

## WAR CRY TO SAVE MHADEI ECHOES ACROSS BORDERS

Activists gather for protests in Panjim and Belagavi; say river diversion will spell doom for Western Ghats



Environmentalists protest against the Kalsa-Bhandura water diversion project in Karnataka's Belagavi district, on Tuesday

Team Herald

PANJIM: Environmental activists from both Goa and Karnataka have stepped up their campaigns against the diversion of water from the Mhadei River, calling for immediate measures to safeguard the Western Ghats and its fragile ecosystems. On Tuesday, protests and rallies took place in Panjim and Belagavi, highlighting growing resistance on both sides of the border.

In Goa, activists gathered at Azad Maidan to decry the state government's inaction on the establishment of a tiger reserve, despite a High Court directive that links conservation efforts with the protection of the Mhadei River. They warned that continued political delay could lead to irreversible damage to the state's lone major river and its surrounding biodiversity.

Activist Rajan Ghate sharply criticised the government's legal manoeuvres. "When the High Court ordered for the creation of a tiger reserve, the government could have implemented the order immediately, but it went to the Supreme Court. The government is simply wasting taxpayers' money," he said.

Ghate underscored the cultural and ecological importance of Mhadei, saying, "Mhadei can be preserved only if the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary is declared as a tiger

reserve. If Belgaum can protest against the diversion of Mhadei, why is the Goa government staying quiet? It's crucial to declare Mhadei a tiger reserve - Rajan Ghate, activist

Activists in Belgaum, Khanapur and Kankumbi in Karnataka are demanding that Mhadei waters should not be diverted. Why then are the Goans silent? It is only when Goans have to hit the streets will they understand why there is a scarcity of drinking water despite heavy rains - Xencor Polgi, activist

reserve. If Belgaum can protest against the diversion of Mhadei, why is the Goa government staying quiet? It's crucial to declare Mhadei a tiger reserve, especially when Karnataka benefits from 20 rivers while Goa relies on just one."

Activist Xencor Polgi questioned the passivity of Goans and alleged that private interests are behind the delays.

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## Cabbies knock on Lobo door, but he won't play saviour

Taxi ally Lobo backs 'digital transparency', leaving drivers feeling uneasy



A taxi owner tears a copy of the draft guidelines at a meeting with Michael Lobo

Team Herald

CALANGUTE/PANJIM: The simmering discontent among Goa's taxi drivers over the draft Goa Transport Aggregator Guidelines, 2025, reached a new pitch on Tuesday as they met with Calangute MLA Michael Lobo at his Parra residence to voice their opposition. The heated discussion underscored the drivers' fears that the new guidelines threaten their livelihoods, while Lobo emphasised the need for digital transparency to address tourists' complaints about inconsistent fares.

Lobo assured the drivers he would arrange meetings with Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and the Transport Minister to discuss their concerns.

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One driver will charge Rs 1,500 and another Rs 1,200 for the same trip. This should not happen. When customers book a cab through an app, the local taxis outside the resorts create problems. Guests should not leave Goa with bad memories. For transparency, I'm with the government - Michael Lobo, Calangute MLA

We don't want aggregators. We work day and night while they take a commission. They get rich, and we stay where we are. Our leaders call us the taxi mafia, but we're just trying to support our families - Srikhandt Gavkar, veteran driver from Valpoi

## Kalsa water already gone, Mhadei stares at doom?

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

KANKUMBI, KARNATAKA: The skies across the Western Ghats are dark with clouds bringing heavy rain, but at Kankumbi, across the border from Goa in Karnataka, the flow of water from the Kalsa canal into the Mhadei River has come to a complete halt.

According to environmentalists and officials, the Karnataka government has reversed the canal's flow direction, diverting precious water resources toward



The Kalsa nala that took water to Mhadei is running dry even during the monsoon

the Malaprabha basin in Karnataka instead.

"There is no study to indicate the quantum of water that the Mhadei is losing due to this il-

legal diversion, but the loss is huge," said environmentalist Rajendra P Kerkar.

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There is no study to indicate the quantum of water that the Mhadei is losing due to this illegal diversion, but the loss is huge. They have diverted the water in such a way that the canal no longer flows through Surla village to Nanoda, where it ultimately joined Mhadei at Utse in Sattari - Rajendra P Kerkar, environmentalist

The Goa government has filed two contempt petitions because water has been diverted at two locations. Unfortunately there has been no hearing and no meeting and site inspections under PRAWAH, which we have asked for some time back - Dilip Naik, WRD Superintendent Engineer

## Active Covid cases cross 4,000 mark in India

AGENCY, NEW DELHI: India's active Covid-19 cases on Tuesday crossed the 4,000 mark within just three days of breaching the 3,000 mark, with most infections reported in Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the last 24 hours, according to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) data.

As per health ministry data on Tuesday, Kerala logged 1,416 new Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra 494 and Gujarat 397 infections in the last 24 hours.

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MAX. TEMP 32.6 °C  
MIN. TEMP 24.5 °C



Forget drones and missiles - send water tankers instead.

## Oppn parties demand special Parliament session on Op Sindoor

Sixteen parties write to the prime minister demanding a special session

PTI, NEW DELHI: INDIA bloc parties on Tuesday rallied together to push their demand for a Special Session of Parliament in the wake of Operation Sindoor, with leaders from 16 parties writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stressing that there were "serious questions facing the nation".

Senior opposition leaders, who held a meeting here, asserted that the session was needed to discuss a series of events, including the Pahalgam attack, followed by Operation Sindoor, US President Donald Trump's claim of brokering a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, and the death of civilians in border areas in Pakistan shelling.

The leaders said they stood with the government after the Pahalgam attack, and through Operation Sindoor, and they should now accept their demand for a special session.

"There are serious questions facing the nation about the terror attack, killing of civilians in Poonch, Uri and Rajouri, the ceasefire announcements, and the implications on our national security and foreign policy. We have supported the government's efforts to engage with the international community on India's position," opposition leaders said in a joint letter.

"The government has briefed foreign nations and the media, but not Parliament-keeping the people of India and their elected representatives in the dark. Therefore, we urge you to convene a special session of Parliament immediately upon the

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The government has briefed foreign nations and the media, but not Parliament - keeping the people of India and their elected representatives in the dark. Therefore, we urge you to convene a special session of Parliament immediately upon the return of the all-party delegations - Opposition

return of the all-party delegations," they said.

Congress' Jairam Ramesh and Deepender Hooda, Trinamool Congress' (TMC) Derek O'Brien, Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) Manoj Jha, Samajwadi Party's (SP) Ramgopal Yadav, and Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sanjay Raut attended the meeting.

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## 18 YEARS A CHALLENGER, NO:18 CHAMPION AT LAST



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's players embrace their teammate Virat Kohli after winning their maiden IPL title by defeating Punjab Kings by 6 runs in the IPL 2025 final held in Ahmedabad, on Tuesday. Batting first, RCB scored 190/9, with Virat Kohli top-scoring with 43 runs. Punjab Kings fell short in the chase, managing only 184/7

## Indian-origin man on life support in Aus after cops kneel on his neck

PTI, MELBOURNE: A 42-year-old Indian-origin man is on life support with suspected brain damage in Australia after a police officer allegedly knelt on his neck during an arrest, mistaking him for being involved in domestic violence. The incident occurred last week on Payneham Road at Royston Park in Adelaide's eastern suburbs. Gaurav Kundi, father of two children, is on life support with suspected brain damage after the arrest, the australiatoday.com news portal reported on Monday.

The video footage of the incident obtained by 9news.com portal shows Kundi being forced onto Payneham Road while he and his wife, Amritpal Kaur, loudly protest his innocence. "I've done nothing wrong," Kundi shouts, while Kaur films and cries out that the police are acting

unfairly. Kundi loses consciousness after being tackled to the ground. He is currently at the Royal Adelaide Hospital on life support. Kaur said an officer allegedly drove a knee into Kundi's neck - a move that echoes the 2020 case of George Floyd, a Black man, in the US that sparked widespread protests against police brutality and racial injustice, both in America and

internationally. "I stopped filming because I panicked when the officer knelt on him," Kaur told 9News. She said Kundi's head was slammed against the police car and the road during the arrest. Kundi was taken to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, where doctors say his brain and neck nerves are severely damaged.

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