Goemkarponn

TRUE GOEMKARS AT HEART

Reg No: GOAENG/2020/79967 VOL: 5 | ISSUE : 212 PANAJI | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2026 | Pages-8 RS. 10/-

Prime Accused Ajit Shankhwalkar Surrenders Before Panaji Police in Goa Cash-for-Jobs Scam

After weeks on the run, the 46-year-old accused in the alleged Excise Department recruitment fraud surrenders amid mounting political pressure and an intensive police manhunt.

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: Ajit Trivikram Kamat Shankhwalkar, the prime accused in the high-profile Goa Excise Department cash-for-jobs scam, surrendered before Panaji Police on Monday, bringing an end to a weeks-long manhunt that had triggered widespread public outrage and political controversy across the state.

The 46-year-old resident of Taleigao had been absconding since the registration of two FIRs in October. His surrender follows the issuance of lookout notices, searches beyond Goa and increasing pressure on the police to secure his arrest.

The alleged recruitment racket came to light in October 2026 after a man identified as Manoj Talekar reportedly approached the Excise Commissioner's office in Panaji and attempted to assume charge as Additional Commissioner of Excise.

Talekar presented an appointment letter purportedly issued in his name. However, officials grew suspicious and verified the document with senior authorities, discovering that no such appointment had been approved. The letter allegedly carried a forged signature of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and was issued in the name of Excise Commissioner Ashvin Chandru A.

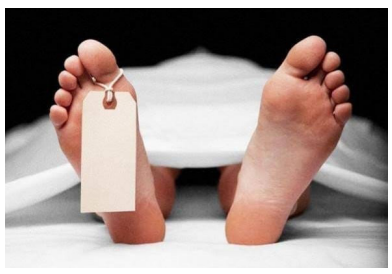
Following the incident, Assistant Commissioner of Excise Sanket Sakhardande lodged

CONTD TO PAGE 06

Second Victim Succumbs to Burn Injuries in Assagao Shop Fire Tragedy

Death Toll Rises to Two as 59-Year-Old Sanjay Madgaonkar Dies During Treatment at GMC

Team Goemkarponn



ASSAGAO: The Assagao shop fire tragedy has claimed its second life, with 59-year-old Sanjay Madgaonkar, a resident of Assagao, succumbing to his burn injuries while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College (GMC) on November 22.

The incident occurred at a shop in Assagao on November 10. Earlier, another victim involved in the same fire incident had succumbed to injuries on November 18.

With Madgaonkar's death, the toll in the tragic fire incident has risen to two.

His last rites are scheduled to be performed on November 23.

Palekar Accuses BJP Government of Ignoring Rising Crime in Goa

GPCC Presents 'Goa Gone Award' to BJP Government, Alleges Neglect of Law and Order

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) spokesperson Adv. Amit Palekar accused the BJP-led government in Goa of prioritising events over pressing issues such as rising crime and deteriorating law and order in the state.

Addressing a press conference, Palekar raised concerns over alleged illegal detention and police involvement in property disputes, questioning the government's handling of such matters.

In a satirical protest, the GPCC also presented the 'Goa Gone Award' to the BJP government, mocking its decisions and alleging that Goa is gradually disappearing in the name of development.

The Congress claimed that the government was focusing on publicity and events while failing to address issues affecting the safety, rights and interests of Goans.



From Student Movement to Political Influencer: What Is CJP's Game Plan?

What began as a student movement is now seeking to shape Goa's political agenda through a Citizens' Manifesto. CJP may say it will not contest elections, but can it influence the electoral outcome without entering the fray?

Goa's political landscape ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections is witnessing the emergence of several new equations, alliances and political initiatives. Amid this churn, the Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) has announced plans to prepare a Citizens' Manifesto and seek commitments from politicians campaigning for the elections. While the organisation maintains that it has no intention of contesting polls, its expanding role raises an interesting question: Is CJP evolving from a student movement into a political force that could influence the electoral outcome?

CJP did not begin as a conventional political organisation. It started as a student movement, with young people coming together to raise issues affecting students and challenge the system. Its growth reflects a larger frustration among sections of the younger generation who feel that their concerns are rarely addressed by those in power. But movements evolve. What begins with students can eventually develop into a wider citizens' platform. CJP's proposed manifesto suggests that it is now attempting to move beyond student-related issues and engage with the larger questions confronting Goa.

Its demand to scrap Section 39A of the Town and Country Planning Act places land protection and planning at the centre of its campaign. This is an issue that has generated considerable public debate, particularly among people concerned about land conversions, unplanned development and the changing character of Goa's villages. However, once an organisation begins asking political candidates to sign a manifesto and seeks to influence how people vote, it inevitably enters the political conversation, whether or not it contests elections.

This is where CJP's role becomes interesting.

Goa is already witnessing efforts to consolidate opposition forces ahead of 2027. Congress is exploring arrangements with the Goa Forward Party and Revolutionary Goans Party, while the Goa First initiative involving AAP and GFP has opened another political front. The BJP, meanwhile, will be looking to defend its position.

In such a fragmented political environment, every new organisation capable of mobilising even a section of voters becomes relevant to the electoral debate.

CJP need not field candidates to influence an election. If its campaign gains traction among students, young voters and citizens dissatisfied with established political parties, it could shape voter preferences in several constituencies. Its insistence that candidates sign a Citizens' Manifesto could also put political parties in a difficult position, particularly if they are unwilling to commit themselves to specific demands.

Could this become another source of division in the anti-BJP vote? That possibility deserves discussion, although it would be unfair to label CJP a vote-splitting organisation without evidence of its electoral intentions or actual influence.

In such a fragmented political environment, every new organisation capable of mobilising even a section of voters becomes relevant to the electoral debate.

CJP need not field candidates to influence an election. If its campaign gains traction among students, young voters and citizens dissatisfied with established political parties, it could shape voter preferences in several constituencies. Its insistence that candidates sign a Citizens' Manifesto could also put political parties in a difficult position, particularly if they are unwilling to commit themselves to specific demands. Could this become another source of division in the anti-BJP vote? That possibility deserves discussion, although it would be unfair to label CJP a vote-splitting organisation without evidence of its electoral intentions or actual influence.

There is also a larger question about the movement's ideological and organisational direction. Will CJP remain focused on public accountability, or will it gradually develop a broader political agenda? Will its leadership remain outside electoral politics, or could some of its members eventually enter the contest as independent candidates or through political alliances?

These are legitimate questions, especially when a movement starts expanding its scope from student concerns to governance and public policy. CJP must also understand that preparing a manifesto is the easier part. The real challenge is ensuring that politicians who sign it honour their commitments after winning elections. A citizens' platform cannot become active only during election campaigns and disappear once a government is formed. It must be equally prepared to question those it supports and those it opposes.

Goa has witnessed several public movements that generated enthusiasm but struggled to sustain themselves over time. CJP now has an opportunity to demonstrate that it is different.

There is nothing wrong with students and young citizens entering public life. In fact, Goa needs more young people questioning political decisions, demanding transparency and participating in governance. But a movement must be clear about its objectives, its leadership and its long-term purpose. CJP says it will not contest the 2027 elections. That may well be its present position. But the bigger question is whether it intends to remain a pressure group or become an organisation that shapes electoral politics without directly contesting. The distinction may appear small, but its consequences could be significant.

Goa's 2027 election will not merely be about which party wins. It will also reveal whether emerging citizens' movements can influence political accountability without becoming political players themselves. For CJP, the real test is not how many politicians sign its manifesto, but whether it can translate the energy of a student movement into a sustained citizens' movement.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CJP'S CITIZENS' MANIFESTO: A MOVEMENT MUST DELIVER MORE THAN ELECTION-TIME PROMISES

The Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) initiative to prepare a Citizens' Manifesto ahead of the 2027 Goa Assembly elections raises an important question about the growing role of citizens' movements in shaping politics.

What began as a student movement appears to be expanding into a platform addressing wider public concerns, including land protection, governance and the demand to scrap Section 39A of the Town and Country Planning Act.

There is nothing wrong with young people taking an active role in public affairs. Goa needs more citizens, particularly students and young voters, questioning decisions, demanding transparency and holding elected representatives accountable.

However, once an organisation asks political candidates to sign a manifesto and seeks commitments on specific issues, it inevitably becomes an influential participant in the political debate, even without contesting elections.

CJP must therefore clearly communicate its objectives, priorities and long-term plans. Its credibility will depend not on how many politicians sign its manifesto, but on whether it continues to question them after they assume office.

A citizens' manifesto should not become merely an election campaign document. It must serve as a public accountability framework against which elected representatives can be assessed.

CJP should also ensure that its approach remains transparent and consistent, irrespective of which political party is in power.

Goa needs strong citizens' movements that can influence governance without necessarily becoming political parties. The real test for CJP will be whether it can convert the energy of a student movement into a sustained platform for public accountability.

- Amit Naik, Margao, Goa

POLITICAL PARTIES NEED TRANSPARENT FUNDING, NOT SELECTIVE CRITICISM OF DONATIONS

The defence of donations by Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) leader Tukaram Parab raises an important question about political funding and the expectations placed on smaller political parties. Running an organisation, contesting elections and maintaining a grassroots presence require financial resources. It is unrealistic to expect political parties to function without contributions from supporters.

Parab's comparison with temples, churches and local clubs, which also depend on donations, highlights how community contributions help sustain institutions. His example of supporters contributing just ₹100 and receiving a "Ravan Thali" in return also illustrates how even modest contributions can support political activities.

RGP's electoral achievements, including winning an Assembly seat and Zilla Panchayat seats, demonstrate that a party with limited resources can still make an impact. However, accepting donations should also come with a responsibility to maintain transparency and public accountability.

The issue is not whether political parties should accept donations, but whether they disclose how funds are collected, accounted for and spent. Every party, irrespective of its size or political standing, must follow clear financial practices.

Criticism of political fundraising should be based on facts rather than political convenience. At the same time, parties must recognise that public trust is their most valuable asset. Transparent funding practices will strengthen credibility and ensure that contributions from ordinary supporters are respected.

- Rohan Prabhu, Panjim, Goa

Printed and Published by Rupali Suraj Nandrekar for M/s Daily Scoops Media Pvt Ltd. Published from H.No 5/56, Donwado, Saligoa, Bardez, North Goa, Goa – 403511 and Printed from H.No 5/56, Donwado, Saligoa, Bardez, North Goa, Goa – 403511. Editor Suraj Arjun Nandrekar (responsible under the PRB Act)

International Film Festival of India | NFDC cinemas of india | सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING | ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY OF GOA (GOVERNMENT OF GOA UNDERTAKING)

DAY 04

MON, 23 NOV 2026

Open Air Screening

Miramar Beach
Tanvi, The Great @ 7 Pm

Vagator Beach
How to Train Your Dragon @ 7 Pm

Ravindra Bhavan (Margao)
Mog Asum @ 7 pm

Cinemela 2026 at Kala Academy

Children Special Screening
08:30 AM - Little Tomas
10:15 AM - Little Tomas

Contemporary at Kala Academy
03:00 PM - Achappa's Album

Nostalgia
06:00 PM - Yaadon Ki Barat

Goan Film
Purnata
Noise
Daryaa
Perfect Shot

Gala Premier
Koodu

Indian Panorama
Ohh My Dog (Feature)
Pagla Ghara (Feature)
Aadi Anant (Feature)
Sarvam Maya (Non Feature)
Chalo India with
Eric Ji – Mizoram (Non Feature)
Switch Off (Non Feature)

Panel Discussion:
Goa in Cinema: Vijay Krishna Acharya Marianne Borgo, Rajendra Talak

In Conversation
The Epic Genres: Mythologies, Superheroes & New Worlds by Ayan Mukerji, Basil Joseph






For more Information & Registration log on to **www.esg.co.in** and **www.iffigoa.org** | IFFI Helpline number **08326741717** (8.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m.)

www.iffigoa.org @iffigoa @iffigoa @iffigoa www.esg.co.in @esg_goa @esggoa @esg_goa

Beverage Partner: Campa Bison
Lounge Partner: Xpanse Coffee, tātāki Immersive Asian Dining
Airline Partner: Qatar Airways, fly91
Airport Partner: GOX Manohar International Airport, Goa
Radio Partner: Big FM
F&B Curation Partner: Hospitality AQ
Screening Partner: PVR INOX
Hydration partner: Laviss
Content Partner: prime video, Netflix, Story TV
Wireless & Surveillance Partner: Salgaonkar Studios

Technical Partner: Sony, SMPTE, Qube, Qube Wire, pulz sound matters, Moviebuff Access, cinedubs

Licensing Partner: Novex, RMPL Feel the beat, IPRS, PPL

Associate Partner: SBI, Wellness Forever, Tuckit, SAFA, Arena, Dakshin Stories, Envision, AK Entertainment, New India Assurance, Pernod Ricard India

Our Supporters: P.W.D Public Works Department, GSIDC, Ravindra Bhavan Margao, Imagine Panaji, Kala Academy Goa, GOI, Corporation of the City of Panaji

Note: Delegates are required to enter the theatre before show start time to avoid reduction of their daily tickets quota.

Goemkarponn
TRUE GOEMKARS AT HEART
PANAJI | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2026

'He called to say he was safe': Vasco family anxiously awaits son's return after tanker attack

■ 24-year-old Dilesh Teli survives attack on LPG carrier in Strait of Hormuz; family seeks government assistance for his early return to Goa

Team Goemkarponn



VASCO: A trembling voice over an unfamiliar WhatsApp number brought a moment of relief amid unimaginable fear for a Vasco family. Their 24-year-old son, who was aboard an LPG tanker attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, had survived. He was injured, but alive and receiving medical attention. For Chandrakant Devu Teli and his wife, however, the ordeal is far from over. As they wait for their son Dilesh Chandrakant Teli to return home, the anxiety of the past few days has overshadowed what was meant to be an exciting milestone in his maritime career. Dilesh, an assistant trainee engineer, was serving aboard the Panama-flagged LPG tanker *Tara Gas*. He joined the vessel in April 2026 and was scheduled to return to Goa in January 2027. The family had been looking forward to his homecoming, particularly as his elder sister's wedding was planned for February.

His sister, Chaitali Chandrakant Teli, who works with a private company, recalled how the family first learnt about the attack on November 17. She had received calls on WhatsApp from an unfamiliar number and initially ignored them.



Safeguard the Future and Livelihood of Goan Sailor Dilesh Teli – Prabhav Naik

■ Goa Government Must Formulate a Comprehensive Policy for Goans Working Overseas

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Madganvcho Awaaz & Youth Leader Prabhav Naik has appealed to the Government of Goa to safeguard the future career and livelihood of young Goan sailor Dilesh Chandrakant Teli, who survived a missile attack on an LPG tanker in the Strait of Hormuz. Prabhav Naik prayed for his speedy recovery and safe and early return home, emphasising that this traumatic incident should not derail his professional aspirations.

Prabhav Naik urged the Government of Goa to formulate a comprehensive policy for the welfare, protection and rehabilitation of Goans employed overseas, particularly those working in high-risk sectors. The policy must provide for emergency assistance, coordination with the Central Government and Indian diplomatic missions, financial support to affected families, medical assistance, insurance facilitation and career rehabilitation. The Government must recognise that its responsibility towards Goan youth does not end at the State's borders and must stand firmly with them and their families during times of crisis. Prabhav Naik stated that ensuring Dilesh's safe return is not enough.



Man assaulted with wooden stick while protecting son in Zuarinagar

Team Goemkarponn

ZUARINAGAR: A man sustained grievous injuries to both his hands after he was allegedly assaulted with a wooden stick while trying to protect his son during a quarrel at Zuarinagar, South Goa, on November 21.

According to the complaint lodged by Gopal Lamani, a resident of Zuarinagar, the incident occurred at around 8 pm when accused Bhure Rehman Shaikh, also a resident of Zuarinagar, Sancoale, along with his family members, allegedly picked up a quarrel with the complainant's son, Rahul.

The accused persons allegedly assaulted Rahul, following which Gopal intervened to protect his son. However, the accused allegedly turned on the complainant and assaulted him with a wooden stick. The accused persons further allegedly pushed Gopal to the ground floor, resulting in grievous injuries to both his hands. Further investigation in the case is being carried out by PSI Mahesh Bhomkar of Verna Police Station.

Woman assaulted with wooden log following personal dispute in Parra; two booked

■ Victim suffers serious injuries; accused also allegedly issued death threats

Team Goemkarponn



PARRA: A woman sustained serious bodily injuries after she was allegedly assaulted with a wooden log following a personal dispute at Boquechi Arradi, Parra, in Bardez taluka, on November 21. According to police, the incident occurred at around 5.30 am. The accused, identified as Abdul Salam and Surabhi, both residents of Rio Baga, Bardez, allegedly abused the victim, a major woman, using filthy language. Police said that following the instigation of accused No. 2, Abdul Salam allegedly assaulted the victim with a wooden log, causing her severe bodily injuries. Thereafter, Surabhi allegedly threatened the victim with dire consequences, including death threats. Based on a complaint lodged by Minat Parvin Mohammad (35), a resident of Parra, the police registered an offence against both accused under Sections 352, 118(2), 351(3), 46, read with Section 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

25-year-old labourer found dead at RMC plant in Curtorim

■ Worker allegedly falls from top of concrete mixer while cleaning; Maina police register unnatural death case

Team Goemkarponn



CURTORIM: A 25-year-old labourer, identified as Manoj, died in an accident at a Ready-Mix Concrete (RMC) plant in Curtorim after he allegedly fell from the top of a concrete mixer while carrying out cleaning work.

According to information received from Ranjith Kama, the labourer was engaged in cleaning the surface of the concrete mixer plant when he accidentally fell from the top of the mixer into the concrete mixer vehicle.

Upon receiving the information, LPSI Veronica Coutinho, along with police staff, visited the spot and found the body of Manoj lying on the ground near the RMC plant. Police subsequently conducted a scene of occurrence panchanama and an inquest panchanama over the body in the presence of two panch witnesses. The services of the forensic team were also requisitioned as part of the investigation.

The body has been preserved at the South Goa District Hospital (SGDH), Margao, for further medico-legal formalities.

Maina Curtorim Police registered Unnatural Death (UD) case No. 61/2026 under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

Painter dies after falling from height while working in Calangute

Team Goemkarponn

CALANGUTE: A 34-year-old painter, identified as Jagdish S/o Rambrich Paswan, died while undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College (GMC), Bambolim, after allegedly falling from a height while carrying out painting work at Calangute. According to police, the incident was initially reported on November 9, 2026, when Calangute Police received a wireless message from the casualty department of GMC, Bambolim, stating that Jagdish had been admitted to Ward No. 120 following a fall from Calangute.

India Cine Hub simplifies filming permissions, strengthens India's global production appeal

■ Single-window digital platform integrates multiple filming clearances, making India a more accessible destination for international filmmakers, highlights panel discussion at 57th IFFI

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: India's growing potential as a global destination for film production came into focus at the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), with policymakers and industry leaders highlighting initiatives to simplify filming permissions and strengthen international collaborations.

A panel discussion titled 'Filming Made Easy: India's Rise as a Global Filming and Production Hub' explored the role of India Cine Hub (ICH), a single-window digital platform spearheaded by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and operated by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

The discussion featured Prithul Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Grainne Brundson, Chief Operating Officer, Screen Australia; and veteran actor, director and producer Anupam Kher. Film critic and journalist Rajeev Masand moderated the session.

Addressing the gathering, Prithul Kumar said the integration of State governments into the India Cine Hub portal marked a significant step towards simplifying filming permissions.



Cinema unites humanity through the universal language of emotions: Karla Sofía Gascón

■ Renowned actor shares insights into the art of acting at IFFI masterclass 'Stages Across Borders', encouraging aspiring performers to embrace individuality and passion

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Cinema transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, connecting people through the universal language of human emotions, renowned actor Karla Sofía Gascón said during a special masterclass titled 'Stages Across Borders' at the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa. The masterclass offered aspiring actors, filmmakers and cinema enthusiasts valuable insights into the art of acting, character development and the creative process behind filmmaking. Emphasising the importance of passion and dedication, Gascón encouraged aspiring actors to believe in themselves, embrace their individuality and remain committed to their craft. She observed that a genuine love for one's profession is essential to delivering authentic performances. Sharing her approach to acting, Gascón said she immerses herself completely in every character, drawing on deep emotional engagement to bring authenticity to the screen. She expressed a preference for unconventional and challenging roles, explaining that portraying characters vastly different from her own experiences provides opportunities for creative exploration, artistic growth and self-discovery.



Northeast cinema brings cultural heritage, identity and social realities to IFFI 2026

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The rich cultural heritage, indigenous traditions and contemporary social realities of Northeast India came into focus at the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), with two films, 'Red Carpet' and 'Urum', presenting compelling stories of identity, resilience and human emotions.

The films were highlighted during a press conference in Goa, where their directors, Aimee Baruah and Duyu Tabyo, shared insights into their creative journeys and the cultural significance of their works.

'Red Carpet', an Assamese documentary directed by Aimee Baruah, has been featured in the Indian Panorama Non-Feature section. The film explores the centuries-old handloom weaving traditions of the Karbi community in Karbi Anglong, Assam, which face challenges from modernisation and changing lifestyles.

NFDC, Sony Pictures Networks India join hands to discover fresh content creators

■ WAVES Bazaar initiative invites original fiction and non-fiction concepts in five Indian languages, offering writers and production houses an opportunity to pitch ideas to SPNI

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) have joined hands to create new opportunities for writers, content creators and production houses across the country through the WAVES Bazaar × SPNI Content Creator Submission Initiative.

The two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on Sunday, formally launching the initiative aimed at identifying and encouraging original storytelling talent across India. Under the initiative, creators can submit original fiction and non-fiction concepts in five languages — Hindi, English, Tamil, Telugu and Bangla. The submissions will be considered across a wide range of formats, including fiction series, premium TV+ content, reality shows, game and competition formats, talent-based programmes and other unscripted concepts.

Russian film 'New Home' explores second chances and the challenges of life after prison

■ Director Nikita Grushin highlights rehabilitation, forgiveness and human dignity at the 57th International Film Festival of India; calls for stronger India-Russia cinematic collaboration

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI: The challenges faced by people returning to society after years of imprisonment and their struggle to rebuild their lives form the central theme of Russian feature film 'New Home' (Novyy Dom), which premiered at the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

Speaking at a press conference during the festival, filmmaker and director Nikita Grushin said people released from prison often face significant difficulties in reintegrating into society, overcoming their past and finding a fresh purpose in life. The 101-minute Russian-language film is making its World Premiere at IFFI 2026 as part of a special showcase celebrating Russia as the Partner Country.

Written and directed by Grushin, 'New Home' follows Anna, a woman released from prison after serving seven years. With no money, family or clear direction, she struggles to find her place in society. With assistance from social services, she secures employment and accommodation and joins a support group, where she meets Roman. As she gradually attempts to rebuild her life with his support, Anna must confront her past and inner struggles before making a difficult decision that could determine her future.

The film explores themes of guilt, forgiveness, rehabilitation and the possibility of a second chance. Grushin said the story was inspired by his interactions with people undergoing rehabilitation after prolonged imprisonment.

"Bisleri Water Is Safe for Consumption": Company Responds After FSSAI Flags Carcinogenic Substances

Packaged water giant says regulatory dispute concerns a single September 2025 batch manufactured in Goa, while questioning conflicting laboratory test results

Team Goemkarponn



MUMBAI: Bisleri International has maintained that its packaged drinking water remains safe for consumption after the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) approved prosecution against the company over a water sample found non-compliant with prescribed safety standards.

The company issued a clarification following reports that a regulatory sample of its packaged drinking water had been declared unsafe after the detection of bromate and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a group of chemical compounds that includes potentially carcinogenic substances.

Bisleri stated that the regulatory matter relates to a single batch manufactured in September 2025 at its Goa facility, one of the 143 plants in its manufacturing network. The company also claimed that it had not received any official notice from FSSAI regarding the reported prosecution proceedings.

According to the company, FSSAI collected six samples from its Goa manufacturing facility on September 30, 2025. Initial laboratory testing found that five samples complied with applicable standards. However, the sixth sample recorded bromate levels of 12 micrograms per litre, exceeding the permitted limit of 10 micrograms per litre.

Bromate is a chemical compound that can form as a by-product during certain water disinfection processes.

Bisleri subsequently appealed against the findings on November 22, 2025, following which the sample was sent to a referral laboratory for further examination. The second laboratory found bromate levels within the prescribed limit but separately detected polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

The company questioned the difference between the two laboratory findings and arranged an independent examination of the same sample at an FSSAI-approved laboratory. According to Bisleri, the independent test also found bromate levels within permissible limits.

The results were submitted to FSSAI's Western Regional Office on February 2, 2026. Bisleri said it received no further communication after submitting the report and believed the matter had been closed.

However, FSSAI stated that the referral laboratory had declared the sample unsafe following the detection of PAHs. The regulator subsequently granted sanction for prosecution under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Reaffirming its position, Bisleri said consumer safety remained its priority, highlighting more than 90 quality checks across its 10-step manufacturing process.

The company maintained that it would cooperate with the regulatory authorities to resolve the matter.

The development has brought renewed attention to packaged drinking water safety and the importance of consistent quality testing across manufacturing facilities.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Prime Accused Ajit Shankhwalkar Surrenders Before Panaji Police in Goa Cash-for-Jobs Scam

a complaint against Shankhwalkar over alleged document forgery.

In a separate complaint, Govind Talekar, father of Manoj Talekar, alleged that the accused had collected ₹52 lakh from the family. According to the complaint, ₹27 lakh was allegedly taken in exchange for securing the bogus Additional Commissioner post for Manoj, while another ₹25 lakh was reportedly collected for a forged appointment letter naming Manisha as Deputy Director of Accounts.

Other reports have also linked Shankhwalkar to alleged financial fraud involving fake government work orders, with the total amount reportedly reaching ₹1.27 crore.

Panaji Police registered two FIRs against Shankhwalkar, including Crime No. 166/2026. The accused faces charges under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, including Sections 318(4), 336, 336(2), 336(3) and 340(2), relating to cheating, forgery and the use of forged documents as genuine.

Investigators also named his wife, Rupali Shankhwalkar, as a co-accused after examining alleged suspicious financial transactions connected to the case. She subsequently approached the North Goa Additional Sessions Court seeking anticipatory bail. During the search for Shankhwalkar, Goa Police reportedly froze two of his bank accounts and dispatched teams outside the state, including to neighbouring Maharashtra. Lookout notices were issued, with posters displayed in Taleigao and near his residence at Radha Estate. The accused's prolonged absence from police custody triggered criticism from opposition parties, particularly the Congress, which questioned the handling of the investigation and demanded Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's resignation. The controversy intensified after photographs reportedly showing Shankhwalkar with senior police officials surfaced in local media. Authorities subsequently initiated a separate inquiry into his alleged links with a Superintendent of Police.

India Retains 3rd Spot as Asia's Biggest Power, PM Modi Ranked 2nd Most Effective Leader

Lowy Institute's 2026 Asia Power Index highlights India's growing diplomatic influence, stronger defence partnerships and rising cultural reach, while China continues to narrow its military gap with the US

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: India has strengthened its position as Asia's third most powerful country, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been ranked the region's second most effective leader, behind Chinese President Xi Jinping, according to the 2026 Asia Power Index released by Australia's Lowy Institute.

The report highlighted India's improving economic outlook, diplomatic influence, defence partnerships and cultural reach. It also noted that India has narrowed the gap between its available resources and its actual influence, marking its strongest performance in this measure since the index was introduced in 2018. Although China continues to hold an overall power advantage of around 80 per cent over India, the gap between the two countries has reached its narrowest level in the index's history. India recorded improvements in five of the eight measures used to assess regional power, while the remaining three registered marginal declines. Diplomatic influence continued to be the country's strongest and most consistent area of performance, even as several other Asian nations experienced setbacks.

The report also highlighted India's expanding defence networks and cultural influence. Growing defence engagement and BrahMos missile sales to Southeast Asian countries helped India improve its regional defence position, placing it ninth in that category.

India's cultural influence increased to 43.8 points, supported by improvements in cultural projection, information flows and people-to-people exchanges. Hunter Marston, director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Lowy Institute and lead of the Asia Power Index project, said India's overall score had risen to 40.5, reinforcing its position as a major Asian power. He also highlighted Modi's ranking as the region's second most effective leader. However, the report identified certain economic and diplomatic challenges. These included a weakening rupee, changes in the International Monetary Fund's economic measurement methods and a decline of nearly $20 billion in India's outbound investments. It also observed that perceptions of Modi's leadership and strategic ambitions had weakened slightly, reflecting India's relatively lower diplomatic profile during the Gulf conflict.



India, China Hold Fresh Military Talks to Defuse Border Tensions in Arunachal Pradesh

■ Second round of Corps Commander-level discussions focuses on preventing troop confrontations, establishing engagement protocols and maintaining peace along the Line of Actual Control

Team Goemkarponn



NEW DELHI: India and China have held another round of high-level military discussions along their disputed frontier in Arunachal Pradesh as both countries seek to prevent localised confrontations from escalating into a larger military standoff ahead of the winter season. The Indian delegation was led by Lieutenant General Girish Kalia, General Officer Commanding of the Army's III Corps, headquartered at Dimapur in Nagaland. His Chinese counterpart and other military officials participated in the discussions. An official from India's Ministry of External Affairs was also present. The primary objective of the meeting was to establish clear engagement protocols between the two militaries, reduce friction between patrolling teams and maintain communication channels. Both sides also discussed measures to ensure that local confrontations do not develop into wider military tensions.



Congress Seeks 60 Winnable Seats in UP, Samajwadi Party Questions Its Electoral Strength

■ Seat-sharing talks begin in Delhi as Congress pushes for more constituencies, while Akhilesh Yadav's party prioritises winning potential over numbers

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: The Congress and the Samajwadi Party are set to begin their first formal round of seat-sharing discussions for the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, with differences emerging over the number and selection of constituencies. While Congress is seeking a larger share of seats, the Samajwadi Party is insisting that the alliance prioritise constituencies where it has a realistic chance of winning. The two-day meeting will begin at noon at the residence of Congress MP Pramod Tiwari in New Delhi. Four representatives from each party will participate in the negotiations. The Congress delegation includes Uttar Pradesh in-charge Rajendra Pal Gautam, state president Aradhana Mishra, working state president Imran Masood and legislative party leader Virendra Chaudhary. The Samajwadi Party will be represented by general secretary Ramgopal Yadav, state president Shyamlal Pal and MPs Rajiv Rai and Iqra Hasan. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is not expected to attend the meeting and is overseeing the discussions behind the scenes.



40 Arunachal Border Villages Witness Reverse Migration, Amit Shah Credits Infrastructure Push

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Around 40 villages located along the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh have witnessed reverse migration, with residents returning to their native places following improvements in infrastructure and basic facilities, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday. Speaking at an event in Itanagar, Shah highlighted the impact of the Centre's Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), which aims to improve living conditions in remote border settlements and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities. He said improvements in road connectivity, healthcare, education, electricity, drinking water supply and employment opportunities had encouraged people to return to villages that had previously experienced population decline due to migration. Shah also pointed to development projects worth more than Rs 5,610 crore in Arunachal Pradesh's frontier areas, describing the investments as significant for the region's development.

India Cherishes Special Friendship With Nepal, Jaishankar Meets PM Balendra Shah in Delhi

■ Nepal Prime Minister begins first bilateral visit to India since taking office, with talks on trade, energy, connectivity and regional cooperation scheduled with PM Modi

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah in New Delhi on Sunday, reaffirming India's commitment to its longstanding friendship with Nepal ahead of the latter's scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During the



meeting at Hotel Taj Mahal, the two leaders discussed several aspects of India-Nepal relations, including connectivity, trade, transit, energy, culture, education, sports and people-to-people exchanges. Cooperation in cricket and football also featured in the discussions.

Following the interaction, Jaishankar described the meeting as a privilege and reiterated that India cherishes its special friendship with Nepal. He also expressed his anticipation for Balendra Shah's engagements with Prime Minister Modi.

'Videshi Toolkit': Nitin Nabin Targets Rahul Gandhi as BJP Launches Chandigarh Civic Poll Campaign

■ BJP national president accuses Congress leader of damaging India's image, while linking the Chandigarh municipal contest to the party's expansion plans in Punjab ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections

Team Goemkarponn



NEW DELHI: BJP national president Nitin Nabin launched the party's campaign for the December 23 Chandigarh Municipal Corporation elections on Sunday, launching a sharp attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and accusing him of acting as a "Videshi Toolkit" to undermine India's image internationally. Addressing a booth workers' conference in Chandigarh, Nabin urged party workers to reach every household and treat the municipal elections as a prestige battle for the BJP. Targeting Rahul Gandhi, Nabin alleged that the Congress leader operated from abroad while the BJP worked within India. He accused him of attempting to damage the country's international reputation and questioned his criticism of the Narendra Modi government. Taking a swipe at Gandhi's challenge for a debate with Prime Minister Modi, Nabin claimed that even a BJP mandal president could respond to the Congress leader's arguments. He further alleged that sections of the Opposition were uncomfortable with India's economic progress under the Modi government.

India Announces ₹15,000 Crore Aid Package for Nepal as Modi, Balen Shah Sign 8 Agreements

Team Goemkarponn

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah in New Delhi, announcing a major economic assistance package worth 24,000 crore Nepali rupees, equivalent to approximately ₹15,000 crore, to support Nepal's reconstruction and development. The announcement came during Shah's first bilateral visit to India since assuming office.

India's WTC Final Hopes Suffer Major Blow as New Zealand Hold Firm for Draw in 1st Test

■ Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips frustrate India's bowling attack with a marathon partnership as New Zealand finish at 239/5 after 120 overs in Wellington

Team Goemkarponn



NEW DELHI: India suffered a major setback in their bid to reach the 2027 World Test Championship final after New Zealand secured a hard-fought draw in the opening Test at Wellington on Monday. A determined batting performance from Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips helped the hosts survive the final day and deny India a series-opening victory.

New Zealand resumed Day 5 at 119 for two, still trailing India's first innings total by 233 runs. India needed early breakthroughs to put pressure on the hosts, and Washington Sundar and Prasidh Krishna delivered by dismissing overnight batters Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra.

Conway departed after scoring 65, while Ravindra contributed 37. Their dismissals briefly raised India's hopes of forcing a result, but New Zealand remained determined to protect their wickets. Anshul Kamboj provided another breakthrough by removing Tom Blundell, who scored 15 from 54 deliveries. However, that proved to be the final wicket India managed to claim.

Mitchell and Phillips then produced a remarkable display of patience and defensive batting. Mitchell remained unbeaten on 49 from 186 deliveries, while Phillips scored an unbeaten 26 off 126 balls. The pair batted together for 259 deliveries, absorbing pressure and frustrating India's bowlers throughout the closing stages. Their partnership ensured New Zealand reached 239 for five after 120 overs, bringing the contest to a draw.

Deepraj Gaonkar's Explosive 72 Goes in Vain as Goa Suffer 13-Run Defeat Against Odisha

■ Unbeaten 30-ball knock featuring eight sixes fails to take Goa past Odisha's challenging 207-run target in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy

Team Goemkarponn



PANAJI : Goa suffered a 13-run defeat against Odisha in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday, despite a sensational unbeaten 72 from Deepraj Gaonkar.

Chasing a formidable target of 208, Goa finished at 194 for seven in their allotted 20 overs. Deepraj produced a stunning counter-attacking performance, scoring 72 not out off just 30 balls, with three boundaries and eight sixes. His explosive innings kept Goa in contention until the final stages, but the team ultimately fell short.

Lalit Yadav provided valuable support with 39 runs, while opener Azaan Thota contributed 37. Suyash Prabhudessai added another 28 runs to the total. However, Goa struggled to maintain the required scoring rate despite Deepraj's late assault.

For Odisha, Ninad Rathva, Badal Biswal and Soumya Lenka picked up two wickets each, while Vageesh Sharma claimed one wicket. Earlier, Odisha posted an imposing 207 for six after electing to bat first. Kartik Biswal led the scoring with 64 runs, while Gaurav Choudhury played an important knock of 62. Soumya Lenka remained unbeaten on 24 to provide a strong finish.

Goa's bowling attack saw Felix Alemao and Vasuki Koushik claim two wickets each, while Shubham Tari and Deepraj Gaonkar picked up one wicket apiece.

Despite Deepraj's remarkable batting display, Goa could not complete the chase and suffered a narrow defeat in the contest.



Goa University Announces Men's Judo Team for AIU West Zone Inter-University Tournament 2026-27

■ Seven judokas selected to represent the university at the tournament in Gujarat from November 24 to 25

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa University has announced its seven-member men's judo team for the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) West Zone Inter-University Judo Tournament 2026-27, scheduled to be held at Swarnim Gujarat Sports University, Gujarat, from November 24 to 25, 2026.

The selected athletes will represent Goa University in the two-day competition, which will bring together university-level judokas from across the West Zone.

A kit distribution and farewell function was organised on November 20 at the Sports Section of Goa University to encourage and prepare the selected players ahead of the tournament.

The programme was attended by Balachandra Jadar, Assistant Director of Physical Education and Sports at Goa University, and Chinmay Jalmi, Assistant Sports Officer. Team coach Vishant Alekar and manager Saurabh Raikar were also present during the occasion. The seven players selected to represent Goa University are Nippu Yadav, Manindra Singh, Abdul Ahmad, Arif Nawar, Niyaz Shaikh, Biru Singh and Samarth Chumari. The team will now look to deliver strong performances and bring laurels to the university at the West Zone Inter-University Judo Tournament.

MCC Masters Cruise to Victory as Tigers Demolish Stallions in MCL-12

■ Masters chase down 138 comfortably, while Amlon D'Souza's five-wicket haul powers Tigers to a dominant win

Team Goemkarponn





MARGAO: MCC Masters and MCC Tigers registered impressive victories in the Members Cricket League (MCL-12), organised by the Margao Cricket Club at the MCC Ground in Margao on Sunday. In the first encounter, MCC Masters defeated MCC DNM Avengers by six wickets after successfully chasing a target of 138. DNM Avengers posted 137 for nine in their allotted 20 overs, with Vedant Naik and Yash Prabhugaonkar leading the batting effort with 38 runs each. Vishwesh Kamat chipped in with 21. For Masters, Shreyash Usgaonkar and Shailesh Redkar picked up two wickets each to restrict the opposition. In response, Masters reached 140 for four in 16.3 overs. Dr. Pawan Rane anchored the chase with 37 runs, while Sudip Faldesai contributed 35. Sahil Adwalpalkar added 25, and Siddhesh Prabhu Alvencar (17 not out) and Angad Poinguincar (14 not out) guided the team home.

Dr. Pawan Rane was named Man of the Match. In the second match, MCC Tigers produced a dominant bowling performance to defeat MCC Stallions by eight wickets. Stallions were bowled out for just 62 in 14.5 overs, with Ketan Kunde scoring 14 and Atchut Naik Dalal contributing 12. Amlon D'Souza was the standout performer with an outstanding spell of five wickets for 14 runs.

Mrunmay Das and Darshan Karekar claimed two wickets each. Chasing just 63, Tigers lost two early wickets but recovered quickly through an unbeaten partnership between Vaibhav Naik and Ved Mahambre.

Vaibhav smashed 30 not out off 16 deliveries, while Ved scored an unbeaten 26 off 14 balls as Tigers completed the chase in just six overs. Amlon D'Souza was adjudged Man of the Match for his match-winning bowling performance.