

# BJP sets sights on South Goa ahead of 2027 polls

### CM urges Salcete voters to back government's inclusive development push; confident of retaining Navelim and gaining ground in minority-dominated segments

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** With the BJP looking to consolidate its hold in South Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant over the weekend expressed confidence that the party would retain Navelim in the next Assembly election and eventually make electoral gains in Benaulim and Velim as well—constituencies traditionally seen as minority strongholds.

Speaking at a BJP workers' meeting in Davorlim, Sawant appealed to voters across Salcete to judge the government based on its development record rather than community lines. He said that the party's efforts in all 40 Assembly constituencies had been uniform and that the government had never discriminated on the basis of caste, creed, or region.

"The BJP government has ensured development across Goa, including in constituencies like Benaulim and Fatorda, where we don't currently have MLAs," Sawant said, adding that his government remained committed

#### SAWANT BACKS HOUSIE BAN

**MARGAO:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant backed the decision taken by the South Goa District Collector to ban housie games that involve large sums of money. "Law is above everything, and no one will be allowed to break it. Nowadays, large amounts of money are involved in housie games. We will take strict action according to the law," said the CM while speaking to media persons on Sunday.

It may be recalled that South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes also informed the media that the Collector had informed him that the game housie has not been banned but the restrictions are for the games that involve prize money that runs into a couple of lakhs.

to inclusive growth.

Asserting that the BJP will retain the Navelim seat in 2027, Sawant credited the 2022 victory to the party's grassroots strength and growing support base. "We won Navelim by a margin of 5,200 votes in the last election. Our local membership has now reached 9,000. If our karyakartas remain united and vote for the party, we have nothing to worry about," he said.

Turning his attention to religious representation, Sawant questioned why Christians should not vote for the BJP. "Our schemes are designed to

benefit everyone, and we don't discriminate. In the North East, which has a 90% Christian population, the BJP is in power in several states. Similarly, in Goa too, the BJP serves all communities equally," he said.

He cited the government's handling of the recent exposition of St Francis Xavier's relics as an example of its inclusive approach. "We spent around Rs 250 to 300 crore on the event, which was appreciated by the Church for its smooth organisation. This proves that the government respects all faiths," the Chief

Minister added.

BJP State President Damu Naik, addressing the gathering, pointed out that there was a time when candidates were reluctant to contest from Navelim. "Today, the situation has changed so much that there's risk of internal rivalry. We must remember to put the party and the nation first, and not let personal ambition get in the way," he advised. Navelim MLA Ulhas Tuemkar, who was also present, submitted a list of local issues to the Chief Minister, including the need for more job opportunities for the area's youth.

Earlier, Sawant urged party workers to reach out to every household in the region and create awareness about the development works undertaken by both the state and central governments. "The double engine sarkar has already invested Rs 30,000 crore to boost road infrastructure across Goa. People need to know what has been done under PM Modi's leadership," he said.

## Two killed in fatal crash at Mollem

Team Herald

**PONDA:** In a tragic early morning accident at Nandran-Mollem on Sunday, a motorcycle collided with a parked truck, resulting in the deaths of two individuals. The rider, Rajesh Desai, 25, a native of Karnataka, died at the scene. The pillion rider, Nikhil Mandival, 24, also from Karnataka, was declared dead upon arrival at PHC Dharbandora.

The two men were travelling from Mollem towards their hometown in Karnataka. The truck, en route to Karnataka, was parked on the road due to a breakdown.

This incident highlights a troubling trend of fatal accidents involving parked trucks along the Mollem to Belgaum National Highway. Over the past year, four people have died in similar collisions.

## Govt orders seizing assets of prime accused in Rs 100 cr investment scam

### Goa Police submit proposal to CBI to issue Red Corner notice against Myron Rodrigues

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Goa Government has issued an interim attachment order under the Goa Protection of Investors and Depositors Act, 2018, to attach seven properties and freeze multiple bank accounts belonging to Myron Rodrigues, his former wife Sunita Rodrigues, and his current wife Deepali Parab.

This action, according to police, is related to an alleged Rs 100 share market crore investment scam where investors were defrauded of their hard-earned money. The attached properties and bank accounts are suspect-

ed to be proceeds from this crime, acquired through the alleged investment scam, which involved promising high returns to investors.

The attachment order demonstrates the government's commitment to protecting investors and depositors from fraudulent activities.

Deepali Parab was previously arrested by the Crime Branch in Kalyan, Mumbai, and is currently in judicial custody after her bail application was rejected by the Sessions Court, Margao. Sunita Rodrigues was also arrested and taken into custody by the MHB Colony Police Station of the Mumbai Police.

Investigations revealed that Myron Rodrigues and Deepali Parab allegedly cheated investors by promising high returns, misappropriating crores of rupees for personal gain. The Economic Offences Cell (EOC) of Goa Police arrested Deepali Parab under sections 406 and 420, read with 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Sections 3 and 5 of the GPID Act.

Myron Rodrigues remains at large. Following a blue notice issued by INTERPOL, the Goa Police has submitted a proposal to the CBI to issue a Red Notice against him, as he is suspected to be abroad.

## Kala Academy draws flak as lighting glitch disrupts Marathi play mid-show

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The mismanagement of Goa's recently renovated premier cultural institution, Kala Academy, came under scrutiny yet again on Sunday evening after a ticketed performance was disrupted mid-show. A lighting glitch halted the Marathi play Purush for about 15 minutes at the Dinanath Mangeshkar Auditorium, forcing lead actors Sharad Ponshe and Spruha Joshi to apologise to the audience during the interruption.

The professional theatre group coming from Maharashtra was visibly upset over the technical failure, which occurred in the midst of a crucial scene. Noted Marathi actor Ponshe later criticised the poor quality of the sound and lighting systems, along with the overall management of the iconic venue. The embarrassing incident has since gone viral on social media, drawing renewed attention to concerns about the quality of renovation and upkeep at Kala Academy.

Speaking to the media after the

show, actor Sharad Ponshe expressed deep disappointment, stating that the carefully crafted lighting design of Purush could not be experienced by the audience due to the technical glitch. He lamented that a prestigious venue like the Dinanath Mangeshkar Auditorium continues to function without a dedicated manager, calling the situation "unfortunate." Ponshe urged Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to personally intervene and take steps to improve the condition and management of Kala Academy.

## Arpora-Nagoa villagers plead to save unauthorised structures

### Sarpanch promises to sort out issue, says he will call on CM for a solution

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** In response to villagers seeking solutions for their unauthorised structures, Arpora-Nagoa Sarpanch Roshan Redkar announced at Sunday's gram sabha that the Village Panchayat will make an appeal to the Chief Minister and relevant authorities. The aim is to regularise the affected structures in accordance with the Goa Regularisation of Unauthorised Constructions Act 2016.

During the gram sabha, residents voiced concerns about the recent Bombay High Court order regarding unauthorised constructions. A local civil engineer noted that most residential and commercial buildings may be non-compliant, suggesting that elected officials at the panchayat and assembly levels had allowed these constructions without proper oversight, questioning why trade li-

**Villagers also explained that financial constraints led them to construct shops and houses for their livelihoods, citing limited job opportunities and lack of government support**

censes were issued without verifying construction licences or TCP technical clearance.

Sarpanch Redkar, however, stated that the current panchayat body is not responsible for unauthorised constructions, attributing them to a period 20 years ago.

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Sarpanch Redkar af-

firmed the panchayat's commitment to assisting the villagers. He presented a letter intended for the Chief Minister, Revenue Minister, and Panchayats Minister, urging affected residents to endorse it.

The letter highlights that many houses were built on ancestral land years ago without proper permissions due to limited access to authorities and lack of awareness.

The letter also appeals to the state government to extend the application timeline under the Goa Regularisation of Unauthorised Constructions Act 2016, to allow the regularisation of structures.

The villagers argued that despite the unauthorised status of their structures, they are not engaged in any illegal activities, emphasising their integration within the village community through their families and shops.

## Saligao police bust IPL betting racket, 3 held

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Saligao police have busted an IPL betting racket and arrested three persons and seized a mobile phone and a laptop and other accessories, all worth Rs 1.20 lakh in connection with the crime.

According to police, the accused have been identified as Mohit Chhablani, 26, from Gujarat, Iman Zafar, 22, from Bihar and Nitinkumar Valecha, 38, from Gujarat. They were arrested were they were caught red-handed at Villa no 4, Arrarzais Villas, Marod, Sangolda, while accepting bets on mobile phone or online on ongoing IPL cricket match played between Gujarat Titans versus Lucknow Super Giants on April 12, 2024.

An FIR has been registered and the case is being investigated by PSI Akshay Fatarpekar under supervision of Saligao PI, SDPO Porvorim Vishwesh Karpe and SP North Akshat Kaushal, IPS.

## A DAY OF FAITH AND HOPE

PICS: SURAJ G, JOSEPH FERNANDES AND PAUL CARVALHO



Palm Sunday was observed across the State yesterday. Parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church, Panjim, St Thomas Church, Aldona, and Guardian Angel Church Sanvordem participated in the Eucharistic celebrations where palm fronds were blessed and later distributed among the faithful. Later in the evening, devotees at the Guardian Angel Church participated in the procession reciting the Rosary and Lenten hymns with the images of Jesus Christ and Mother Mary re-enacting the 'Passion of Christ' followed by Veronica song sung by Rizelle Pereira unrolling the picture of suffering face of Jesus Christ.

## Labourer murdered in Raia; one detained

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** A 40-year-old labourer from Odisha, identified as Khageshwer Sabar, was allegedly murdered in his rented room at Golden House Chal, Sonarwado, Santimol, Raia. Maina-Curtorim police have registered an offence under relevant sections of the IPC and launched an investigation into the incident.

According to police, Sabar, who was engaged in labour work, was residing with two roommates and sharing the rent. Preliminary investigation suggests that two individuals, suspected to have committed the murder, are currently absconding. A forensic team and fingerprint experts also inspected the crime scene, though no major clues have emerged so far.

## Redeveloped Margao wholesale fish market to open on April 30

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The long-awaited redeveloped Margao wholesale fish market is finally set to be inaugurated on April 30, marking the completion of a project funded by the central government. South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) Chairman and MLA Krishna Daji Salkar confirmed that all preparations are in place for the grand opening, bringing relief to vendors and customers who have endured delays. While the immediate benefits include better wastewater management and organized parking for fish-laden vehicles, Salkar assured that additional facilities, such as the proposed cold storage unit, will be implemented in the future as per the pro-

ject report. He emphasized the commitment of the PDA and the government to fulfill all aspects of the plan, though some components may take more time to materialize.

Responding to criticism over the dolphin-themed paintings adorning the market walls, Salkar stated that the PDA would consult the government for a final decision on the matter. He defended the choice, explaining that while public sentiment is valued, it is impractical to feature individual fishermen on the building. The redevelopment is expected to streamline operations and improve hygiene, addressing long-standing concerns of traders and buyers alike as the market prepares for its official reopening.

## Environment Minister hospitalised in New Delhi

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Sunday said that Environment Minister **Aleixo Sequeira** is admitted in a private hospital in New Delhi for minor treatment and he had gone to see him there.

Speaking to mediapersons, he said, "I had gone to Delhi to see Aleixo Sequeira who is admitted to a hospital there. He is alright now. He is taking treatment there."

Sources said that the minister would be discharged in a next couple of days.



## National Fire Service Day 2025 calls for united action on fire safety

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** Marking National Fire Service Day on April 14, the Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services, Goa, joined the nation in honouring firefighters who lost their lives in the 1944 Bombay Dock Explosion and in reaffirming the urgent need for fire safety awareness across the country.

### PREVENTING TRAGEDIES

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**This year's theme, 'Unite to Ignite, A Fire Safe India,' emphasises the growing need for shared responsibility in fire prevention amid rising urbanisation and industrial activity. As cities grow taller and industries expand, so do the risks. Fire safety is no longer optional—it's a collective responsibility — Nitin V Raiker, Director of Fire and Emergency Services.**



expand, so do the risks. Fire safety is no longer optional—it's a collective responsibility," said Nitin V Raiker, Director of the Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services.

Throughout Fire Prevention Week (April 14–20), the Directorate will conduct a series of initiatives including fire safety

drills in schools, residential areas and offices, public awareness campaigns, and technology exhibitions to showcase the latest in fire detection and suppression.

"Thousands of lives are lost each year to preventable fire incidents. Simple steps like installing smoke detectors, inspecting wir-

ing, and participating in safety drills can go a long way," Raiker added.

In addition to practical education, firefighters will be recognised for their bravery and dedication during special ceremonies.

Raiker urged builders, businesses, and residents to comply with fire safety regulations and embrace preventive technologies. "We must educate, equip, and empower every citizen to be fire-aware," he said.

The Directorate's message is clear: fire safety cannot be the responsibility of fire departments alone. It is a national mission. As Raiker concluded, "Together, we can prevent fire tragedies. Together, we can create a Fire Safe India."

