

# Romi lovers slam Velingkar over script origin remarks

## Accuse him of stoking communal divide; vow to fight for rightful place of Roman script in Official Language Act

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan (GRLA) has hit out at Subhash Velingkar for opposing the inclusion of Romi Konkani in Goa's Official Language Act, accusing him of making politically motivated and communal remarks.

Velingkar, who has long opposed the use of the Roman script for Konkani, reiterated his stance by stating that the script is not Indian in origin and therefore should not be recognised in the Official Language Act. He argued that granting it official status would undermine the linguistic and cultural identity rooted in indigenous scripts. His comments have

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— Kennedy Afonso, GRLA president

triggered fresh tensions in Goa's long-standing language debate.

Reacting to Velingkar's assertion that the Roman script is “not Indian in origin” and should therefore not receive official recognition, GRLA president Kennedy Afonso condemned the stance as misleading and divisive. “He's once again being used by parties like BJP and MGP

to stir communal tensions with elections in view,” Afonso alleged.

He reaffirmed that Konkani remains Goa's sole official language and accused Velingkar of distorting facts about Marathi's role in governance. Afonso stressed that Romi Konkani has been systematically sidelined for decades and vowed to intensify efforts to include it officially and introduce it in Goa's school curriculum.

Afonso said Romi Konkani has suffered an injustice since the drafting of the Act. “We will fight to give Roman script its rightful place in the Official Language Act and ensure it is taught in schools across Goa,” he declared.

According to him, the demand is not limited to one community. “People of Goa will not be fooled by this tirade anymore. Both communities agree that an injustice has been done to Romi Konkani for the last 36 years, and this needs to be corrected. Only a few communal rabid fanatics like Velingkar are still opposing it.”

Velingkar also triggered controversy with his remarks about Goa's colonial past, stating that continued admiration for the Portuguese regime by certain sections of Goan society was “surprising and disgusting,” and reflected misplaced loyalty towards historical oppressors.

## 4 cows mowed down by speeding vehicle at Dharbandora

Team Herald

**PONDA:** In a tragic early morning accident around 4 am near the Sanjivani Sugar Factory in Dharbandora, four cattle were killed on the spot after reportedly being hit by a speeding vehicle on the main highway.

Police are investigating the incident and trying to identify the vehicles involved. A car and a tanker, both traveling through the area at the time, were also reportedly involved in the accident.

This comes just two weeks after two buffaloes were killed in a similar accident on the Dhavli-Farmagudi Highway. Locals have raised growing concerns over the presence of cattle on highways, especially during the rainy season when visibility is low and animals sitting on the road are hard to spot.

## Fishing union slams harassment of traditional canoe fishers at Campal

### Demands forest dept, tourism officials and CCP stop targeting small-scale fishers

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The National Federation of Small-Scale Fishworkers (NFSF) has condemned what it described as a “sustained aggression” against traditional fishers in Campal, Panjim, after its affiliate in the state raised concerns over harassment by government authorities.

In a letter addressed to five senior officials — including the Director of Fisheries, the Captain of Ports, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, the Director of Tourism, and the Commissioner of the Corporation of City of Panaji (CCP) — the NFSF said that local fishers from the All Goa Small Scale Responsible Fisheries Union

(AGSSRFU) are being prevented from docking their canoes at Campal.

According to the complaint, officials from the Forest Department, Tourism Department, and the CCP have, since April 6, allegedly told fishers that their canoes appear “dirty” and should not be stationed in the area.

“What is dirty and beautiful is based on subjective bias of the beholder,” NFSF General Secretary, Dr Sebastiao Rodrigues wrote in the letter, firmly objecting to what he called the derogatory labelling of traditional fishing gear. He added that describing traditional canoes as “dirty” was an insult to the age-old occupation of fishing in Goa.

Rodrigues also alleged

that the space traditionally used for parking fishing canoes at Campal beach has steadily been reduced due to afforestation efforts by the Forest Department, which has planted casuarina and mangrove species in the area. He said this amounted to encroachment on the livelihood space of riverine fishers operating along the Mandovi.

Calling for immediate intervention, the NFSF urged all departments involved to remove the impediments and allow local fishers to go about their work without interference.

The Federation termed the current situation as a violation of the rights of small-scale fishers and an attack on their traditional means of livelihood.

## Pilar seminary opens formation year 2025–26 with focus on hope, encounter and fellowship

**MARGAO:** Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão, the Archbishop of Goa and Daman and patron of the Pilar Theological Institute, recently inaugurated the new Academic and Formation Year 2025–26 with the celebration of the Eucharist in the chapel of the All India Mission Seminary.

In his homily, the prelate elaborated on the annual theme for the new seminary year — Journeying with Hope: Encounter, Fellowship and Proclamation. He reflected that, in life, we undertake various kinds of journeys, and in all of them, it is hope that sustains us. Drawing on the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he noted that we may sometimes feel lost, discouraged, or unsure of where God is. “But Christ walks with us, draws near, speaks to our hearts, and renews our hope,” he said.



Following the Eucharistic celebration, the community gathered in Br. Albert's Hall for the inaugural programme. Fr Norman Almeida, Rector of the Mission Seminary, welcomed the assembly and remarked that this moment marked the beginning of another year of learning, growth, and spiritual enrichment for the formation community.

During the programme, the Handbook for the Year 2025–26 was released by the Archbishop, while

the annual journal Euntes Docete was released by Rev. Fr Nazareth Fernandes, Superior General of the Society of Pilar. This was followed by the unveiling of the logo and theme for the new seminary year.

A highlight of the new academic year was the Lectio Brevis — the inaugural lecture. Fr John Bennet, who has completed his Licentiate in Liturgy from the Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo, Rome, presented on the topic Chris-

### THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF ARCHBISHOP RAUL NICOLAU GONSALVES TO BE COMMEMORATED IN OLD GOA

**MARGAO:** The Archdiocese of Goa and Daman will commemorate the third death anniversary of Archbishop-Patriarch Raul Nicolau Gonsalves with a solemn Eucharistic celebration on Saturday, July 5 at 4 at Se Cathedral, Old Goa. Born on June 15, 1927 and called to eternal rest on July 1, 2022, Archbishop Gonsalves is fondly remembered for his pastoral leadership and spiritual guidance. All the faithful are invited to participate in the Eucharist, offering their prayers and supplications in memory of Archbishop Gonsalves.

tian Initiation in the Contemporary Scenario. The session was moderated by Rev. Dr Ivon Almeida, a professor at the Pilar Theological Institute.

In his lecture, Fr Bennet explored the theological and liturgical significance of Christian initiation within the Catholic tradition, particularly in the pluralistic and culturally diverse con-

text of India. He emphasised that this context, marked by religious diversity and deep-rooted traditions, requires pastoral sensitivity in the celebration of baptism. While the Church upholds baptism as a public and communal act, it also recognises the need for pastoral prudence, especially in settings where religious sentiments must be carefully respected.

## FROM PAGE 1

### YET ANOTHER HERITAGE BREACH IN OLD GOA, THIS TIME NEAR ST AUGUSTINE TOWER

Peres said, “How is this possible? Local MLA and panchayat members must visit the site and witness the situation firsthand.”

Jennifer Lobo, also a committee member, reiterating the group's opposition, said: “We have already condemned all the projects that have been built in this protected zone. The key question remains — how is this construction allowed to proceed? We call on Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to urgently initiate and implement a master plan for Old Goa.”

### JUNE 18, WHEN I WAS REMOVED, WAS MY HAPPIEST DAY: GAUDE

Gaude claimed he was the only minister to receive appreciation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Gaude emphasised that he always advocated for the downtrodden and is a voice for the people.

Regarding his future plans, he affirmed his commitment to staying with the BJP and aims to strengthen PM Modi's Vision 2047.

He recalled that former Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar supported him in the 2017 Assembly elections.

Gaude said, “When Parrikar fell ill, I recommended my classmate and friend Pramod Sawant for the Chief Minister's post. I actively participated in the 2019 Shiroda constituency by-election to ensure Subash Shirodkar's victory, thereby strengthening CM Sawant's position.”

### ARRESTS NEAR SCHOOLS REVEAL EXPANDING DRUG THREAT IN GOA

Political analyst Trajano D'Mello was more direct in his criticism. He questioned the role of law enforcement, especially in the coastal belt of Mandrem and Morjim, where night parties and EDM festivals allegedly serve as hubs for drug distribution. “It's naive to believe these parties are drug-free. Children are being exposed and tempted. Corruption and lack of enforcement are enabling this,” he said. He also referenced a High Court directive mandating a 500-metre drug-free zone around EDM venues — a directive he claims is routinely flouted.

Social activist Mariano Ferrao went further, accusing the government of protecting drug networks. “Drugs have reached the interiors of Goa. The police may register cases, but ‘God-fathers’ suppress them. This emboldens the drug mafia. The youth — our future — are the casual-ties,” he warned. Ferrao linked the rise in youth-related crimes to drug addiction and called for immediate, stringent legislation.

Activist Anthony D'Silva reflected on the long-standing nature of the problem, recalling instances over the past three decades. “Years ago, there were reports of drugs hidden in chocolates and chewing gums. Now it's stickers and tattoos. It's not just a police issue — schools and parents must also take responsibility,” he said, urging school administrations to monitor student activity near campuses closely.

Roland Martins, Convenor of the Goa Civic and Consum-

er Action Network (GOACAN), welcomed the police action but stressed the importance of community involvement. “Efforts by the North Goa District Police are commendable. But they must be supported by school managements and PTAs. Civil society must play an active role,” he said.

He pointed to recent capacity-building workshops conducted under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) and the enforcement of provisions under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, which restrict the sale of tobacco near schools, as important but limited measures.

With the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking approaching on 26 June, activists and citizens are calling for a comprehensive and coordinated response to protect Goa's youth from the spiralling drug crisis.

### US BOMBS IRAN NUKE SITES

“There will either be peace or there will be tragedy for Iran,” said Trump, who acted without congressional authorisation.

Trump claimed the US “completely and fully obliterated” the sites, but the Pentagon reported “sustained, extremely severe damage and destruction.” US defence officials said an assessment was ongoing.

With the attack, the United States has inserted itself into a war it spent decades trying to avoid. Success could mean ending Iran's nuclear ambitions and eliminating the last significant state threat to the security of Israel, its close ally. Failure — or overreach — could plunge the US into another long and unpredictable conflict in the Middle East.

For Iran's supreme leader, it could mark the end of an ambitious campaign to transform the Islamic Republic into a greater regional power that holds enriched nuclear material a step away from weapons-grade.

Fourteen of the bombs were used on two nuclear sites, including Fordo, according to Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In all he said, 75 precision-guided weapons were used, including missiles fired from a submarine.

The strike on Fordo, which is dug deep into a mountain, raised an urgent question — what has happened to Iran's stockpile of uranium and centrifuges?

Satellite images taken by Planet Labs PBC after the American strikes, analysed by The Associated Press, show damage to the facility.

The images suggest Iran packed the entrance tunnels to Fordo with dirt and had trucks at the facility ahead of the US strikes. Several Iranian officials, including Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, have claimed Iran removed nuclear material from targeted sites.

Before the Israeli military campaign began, Iran said it had declared a third, unknown site as a new enrichment facility.

“Questions remain as to where Iran may be storing its already enriched stocks ... as these will have almost certainly been moved to hardened and undisclosed locations, out of the way of potential Israeli or US strikes,” said Darya Dolzikhova, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute focused on nonproliferation issues.

## RESERVED FOR COWS?



Stray cattle roam freely on the road at Ramtollem in Aldona during the night, posing a hazard to motorists. Locals allege that farmers abandon the animals after milking them, turning them into a nightly nuisance

## Free medical camp in Calangute draws over 160 residents

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** A free medical camp held at the Calangute panchayat community hall on Sunday witnessed an encouraging turnout, with over 160 residents availing of various health check-ups and consultations.

The camp provided screenings and consultations for blood pressure, blood sugar, eye tests, breast cancer, and gynecological ailments, among others. Organised by the Goa Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan in collaboration with the Village Panchayat and RG Hospital, the initiative aimed to promote health awareness and early detection

of medical conditions. Speaking at the event, Calangute VP member Geeta Parab said, “We're trying to motivate people to take better care of their health through these camps. Many hesitate initially, but with frequent camps and continuous encouragement, the response has been steadily improving.”

Highlighting the importance of breast cancer screening, doctors present at the camp said, “Breast cancer is the second most common cancer. Many women assume they're safe if they're not experiencing pain. But regular screening is essential for early detection and treatment.”

## Betim resident dies after bike-car collision

Team Herald

**CALANGUTE:** A 30-year-old resident of Betim, Paresch Naik, succumbed to injuries on Saturday following a bike-car collision that occurred late Friday night near Viva Goa restaurant.

According to Porvorim police, Naik was riding his motorcycle with a pillion rider when he allegedly lost control while riding rashly and negligently, veering onto the right side of the road and colliding head-on with a car coming from the opposite direction.

Both Naik and the pillion rider fell and sustained serious injuries. They were immediately shifted to Goa Medical College, Bambolim, where Naik died while undergoing treatment

on Saturday afternoon. According to Porvorim police, Naik was riding his motorcycle with a pillion rider when he allegedly lost control while riding rashly and negligently, veering onto the right side of the road and colliding head-on with a car coming from the opposite direction

The accident occurred around 11:15 pm on Friday when Naik was traveling from Betim towards Volland.

Police have registered an offence against Naik under Sections 281, 106(1), and 125(a) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 for rash and negligent riding endangering human life. Further investigation is underway.