

DOCS CALL OFF GMC AGITATION AS TALKS FINALLY DEFUSE CRISIS

CM agrees to medics' demands; MOU signed in his presence



Agitating doctors outside the dean's office at GMC, Bambolim, on Tuesday

Team Herald

PANJIM: The agitation building up at Goa Medical College (GMC) was defused on Tuesday as doctors called off their stir after Chief Minister Pramod Sawant visited the hospital and addressed their demands, taking an upper hand to defuse a crisis that has rocked Goan politics since the weekend.

The protests – sparked by Health Minister Vishwajit Rane's outburst against GMC Chief Medical Officer Dr Rudresh Kuttikar, the video of which went viral and sparked national headlines, had escalated into a national controversy – but

the resolution eased tensions.

The strike, led by the Goa Association of Resident Doctors (GARD) and supported by the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), demanded an apology from Rane for his remarks in the hospital's casualty ward, with a 24-hour ultimatum.

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On Tuesday afternoon, Sawant met with GMC Dean Dr Shivanand Bandekar, Medical Superintendent Dr Rajesh Patil, Dr Kuttikar, GARD president Dr Aayush Sharma, SP Rahul Gupta, and other representatives,

while doctors protested outside the Dean's office, holding placards demanding an apology.

Following discussions, most demands of the doctors were accepted, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Sawant's presence. A Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) will be deployed at the Bambolim police outpost, 50 additional police personnel will be stationed at the GMC complex, and a vigilance committee, headed by the Secretary (Health) and including the GMC Dean, Medical Superintendent, and relevant department heads, will address future issues through established

DECISIONS ON DOCS' DEMANDS

- Doctors accepted that public apology already in place
- Photography and videography to be prohibited at the patient care area
- 'VIP culture' not to compromise the treatment of serious patients
- Disciplinary committee headed by Secretary (Health) to decide complaints against medical professionals
- Reconstitute Staff Society which has been defunct for 15 years
- No action to be taken against any doctor who took part in the agitation
- A PSI to be posted round-the-clock at police outpost, Bambolim and 50 armed policemen within GMC, Bambolim

protocols. Measures were also introduced to prohibit photography and videography inside hospital interiors, including by ministers and their media teams.

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FIERY CRISIS ON HIGH SEAS



The Indian Coast Guard and Navy are trying to douse the fire on the Singapore-flagged container ship MV Wan Hai 503, which is approximately 78 nautical miles off Bepore port in Kerala, on Tuesday. Eighteen crew members have been rescued, while four remain missing

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Blow to tiatr as Ravindra Bhavan shuts auditoriums

Pai Tiatr Auditorium, Black Box theatre at Margao venue shut after false ceiling collapse

Team Herald

MARGAO: There was bad news for tiatr lovers on Tuesday as Ravindra Bhavan Margao (RBM) announced the closure of its Pai Tiatr Auditorium and the Black Box theatre. The decision came after a section of the false ceiling collapsed and extensive dampness was detected in the facility, raising serious safety concerns.

According to a report submitted by the Public Works Department (PWD) Division VIII, the closure – effective since May 19 – was deemed necessary to ensure the safety of performers and the public. Initially, water leakage was the main problem, aggravated by heavy rainfall



A section of the false ceiling which collapsed at the Ravindra Bhavan, Margao

that delayed emergency roof repairs. Though the roofing work has since been completed, further inspections revealed structural damage.

PWD engineers found the false ceilings of both venues to be compromised, with signs of damp-

ness, and potential risk of collapse.

The 17-year-old ceiling structures were declared unfit for continued use, and the department recommended a complete overhaul before resuming any cultural activities.

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Assistência Goa urges Missionaries of Charity to reopen St Inez home

Team Herald

PANJIM: In an extraordinary general body meeting held on Sunday, Assistência Goa unanimously resolved to request the Missionaries of Charity to reconsider their decision to shut down the home for the destitute at St Inez, Panjim.

The charity organisation has faced sharp public criticism after the Missionaries of Charity vacated the premises on April 28, ending over 49 years of service

at the location. The religious order cited a sharp decline in vocations as the reason for being unable to continue its work at the home.

Following the closure, 44 residents from the St Inez facility were relocated to other Missionaries of Charity homes in Carambolim, Quepem, and Cotto-de-Fatorpa.

Amid interest from several NGOs to take over operations at the now-vacant facility, Assistência Goa convened its members and

passed a unanimous resolution to approach the Missionaries of Charity.

"The general body has decided to write to the Missionaries of Charity requesting to reconsider its decision. We will talk to them," said one of the members.

When asked whether the applications from NGOs wishing to manage the facility were considered, the member added, "We will think of it only after receiving the reply from the Missionaries of Charity."

US Embassy warns Indians after video of cuffed student

AGENCY, NEW DELHI:

The United States Embassy in India has issued a strong advisory to Indian nationals travelling to the US, cautioning against visa misuse and illegal entry. The statement came in the wake of a viral video showing an Indian student being detained in handcuffs at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey.

The embassy's advisory, posted on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), stated: "The United States continues to welcome legitimate travelers to our country. However, there is no right to visit the United States. We cannot and will not tolerate illegal entry, abuse of visas, or the violation of US law."

The video that triggered the statement was first shared by Indian-American entrepreneur Kunal Jain. It shows a distressing scene in which a young Indian student is forcibly held down by US authorities – his hands and legs restrained, and at least two officers seen pressing their knees into his back.

"I witnessed a young Indian student being deported from Newark Airport last night – handcuffed, crying, treated like a criminal. He came chasing dreams, not causing harm," Jain wrote. "As an NRI, I felt helpless and heartbroken. This is a human tragedy." He has called upon the Indian Embassy to look into the matter and ensure support for the student.

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India's population touches 1.46 b even as fertility rate drops: UN

PTI, NEW DELHI: India's population is estimated to reach 1.46 billion in 2025, continuing to be the highest in the world, according to a new UN demographic report, which also revealed the country's total fertility rate has fallen below the replacement rate.

UNFPA's 2025 State of World Population (SOWP) Report, The Real Fertility Crisis, calls for a shift from panic over falling fertility to addressing unmet reproductive goals.

Millions of people are not able to realise their real fertility goals, it asserts.

This is the real crisis, not underpopulation or overpopulation, and the answer lies in greater reproductive agency – a person's ability to make free and informed 150 per cent choices about sex, contraception and starting a family, it says.

SIZE MATTERS

Population Size & Growth:

- Current Population: ~1.464 billion
- Expected to peak at ~1.7 billion by ~2065, then decline
- Population Doubling Time: ~79 years (slowing)

Total Fertility Rate (TFR):

- 1.9 births/woman – (Below the replacement level of 2.1)
- Historical Comparison: ~6 children/woman in 1960 ~5 in 1970



Demographic Composition:

- Youth Population: 0–14 years: 24%
- 10–19 years: 17%
- 10–24 years: 26%

Working-Age Population (15–64): 68% – potential demographic dividend

- Elderly (65+): 7% – projected to increase with higher life expectancy
- Life Expectancy (2025): Men: 71 years Women: 74 years

The report also reveals key shifts in population composition, fertility, and life expectancy, signalling a major demographic transition.

The report found that India's total fertility rate has declined to 1.9 births per woman, falling below the

replacement level of 2.1.

This means that, on average, Indian women are having fewer children than needed to maintain the population size from one generation to the next, without migration.

Despite the slowing birth rate, India's youth popu-

lation remains significant, with 24 per cent in the age bracket of 0-14, 17 per cent in 10-19, and 26 per cent in 10-24.

The country's 68 per cent of the population is of working age (15-64).

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High Court directs PWD to resolve Usgao water crisis in 10 days

Court responds to PIL highlighting severe water shortage in Usgao village

Team Herald

PANJIM: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Tuesday directed the Public Works Department (PWD) to address the severe water shortage in Usgao, Ponda taluka, and resolve the issue within 10 days. The order came during a hearing of a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Rohan Naik, who highlighted the acute water scarcity faced by Usgao residents.

Naik's petition, supported by a February

21, 2025, O Heraldo report submitted to the court, detailed the plight of villagers. Advocate Shane Coutinho, representing Naik, filed an additional affidavit stating that in several wards of Ganjem-Usgao village panchayat, drinking water is supplied for less than 30 minutes daily. In some wards, residents rely on bore wells and lack access to treated water. Naik also noted that interior areas do not receive water from the Opa treatment plant,

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

Muddy, untreated water leaves Usgao fuming

Residents fighting for basic amenity for decades, demand water from Opa plant



with no action taken by authorities to address these hardships.

Naik urged the court to direct the PWD to supply treated water to wards

2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of Usgao, which has 11 wards in total. The division bench, comprising Justices Bharati Dangre and Nivedita P Mehra, acknowledged the

grievances, supported by newspaper clippings annexed to the affidavit. The court took the additional affidavit on record.

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3 Swedes arrested with LSD, Ketamine worth Rs 2.6 cr

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the Goa Police has arrested three Swedish nationals for allegedly possessing a substantial quantity of illegal narcotics, with an estimated street value of Rs 2.59 crore.

According to officials, the accused were found in possession of 24.8 grams of LSD in liquid form, 70 LSD blotter papers, 49.3 grams of liquid ketamine and 1.5 grams of ketamine powder. The operation marks a significant seizure in the State's ongoing efforts to curb the

drug menace.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the foreign nationals had been residing in Goa for approximately two years without valid travel or residential documentation, indicating serious violations of Indian immigration laws in addition to offences under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Andreas Lorenzo Calic (39), Sami Antero Hilden Tanskanen (36) and Joel Emmanuel Carlstrom (33).

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MAX. TEMP 32.6 °C
MIN. TEMP 25.5 °C

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Sir! Lower your tone! They don't know your power.