

shorttakes

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GAS LEAK, FIRE REPORTED AT CAMPAL; NO INJURIES

PANJIM: A natural gas leak from an underground pipeline triggered a fire near Lake View Colony in Campal on Sunday evening.

Panjim Fire Services, along with technicians from the gas company, responded swiftly to the incident. "We received a call around 5.30 pm about a gas leak and fire. A fire tender was rushed to the spot and the flames were extinguished within 15-20 minutes using water," said firefighter Suraj Ghadi.

The gas company's response team soon arrived, and the pipeline was shut off to prevent further leakage. While the exact cause of the fire remains unknown, no injuries were reported, and damage was limited to the pipeline, officials said.

MURDER ACCUSED FOUND DEAD ON TRAIN WHILE FLEEING TO KERALA

MARGAO: The prime accused in the murder of a 38-year-old man from Bhatkal, Karnataka, was found dead in a train compartment in Kerala while allegedly fleeing from Goa.

Police had been investigating the death of Bashir Gudu Sab Ahmed, whose body was found outside a hotel on Station Road, Margao, on April 30. Initially registered as an unnatural death, the case turned into a murder probe after post-mortem revealed serious injuries.

Investigations revealed that Bashir was allegedly pushed out of a second-floor window by H Rafiq, also from Bhatkal, with whom he had checked into the hotel. After the incident, Rafiq fled the scene. Later, his relatives and Bashir's relatives, who arrived in Goa, informed the police here that Rafiq was found dead in a train compartment. Margao police have sent a request for further details to their Kerala counterparts and continue to investigate the motive. CCTV footage, hotel records, and witness statements are being examined.

A case of murder has been registered under Section 103(1) of the BNS, 2023.

SCOOTER RIDER INJURED IN COLLISION WITH TOURIST IN RENTAL CAR NEAR BETUL

MARGAO: Gajanan Kumtekar of Canaguinim, Quepem, sustained serious injuries after his scooter was hit by a rent-a-car near the ONGC petrol pump at Betul on May 2. He is currently undergoing treatment at Goa Medical College and Hospital, Bambolim.

According to a complaint filed by Head Constable Vinod Kankonkar of Cuncolim Police Station, the accident occurred around 2.33pm when the accused, Aagam Jain from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, allegedly drove a rented car rashly and negligently without a valid driving licence. While heading from Betul towards Canaguinim, Jain reportedly veered sharply to the right near the petrol pump without using indicators or taking necessary precautions, hitting the rear of Kumtekar's scooter.

The impact caused Kumtekar to fall by the roadside and sustain injuries. Police said Jain endangered human life through his reckless driving. Further investigation is in progress.

CHINCHINIM MAN BOOKED FOR ORGANISING 'HOUSIE' GAME WITH RS 10 LAKH PRIZE

MARGAO: Cuncolim police have registered an offence against Dalrich Fernandes of Mirandawado, Chinchinim, for allegedly organising a gambling activity, popularly known as "Housie", during a stage show without prior permission from authorities.

According to a complaint filed by PSI Suhas Velip, the incident occurred between 7pm and 10.30pm on May 2 at the Chinchinim Panchayat Playground. Fernandes allegedly conducted the gambling activity in a public place during the event, offering a total prize of Rs 10 lakh to participants.

Police registered the case under Section 11(2)(a) of the Public Gambling Act. Further investigation is underway.

Sao Matias Villagers Oppose Use of Ferries for Film Shoots

PANJIM: The Sao Matias gram sabha on Sunday passed a resolution urging the River and Navigation Department (RND) not to permit the use of passenger ferries for film shoots.

The villagers also decided that anyone wishing to shoot films in the area must first obtain proper permissions from the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG).

During the meeting, residents raised concerns about mud dumped on village roads due to ongoing underground cabling work and demanded a timeline for its completion. They also called on the panchayat to immediately recover pending rent dues from the Health Department and BSNL.

Nerul Man Booked for Setting Boats on Fire at Coco Beach

PANJIM: Porvorim Police have booked a Nerul resident, Willy Mascarenhas, for allegedly setting fire to five glass fibre boats at Coco Beach, Nerul, on the night of May 2. The complaint was filed by Orlando Ferrao of Maimem Vaddo, who claimed the boats—belonging to him and others—were deliberately torched, resulting in damages estimated at Rs 20 lakh. The accused has been booked for mischief with intent to cause damage.

Tourism at risk from overpricing, warns Transport Minister

Admits govt is not happy with tourist footfall; calls for greater cooperation amongst stakeholders to maintain State's appeal

Team Herald

MARGAO: Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho has urged tourism stakeholders to address pricing concerns, warning that Goa's tourism industry could suffer if overcharging continues.

Speaking after inaugurating a tourism department event held in Colva on Friday, Godinho pointed out that while taxi operators, airlines, and restaurants seek increased tourist numbers, their pricing practices could ultimately harm the sector.

"Overpricing will affect tourism in Goa in the long term. People may look to new places," Godinho cau-

tioned. He emphasized that despite Goa's popularity, continued success requires responsible business practices. "The minister acknowledged Goa's strong position in India's tourism landscape but warned against complacency. "Goa is one place where everyone wants to come. We have been a number one tourist destination. Charters are coming from across the world. Tourists are coming from the country. After seeing all this, we became a little complacent. Overpricing will affect tourism in Goa in the long term. People may look to new places

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Godinho expressed concern about recent tourist numbers falling short of expectations. "For some

reasons, we are not happy with the footfall in the tourism sector. We have to work together to take tourism forward," he stated.

The minister highlighted efforts by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte to boost the sector and expand tourism into Goa's hinterland areas. He called for greater cooperation among stakeholders to maintain Goa's appeal.

"With cooperation from everyone, it is high time we should have more tourism footfall and tourists. We have to take tourism forward and locals will get the opportunity to benefit from tourism," Godinho added.

Cong MP feted at temple day after tragedy; receives flak

Team Herald

PANJIM: The BJP on Sunday hit out at South Goa Congress MP Viriato Fernandes, for accepting a felicitation at the temple in Shirgao where six persons died in a stampede only a day ago.

Fernandes visited the Shree Lairai Devi temple and was felicitated by the temple committee by offering a shawl and flowers and a video of the felicitation went viral.

BJP spokesperson Giriraj Pai Vernekar said while Goa was mourning the tragic loss of lives, Fernandes felt "no shame in getting himself felicitated."

While Fernandes was unavailable for comments on the criticism, talking to reporters on Sunday morning after the felicitation, he said he did not represent North Goa but has a special affinity for neighbouring Assnora village where he was born.

NOBODY TO LEAN ON



An India post mailbox placed in the heart of Panjim, near Cine National is barely hanging onto its post, awaiting repairs from concerned authorities.

Nuvem GS resolves freeze on large housing projects

Decision taken after discussion on how rapid development is straining essential services and the environment; follows several other villages

Team Herald

MARGAO: At Nuvem's gram sabha on Sunday, villagers unanimously passed a resolution calling for a moratorium (temporary ban) on the construction of multi-family housing complexes—such as apartment buildings and row houses—until the government defines the village's carrying capacity. The decision followed a detailed discussion on how rapid development is straining essential services and the local environment.

The proposal was moved by Jose Roque Andrade, who warned that Nuvem's infrastructure—particularly its water supply and roads—is already stretched beyond

capacity. He expressed concern that further approvals for large housing projects would jeopardise the future of existing residents. Villagers Carmelito Andrade and Zarina D'Cunha also supported the concerns, leading to a resolution moved by Carmelito and seconded by Zarina. It was passed unanimously, with the sarpanch assuring that the matter would be taken up with the authorities.

Environmental degradation was also raised during the meeting, with Zarina highlighting construction and land-filling in low-lying areas near the Nuvem underpass, part of the River Sal floodplains. She pointed to new roadside structures and their

impact on local biodiversity. Sarpanch Freda D'Sa said no licences had been issued for these works and she would write to the highway authority for clarification.

Zarina also criticised the lack of meetings of the panchayat's committees. Apart from the Village Development Committee (VDC) and the biodiversity committee, she noted that others had not convened and called for regular reviews and action.

Another issue came from a Cupem villager, who flagged traffic congestion near the Honda (Goa Rajee) showroom caused by the placement of signals. The sarpanch acknowledged the problem and said steps would be taken to shift the signals forward.

GHRC directs Penha-de-Franca panchayat to halt waste handling at MRF site near school

Commission cites pollution, improper segregation and health concerns raised by parents

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Goa Human Rights Commission (GHRC) has directed the Penha-de-Franca Village Panchayat to stop handling mixed waste—comprising biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials—at the authorised Material Recovery Facility (MRF) site, and to instead transport the waste to the solid waste management facility at Saligao.

The order came during the hearing of a complaint filed by Pushpa Naik and others, all parents of children studying at Vidya Prabodhini School, Porvorim. The Commission agreed with the complainants and the Chairman of the Prabodhan Education Society, noting that inspection reports from the Goa State Pollution Control

Board (GSPCB) revealed improper waste segregation by the Penha-de-Franca Panchayat. This, the reports said, had resulted in environmental pollution in the area, prompting the GSPCB to impose a compensation penalty of Rs 10,000 on the Panchayat.

The GHRC stated that the GSPCB's directions must be strictly complied with. It further instructed the Board to monitor the MRF site and conduct inspections every 15 days, issuing directions to the panchayat as needed.

Following the first inspection of the MRF shed on September 20, 2024, the GSPCB issued directions via an order dated July 26, 2024, citing violations of the conditions under which operation of the MRF was approved (vide order dated August 4, 2021). The

Panchayat was directed to pay Rs 10,000 as environmental compensation.

In response, the Village Panchayat requested a six-month period to carry out procedural formalities, including floating tenders, inviting quotations, and corresponding with the Directorate of Panchayats and the BDO, Bardez, for necessary approvals regarding the MRF shed. However, the GHRC observed that the Rs 10,000 fine imposed by the Board had still not been paid.

A second inspection held on December 10, 2024, revealed that the MRF shed was located directly opposite the newly constructed Vidya Prabodhini School premises, separated only by a six-metre-wide road. The shed was found to be inadequately covered, lacking separate compartments for waste segregation.

The inspection also found dry waste littered and scattered both within and outside the MRF shed. Traces of wet waste, including vegetable scraps, kitchen and restaurant waste, were also observed. The contractor informed inspectors that small amounts of wet waste often came mixed with dry waste. Additionally, construction and demolition (C&D) waste was seen disposed of at the site.

The parents of Vidya Prabodhini School students had earlier lodged complaints stating that their children had been shifted in June 2024 to the new school building, which was located next to the garbage treatment plant and exposed to a polluted atmosphere. They had appealed for action on grounds of violation of human rights.

Flood risk: Mungul residents threaten stir if debris not cleared

Team Herald

MARGAO: Frustrated by inaction, residents of Mungul-Fatorda have issued a one-week ultimatum to authorities to remove soil dumped during the construction of the stilt bridge for the western bypass near the SGPDA market, failing which they will escalate the matter with the authorities. The soil, which was filled to facilitate machinery movement for the bridge's construction, was supposed to be cleared after completion, as assured by PWD officials and the contractor concerned in the presence of local representatives. However, six months since the bridge's completion, the debris remains, raising fears of severe flooding in the low-lying area during the upcoming monsoon.

"The entire stretch is a natural water catchment zone, and if this soil isn't removed, our village could be submerged," said Cruz Fernandes, a concerned resident. He pointed out that officials had also promised a culvert along the Margao-Col-

va road to manage water flow, but no work has been done. "We were given assurances in writing and in meetings, yet nothing has happened. Now, with the monsoon approaching, we have no choice but to demand immediate action."

The villagers are now calling on Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who also holds the PWD portfolio, and local Fatorda MLA Vijai Sardesai to intervene. "If the soil isn't cleared within a week, we will meet the MLA and consider stronger measures," warned Fernandes. With time running out, the community is bracing for a potential crisis, hoping authorities act before the first rains arrive.

3rd case in five months: Bailancho Ekvott seeks probe into BITS Pilani student suicides

Team Herald

MARGAO: Women's rights group Bailancho Ekvott has raised serious concerns following the recent suicide of a student at BITS Pilani, urging authorities to investigate possible causes, including ragging and inadequate mental health support on campus.

Speaking to the media, Bailancho Ekvott President Auda Viegas described the incident as part of a trou-

bling pattern, pointing out that three students have reportedly died by suicide at the institution within the last five months.

She said the recurring cases suggest systemic issues that remain unaddressed and may be driving students to the point of self-harm.

"There could be ragging on campus, and if students are not filing complaints, we need to ask why. Is there a culture of silence, fear, or

mistrust? Are there qualified counsellors available to handle these sensitive issues?" questioned Viegas.

She called for an impartial and transparent inquiry into the student deaths to determine whether the campus environment is contributing to psychological distress among students.

According to Viegas, academic pressure, social isolation, or harassment could be underlying causes that need

to be identified and tackled.

"It is unacceptable and unbelievable that self-harm is seen as a solution by young, promising students. The suicide of any student is a tragedy that the education system must confront and learn from," she said.

Viegas emphasised the need for institutions like BITS Pilani to prioritise the emotional and psychological well-being of their students alongside academic success.

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