

600-yr-old banyan tree collapses at Banastari market, tragedy averted

Locals, vendors heave sigh of relief; thank 'Vada Dev' for protecting them

Team Herald

PONDA: A major tragedy was averted as a 600-year-old banyan tree, worshipped by locals as Vada Dev, collapsed at the Banastari market at 1:30 am on Thursday. Fortunately, no casualties were reported, bringing relief to vendors and devotees who regularly worship at the site.

The ancient tree, which housed a small temple (ghumti), had been revered for centuries. Locals and vendors, who arrived at the market in the morning, expressed gratitude that the tree had fallen before the busy market day, preventing a potential disaster. "We are thankful that Vada Dev protected us and collapsed without harming anyone," said a local vendor. Every year, cultural celebrations, including two staged dra-

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— Damodar Naik, Bhoma Sarpanch

mas, are held at the site to honour the sacred tree.

Bhoma Sarpanch Damodar Naik questioned the efficiency of Ponda's Disaster Management Team, accusing them of negligence. "Where is the disaster management team?" he asked. "The Bhoma Panchayat submitted multiple memorandums over the past six months, requesting the removal of the tree as it was drying at the top. However, no action was taken. The Panchayat could not bear the cost of removal, so we sought assistance from the disaster management authorities, but there was no response."

Naik further stated that the incident caused an estimated loss of Rs 6 lakh, as the falling tree damaged metal sheets of the ghumti and several market stalls. However, he acknowledged that the timing of the collapse saved lives, as it occurred in the early hours of the morning before vendors and shoppers arrived.

Locals have now urged authorities to take immediate action on similar risks to prevent future disasters.



The ancient tree which was revered for centuries came crashing down on Thursday.

West Bengal youth dies in rickshaw crash at Dharbandora

Team Herald

PONDA: Sanit Chandra Geetal, 25, a resident of Banastari originally from West Bengal, died after a rickshaw collided with a parked container truck at around 4 am on Thursday. The rickshaw driver, Uttam Gawli, 48, from Banastari, sustained minor injuries.

According to Ponda police, Sanit Geetal, who was seated next to the rickshaw driver, died on the spot when the rickshaw crashed into the back of a stationary container truck at Dharbandora. The vehicle was transporting vegetables from Banastari to Belgaum at the time of the accident. Following the collision, Sunit was trapped inside the rickshaw's cabin and succumbed to his injuries before Ponda fire brigade personnel cut open the roof to extricate him.

The container truck had reportedly broken down and was parked on the road at the time of the accident, according to the injured rickshaw driver.

shorttakes

GOA STARTS ISSUING E-PASSPORTS ON PILOT BASIS FOR CIVILIANS

PANJIM: The Regional Passport Office, Panjim has started issuing e-passports on a pilot basis for civilians. These passports feature an embedded chip storing biometric data for enhanced security. The trial phase aims to assess the functionality of the chip, biometric data collection, and passport readers while identifying potential issues. The e-passport will enhance security and facilitate smoother travel. It will provide advanced security features and easier immigration facilities for Indian citizens in 140 countries worldwide. It will also reduce fraud cases by consolidating complete personal data on a single page, it was informed. The Union Ministry of External Affairs, which launched the project in April 2024, will gather feedback from users and immigration officers before a nationwide rollout. Goa is the third passport office to offer the facility after Nagpur and Bhubaneswar.

JHARKHAND YOUTH HELD FOR RAPING MINOR GIRL

MARGAO: Sushan Nayak, 21, a resident of Sarzora, Salcete, and native of Kaloni, Jharkhand, was arrested by Cuncoim police for allegedly raping a minor girl. He was produced before the Judicial Magistrate First Class, JMFC, Margao, and remanded to judicial custody. Police stated that Nayak's statement will be recorded, and a medical examination will be conducted at Goa Medical College, GMC Bambolim Hospital. The parents of the minor victim, who are labourers in Jharkhand, have been informed, and details about the alleged kidnapping will be collected from them. Nayak, a waiter at a South Goa hotel, was picked up by Cuncoim police from his rented room in a Salcete village. His clothes and other evidence have been seized. According to police, Nayak traveled to Jharkhand, brought the minor girl to Goa without her family's knowledge, and sexually abused her.

CHANDOR MAN FALLS TO DEATH WHILE PRUNING COCONUT TREE

MARGAO: Silystre Felipe, a 60-year-old resident of Chandor, Salcete, succumbed to his injuries after accidentally falling while cutting a coconut tree at Pingal, Assolda, Quepem. According to Quepem police, they were alerted by the Police Control Room (PCR) in Panaji that Felipe was brought dead to the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Curcholem. Upon inquiry, police confirmed that he had fallen from a height while cutting a coconut tree. A scene of occurrence panchanama and inquest panchanama were conducted. The body was sent for a postmortem examination at South Goa District Hospital, Margao, where the police surgeon certified the cause of death as 'haemorrhagic shock' due to an artery that ruptured when he sustained multiple fractures in the fall.

Carnival floats parade in Cortalim

Team Herald

VASCO: The Cortalim Villagers Social Welfare Sports Club and Cortalim Kala Kendra in coordination with the Directorate of Art and Culture will organise its maiden three-day Viva Carnival 2025, at Cortalim, from March 2 to 4. The three-day Carnival will feature traditional khell performances, cultural programmes, fancy dress competition and floats parade on March 4. Also live bands like The Big Country Band will be attendance.

Cortalim MLA Anton Vas on Thursday said that with the support of various

groups and the Directorate of Art and Culture, Carnival will be organised on a grand scale in Cortalim.

During the floats parade, one-side of the highway from Vailankanni Chapel at Pajentar to Cross Junction will be closed for vehicular traffic.

Cash prizes of Rs 1 lakh, Rs 75,000 and Rs 50,000 will be awarded to the winners of floats parade. Besides this, five consolation prizes of Rs 10,000 each will be awarded. Cash prizes will also be given to the winners of fancy dress contest, said Cortalim Carnival Committee members Edward 'Eddie' Fernandes

India urged to revive Lanka fishing dialogue, ban destructive practices

Team Herald

MARGAO: National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) General Secretary Olencio Simoes has demanded that the Indian government immediately reactivate bilateral dialogue with Sri Lanka and ban destructive fishing practices, following his participation in an international small-scale fisheries workshop in Sri Lanka. Speaking at the three-day event in Minuwangoda, Colombo, Simoes called for India to include local stakeholders in the Joint Working Group and implement stronger legislation against harmful methods such as bottom trawling, pair trawling, bull trawling, and LED light fishing.

The workshop held recently brought together fishing community leaders from across Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America to discuss issues facing small-scale fisheries globally. A major focus was the transboundary conflicts

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in Palk Bay—the narrow strait separating Tamil Nadu in India from northern Sri Lanka—where fishing rights have long been contested between the two nations. Simoes highlighted the urgent situation, noting that over 530 boats were seized by Sri Lankan naval forces in 2024 alone, with 119 fishers and 16 vessels detained since January this year.

A dedicated panel discussion on Palk Bay featured prominent voices including Annalingam Annarasas, President of Federation of Jaffna District Fisheries Cooperatives Union, Pradip Chatterjee of India's National Federation of Small Scale Fishworkers, along

with Meera Srinivasan, correspondent for The Hindu in Sri Lanka, and Dr. Ahilan Kadirgama, senior lecturer at the University of Jaffna.

Simoes further urged the Indian government to fully implement the voluntary guidelines for sustainable small-scale fisheries established by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, to which India is a signatory. He emphasized that such measures would protect the livelihoods of millions of fishers while safeguarding fish as a crucial economic food source, particularly relevant given India's concerning position at 105th out of 127 countries in the Global Hunger Index.

The workshop, organized by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers and the Forum for Small Scale Fisheries, reinforced the international commitment to promoting equitable, gender-inclusive, self-reliant, and sustainable small-scale fisheries worldwide.

W(H)ATER MESS



Sewage water overflows near Bharat Petrol Pump, Mermaid Garden, Panjim, posing a serious hazard for pedestrians.

DoT opens portal for cable applications

PANJIM: The Department of Telecom (DoT), Government of India, has announced that the Gatishakti Sanchar Portal is now open for online applications from February 15. This move is expected to resolve the two-month-long internet disruption in Goa caused by cable-cutting issues. The portal, accessible at gatishakti-sanchar.gov.in, will allow Facility Providers, including telecom and internet service providers, to apply for the use of the Electricity Department's infrastructure for cable installation.

Under the Telecommunications (Right of Way)

Rules, 2024, all applications must be processed online. Facility Providers who previously submitted applications in hard copy must reapply through the portal. The Electricity Department will assess applications on merit after payment of the required fees. To streamline coordination, two nodal officers have been appointed for North and South Goa.

Meanwhile, the High Court of Bombay at Goa has directed cable operators to pay 20% of their pending dues to the Electricity Department for using its infrastructure.

Delegation seeks extension of Carnival timings beyond 10 pm

Team Herald

MARGAO: A delegation led by social worker Warren Alemao met Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, requesting an extension of the timing for Carnival dance events beyond the 10 pm deadline. In the memorandum submitted to the CM, Alemao emphasised that the Carnival is a deeply rooted Goan tradition and should be allowed to continue later into the night.

The letter also requested an extension of the Carnival to a four-day event, from March 1 to March 4. Alemao argued that extending the festivities would encourage more tourists to visit, benefiting businesses, artists, and performers.

Stating that restrictions dampen the vibrancy of the celebrations, he appealed

for necessary permissions to extend the timings and duration of Goa Carnival 2025.

Alemao highlighted that these celebrations, organized by locals for locals, truly embody the Goan spirit. Expressing gratitude for the CM listening to their demands, he urged for the preservation of Goa's rich cultural heritage. "Let's celebrate Goa in the true spirit of Goemkarponn and keep our Carnival traditions alive for generations to come," he stated.

In the memorandum, Alemao emphasised the historic significance of the Carnival. He pointed out that the festival, featuring parades, traditional music, and dance, is not just a cultural highlight but also a major driver of tourism, boosting the local economy.

Fishermen rescue Olive Ridley hatchlings in Benaulim

Team Herald

MARGAO: Fisherman Pele and his crew rescued several Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings on Thursday morning at Benaulim beach. The fishermen discovered the hatchlings trapped in a fishing net during their early morning expedition.

The turtles were in immediate danger from predators, including hungry stray dogs and crows, when the fishermen intervened. After carefully untangling the hatchlings from the net, Pele and his team transported them to deeper waters and safely released them into the sea.

The fishermen emphasized the need for turtle protection in the area and also expressed concerns about marine pollution affecting their livelihoods and local fish populations.

Locals livid as residential complex spews sewage at Daag-Ponda

Irked that septic waste is still not disposed of properly despite the new Sewage Treatment Plant in town

Team Herald

PONDA: Residents of Ponda, have raised health concerns over yet another instance of sewage overflow from a building at Daag. The overflowing human waste has caused a strong stench, creating a public nuisance. Locals have complained about the unbearable odour in the area.

Despite repeated warnings from the Ponda Municipal Council (PMC) in the past, there has been a lukewarm response to connecting residential buildings to the sewage system.

Kisan Naik, a resident of Ponda, questioned the authorities' inaction,

stating that despite the presence of a functional 15 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), sewage continues to overflow into the open. "Who will take responsibility if diseases like cholera and typhoid spread due to sewage spilling onto the roads from residential buildings?" he asked. He stressed that it is PMC's duty to address the problem.

It may be recalled that the PMC had previously warned certain residential buildings in Daag-Tisk that their water connections would be disconnected if the sewage issue was not resolved. However, the current overflow of septic waste is from a different building in the same area.

PMC Chairperson Anand Naik urged all residential buildings and societies in Ponda to apply for and obtain sewage connections, warning that failure to do so could lead to the disconnection of their water supply. "Residents should cooperate to maintain cleanliness in the town. Some hospitals have already obtained sewage connections, and all residential buildings must follow suit," he stated. Municipal supervisors have been distributing application forms for sewage connections and have identified areas where sewage is overflowing. Naik reiterated that PMC will not tolerate open sewage flow, which poses a public health hazard.

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
NEW DELHI

Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET) 8
Notice No. 34/2025 Date: 24.02.2025
www.aiimsexams.ac.in

Online Application is invited for the Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test (NORCET) 8 for the recruitment of Nursing Officer posts at Level 07 in the Pay Matrix pre-revised Pay Band-2 of Rs.9300-34800 with Grade Pay of Rs.4600/-, Group-B for AIIMS New Delhi and other AIIMS as per available vacancies in the respective Institutes.

The On-line applications can be done through AIIMS web site www.aiimsexams.ac.in from **24.02.2025 to 17.03.2025 up to 5:00 P.M.**

Eligibility Criteria for appearing in NORCET

Essential Qualification	
I	a. B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing / B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/state Nursing council recognized Institute or University OR B.Sc. (Post-Certificate) / Post-Basic B.Sc. Nursing from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute/ University, b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife with State / Indian Nursing Council
OR	
II	a. Diploma in General Nursing Midwifery from an Indian Nursing Council/State Nursing council recognized Institute / Board or Council. b. Registered as Nurses & Midwife in State / Indian Nursing Council. c. Two Years' Experience in a minimum 50 bedded Hospital after acquiring the educational qualification mentioned above as applicable for all Participating AIIMS.

Remarks - The required two years of experience as in above is as an essential criterion and to be valid, the experience shall must be acquired after obtaining Essential Qualification, i.e. after completing residency period of the course, declaration of result & registration with State/Indian Nursing Council.

Age Limit: For all AIIMS: Between 18-30 Years. (As per detail on Age relaxation given in General Conditions subject to age Relaxation as per Recruitment rules of respective Institutes/Hospitals.)

All age shall be counted on the last date of closing of application form.

APPLICATION FEES:
A) General/OBC Candidates - Rs.3000/- (Rupees Three Thousand only)
B) SC/ST Candidates/EWS - Rs. 2400/- (Rupees Twenty-Four Hundred only)
C) Persons with Disabilities - Exempted

The candidate can pay the prescribed application fee through DEBIT CARD/CREDIT CARD/ NETBANKING. Transaction / Processing fee, if any, as applicable, will be payable to the bank by the candidate.

Application fee once remitted shall not be refunded under any circumstances. Applications without the prescribed fee would not be considered and summarily rejected.

Application Fees of SC/ST candidates who appear in the Examination will be refunded after declaration of results in due course of time after verification SC/ST certificate to be uploaded at a later stage.

Online (CBT) for Stage I: NORCET Preliminary, Date: 12th April, 2025 (Saturday),
Online (CBT) for Stage II: NORCET Mains, Date: 2nd May, 2025 (Friday)

Please visit AIIMS website www.aiimsexams.ac.in to apply online & for latest information.
CBC-17112/11/0060/2425