As a result, the team is now considering sourcing suitable kits locally to ensure proper match readiness.

The players, who had travelled to Australia following a training camp in Turkey, expressed disappointment over the situation. Senior members of the squad formally communicated their concerns to the

federation, stating that the lack of appropriate training apparel in the lead up to a major tournament had affected morale and focus.

In their communication, the players highlighted that representing the country at an international level requires professional standards, including properly fitted match and training gear. They stressed that such oversights in the final days before a crucial fixture were disruptive.

Federation officials

acknowledged the issue, stating that it had been brought to their attention and corrective steps were underway. According to the federation, properly sized kits have been arranged and are expected to be delivered ahead of the opening match.

With the tournament fast approaching, the team will now look to shift focus back to on field preparations as they aim for a strong start to their continental campaign.