

Guv, CM, Union leaders honour Pontiff's legacy of peace, humility and compassion

Team Herald

PANJIM: Tributes from Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Union Minister of State for Power Shripad Naik, and Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade poured in after the Vatican announced Pope Francis had died on Easter Monday.

In a deeply personal message, Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai expressed heartfelt condolences, describing the Pope as "a beacon of mercy, compassion, and humility for the entire world." He said, "It is with profound sorrow and reverence that I express my heartfelt condolences on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis, the spiritual head of the Catholic Church."

Reflecting on a memorable encounter, Pillai recalled receiving a personal blessing from the Pope through Cardinal George Koovalatt during a visit to the Goa Raj Bhavan just four months ago. "On my request to honour him and his delegation from the Vatican, Cardinal Koovalatt presented to me a blessed crucifix of Jesus Christ, two sacred rosaries, and a portrait



of Mother Mary—an unforgettable gesture of spiritual grace that I shall always treasure."

Calling Pope Francis "a man of the poor and the marginalised," the Governor highlighted the pontiff's deep compassion and advocacy for the oppressed, as reflected in his book *The Name of God is Mercy* (2015). Pillai also praised Pope Francis's warmth towards India and its leadership, recalling

the affection he extended to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Italy.

"He chose to live in a modest home, cooked his own meals, and travelled using public transport—a rare embodiment of spiritual authenticity in today's world," said Pillai, drawing a parallel between the Pope and St Francis of Assisi.

"Pope Francis will always be re-

membered as a spiritual teacher of the highest order, who tirelessly spread the message of human love, global harmony, and peace. A bold reformer, he courageously addressed critical global issues—be it terrorism, climate change, or the plight of refugees—always standing firm for justice, compassion, and human dignity," Pillai concluded.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant also joined the nation in mourning, stating, "Deeply saddened to learn about the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. His unwavering commitment to peace, compassion, and the upliftment of humanity transcended borders and faiths."

The Chief Minister extended heartfelt condolences to the Catholic community in Goa and across the world on behalf of the state government.

Union Minister Shripad Naik remarked, "A beacon of compassion and humility, he dedicated his life to Christ's ideals, serving the poor and inspiring hope among the suffering. His legacy will endure forever."

Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade said, "He was a compassionate leader who dedicated

his life to peace, kindness, and serving people across all faiths. My heartfelt condolences to the Catholic community in Goa and around the world."

Pope Francis, the first Latin American pontiff, passed away on Monday at the age of 88. His global impact, marked by simplicity, social justice, and spiritual leadership, leaves behind a legacy mourned by millions across all faiths.

BJP leader Savio Rodrigues has also requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare a national day of mourning in honour of Pope Francis. Rodrigues praised the late pontiff as a "true friend of India" who had a deep longing to visit the country. He highlighted Pope Francis's message of peace, compassion, and unity, which resonated across faiths and touched countless lives.

In his request, Rodrigues stated that millions of Indian Christians, as well as people of different religions in India and abroad, mourn the Pope's passing. Declaring a national day of mourning, he said, would be a mark of India's respect for the pontiff's commitment to humanity, harmony, and hope.

Priests pay tribute to Pope Francis

Pope Francis was truly a Holy Father, who was a Pastor, not only of the Catholic Church but a Servant Leader of Humanity and the Cosmos. Although he was called the Pontiff, he was more a Man of the Masses, who could interact and relate with anyone and everyone because he spoke and acted with his heart. He hoped that the Church of the Second Vatican Council could be made relevant for the contemporary times and hence, began the journey for a Synodal Church. I hoped and prayed that he would live to conclude the Synodal process in 2028 but God's will be done. May God grant him the eternal reward for being a Pope of Our Time!"

— Fr Aleixo Menezes,

Parish Priest of St John the Baptist Church, Benaulim

Pope Francis lived a life of simplicity. He was a real pastor and felt the smell of the sheep. He strived to bring a lot of reform and have true collaboration between the Pastors and the Lay faithful. The synod on synodality was a step to get to the roots of what the Church is. He suffered during his recent illness and God has relieved him from this earthly suffering. But for us we have lost a Pastor who had a vision of what Christ wanted for the Church. May the Lord give us a new Pastor who will walk in the right steps

— Fr Nelson Sequeira,

Director, Good Shepherd Institute of Theology, Rachol

With the passing away of our beloved Pope Francis, the Church has lost a man with a vision, mission and passion for making the merciful love of Christ tangible to everyone, especially to those who are considered by the world as least, lost and last. He was a bridge that endeavoured to embrace people of all faiths with a commitment to foster fraternity and harmony in the world. He was an epitome of joy and hope who always utilized his papacy to give voice to the voiceless and make the invisible people visible to the world. Indeed, a true embodiment of Jesus — the Good Shepherd

— Rev Dr Agnelo Pinheiro,

Professor of Philosophy at Rachol Seminary and Convenor of the Apostolate of Inter-Religious Dialogue

The sad demise of the Holy Father is a great loss to the Catholic Church. I personally was motivated by his compassion for the poor and needy, the marginalized, his sensitivity towards the mother earth, care and concern towards the family and dedication towards safeguarding the principles of our faith. As the director of the Family Apostolate in the Archdiocese, I took inspiration from him to uplift the dignity and sanctity of the Sacrament of Marriage. He may become one of the Saints in the future. May God grant him eternal rest

— Fr Albano Fernandes,

Director of Diocesan Family Service Centre

Pope Francis endeared himself to almost every section of people. He raised his prophetic voice regarding wars, poverty, environment etc. His humble and smiling personality made almost everyone love him. Since he hailed from Argentina where he experienced the kinds of pains and agonies people went through, he displayed special concern for the marginalized, downtrodden, prisoners etc. He practiced what he preached. His word and personal action went hand in hand. He brought the Catholic Church closer to other peoples of other Religions. He has no Malice towards anyone but was an embodiment of Love towards all - a Fatherly Figure Indeed!

— Fr Eremito Rebelo,

Senior priest of the Archdiocese of Goa

I was deeply shocked to learn of Pope Francis's passing. It was difficult to process such news, especially a day after Easter Sunday. Pope Francis gave our Church a powerful vision of mercy. His papacy emphasized shepherding leadership, viewing the Church as a battlefield hospital embracing the wounded and marginalized. He reminded us priests to "smell of our sheep"—walking alongside the poor and exploited. He taught us to care for our common home, advocating that creation itself is a gospel inscribed by God. As a tireless advocate for social friendship, he called us to cross divisions of religion and culture, reminding us no wall should separate God's people. His vision of a synodal Church—walking, listening, journeying together—remains his lasting gift. I believe Pope Francis now shares in Christ's victory, a good and faithful servant received into God's embrace

— Rev Fr Dr Victor Ferrao,

Parish Priest of St Francis Xavier Church, Borim

Pope Francis was a true shepherd onto the heart of God and for the people of God. He opened the love of God without any discrimination. He had special desire to protect the environment and he wanted us to protect the nature. He also had a dream of Synodal Church where each and every faithful participate in the decision making and in the building of the Church. He was a true Pastor

— Fr Barry Cardozo, Director of Diocesan Centre for Social Communications Media (DCSCM), Goa and Archdiocese of Goa spokesman

Catholic association condole sudden demise of Pope

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Catholic Association of Goa (CAG) has expressed its deepest sorrow and pain at the sudden passing away of Pope Francis, and expressed its prayerful solidarity and communion with the suffering millions around the World.

"The CAG joins the millions of Catholics around the World, and particularly the Catholic Community in Goa led by Archbishop Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao, in expressing profound shock and pain at the sudden demise of our Holy Father, the Universal Head of the Catholic Church. The late Holy Father will be fondly remembered and leaves behind an enduring legacy that transcended the boundaries of the Church," the CAG stated in a press release issued by Adv Nick Colaco.

"Amidst raging conflicts around the world, particularly in Palestine, the birthplace of

Christianity, the late Holy Father was a resounding and consistent voice for sustained peace, hope and reconciliation. He had the courage of his convictions to speak truth to the powers-that-be and became a powerful voice for the poor and the marginalised, especially the suffering migrants around the world," the CAG stated.

"Our dear departed Holy Father leaves behind a perpetual legacy, espousing Christian and Gospel Values of transformation, truth, justice, freedom, simplicity, equality, dignity, inclusivity and harmony with God's Creation. His poignant words in his last Easter Message to the world, *Urbi et Orbi*, last Sunday, will continue ringing in our hearts and minds, being particularly relevant to our context: "There can be no peace without freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and respect for the views of others," it stated.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind lauds pontiff's efforts for peace

Team Herald

PANJIM: Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Goa has expressed its deep sorrow and heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Pope Francis, the spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Goa said, "Pope Francis was widely respected across faiths for his humility, compassion, and consistent advocacy for justice, peace, and the upliftment of the poor and marginalised. His efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and foster mutual understanding among diverse communities will be remembered as a significant contribution to global harmony and human solidarity. We extend our sympathies to our Christian brethren in Goa, across India, and around the world, as well as to the Vatican and the global Catholic community.

Bishops' body declares 9 days of mourning across country

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) has called for nine days of mourning throughout the country following the death of Pope Francis, according to an official circular issued on Monday.

The Archbishop of Goa and Daman, Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, who is also the CCBI president, signed the statement expressing the Church's grief and outlining commemorative activities.

Cardinal Ferrao issued in the circular addressed to all archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, religious, catechists, and lay faithful of the Latin Catholic Church in India.

The CCBI president has requested special prayers and Requiem Masses for the repose of the Pope's soul during this mourning period. As a visible sign of grief, church bells are to be tolled "to signify our sorrow and announce the passing away of our Supreme Pontiff."

The letter highlighted Pope Francis's legacy as the Successor of Peter from 2013 to 2025, noting that he guided the Church with "wisdom, humility and an open heart, always

seeking to promote fellowship and striving to bring people closer to God." It particularly emphasized his efforts to transform the Church into a "synodal community, one that listens, discerns, journeys together and embraces inclusivity."

Cardinal Ferrao requested all dioceses, where possible and considering local circumstances, to gather priests, religious and lay faithful at their cathedrals on a suitable day for Requiem Masses, "uniting in prayer for the eternal repose of our beloved Holy Father" and expressing "profound solidarity with the Universal Church."

Cardinal Ferrao wrote: "May our merciful Lord grant Pope Francis eternal rest. Through the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may the Church be strengthened in these difficult times."

The statement also noted Pope Francis's legacy of canonising five Indian saints during his pontificate: St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and St. Euphrasia Eluvathingal (November 23, 2014), St. Joseph Vaz (January 14, 2015), St. Mariam Theresia Chiramel (October 13, 2019), and St. Devasahayam Pillai (May 15, 2022).

Speed breakers planned at Coldem stretch

Team Herald

MARGAO: Authorities have installed barricades and plan to construct speed breakers at the hazardous Coldem stretch in Navelim, following growing safety concerns. Officials from the Traffic Department, PWD, Police, and RTO conducted a joint inspection of the area today prior to implementing these measures.

The action follows repeated appeals by local residents and Adv Pratima Coutinho, who had raised the issue with various authorities. Speaking to media persons after the inspection, Coutinho said, "Where there is a will, there is a way," acknowledging the authorities' response to the residents' concerns.

Earlier, villagers from Navelim had submitted a memorandum to the PWD office, demanding safety measures for the accident-prone stretch. Their demands came in the wake of a protest, during which residents had threatened to block the road if action was not taken. Locals had cited multiple accidents caused by the absence of speed breakers, inadequate signage, and poor visibility at blind spots along the road.

In response to these representations, government officials agreed to implement safety measures and scheduled today's inspection. With barricades now in place and speed breakers in the pipeline, authorities have begun addressing the long-standing safety issues at this location.

Aadhaar card scams: Fatorda residents decry misuse of addresses by migrants, tenants

House numbers, addresses used without consent of actual occupants; authorities urged to implement stricter verification methods

Team Herald

MARGAO: Concerns are growing among residents over the increasing misuse of documents in the Aadhaar card application process. Citizens have come forward alleging that fraudulent practices—such as the use of fake addresses and misrepresentation of housing details—are being employed by individuals, particularly migrants, to obtain Aadhaar cards.

Local residents claim that house numbers and addresses are being falsely used without the knowledge or consent of the actual occupants. In several instances, rented tenants or non-local migrants have allegedly submitted applications listing someone else's

"We recently found out that someone had used our house number in their Aadhaar application without even living here

— Tony Pinto, Fatorda resident

"We understand that everyone needs an Aadhaar card for essential services, but using someone else's address without permission is dishonest and harmful

— Thelma Fernandes, Social worker

residential address as their own.

"We recently found out that someone had used our house number in their Aadhaar application without even living here," said Tony Pinto, a long-time resident of Fatorda. "I only came to know when we received a letter addressed to a name we didn't recognise. When I contacted the Aadhaar office, they

confirmed the number had been used in a new application."

Another resident, Pravin Naik, echoed similar concerns. "This isn't just a one-off incident. Several families have experienced the same. People who have never lived here are listing our addresses, and sometimes even submitting forged rental agreements," he said. Migrants and tempo-

"This isn't just a one-off incident. Several families have experienced the same. People who have never lived here are listing our addresses, and sometimes even submitting forged rental agreements

— Pravin Naik, Fatorda resident

rary renters are reportedly among those frequently cited in such cases. Some locals believe that the pressure to quickly obtain identification documents pushes them into resorting to such measures.

"We understand that everyone needs an Aadhaar card for essential services, but using someone else's address without permission is dishonest

and harmful," said Thelma Fernandes, a social worker in the area. "It can lead to legal confusion, especially if that person is later involved in any financial or legal dispute."

Residents are now urging authorities to implement stricter verification mechanisms during the Aadhaar enrolment process.

"The UIDAI must work closely with local municipal offices and housing societies to verify addresses before issuing Aadhaar cards," suggested citizens. "At the very least, there should be a physical verification or cross-check with property owners in the case of rented premises."

The issue has sparked calls for greater vigilance, transparency, and community awareness.

Chaos at SGPDA market as sewage works stall traffic, vendors demand action

Team Herald

MARGAO: The bustling South Goa Planning and Development Authority (SGPDA) market in Margao has descended into chaos in recent days, as ongoing sewage network works brought traffic to a near standstill, leaving vendors, commuters, and shoppers frustrated and calling for immediate intervention.

The road leading to the



market witnessed severe congestion throughout the day, with vehicles crawling at

a snail's pace and pedestrians struggling to navigate the overcrowded stretch. The

situation was further exacerbated by construction machinery blocking key access points, choking an already narrow road system.

Conditions on Saturday and Sunday were particularly dire, with exasperated vendors and shoppers urging authorities to step in.

"This is becoming unbearable. We are losing customers because people don't want to get stuck in this mess," said Maria Fernandes, a vegetable

vendor who has been selling at the market for over a decade. "I understand the work is necessary, but the authorities should have made alternate arrangements."

Shoppers echoed similar concerns. Anita Naik, a Margao resident who visits the market twice a week, said, "It took me 30 minutes to park and reach the market entrance. There is no proper signage, no traffic control, nothing. It's like we're

left to fend for ourselves."

Several vendors reported reduced footfall and plummeting sales due to the lack of accessibility. "People are avoiding this place because of the chaos. We're already struggling with rising costs—this just adds to our burden," said Salim Shaikh, who runs a small grocery stall in the market.

Citizens also criticised the lack of coordination among authorities. "Even a few traf-

fic police managing the flow could make a big difference," one resident noted.

Despite mounting complaints, there has been no official communication from traffic authorities regarding any temporary traffic management plan. Locals are now demanding immediate deployment of traffic personnel, clear detour signage, and a dedicated parking area to ease the situation and prevent further inconvenience.