

Mhadei diversion will leave Goa without water: Activist

Expresses concern over K'taka CM Siddaramaiah's remark that work on Mhadei diversion project will commence soon

Team Herald

PANJIM: Expressing concern over Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's statement on Mhadei diversion work, social activist Xencor Polgi on Monday raised apprehensions that there will be no water left for consumption. Siddaramaiah, while presenting the State budget reportedly said that the government has awarded a contract for Mhadei diversion project with certain conditions and the work for the project will commence as soon as possible. "Mhadei is the water which we use for drinking purposes. If we do not save it today then we will not get

“Mhadei is the water which we use for drinking purposes. If we do not save it today then we will not get water for drinking. That is why activists are calling for protection of the river. But the government thinks that the activists are holding political meetings”
-Xencor Polgi, social activist

water for drinking. That is why activists are calling for protection of the river. But the government thinks that the activists are holding political meetings," Polgi said. He questioned if the matter is sub-judice then how the Karnataka Chief Minister is mentioning the issue in his budget speech and saying that a contractor has been appointed for carrying out the diversion work.

"It means that the government is not serious on the Mhadei river issue. Hills are being destroyed, agricultural fields are being converted and mega projects are being brought into the State. If these mega projects are being given water then also Mhadei will have to be protected," he said. However, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the State Government is seri-

ous about the Mhadei matters and that he does not feel the need to comment on the budget of Karnataka. "Why should I comment on the Karnataka budget? I am reiterating that the government is serious about Mhadei matters. The matter is in the Supreme Court. We are fighting the matter with due force," he said. Siddaramaiah in his budget presented on March 7, 2025, had reportedly said that the contract for the Kalasa-Bhandura diversion project has already been awarded and that the work will start as soon as approval is received from the Centre.

Cong's non-violent demo at Old Goa on March 12

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa Congress on Monday announced that it will be organising a non-violent demonstration on March 12 at Gandhi Circle, Old Goa, to mark the 95th anniversary of the Dandi March.

Rajan Ghatge, State Chief Organiser of Goa Congress Seva Dal, said, "We will gather at the Gandhi Circle on Wednesday, March 12 and will take out a march. Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemao, Goa Congress President Amit Patkar, among others, will take part in the march. We have decided to make the 95th anniversary of Dandi March a success." Ghatge said, "There is a need to preserve the traditional business because that gives Swadeshi salt in a real sense. It was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi as well."

Tillari protestors seek govt's written statement on closure of mines

Team Herald

PERNEM: The residents of Khanayale, Dodamarg continued the hunger strike for the fifth consecutive day, vowing to continue their agitation until the government gives them a written statement that the mines will be completely shut.

They warned that if the canal bursts, even areas in Goa will get flooded. Sawantwadi MLA Deepak Kesarkar met the protestors on Monday and asked the Sindhudurg Collector to collect complete information regarding the mines by conducting measurements with the villagers and to take action. The protestors are demanding a stop to the blasting and stone quarrying op-

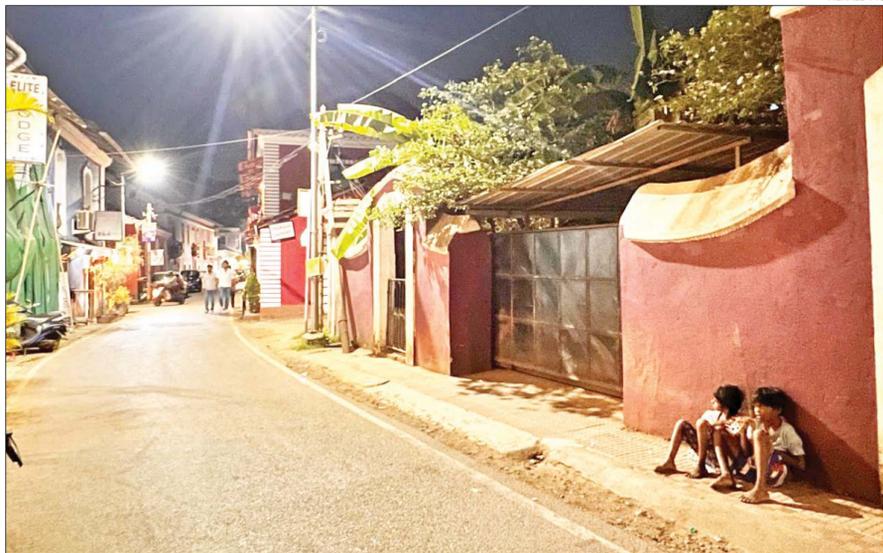


Sawantwadi MLA Deepak Kesarkar during a meet with officials on Monday

erations in the village. Nagraj Naik, a villager, said, "Today a discussion was held with MLA Deepak Kesarkar. But we will continue our protest till we get assurance in writing from the Collector that the mining operations will be closed in the village. We are firm on our demand." Vinita Gaude, another villager, pointed out that the trucks used during the mining operations run at

high speed which cause accidents in the area. "People are facing health issues as well but the administration is not paying any attention to that. The elected representatives have not shown any interest in addressing our problems. It is not just a problem of mine or the village but it is the problem of the entire Dodamarg taluka," she said.

KIDS' NIGHT OUT



Children sitting on a footpath watch passersby along the 31st January Road on Monday

KTCL workers protest, serve strike notice to govt, corp

Demand salary arrears of 34 months

Team Herald

PANJIM: Employees of Kadamba Transport Corporation Limited (KTCL) on Monday held a protest at the Corporation's office at Porvorim to press for their demands and served a strike notice to the Corporation, State Government and Labour Commission demanding that their demands be fulfilled.

Speaking to mediapersons, AITUC general secretary Christopher Fonseca said, "We have served strike notice to the management of the KTCL and have also sent the notice to the State government as well as the Labour Commissioner. There are many demands which are yet to be fulfilled by the government. The demands are not new."

"The demands include salary arrears of 34 months from January 1, 2026 to 2018 and Provident Fund restoration at 12 per cent. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had

“We are demanding that the arrears be paid to those employees who have retired first and those in service be paid in instalments. The workers are against the 'Mhaji Bus' Scheme introduced by the government as it is against the interest of workers, people and the KTCL. The services of workers who have been working for more than 10 years on a temporary basis should be regularised immediately. There are around 300 workers waiting for regularisation of their services”
-Christopher Fonseca, AITUC general secretary

agreed to accept our demands. We are demanding that the arrears be paid to those employees who have retired first and those in service be paid in instalments," he said. Fonseca said the workers are against the 'Mhaji Bus' Scheme introduced by the government as it is against the interest of workers, people and the KTCL. He demanded that the services of workers who have been working for more than 10 years on temporary basis be regularised immediately. According to Fonseca, there are around 300 workers waiting for regu-

larisation of their services. "At least they can be provided status of temporary employees with the pay scale of permanent employees. Similarly, the number of posts of traffic controllers should be increased. There should be KTCL drivers in the electric buses being run by the corporation," he said. The AITUC leader said the employees held a day-long fast at Shram Shakti Bhavan, Patto, to register their protest. Fonseca complained that despite giving representation to the Labour Department 12 days ago, the Labour Commissioner is yet to respond.

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Edu Dept's move to start academic year from April challenged in HC

Team Herald

PANJIM: The decision of the Directorate of Education (DoE) to commence the new academic year for schools in the State from April 1, has been challenged in the High Court of Bombay at Goa.

The next hearing in the matter is scheduled after a week for the purpose of filing of reply. The State government and the Government of India will file their replies in the matter.

Advocate General Devidas Pangam told the court that the State government took the decision after due deliberations and discussions with experts in accordance with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and in the interest of students.

The change has been proposed based on detailed

discussions and studies. AG Pangam went on to add that classes will be held till April 30 and that too only up to 11.30 am and that regular classes will resume in June. The writ petition has been filed in the Court by a group of parents.

Meanwhile, social activist Cecille Rodrigues on Sunday accused Director of Education Shailesh Zingde of contradicting his statements on opening of the schools.

In a statement, she said, "After reading the Director of Education's message in O Herald's edition dated March 8, we find that his statements are contradictory and appallingly insensitive to the wishes and sentiments of the thousands of parents across Goa who have opposed the start of schools in April through signature campaigns in

schools all over Goa, and the records are being sent to each relevant department head."

She said, "All over Goa signature drives are going on to oppose the same and many PTA heads informed him too. More than 10,000 signatures of parents have been taken within three days against the academic year starting in April. Teachers associations, PTA heads and even headmasters have put forth their grievances. Will the government just ignore the huge number of parents and stakeholders who have voiced out against this?"

Cecille pointed out that the Director of SCERT had on March 3, stated that they are considering giving the children a break.

The Secretary, Education, too has assured a parent delegation that they would

give the students a break of a minimum of one week, she recalled.

She said, "Now the Director of Education contradicts his own statements and that of the other heads who have informed parents that they will be planning a week which we were unhappy about. Are we in a dictator's rule where parents, teachers and headmasters are not going to be heard?"

Alleging that the government has decided to make a clear statement that this is not a democracy by acting against the voice of thousands across the State, she said, "We have not been given proper explanation why does school need to start in April when last year Class IX completed their 220 days and all requirements were well fulfilled"

Land Survey Dept inspects Oxel spring

Team Herald

ASSAGAO: Following the directive of the High Court of Bombay at Goa, which is hearing a case against a multi dwelling project coming up in close proximity to the medicinal Oxel spring, the officials from the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department and Land Survey Department conducted a joint inspection on Monday.

The petitioners Suraj Chodankar and Avertino Miranda were present and

so were some locals. The inspection that was scheduled a fortnight back could not take place as no officials from the Land Survey Department had arrived and just a lone TCP official was present at the site.

The nearly two-hour-long inspection witnessed the officials measuring the road width all along the km stretch of Oxel round the spring. The report is expected to be submitted before the High Court through the TCP Department for the next hearing scheduled on March 19.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY 75 MAI

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Blistering heat: IMD extends yellow alert till March 12

Team Herald

PANJIM: There seems to be no respite to the coastal State from the sweltering weather with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday extending the yellow alert heat warning till March 12.

The IMD predicted that hot and humid conditions are very likely to prevail over isolated pockets of the State during this time.

"Weather is very likely to be dry over North Goa and South Goa districts of the State. Maximum temperatures are very likely to prevail between 35 and 37 degree Celsius over Goa. Shallow to moderate fog is very likely in the morning. Hot and humid conditions are very likely to prevail over isolated pockets of North and

“Weather is very likely to be dry over North Goa and South Goa districts of the State. Maximum temperatures are very likely to prevail between 35 and 37 degree Celsius over Goa. Shallow to moderate fog is very likely in the morning. Hot and humid conditions are very likely to prevail over isolated pockets of North and South Goa”
-India Meteorological Department

South Goa," the IMD said.

Earlier, the yellow alert was only until March 10.

According to the IMD, heat wave criteria for Goa State (coastal station) is when maximum temperature departure is 4.5 degree Celsius or more from normal. Heat waves may be described, provided actual maximum temperature is 37 degree Celsius or more.

Meanwhile, the maximum and minimum temperatures recorded at

Panjim during the last 24 hours ending at 5.30 pm of March 10 were 34.4 degree Celsius and 24.8 degree Celsius respectively, while Mormugao till 8.30 am on March 10, 2025, recorded 33 degree Celsius and 25.1 degree Celsius respectively.

According to the IMD, the maximum temperature in the State is expected to be around 36 degree Celsius and a minimum temperature of around 24 degree Celsius till March 13.

Ribandar-Chorao Ro-Ro ferry service delayed yet again

Will be launched after two months: Min

Team Herald

PANJIM: The wait for the two roll-on-roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferries which were expected to give some respite to the Chorao-Ribandar river route commuters will now be longer as River Navigation Department (RND) Minister Subhash Phal Dessai on Monday said that it will take another two months to deploy them on the route.

The minister said the government will receive the ferries in the next 15 days as the ramp work has been delayed, the service will be launched after two months.

"We are bringing two Ro-Ro ferries. They are being built by a Goan contractor. But they cannot be

“In case of any malfunction, the propulsion system can be hydraulically shifted below the deck, eliminating the need for a dry deck”
-Vikram Rajebhosle, RND official

launched unless infrastructure is developed for them. However, the infrastructure development work is going on at full speed. Initially, it was delayed because of the disputes for the place. However, it has been resolved now and ramps are being built at both sides of the river. So now we will start the services of RoRo ferries within two months,"

he said. The launch of the ferries has been rescheduled several times and the new date was set for March 21.

Last month, RND official-Vikram Rajebhosle had said that the launch of the new roll-on roll-off (RoRo) ferries has been rescheduled for the last week of March.

According to the official, the new vessels which will be deck-mounted will eliminate the risk of ropes getting entangled in the propeller, which is a common issue for traditional ferries. "In case of any malfunction, the propulsion system can be hydraulically shifted below the deck, eliminating the need for a dry deck," Rajebhosle had said.

My most sincere and heartfelt thanks to

Mr and Mrs Vijai Sardesai

For recognising my contribution to the Carnival festival and felicitating me at the

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Mr and Mrs Vijai Sardesai felicitating Timoteo Fernandes at the Big Fat Fatorda Carnival. Also seen is brother of Timoteo Fernandes, Tome Fernandes, 4-time King Momo of Goa Carnival

Thanks also to the committee for the memorable felicitation function and to the media for the coverage.

From **TIMOTEO FERNANDES**
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