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Smart City blunder in Bhatlem, gas leak disaster averted

Pipeline damage during sewerage works disrupts supply to 4,000 houses; Smart City officials conspicuous by their absence

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Smart City works in the State's capital continue to be carried out in the most haphazard manner. Barely a week after a main water pipeline burst at Bhatlem, causing severe flooding in the area, a major disaster was averted on Sunday after a

“The gas pipeline has been damaged because sewerage-related work is going on. The moment we received information about the incident, our emergency response team rushed to the site, stopped the gas leakage and repaired the pipeline. We supply gas to around 4,000 customers in Panjim through this pipeline. Such incidents occur when digging work is taken up by a third party and we are not informed about the same

— Mehdi Kamal, Manager, Fire and Safety, Goa Natural Gas Pvt Limited



The CCTV footage shows a labourer running for his life after the gas pipeline was damaged at Bhatlem

gas pipeline belonging to Goa Natural Gas Pvt Limited was allegedly damaged by the workers, while carrying out sewerage works near a temple in the area, disrupting gas supply to 4,000 houses.

The incident took place at around 4.30 pm when sewerage work was underway using earthmoving machinery.

According to locals, the workers had no idea that there was a gas pipeline passing through. Officials of Panjim Police and Fire Station visited the spot.

Speaking to reporters, Mehdi Kamal, Manager, Fire and Safety, Goa Natural Gas



Labourers carry out repair work of the damaged pipeline

Pvt Limited, said, “The gas pipeline has been damaged because sewerage-related work is going on. The moment we received information about the incident, our emergency response team rushed to the site, stopped the gas leakage and repaired

the pipeline. We supply gas to around 4,000 customers in Panjim through this pipeline. Such incidents occur when digging work is taken up by a third party and we are not informed about the same.”

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Atishi resigns as Delhi CM

PTI, NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Atishi handed over her resignation to Lt Governor V K Saxena on Sunday, a day after her Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faced a crushing defeat in the assembly polls.

Atishi, who retained her Kalkaji seat, handed over her resignation to Saxena at Raj Niwas, officials said. The LG's office said that Saxena has asked the outgoing CM to continue in the post till formation of a new government. The BJP is expected to stake claim to power next week after PM Modi returns from a foreign visit, party leaders said.

“Hon'ble Lt Governor, Shri V K Saxena today received the resignation of Hon'ble CM, Ms Atishi. He asked her to continue in her position till the formation of the new government,” Raj Niwas, Delhi posted on X handle.

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Manipur CM Biren Singh quits

PTI, IMPHAL: Amidst rumblings within the State BJP seeking a change of leadership in strife-torn Manipur, Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal.

The Governor accepted Singh's resignation, along with that of his council of

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ministers, and requested that he continue in office until alternative arrangements are made.

The resignation comes just hours after Singh returned from Delhi and following 21 months of ethnic violence that has shaken the State since May 2023.

The Opposition had been demanding his resignation for long. The Congress was prompt to react that the resignation was “belated”.

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PERFECT FRAME



A child clicks photograph during the 'Delhi Tulip Festival' organised by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) at the lawns of Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri, in New Delhi, on Sunday

4.67 lakh foreigners visited Goa in 2024: Minister

AGENCIES, PANJIM: The number of international travellers to Goa is on the rise, with 4.67 lakh foreigners arriving in the coastal State last year against 4.52 lakh in 2023.

This was stated by Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte in a written reply tabled in the State Assem-

bly during its winter session held recently.

During the year 2020, a total of 3,00,193 international tourists arrived in Goa, but the number dropped to 22,128 in 2021, he said.

The year 2022 saw Goa again attracting foreign travellers with 1.69 lakh

tourists arriving in the State, followed by a major surge in 2023 when 4.52 lakh international tourists visited Goa, he said.

Last year, 4.67 lakh international tourists visited the coastal State, Khaunte said responding to a question by Goa Forward party MLA Vijai Sardesai.

The foreign tourists arrived in Goa through chartered flights, international scheduled flights, cruises and domestic flights too, the minister added.

The two-day winter session of the State assembly was held on February 6 and 7.

South Collector halts illegal land filling in Velsao

Primeiro Vaddo residents term stop work order as temporary relief

Team Herald

MARGAO: In a significant relief for Velsao locals, the South Goa Collector issued a stop work order halting the illegal land filling and dumping of construction materials at Primeiro Vaddo, Velsao.

The order, signed by South Goa Deputy Collector Velton Tellis, was issued after the Flying Squad received complaints about unapproved land filling in the area. A site inspection confirmed that large-scale dumping was taking place adjacent to survey numbers 60/2, 60/4, 59/1-A, 58/8-A, 58/10, and 58/11 without the necessary approvals or permissions. The order also mentioned that no notice board displaying authorisation from the Town and Country Planning Department (TCP) was found at the site, nor were any permits made available during the inspection, making the activity a prima facie violation of Section 17(A) of the TCP Act, 1974. The order further directed the Verna Police Inspector to stop the illegal activity immediately and instructs the Deputy Collector of Mormugao to ensure that no further violations occur. The Town Planner, Mormugao, has also been asked to take immediate action and report compliance to the authorities.

With the order in place, work at the site has temporarily stopped, bringing some relief to the affected residents. However, locals remain on edge, fearing that railway authorities



Rubble dumped near a house in Velsao

RAILWAYS REJECTS VELSAO PANCHAYAT'S STOP WORK ORDER

MARGAO: The Railways has firmly rejected the stop work order issued by the Velsao Panchayat against ongoing construction on the traditional access path, stating that local bodies have no legal authority to halt railway projects.

In a letter addressed to the Velsao-Pale-Issorcim Panchayat, Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) clarified that, under Section 11 of the Railways Act, 1989, Indian Railways, as a Central government entity, does not require permission from panchayats or local bodies to execute infrastructure projects. Consequently, they argued that the stop work order issued on January 29 has no legal standing. The letter further referenced a Railway Board notification from January 30, 2020, stating that it pertains to the commercial use of railway land and does not restrict the Railways' ability to carry out infrastructure projects of national importance, such as double-tracking.

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may attempt to resume operations despite the official directive. Residents say they have been subjected to immense hardship over the past weeks, with truckloads of mud dumped directly in front of their homes, cutting them off from the rest of the village.

“It reached a point where we couldn't even step out of

our houses. Some of us had our vehicles trapped inside our compounds with no way to take them out,” said a resident. The situation was made worse by the alleged taunts from railway officials, who reportedly told villagers to “obtain a stop work order” if they wanted relief.

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Pope reminds armed forces only to act for defence, respect international laws

AP, VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis on Sunday told soldiers, police and other law enforcement officials from around the world that armed forces can only be used for legitimate defence and must always respect international law.

The pontiff reappeared in public for the first time since he was diagnosed with bronchitis on Thursday to celebrate an outdoor Jubilee Mass for the armed forces, police and security personnel. However, after a few words, he handed off his homily to an aide to read, saying he was having difficulty with his breath.

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“I would like to recall the teaching of the Church in this regard: The Second Vatican Council says that those who exercise their profession in the ranks of the army in the service of their homeland should consider themselves as servants of the security and freedom of their people

— Pope Francis



the ranks of the army in the service of their homeland should consider themselves as servants of the security and freedom of their people,” Francis said in his final prayer.

“This armed service must be exercised only for legitimate defence, never to impose dominion over other nations, and always observing international conventions regarding conflicts,” he added.

The pontiff launched a new appeal for peace, citing conflicts around the world, including Ukraine, the Middle East, Myanmar and Sudan.

“Let the weapons be silenced everywhere and let the cry of the people asking for peace be heard,” Francis said. The Pope was diagnosed with bronchitis on Thursday.

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Ed Sheeran unplugged in Bengaluru, literally

Police stop the Grammy winner from busking; British singer says he had permission

PTI, BENGALURU: Bengaluru Police on Sunday morning halted British musician Ed Sheeran's live street performance in the city, citing lack of permission by the popular singer-songwriter.

In the evening, Sheeran said he and his team had the permission “to busk” and that they didn't turn up “randomly” at the spot.

The police pulled the plug on the gig, which was being held at Church Street, when the Grammy winner was midway into the performance of his chartbuster “Shape of You”.

“We had permission to busk, hence us playing in that exact spot, was planned out before, it wasn't just us randomly turn-



ing up. All good though. See ya at the show tonight x (sic)” Sheeran wrote on his Instagram Story hours ahead of his second show in Bengaluru.

Earlier in the day, clips of Sheeran -- who performed his first concert in Bengaluru

on Saturday night -- arriving with his security personnel at Church Street started circulating online in which he was greeted by cheering onlookers.

“We were going to play more than one song but we're being asked to play one song,” he said

IMPROMPTU GIG HITS A SOUR NOTE

■ Clips of Sheeran arriving with his security personnel at Church Street started circulating online in which he was greeted by cheering onlookers

■ “We were going to play more than one song but we're being asked to play one song,” he said on the microphone, before he started strumming the prelude of ‘Shape of You’ on his guitar

■ Just before he could finish the

refrain of the song, a policeman stepped in and pulled the cables attached to the microphone and musical instruments

■ A Cubbon Park Police Station official said Sheeran was performing “without any permission so they had to stop”

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A senior police official of the Cubbon Park police station said Sheeran was performing

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— Ed Sheeran, British singer-songwriter wrote on his Instagram Story

“without any permission so they had to stop”.

“The police got there because someone had complained of public nuisance,” he told PTI, adding if the musician and his team had the permit they could have shown it to the cops.

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