

shorttakes

**SIOLIM YOUTH ON TWO-WHEELER KILLED IN BIKE-TAXI COLLISION AT TUEM**

**PERNEM:** Raj Pednekar, 25, a resident of Siolim, was killed in a road accident on Tuesday morning after his two-wheeler collided with a tourist taxi near the Tuem petrol pump. The accident occurred when the taxi driver made an unexpected right turn to enter the fuel station, resulting in Pednekar's two-wheeler crashing into the vehicle. Pednekar, who ran a garage in Siolim, died from his injuries. Mandrem police have registered a case against the taxi driver, Suarav Gudekar, for rash and negligent driving, causing death.

**FIRE BREAKS OUT IN AMBULANCE IN WEE HOURS, EN ROUTE TO GMC, BAMBOLIM**

**PERNEM:** A 108 ambulance on its way to Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMC), Bambolim, from Sawantwadi, Maharashtra, caught fire early on Tuesday morning at Mahakhajan, Dhargalim. The quick thinking of the ambulance driver and doctor prevented a major tragedy. The staff noticed smoke coming from the ambulance bonnet and managed to evacuate the patient, staff, and the patient's relative just before the vehicle was engulfed in flames. The patient was subsequently transferred to another ambulance and taken to the hospital. No injuries were reported in the incident.

**COLVA POLICE ARREST MAN FOR GOLD JEWELLERY THEFT AT VARCA HOTEL**

**MARGAO:** Colva police have arrested Kasim Fayaz, 39, of Gudde Kunkundar, Udipi, Karnataka, in connection with a gold jewellery theft reported at a star hotel in Varca. The accused allegedly forced open the gallery door of Room No. 2304 at the hotel.

The stolen gold, worth Rs 10,00,000, was later recovered following Kasim's disclosure during interrogation. Kasim also revealed involvement in similar thefts at the hotel. Further investigation led Colva police to Sakleshpur, Karnataka, where they found the gold in the possession of Kasim's friend, SM Pradeep.

Pradeep claimed the gold was taken as security for a loan due to financial difficulties. The police have served a notice to Pradeep, who is now required to present himself at Colva Police Station.

**VASCO TRAFFIC POLICE BOOK 56 CASES AGAINST MODIFIED SILENCERS**

**VASCO:** Vasco Traffic Police have launched a crackdown on the illegal modification of two-wheeler silencers, which contribute to sound pollution and violate traffic regulations. Since January 1, the traffic cell has booked 56 cases against violators using modified silencers. The police emphasised that the removal or modification of silencers not only causes noise pollution but also poses health risks to the public and can lead to distractions on the road. Authorities have urged riders to use authorised silencers and adhere to traffic laws to avoid fines. The drive will continue as part of efforts to maintain public safety and reduce noise pollution.

**COMPLAINT FILED FOR ILLEGAL SAND EXTRACTION FROM KHANDEPAR RIVER**

**MARGAO:** Suraj Kalgutkar, a Junior Geologist at the Directorate of Mines & Geology, filed a complaint with Curcholem police regarding illegal sand extraction from the Khandepar riverbed in Codli village, Dharbandora. According to the complaint, the accused extracted approximately 42 cubic metres of sand without obtaining prior permission from the Mines Department, resulting in a loss to the State Government amounting to Rs 54,600. Based on the complaint, Curcholem police registered an offence under Section 303(2) of BNS 2023 and Section 4(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957. The investigation is still in progress.

**CAR DRIVER BOOKED FOR INJURING PEDESTRIAN IN BENAULIM**

**MARGAO:** Colva police have registered an offence against Sindhiya Shakya, a four-wheeler driver from Pulwado-Benaulim, for rash and negligent driving that led to the injury of Shankarappa Mushannavar Harijan from Toleband, Benaulim. The incident occurred when Shankarappa was crossing the road near Padre Jose Vaz General Store. The driver, who was heading towards Khareband, Benaulim, failed to drive with caution and struck Shankarappa. He sustained grievous injuries and was hospitalised. Police visited the scene and attached the car involved in the accident.

**CHIEF MINISTER TO LEAD CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS**

**PONDA:** Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant will lead the State's celebrations of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti at Farmagudi, Ponda, on February 19. The day-long event will begin with performances by Dhol Tasha Pathak and the garlanding of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The event is organised by the Department of Information and Publicity and will feature key dignitaries, including ministers and other officials, paying tribute to the legendary Maratha king.

**POWER SHUTDOWN**

- **BICHOLIM:** On Feb 19, from 9 am to 2 pm, at Sastiwada, Housing Board Bordem, ITI and surrounding areas
- **TALEIGAO:** On Feb 19, from 9 am to 2 pm, at Banyan Court Bldg, Merrindin, Rosary Church, Swim Sea hotel and surrounding area at Taleigao and surrounding areas
- **BICHOLIM:** On Feb 20, from 9 am to 2 pm, at Sudha Colony, Naiknagar, Shardanagar and surrounding areas
- **VASCO:** On Feb 20, from 3 pm to 4 pm, areas around Susheela Seawinds, Monsoon bar, Vaddem lake, Salkar chawl, Pai hospital, Mercedes-Vaddem, Dhobighat, Cottage hospital, BSNL tower, Mogubai estate, Essen windmills, NAD and Alaska DTC
- **BICHOLIM:** On Feb 21, from 9 pm to 2 pm, near Mardolkar hospital, Musilimwada, Sai service, Sandipak plaza and surrounding areas

# Borim locals up in arms against industrial pollution

Team Herald

**PONDA:** Residents of Borim-Shiroda and the neighbouring villages of Tarwale, Shiroda, Khajorda, Vaje, and Tishe-Borim, are up in arms over the escalating pollution caused by a local company processing mining-related products.

Locals allege that the smoke, noise, and dust from the pellet processing company's operations have begun to severely impact their daily lives and health. They have demanded immediate action and threatened that failure to do so by March 31, would attract legal action.

One local resident, Dhanraj Naik, voiced the community's growing frustration, saying, "Since the company began operating, we've had to endure air pollution, noise, and even water contamination. The air quality has worsened, and it's causing a number of health problems among the people here. The company has not taken sufficient measures to control the pollution, and the dan-



gerous dust is entering our homes." The locals have also expressed concerns about the constant noise that disrupts their lives day and night. "We can't even sleep properly because of the constant noise. This is affecting our health," another resident, Manila Shirodkar, added. The residents are calling on the Pollution Control Board to step in and conduct an immediate inspection of the company. They demand to know what action will be taken to address the ongoing pollution. "We just want a pollution-free environ-

ment," said one protestor. He further said, "The company must stop ignoring the health and well-being of the people here. We have peacefully protested today, but if nothing changes by March 31, we will be forced to take legal action."

– Dhanraj Naik, Borim resident

Meanwhile, company officials have responded, stating that they are aware of the concerns and will take the necessary safety measures to comply with government regulations. A company representative explained, "As per government rules, we are required to submit an

inspection report to the authorities. The government has also ordered us to implement five new safety measures, and we are committed to ensuring that everything is in place by March 31."

However, with the deadline looming, the community remains sceptical and is demanding concrete action to protect their environment and health. The coming weeks will determine whether the company will meet its obligations or face further protests and possible legal action from the residents.

**CM launches cyber helpline**

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant inaugurated the dedicated Cyber Helpline Centre (1930) and an AI and Machine Learning (AI-ML) Lab in Goa. He also launched the Quick Pass Mobile app for the Goa Police and introduced the Cyber Yodha initiative, aimed at empowering citizens to secure cyberspace.

The Cyber Helpline Centre (1930) will be operated by a specialised team within the Cyber Cell, with the goal of handling complaints efficiently and streamlining post-complaint procedures. The AI-ML lab has been designed to address modern policing challenges using cutting-edge technology. The QuickPass app is a mobile application that generates QR codes for individuals intercepted by traffic police, aiming to prevent repeated checks for commuters. The Cyber Yodha initiative seeks to raise community awareness about cyber security through trained volunteers. Approximately 120 Cyber Yodhas from 12 colleges and NGOs have already been trained.

Chief Minister Sawant congratulated the Goa Police and acknowledged that cybercrime is one of the fastest-growing threats. "I urge people to stay aware of these threats and report any instances of fraud or attempted fraud immediately," he said.

**TRASH STOP**



Commuters have converted an empty nook (SEE INSET) in the new stainless steel Panjim 'Smart' Bus Stop, located near the Fish Market, into a makeshift garbage bin

## Ponda municipality crackdown on illegal scrapyards, four units demolished

Team Herald

**PONDA:** The Ponda Municipal Council (PMC) has taken action against four illegal scrapyards in the city.

One of the illegal scrapyards, located in Varkhandem near the Hanuman Temple, was demolished after the court granted permission. Another scrapyards in the same area was also demolished last month.

Vishant Naik, the Municipal Engineer, explained the ongoing efforts to address the issue, saying, "The Council passed a resolution

some time ago to clear illegal scrapyards in the city. While some have been demolished, others have approached the Court for relief. Recently, under Section 184, the Deputy Collector issued an order to demolish a scrapyards at Varkhandem. In accordance with this order, our team demolished a shed of the illegal scrapyards."

The engineer further explained that the scrapyards operator had been given 15 days to clear the area. "The operator has been instructed to remove plastic mate-

rial, bags, and other debris from the site and relocate them elsewhere," he added.

PMC Chairperson Anand Naik also commented on the delayed action, saying, "The demolition was postponed because the scrapyards owner went to court. However, now that the court has issued an order to demolish the scrapyards, we are taking action."

The chairperson went on to highlight the risks posed by the scrapyards, especially to local residents and traffic on nearby highways. "These scrapyards were a

safety hazard for residents and for traffic on the highways. Therefore, we have taken steps to clear all four illegal scrapyards in the city," he said.

This action follows concerns raised after a fire at Dhavalim scrapyards spread onto the highway, forcing authorities to divert traffic for two days. Since the incident, residents of Ponda Taluka have been demanding that scrapyards be relocated away from residential areas and placed in industrial zones to ensure the safety of the community.

## 21 students from Aakash achieve more than 90 percentile in JEE Mains

Svarali Chaudhari becomes top scorer with 99.89 percentile

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), announced that its student, Svarali Chaudhari emerged as the top scorer, achieving a remarkable 99.89 percentile in the first session of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Mains 2025.

Other top achievers included Agastya Dry with 99.69 percentile, Lakshya Saimi with 99.34 percentile, Sahil with 99.28 percentile, Nikhil Ravut with 98.38 percentile, and Narshima K Nayak with 97.92 percentile. These outstanding re-



sults highlighted the students' dedication and academic excellence in one of India's most challenging exams. The National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the results on February

11, marking the beginning of this year's two scheduled JEE sessions.

Dr HR Rao, Chief Academic and Business Head at Aakash Educational Services Limited, congratulated the students on their impressive achievements. He said, "We are incredibly proud of our students' success in JEE Main 2025. Their hard work, determination, and the right coaching have led to these exceptional results. At Aakash, we focus on providing high-quality education that helps students realise their full potential. Congratulations to all our successful students."

## GTDC to host Shiv Mahotsav at Sancorda

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) will organise Shiv Mahotsav 2025, on the eve of Mahashivratri on February 25, at Satpal-Sacorda in Dharbandora.

The announcement was made by GTDC Chairman Ganesh Gaonkar at a press briefing on Tuesday, during which a celebration song

for Shiv Mahotsav was also unveiled.

The event will take place in the vicinity of the centuries-old Tambdi Surla Temple, a popular tourist spot nestled in the hinterlands of Sanvordem. Shiv Mahotsav 2025 will feature a variety of cultural performances, including Shiv Ganas with Dhol Tasha, a Shiv Stuti Nrutya Natika, and a Bharatanat-

yam performance on Shiv Bhakti by renowned artist Pavitra Bhat. The celebrations will culminate with the Ganga Arti ceremony. Marathi actress Sonali Kulkarni and singer Avdhoot Gupte will also grace the occasion with their presence. The event will kick off at 5:30 pm, with local artists showcasing their talents, and a live performance by legendary

singer Sudesh Bhosle. Gaonkar described the event as a unique cultural celebration and encouraged all Goans to attend and make it a grand success. "Just like the programme at the Isha Foundation in Coimbatore, which attracts millions, we hope that over time, Shiv Mahotsav will also draw large crowds, possibly even lakhs of people," Gaonkar said.

## Romi script movement expands to village level

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** Romi Script enthusiasts have resolved to expand their movement to the village level, furthering its reach and impact across Goa.

The resolution was made at a meeting convened by the Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan at the Holy Spirit Church Hall. The meeting focused on mapping a way forward for the Roman Script movement, with an emphasis on uniting all Konkani associations.

Kennedy Afonso, President of the Global Konkani Forum, stressed the importance of uniting all Konkani associations to strengthen the movement's efforts.

Anthony Silva highlighted the need to introduce Romi Konkani in schools, urging the Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan to lead a sustained battle for this educational reform.

Wilson Mazarello emphasised the need for all Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to table the Official Language Amendment Bill in the next Assembly session, aiming to bring justice to the Romi Script.

Avinash Tavares expressed concerns over the government's decision to conduct exams only in Devanagari, arguing that it discriminates against government job applicants from the minority community, placing them at a disadvantage.

Michael Gracias called for the government to pass the bill to establish the Goa State Minorities Commission in the next Assembly session, stressing the importance of protecting the rights of minority communities in the state.

The meeting concluded with the passing of several key resolutions: a push for MLAs to introduce the Official Language Amendment Bill in the upcoming Budget session, granting equal status to Roman Script Konkani alongside Devanagari; a sustained effort to ensure the inclusion of Roman Script Konkani in schools, in line with the National Education Policy; and a call for the establishment of the Goa State Minorities Commission in the next Assembly session.

Additionally, it was decided to hold the Maha Sabha in Goa with the participation of all five script associations, further uniting the movement for the cause of Romi Script Konkani.

## Notice issued to contractor over garbage dump at Baga

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** The Health Officer at Candolim Primary Health Centre (PHC), Dr Roshan Nazareth, conducted a site inspection of a garbage dump in Tito's lane at Baga, following a complaint was filed last week about garbage dumping by the tourism department contractor.

After the inspection, Dr Nazareth confirmed that a notice has been issued to the beach cleaning contractor, KCIC Pvt Ltd. He said, "We have issued a notice to KCIC Pvt Ltd, instructing them to clear the garbage and remove multiple broken bins that are potential breeding sites for mosquitoes. They have been given seven days to resolve the issue, with a copy of the notice sent to the Tourism Department to ensure it is carried out."

The complaint was lodged by the Calangute Congress Block Committee on Saturday, citing con-

cerns about the improper disposal of waste by the Tourism Department's contractor in Baga. Lourenco Silveira, the president of the Calangute Congress, explained the serious consequences of the situation. He said, "The improper garbage disposal and the large dumping site created by the contractor are negatively impacting both public health and the environment. The increasing accumulation of waste in a key tourist area is creating unhygienic conditions, attracting pests, and increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. This not only affects the well-being of the community but also damages the region's reputation as a tourist destination."

In addition, the Calangute Panchayat had issued a notice to the Tourism Department on February 12, demanding that the waste dump be cleared within seven days.