

NO MORE ORE: Pilgao vs Vedanta is a David vs Goliath battle

Braveheart Pilgaokars vow to drag mining big daddy to High Court if night-time ore transportation doesn't stop

Team Herald

BICHOLIM: The simmering tension in Pilgao over the transportation of ore escalated on Friday as local farmers and villagers, joined by Panchayat members, announced their intention to approach the Bombay High Court at Goa if Vedanta Sesa Goa's night-time ore transportation does not stop.

A meeting on Friday between all stakeholders – the Deputy Collector, Bicholim Police, village representatives, Panchayat members, and officials from mining company – failed to break the deadlock.

This followed a second consecutive night of protests on Thursday, where locals blocked the trucks transporting ore, alleging that the noise pollution was ruining their sleep and throwing the lives of their



The Friday meeting at Pilgao with all stakeholders

FRIDAY MEETING FAILS TO BREAK ORE MOVEMENT DEADLOCK

▶▶ Back-to-back protests on Wednesday and Thursday night as villagers stop trucks carrying ore

▶▶ A meeting on Friday between all stakeholders – the Deputy Collector, Bicholim Police, village representatives, Panchayat members, and officials from mining company – failed to break the deadlock

▶▶ Villagers argue that the government's approval for such activities violated SC guidelines and the conditions of the Environmental Clearance granted for mining operations

▶▶ Vedanta Sesa Goa Workers Union President Atmaram Tilve warns that if the blockades continued, union members would take to the streets

children, who have to go to school in the morning, out of gear completely.

Claiming that the right to peaceful sleep is a fundamental right, the protesters

expressed their concerns to police, stating that the constant movement of trucks

was causing significant sound pollution during the night. In response, Bicholim Mamlatdar Pravind Gawas visited the site to mediate the situation, advising the protesters to meet with the Bicholim Deputy Collector on Friday morning.

A meeting took place later between Deputy Collector Rohan Kaskar, Bicholim Police Inspector Dinesh Gadkar, village representatives, Panchayat members, and officials from Vedanta Sesa Goa. However, the meeting failed to resolve the issue, with villagers continuing to oppose night-time ore transportation. They argued that the government's approval for such activities violated Supreme Court guidelines and the conditions of the Environmental Clearance (EC) granted for mining operations.

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Tourists thrashed at Calangute shack, again

Holiday-makers mistaken for thieves and beaten up; landing one in hospital

Team Herald

CALANGUTE: The famed hospitality of Goa came under a cloud once again, as a group of tourists from Maharashtra was allegedly assaulted by staff members at a shack in Calangute early on Friday.

The incident marks yet another violent incident involving tourists in the area within a week. On December 31, a tourist from Andhra Pradesh was beaten to death after an altercation over serving beyond the shack's operating hours.

Friday's incident took place at the Planet Goa shack, located on Calangute Beach around 3 am. Nitin Agarwal and his friends, hailing from Thane and Mumbai, were reportedly attacked by the shack's employees and security guards. The shack is owned by a relative of a Calangute panchayat member.

According to police reports, the altercation started over a minor issue. The shack had already closed for the day when the tourists, while walking near the establishment, accidentally collided with a clothes drying stand. Mistaking the sound for a potential theft, staff members allegedly attacked the

Calangute shocker: Tourist killed in beach shack brawl

Argument over serving food turns ugly between shack staff and holidaymakers from Andhra Pradesh



Beach shack where the altercation happened

group. During the assault, one of the tourists, identified as Rohit, sustained serious head injuries after being struck with a wooden stick. The blow caused severe bleeding, and authorities are now investigating whether the attack was an attempted murder.

Rohit was rushed to the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC) in Bambolim, where he received treatment and was later discharged on Friday.

Following the attack, local police arrested six individuals in connection

with the assault. The accused include Noufal PT (28) from Kerala, Rohit Kumar (27), Abhishek Kumar (24), Vinod Kumar (31), and Surinder Kumar (28), all hailing from Himachal Pradesh, as well as Mayuresh Saudagar (34), a security guard from Pernem.

In another troubling development, on December 31, a 28-year-old tourist, Bhola Ravi Teja from Andhra Pradesh, was allegedly murdered after a violent altercation with shack staff over a food dispute at Calangute beach.

PANWAR CASE ED's 15-hour questioning of MLA 'inhuman'

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has observed ED's "high-handedness" and "inhuman conduct" during an almost 15-hour long interrogation of former Haryana Congress MLA Surender Panwar and upheld an order saying his arrest was illegal.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said it was an "inhuman conduct" on part of ED officers as the case was not related to some terror activity but of an alleged illegal sand mining.

"This is not the way to treat people in such a case. You have virtually forced a person to make a statement," it said.

Dismissing the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s plea against the high court order, the bench held, "We are not inclined to interfere with the finding of the high court that the arrest of the respondent was illegal."

The high court's findings, it said, were only for deciding whether Panwar's arrest was illegal.

"These findings will not affect the merits of the pending complaint under Section 44 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002," said the bench in its order on December 2.

The court said the ED's approach in conducting the probe was a "shocking state of affairs" where a person was virtually forced to make a statement.

ED's counsel Zoheb Hussain said the high court had erred in its finding that Panwar was continuously quizzed for 14.40 hours, pointing to a dinner break during the interrogation.

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REPUBLIC DAY PREP IS ON



Assam Rifles personnel during rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2025, amid fog, at Kartavya Path in New Delhi, on Friday. Around 400 flights were delayed in the national Capital due to poor visibility during the day

After China's Covid-like scare, India monitoring flu cases

PTI, NEW DELHI: The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country.

FLU OUTBREAK

try, and is in touch with international agencies in the wake of the recent reports of an outbreak of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China, official sources said on Friday.

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CHINA SAYS COUNTRY SAFE FOR TRAVEL

PTI, BEIJING: China on Friday played down reports of a massive outbreak of flu in the country overwhelming hospitals, saying that cases of the respiratory diseases which occur during the winter were less severe this year compared to last year. The Foreign Ministry here said it is safe for foreigners to travel to China. "Respiratory infections tend to peak during the winter season in the northern hemisphere," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media here in response to a question on the spread of influenza A and other respiratory diseases in China. Videos circulating on social media show overcrowded hospitals.

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BHOPAL TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL Protests flare up in MP town

PTI, DHAR (MP): Protests rocked Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh on Friday against the planned disposal of 337 tonnes of toxic waste linked to the Bhopal gas tragedy, prompting the authorities to clamp prohibitory orders around the premises of the firm where the incineration will be carried out. Two protesters also tried to self-immolate.

Prohibitory orders were clamped, banning the assembly of 50 or more persons around Ramky Enviro company, where the toxic waste will be incinerated. It will be in force till January 12, the order issued by district authorities read.

As part of the protests during the day, a mob of 500-600 persons had marched to Ramky Group's Industrial Waste Management Private Limited premises, where the waste is set to be incinerated, but police managed to disperse them in time.

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India protests after China announces new counties in occupied Ladakh

PTI, NEW DELHI: India on Friday said it has lodged a 'solemn protest' with China over creation of two new counties in Hotan prefecture, asserting that such moves will not lend legitimacy to Beijing's 'illegal and forcible' occupation in the region.

In a strong reaction, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said parts of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh and that the Chinese action will have no bearing on New Delhi's consistent position regarding its sovereignty.

China's announcement on establishing the two counties came days after Special Representatives of the two nations resumed boundary talks that was stalled for almost five years.

"We have seen the announcement pertaining to the establishment of two new counties in Hotan Prefecture of China. Parts of jurisdiction of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh," Jaiswal said.

"We have never accepted the illegal Chinese occupation of Indian territory in this area," he said.

"Creation of new counties will neither have a bearing on India's long-standing and consistent position regarding our sovereignty over the area nor lend legitimacy to China's illegal and forcible

Will take steps to protect interests: India on China's Brahmaputra dam

PTI, NEW DELHI: Days after China announced its plan to build a mega dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet, India on Friday said it will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect its interests.

In its first reaction to the proposed dam, New Delhi urged Beijing to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas.

"We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

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Hyderabad's pride: As traffic volunteers, 39 transgenders find road to respect

PTI, HYDERABAD: From seeking alms on city roads to managing traffic at the same places, it has been an incredible journey of empowerment for 39 transgenders in Hyderabad who have been inducted as traffic assistants to help the city police.

The transgenders, who have been appointed on a pilot basis, say they now get respect from citizens in contrast to the severe discrimination and insults they faced in the past.

"It is wonderful that we manage traffic at places where we used to beg in the past," Nisha, a transgender traffic assistant, told PTI on Friday.

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A transgender traffic assistant manages traffic, in Hyderabad, on Friday

“My parents did not accept me. But, they accepted me now. My friends used to avoid me. But, now they message me and keep in touch. After I got the job, my relations and others are appreciating. It is a wonder. I cannot describe in words

– Nisha, one of the recruits

PILOTING SOCIETAL PROGRESS

▶▶ 39 transgender individuals in Hyderabad have been inducted as traffic assistants

▶▶ Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy spearheaded the project

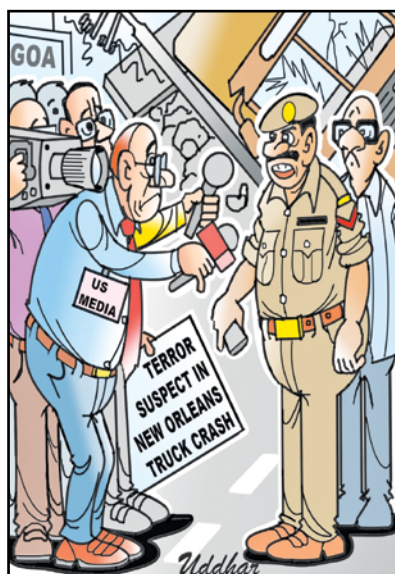
▶▶ 100 transgenders applied for the posts; 44 were short-listed and 39 completed rigorous training

▶▶ Police officials have praised their enthusiasm and commitment

▶▶ The initiative has restored dignity, confidence and hope in the lives of the recruits.

MAX. TEMP 32.2 °C
MIN. TEMP 20.5 °C

idharudhar



Not a terror attack, just regular drunk driving.

EXPOSITION MASS OF ST FRANCIS XAVIER



Watch the Exposition Mass Day 45, in Konkani at 5 pm on Herald TV and YouTube.

Just scan this QR code and watch the Holy Mass on your cell phone.

NOTE: THE QR CODE WILL BE ACTIVE ONLY AT 5PM