

## This govt can't get us Mhadei water: Activists

Over Rs 3 cr down the drain in legal fees, but all the water is going to K'taka: MBA

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Activists under the umbrella of Mhadei Bachao Abhiyan (MBA) have slammed the Goa government for its indifferent handling of the water dispute with Karnataka, claiming that the triple engine sarkar – a BJP government in Goa, Karnataka and the Centre – has done nothing to save the state's interests and there seems to be a covert plan to let Karnataka divert the Mhadei's waters.

Speaking at a press briefing on Friday, MBA representatives like Nirmala Sawant, Rajendra Kerkar, Adv Bhavanishankar Gadnis, Adv. Avinash Bhosale, and Prajal Sakhardande, collectively criticized the government's approach to the ongoing legal battle. Sawant specifically questioned the effectiveness of Goa's representation in the Supreme Court, pointing out that despite the Mhadei case being listed as item number 117 on the court's cause list, the Goa sent a delegation comprising 17 representatives, who returned without the case being heard. "Karnataka representatives never attended the hearing. This suggests that the government is staging a show, misleading the people of Goa with false promises of saving Mhadei,"



“The government has spent Rs 3.2 crore on legal fees for Mhadei in last 5 years. No common man is benefiting from this – Nirmala Sawant

“If the government wanted to save Mhadei they should have notified the tiger reserve. They did not do it despite the High Court ruling – Rajendra Kerkar

“This government is fooling the public. I request people to start an agitation. Please see that this matter is ended this year by asking for an early hearing – Bhavanishankar Gadnis

Sawant alleged.

Sawant further criticised the government's spending on legal fees, revealing that Rs 3.2 crore had been spent over the last five years without benefiting the common people of Goa. She also noted that the Goa team travelled business class and stayed in luxury hotels instead of utilising Goa Bhavan, which raised questions about the administration's priorities.

Eco-warrior Rajendra

Kerkar also voiced concerns over the government's inaction on the tiger reserve issue, stating that if the government genuinely aimed to protect Mhadei, it would have notified the Tiger Reserve as per a High Court ruling. "Their refusal to act and challenge the court's decision demonstrates a lack of intent to save the Mhadei river," Kerkar said.

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## DAREDEVILRY IN THE SKY



IAF's aerobatic team Surya Kiran performs on the last day of Aero India 2025, at Yelahanka Airbase in Bengaluru, on Friday

## FROM TURTLE-NESTING BEACH TO DECIBEL-FLOUTING NIGHTCLUB

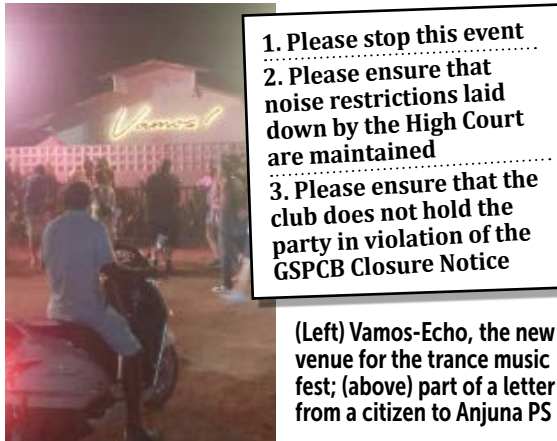
## Venue hunt lands Karacus Marakus music festival in hot water again

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

**COUTINHOVADDO, VAGATOR:** From turtle nesting site to a nightclub that has been ordered shut for violating decibel norms – the frantic venue hunt for the Karacus Marakus festival has plunged the trance music event into another controversy.

According to a decision announced by the organiser Pralayahrecords, the six-day event is now being held at Echo in Vagator, which is under a closure notice issued by the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB).

The festival was forced to shift to Echo at the last minute after **O Herald** reported on February 12 that its previous venue – Dream Beach in Vagator – was a nesting site for the protect-



1. Please stop this event  
2. Please ensure that noise restrictions laid down by the High Court are maintained  
3. Please ensure that the club does not hold the party in violation of the GSPCB Closure Notice

ed Olive Ridley turtle.

As for the new venue, Echo, the GSPCB filed an affidavit with the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court on February 12, stating that a reminder letter had been issued to the Collector to implement the closure directions against Echo-Vamos.

According to the affidavit, "Reminder letter issued to the Collector for implementation of the Closure Directions against Vamos-Echo" was highlighted in the section 'Action taken / proposed on 11/02/2025.'

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“I have received no application for permission to play music and was not aware that a closure notice stands against the venue (Echo) – Varsha Parab, North Goa Deputy Collector

“The question of us giving permission to play at Echo does not arise as I am aware of the affidavit presented to the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court by GSPCB – Suraj Gawas, Pl, Anjuna Police

“Trying to have a party at a place with a closure notice not only smacks of arrogance but is in contempt of the Goa Bench of the High Court – Alex Noronha, activist

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## Hugs aside, Trump calls shots as Modi nods

US Prez open to trade deal but firm on reciprocal tariffs on India

**PTI, WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump announced after talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India will buy more oil, gas and military hardware, including F-35 fighter jets, from America to bring down trade deficit but asserted that Washington will not spare New Delhi from reciprocal tariffs.

At his Oval Office in the White House on Thursday (Friday India time), Trump warmly welcomed Modi with a long handshake and a bear hug while describing the prime minister as a "great

friend" for a long time and a "terrific" man.

The US president, at a joint media briefing with the Indian prime minister following the talks, said both sides are looking at striking a major trade deal soon while calling import duties imposed by India on certain US products as "very unfair" and "strong".

"Whatever India charges, we will charge them," Trump said, adding "We are being reciprocal with India."

The Modi-Trump meeting took place hours after the US President announced a new reciprocal tariff policy for all the trading partners

### HARD BARGAIN

- India to increase purchases of oil, gas
- India to buy significant military hardware sales, including the possibility of F-35 stealth fighters
- Both countries to prepare new defence cooperation

of the US in the latest in a series of such actions initiated by his administration.

In his remarks, Trump said he and PM Modi have reached an agreement that could potentially make the US the "number one sup-

plier" of oil and gas to India, suggesting it to be part of measures to bring down the US trade deficit with India that stands at around \$45 billion.

framework for the next decade  
■ India is reforming laws to allow US nuclear technology in the Indian market  
■ The US approved the extradition of 26/11 Mumbai attack plotter Tahawwur Rana to India. More extraditions may follow

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PM Modi hugs US President Donald Trump at the White House

## Pope Francis hospitalised with bronchitis

**AP, ROME:** Pope Francis was hospitalised Friday to treat a weeklong bout of bronchitis and undergo diagnostic tests, the Vatican said, confirming the latest issues with the 88-year-old's pontiff's health that forced him to cancel his agenda through Monday at least.

Francis was diagnosed with bronchitis on February 6, but had continued to hold daily audiences in his Vatican hotel suite. He attended his general audience Wednesday and presided at an outdoor Mass on Sunday. But he had handed off his speeches for an aide to read aloud, saying he was having trouble breathing.

On Friday, he appeared bloated and pale during the handful of audiences he held before going to the hospital. The bloating appeared to indicate that the medication he was taking to treat the lung infection was making him retain water.

Francis, who had part of one lung removed as a young man, has long battled health problems, especially bouts of acute bronchitis in winter. He uses a wheelchair, walker or cane when moving around his apartment and recently fell twice, hurting his arm and chin.

Francis was hospitalised at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he was last admitted in June 2023 to have surgery to remove intestinal scar tissue and repair

### PALESTINIANS MUST 'STAY ON THEIR LAND': VATICAN

**AFF, VATICAN CITY:** A top Vatican official on Thursday rejected US President Donald Trump's proposal to move Palestinians from Gaza, saying "the Palestinian population must remain on its land". "This is one of the fundamental points of the Holy See: no deportations," Secretary of State Pietro Parolin said on the sidelines of an Italy-Vatican meeting, according to the ANSA news agency.

Moving Palestinians out would cause regional tensions and "makes no sense" as neighbouring countries such as Jordan are opposed, he continued.

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a hernia in the abdominal wall. A few months before that, he spent three days in the hospital to receive intravenous antibiotics for a respiratory infection.

The Vatican said Francis was admitted after his Friday audiences. In addition to regular Vatican officials, the pope met Friday morning with the Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, and CNN head Mark Thompson.

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## Two from Goa in 2<sup>nd</sup> batch of US deportees

Plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants likely to land in Amritsar today

### PUNJAB CM SLAMS CENTRE OVER AMRITSAR AS LANDING DESTINATION

**PTI, CHANDIGARH:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday questioned the likely landing of another plane carrying illegal Indian immigrants at the Amritsar airport as he hit out at the Centre, accusing it of trying to defame Punjab. "The BJP-led Centre always discriminates against Punjab. It does not let go of any chance of defaming Punjab," alleged Mann. "Under a conspiracy, they are

land on February 16.

The development came days after a US military air-

craft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport last week. Of

them, 33 each were from Haryana and Gujarat and 30 from Punjab. Most of the deportees hailing from Punjab had said they wanted to migrate to the US for a better life for their families. After Donald Trump assumed office as the US President, the country's law enforcement agencies have launched a crackdown against illegal immigrants. Many people from Punjab and some other States, who entered the US through 'donkey routes' – an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter America or other illegal means by spending lakhs of rupees – are now facing deportation.

MAX. TEMP 34.2 °C

MIN. TEMP 22.2 °C

idharudhar



The order is to shoot him – with the camera, you fool!

