

River Sal stinks of government apathy, rues HC petitioner

Says contamination of tributaries and fields is testing farmers' patience; pins hopes on High Court

Team Herald

MARGAO: As the High Court hearing approaches on Tuesday regarding the ongoing Public Interest Litigation (PIL) concerning the discharge of sewage and waste into Margao's storm water drains, which ultimately pollutes the River Sal and nearby bodies like Salpem Lake in Navelim, petitioner Professor Antonio Alvares continues to emphasize that much more needs to be done to resolve the issue permanently.



Despite the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) sealing several establishments in Margao, Alvares points out that significant challenges remain.

"The water flowing into the nullah remains as polluted as ever. It's testing the patience of the farmers. The Municipal Council has shown little urgency in addressing this problem. Neither the State Government, Water Resources Department (WRD), Public

Works Department (PWD), Health Department, Margao Municipal Council (MMC), nor the GSPCB seem to understand the distinction between a gutter and a nullah, which should only carry rainwater. The sewage network, on the other hand, is connected to the Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP). Storm water nullahs should not carry any waste, including dirty water. Unfortunately, local authorities seem indifferent as long as the sewage continues to

flow into Navelim fields and the River Sal," Alvares stated. He also highlighted the improper disposal of waste, including chicken, beef, mutton, and pork waste from the SGP-DA market. "The MMC doesn't collect this waste, and it can be seen floating in the River Sal near Khareband," he alleged. Incidentally, Alvares is also the leader of the Navelim farmers group that have faced challenges due to the sewage contamination of the fields in Navelim village.

PORTS MIN DENIES PLANS FOR JETTIES ON RIVER SAL

MARGAO: Amid growing concerns over proposed jetties on the Sal River, Ports Minister Alexio Sequeira categorically denied any government plans for such projects. He stated that there was no proposal with the government to construct even a single jetty on the Sal, dismissing allegations raised by Congress functionaries. Sequeira questioned how Congress had arrived at the conclusion that jetties were being planned for the river.

The minister's remarks came after the Benaulim Congress block committee submitted a petition to South Goa MP Viriato Fernandes, voicing concerns over alleged plans to construct three additional jetties on the river. Congress cited announcements made by the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC), which listed waterway projects across India, including river Sal. Local fishing communities from

Benaulim, Navelim, and Velim have raised alarms about the potential environmental fallout of such developments, particularly fears of coal transportation through the proposed jetties. The petition highlighted the importance of river Sal for traditional fishing activities, with major fish unloading centres at Cutbona and Mobor. South Goa District Congress President Savio D'Silva has announced plans to escalate the matter at gram sabhas of riverside panchayats. He pointed out the river's existing pollution issues, including high E. coli levels due to sewage discharge, and argued that additional industrial activity could further threaten the fragile ecosystem and local livelihoods. Despite Sequeira's denial, Congress has insisted on transparency regarding the IWDC's announced plans and their potential implications for the river.

Benaulim MLA to push for quality education and healthcare in upcoming Assembly session

Team Herald

MARGAO: Benaulim Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Capt Venzy Viegas has tabled three Private Members' Resolutions for the upcoming Goa Legislative Assembly session. The resolutions, which focus on enhancing public infrastructure, education, and healthcare, he said, aim to address critical gaps in the state's governance and ensure equitable access to essential services for all Goans.

The first resolution emphasizes the 'Right to Quality Infrastructure and Smart

Classrooms in Government Schools'. Highlighting the need to modernize government-run educational institutions, Capt Viegas has called for robust infrastructure and technology-enabled learning environments to uplift the standard of education. "Every child in Goa deserves access to facilities on par with private institutions," he said.

The second resolution advocates for the 'Right to Super Specialist Consultation Facilities in All Sub Health Centres' across the state. Acknowledging the growing demand for specialized medical care,

Viegas underlined the importance of making expert consultations accessible at the grassroots level. "It's unacceptable that people in must travel long distances for specialized healthcare," he added.

The third resolution focuses on ensuring the 'Right to Ambulance Access' for every citizen. Viegas noted the pressing need for a more responsive and efficient ambulance network in Goa, especially in remote areas. "Ensuring that ambulances are available and accessible is a fundamental right that the government must guarantee," he stated.

MAD RUSH

SAGUN GAWADE



A massive crowd thronged the stalls on the concluding day of the Lokotsav 2025 at the Darya Sangam, Kala Academy, Campal-Panjim, on Sunday

Goa sets target to achieve 100% literacy by May 30

Team Herald

PANJIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday said that the State which has literacy rate of 94 per cent as of today will be declared 100 per cent literate state by Statehood Day which is on May 30.

Speaking after inaugurating ULLAS MELA 2025, New India Literacy Programme, he said, "As of now, around 94 per cent of people in Goa are literate. We aim to achieve 100 per cent literacy by May 30, on Goa Statehood Day."

The Chief Minister said the initiative to identify illiterate persons and give them basic literacy lessons has been initiated under the New India Literacy Programme of Government of India. Exams are conducted

through The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to ascertain that they have gained basic literacy, he said and added that the program is open for persons from Goa as well as other states.

Interestingly, Chief Minister had announced in the month of July last year that the Goa government is aiming to declare the State as 100 per cent literate by December 19, 2024.

He had said that efforts were on to educate the illiterate population which was around two per cent in the State.

Barring the three talukas of Quepem, Canacona and Sanguem, illiterate population in the rest of Goa has been identified and trained, the CM stated.

Russian attempts to smuggle charas in Colvale jail

Team Herald

MAPUSA: A Russian national undertrial, Sergei Rozanov, has been booked for trying to smuggle narcotic drugs in Colvale State Central Jail.

Shankar B Gaonkar, Superintendent of Jail, Colvale, lodged a complaint with the Colvale Police Station stating that the incident took place on January 21 at around 3.45 pm.

According to the complaint, the alleged accused was taken out for a court hearing at Mapusa and after the hearing he was brought back. While entering the prison, he was frisked by the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRBn) when he was allegedly found in the possession of 94 grams of charas worth approximately Rs 94,000. He had concealed the drugs in sandals.

Common man feels the pinch as coconut prices soar due to shortage

Smaller coconuts are now priced at Rs 25, up from Rs 15, while bigger nuts are sold at Rs 35 to 45

Team Herald

PONDA: Coconut prices in Goa have surged significantly over the past month, with rates increasing by Rs 10 to Rs 15 per coconut. While those with higher incomes may weather the price hike, daily wage earners and economically vulnerable sections are struggling to adapt. The essential role of coconuts in Goan kitchens leaves families with little alternative, forcing them to restrict their usage.

Local vendors at the Ponda Agricultural Mar-

ket report that reduced imports from other states and delayed rainfall have exacerbated the situation. According to farmers, issues such as mite diseases and changing weather patterns may impact production.

For homemakers like Nayan Naik from Ponda, the price surge has disrupted household budgets. "The government needs to address the reasons behind reduced production, control prices, and encourage local youth to plant more coconut trees. Over-reliance on government jobs and

increasing construction activity are leading to a decline in tree planting," she said.

Coconut pluckers also cite challenges such as diseases like mite infestation, which have caused tree deaths. One coconut plucker alleged that the proliferation of mobile towers in rural areas might contribute to the issue, although this remains unproven.

Vishal Fatde, another local, suggested that importing coconuts from other States could be a viable solution to stabilise prices.

Guv: Unfortunate that some leaders criticise Constitution during visits abroad

Team Herald

PANJIM: Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai on Sunday said that it was unfortunate that some of our leaders from the country were criticising the Constitution during their foreign visits.

The Governor made the statement in his Republic Day address at the Goa University ground at Taleigao.

"On the 76th birthday of our Constitution, we are in a better position as everybody has accepted the Indian Constitution. At the same time, it is unfortunate that there are leaders, I'm not mentioning the names who are going to other countries and criticising the Constitution," the Governor said and added that in politics, there are different views and the ruling party should accept and respect the Opposition.

"Right to differ is the basis of democracy but a leader or somebody else going to another country and criticising our setup here is unprecedented and unfortunate," the Governor said.

Batting for one-nation-one-election and uniform law in the country, the Governor praised Goa's successful implementation of Uniform Civil Code, encouraging other states to follow.

The Governor said the Constitution of the country is not just a legal document but a beacon of hope and a guide for the citizens.

"Our Constitution is not just a legal document but a living testament to the values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is a beacon of hope and a guide for us to navigate the challenges of a modern and complex world," he stated.

The Governor, highlighting the achievement of the State government, said that the State Government has been doing a commendable job for the progress and development of Goa by providing infrastructure in the form of roads, railways, airports and bridges. Stating that Goa is one of the fastest growing States in the country and has been ranked to be the best amongst all the States in India in all categories, the Governor pointed out that due to the state being among the top three States in the country, the Eleventh Finance Commission has ranked it as the best placed state in the country in terms of infrastructure facilities.

On the occasion, the Governor inspected the parade and received the guard of honour.

Republic Day celebrations highlight unity in diversity: Sequeira

Team Herald

MARGAO: Environment Minister Alexio Sequeira emphasized that Republic Day embodies the spirit of unity in diversity, marking the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950, which transformed India into a republic. He shared these sentiments while addressing the Republic Day function held at the South Goa Collectorate in Margao.

Extending his greetings to the public, Sequeira highlighted the Indian Constitution's principles of equality, liberty, justice, and fraternity, which continue to guide the nation. He noted that this year's celebrations re-

volve around the theme "Golden India, Legacy and Progress," reflecting the country's achievements and aspirations.

The minister lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and credited the "double-engine Sarkar" for Goa's rapid infrastructural development. He also commended Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for his efforts in fostering the growth of the student community, stating that today's students are the leaders of tomorrow.

The event began with Sequeira receiving the guard of honor from contingents of the Police, Home Guards, and students.

Varca panchayat pays tributes to Dr Jack Sequeira on Republic Day

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Varca village panchayat, under the leadership of Acting Sarpanch Solon Furtado, paid a heartfelt tribute to Dr Jack Sequeira, widely recognized as the Father of the Opinion Poll, on the occasion of Republic Day. To honor his monumental contribution to Goa's history, the panchayat installed Dr Sequeira's portrait in the panchayat office.

Dr Jack Sequeira played a pivotal role in the historic Opinion Poll referendum that safeguarded Goa's unique identity and prevented its merger with Maharashtra. His vision and

leadership ensured that Goa remained a distinct state, preserving its culture, heritage, and individuality.

Speaking on the occasion, Acting Sarpanch Solon Furtado emphasized the importance of Dr Sequeira's legacy, urging every panchayat in Goa to similarly honor his memory. He stated that Goa owes an immense debt to Dr Sequeira for his efforts in shaping its future and ensuring it retained its distinct character.

"The installation of the portrait serves as a symbol of gratitude and recognition of Dr. Jack Sequeira's invaluable contributions to Goa's history and identity," he added further.

GIDC to tighten safety measures across Verna Industrial Estate

Team Herald

MARGAO: The recent fire at the Verna Industrial Estate, which destroyed around 40 cars, has spurred the Goa Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) to tighten safety measures across the estate while also issuing closure notice to the unit in question. GIDC Chairman Alexio Reginaldo Lourenco has directed all industries in the area to conduct a thorough review of safety protocols and ensure compliance to prevent similar incidents. He stressed the need to maintain clear surroundings and address fire hazards promptly, warning of strict action against defaulters.



GIDC took immediate action against the automobile service centre found in violation of safety regulations. Acting on a report that was submitted by its estate wing, GIDC revoked the service centre's occupancy certificate and ordered its operations to cease.

The estate wing's report revealed that vehicles awaiting servicing were parked in open spaces, dis-

regarding prior directives from the Corporation. This negligence was identified as a major factor in the fire's rapid spread. GIDC Managing Director Pravin Abhishek confirmed, "We have issued show cause notices to the retailers for ignoring our earlier orders to remove the illegally parked vehicles. They have seven days to respond, after which further action

will be initiated." Abhishek emphasized that the operators' failure to comply with previous notices had serious consequences. "The occupancy certificate was revoked immediately after reviewing the report. The facility has since shut down operations, and the operators have complied," he stated.

The fire, which began in dry grass before spreading to parked vehicles, has highlighted the risks of unattended hazards. Lourenco disclosed that many of the affected vehicles had been left abandoned for two to three years, despite earlier notices to the company responsible. "We have taken action against them for their non-compliance," he said.

LOTTERY DRAW IN AID OF ST. ANTHONY FOOTBALL CLUB ASSOLDA

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st PRIZE | 2nd PRIZE | 3rd PRIZE | 4th PRIZE | 5th PRIZE |
| MARUTI SWIFT VXI 30704 | ROYAL ENFIELD (CLASSIC 350) 28323 | TVS JUPITER 16710 | HONDA ACTIVA 20811 | HONDA ACTIVA 11424 |

This draw was supposed to be published ON 1ST JANUARY 2025 WAS CANCELLED due to unavailable circumstances and it was published TODAY 27TH JANUARY 2025

N.B.: Prizes should be collected with 30 days from the date of publication.
 Contact: Custodio Fernandes (President) 9921756291
 Francisco Fernandes (Secretary) 9881334041
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A Very Happy Birthday

CLETUS PACHECO
 (Panch of 2nd Ward Village Panchayat Colva, Dynamic Youth Leader & Social Worker)

Wishing you good Health and lots of Happiness. May there be Joy and Peace in your Heart and may all your Wishes come true. A youth with zeal and anxiety to help others, and always for the People. All the Best.

GOD BLESS YOU ABUNDANTLY

From: **SINGHAM BOYS**
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