

Connect to sewage network or face water cut-off: CM to Colvekars

Team Herald

MARGAO: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has set a March 31 deadline for all commercial establishments and households in Colva to connect to the newly commissioned 7.5 million litres per day (MLD) Sewage Treatment Plant (STP). Failure to meet this deadline will result in the disconnection of water supply, the CM warned during the plant's inauguration on Thursday. Sawant emphasised the importance of compliance, stating that the government has invested Rs 56 crore in the project, which includes Rs 23 crore for the STP and Rs 33 crore for an 11-kilometre sewerage network.

The plant currently operates with 19 domestic connections, while 35 commercial connections are in progress. The charges for connections range from Rs 5,000 for domestic users to Rs 1.5 lakh-Rs 2 lakh for commercial establishments. Apartments are charged Rs 3,000. Monthly sewerage fees will be 50% of the water bill for commercial users and 35% for domestic users, requiring only a copy of the water bill to apply. Sawant also announced



For years, sewage from homes, shacks and commercial establishments has been contaminating the Colva Creek, which in turn flows into the sea, making the Colva beach stretch amongst the most polluted on the Goa coast. (file pic)

that treated water from the STP would be provided free of charge for gardening and construction purposes if users arrange their own transportation. Responding to concerns from Environment Minister Aleixo Sequeira about the absence of tapping points for hotels, Sawant directed officials to install these facilities to enable easier access. A minimal

fee for treated water may be introduced later, depending on user response.

The Chief Minister instructed the Sewerage Infrastructure Development Corporation of Goa Ltd (SIDCGL) to connect the Sulabh toilets in Colva to the STP and revealed plans to appoint a contractor for the facility's maintenance for the next five years. He reiterated

PROJECT INVESTMENT

Total Cost: Rs 56 crore
Rs 23 crore for the STP
Rs 33 crore for the 11-kilometre sewerage network
Connection charges:
Domestic: Rs 5,000
Commercial: Rs 1.5 lakh - Rs 2 lakh
Apartments: Rs 3,000
Monthly sewerage fees:
Commercial users: 50% of the water bill
Domestic users: 35% of the water bill
Sulabh toilets in the village to be connected to the STP
Five-year maintenance contract: Planned by the Sewerage Infrastructure Development Corporation of Goa Ltd (SIDCGL)
Network expansion: Possible extension to Benaulim constituency if capacity is underutilised

the government's resolve to enforce connections wherever the sewerage facility is available, adding, "People must take the connections by the set deadline or face water disconnections."

When asked about the STP's capacity to serve the entire Benaulim constituency, Sawant clarified that it was primarily built to cater to Colva. However, he said, "If capacity remains underutilised, we will consider expanding the sewerage network to additional areas."

Highlighting Goa's progress in waste management, Sawant said the State will soon become the first in India to treat all forms of waste, including sewage, garbage, biomedical waste, e-waste, and hazardous waste. Goa already has several waste management facilities, and more sewage treatment plants are planned along the coastal belt from Calangute to Canacona, where high water tables make traditional soak pits ineffective. "With public cooperation, we can make Goa clean and green," he added.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of ensuring optimal utilisation of the Colva STP, noting that any decisions to expand the network would depend on demand and available capacity. This approach, he said, aims to balance infrastructure development with environmental sustainability in Goa's coastal areas.

Three weeks on, Benaulim's crash-prone Western Bypass still awaits safety measures



Team Herald

MARGAO: The newly opened Western Bypass stretch in Benaulim has emerged as a significant safety concern, with multiple accidents reported since its inauguration just before Christmas last year. The mishaps have highlighted persistent design and safety issues that were first identified during official inspections in December 2024.

Citizens and commuters have raised the alarm about accidents occurring at critical junctions, including service road entrances and the Mercado underpass near Khareband. The collisions have been attributed to multiple factors, including heavy vehicles traveling at excessive speeds, wrong-way drivers, and dangerous blind turns that severely limit visibility.

Following a series of accidents in December 2024, authorities conducted two joint inspections of the site. During these inspections, Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas had highlighted critical flaws in the bridge's engineering and design. In response, several interim safety measures were proposed, including the installation of temporary barricades and construction of substantial speed breakers to regulate traffic at high-risk junctions.

Additional safety improve-

Improvements that were recommended included the installation of convex mirrors, functional streetlights, and rumbler strips at strategic locations

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(Traffic) Rajendra Prabhu-desai had also emphasised the need for proper signage and improved speed breakers, noting several potentially hazardous areas along the bypass.

The safety concerns were initially raised during the first inspection, but the measures were postponed to accommodate increased traffic flow during the Christmas season.

With several accidents already reported in the first few weeks of January 2025, the situation paints a grim picture of what could unfold in the months ahead if immediate action is not taken.

Local residents lament that those who have met with accidents here have sustained serious injuries and stress that the government should not wait for another major accident to occur before addressing these concerns on priority.

'Nyaya Yatra' launched to promote legal awareness in S Goa



Team Herald

MARGAO: "It is our duty to ensure that justice reaches the most marginalised sections of society," said Adv Sangram Desai, Chairman of the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa, while launching the Nyaya Yatra - Journey to Justice, an innovative initiative by GR. Kare College of Law, Margao. The project is a collaborative effort with the South Goa District Legal Services Authority and the Konknan Railway Corporation.

The Nyaya Yatra was inaugurated at the Margao Konknan Railway Station in the presence of several dignitaries, including Sarika Faldessai, Judicial Officer and Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority; Adv Pravin Faldessai, Deputy Solicitor General of India; Nitin Kunkolienkar, President of VVM; Adv Pritam Morais, Co-Chairman of the Law College Governing Council; DYSP Sidhanth Shirodkar; Dr Maria Goretti Morais, Officiating Principal

of GR. Kare College of Law; Adv Prasad Naik, President of the South Goa Advocates Association; and Ganesh Samant, Senior Regional Traffic Manager of Konknan Railway.

Adv Sangram Desai highlighted the importance of citizens performing their constitutional duties, noting that fulfilling duties reduces the need to focus solely on rights. He also pledged the Bar Council's support for any legal awareness campaign and encouraged law students to partner with the council to create a legally aware society.

Adv Pravin Faldessai commended GR. Kare College for its innovative approach to spreading legal awareness, while Nitin Kunkolienkar reaffirmed the institution's commitment to empowering citizens through legal education.

Dr Maria Goretti Morais outlined the objectives of the Nyaya Yatra, emphasising its role in promoting legal literacy.

TIDAL TANGO

ANISHA FRANCIS



The confluence of River Sal and the Arabian Sea makes for a breathtaking view from the Betul Lighthouse. At low tide, the submerged sandbar, a notorious obstacle for Cutbana fishermen, becomes visible just beneath the surface

6 Goan students rank 'Best in India' at computational thinking contest

Team Herald

MARGAO: Goan students achieved remarkable success in the 2025 Bebras India Computational Thinking Challenge, with six students securing National Rank 1 and twelve earning "Best in State" titles across English, Hindi, and Marathi languages. The competition saw massive participation with over 16,000 Goan students, marking their strongest performance in four years of participating in this international computational thinking challenge.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Goa announced

that of the total participants, 8,912 students completed the challenge, demonstrating the growing enthusiasm and interest in computational thinking among young learners in the state. The students who achieved the "Best in India" ranking represent various schools across Goa, showing the widespread excellence in computational thinking across the region. Anubhav Parab and Trisha Gaude, both from Grade 5, represented G. S. Amonkar Vidya Mandir, Mapusa in Bardez and Sharada Eng High School Marcela in Ponda respectively. Grade 6 winners included Aahan Borkar from St. Theresa's High



School Candolim in Bardez and David De Sa from The Rosary High School in Panjim. From the higher grades, Saaket Amonkar of Grade 7 and Sai Pranav Gandhi of

Grade 9, both from Sharada Mandir School, Panjim, secured top positions.

The Bebras India Challenge, organised by ACM India's CSpathshala initiative, is designed to introduce students aged 8-18 to fundamental concepts of computational thinking through engaging and thought-provoking problems. The challenge specifically aims to foster problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, and algorithmic thinking among participants, making it a comprehensive test of students' computational abilities.

SCERT Goa has expressed its appreciation for the hard work and dedication

shown by the participating students, their teachers, and school administrators. As the premier institution responsible for developing and implementing educational policies and programs in the state, SCERT Goa remains committed to promoting computational thinking as an essential 21st-century skill. The council has pledged to continue supporting initiatives that encourage students to explore the world of computing, while maintaining its focus on enhancing the quality of education and fostering innovation in teaching and learning practices throughout the State.

MAX. TEMP 34.6 °C
MIN. TEMP 23.2 °C

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For a Goa package, what's your annual income?

New Romi Konkani script movement emerges to correct 'historic injustices'

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan (GRLA), a newly formed group advocating for the inclusion of the Roman Konkani script in the Official Language Act, was formally registered under the Societies Act, 1860, on Opinion Poll Day. Announcing its launch, the group highlighted its mission to unite Konkani speakers and associations worldwide to combat the marginalisation of non-Devanagiri scripts.

"On this historic day, when Goans commemorate the fight to retain their identity, we call on all Goans to rise in solidarity with the Roman script movement," said Kennedy Afonso, the group's president, while addressing media persons in Margao on Friday.

It may be recalled that Afonso was the former Pres-



ident of the Goa Konkani Forum (GKF) that had taken up the same cause but he had recently resigned from his post, which was accepted by GKF. With GKF splitting and the new group, which includes members from GKF, being formed, the Romi activists asserted that the spirit and motive remains the same.

Speaking about the new group's intention, GRLA said the need for their movement

While Devanagiri script users account for only 12% of Konkani speakers, they dominate the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board and have exclusive recognition under the Official Language Act of 1987, according to the newly-formed Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan. The remaining 83% of Konkani speakers—using Roman, Kannada, Malayalam, and Perso-Arabic scripts—are excluded, the activists allege.

arose from systemic discrimination against non-Devanagiri scripts. While Devanagiri

script users account for only 12% of Konkani speakers, they dominate the Sahitya Akademi Advisory Board and have exclusive recognition under the Official Language Act of 1987. The remaining 83% of Konkani speakers—using Roman, Kannada, Malayalam, and Perso-Arabic scripts—are excluded. "The rich diversity of Konkani cannot survive with-

out uniting all its scripts. This is why the Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan was formed—to em-

brace all Konkani lovers and fight for the Roman script's rightful place," Afonso said.

The group's leadership team comprises Vice President Joaquim Faleiro, Secretary Michael Jude Gracias, Treasurer Ansh Bandekar, and 12 other executive members. GRLA announced plans to push for an amendment to the Official Language Act during the Goa Assembly session on February 6, 2025, to permit Roman script as an option for teaching Konkani in schools. The group extended an open invitation to all political parties and their members to join the cause, emphasizing that GRLA is apolitical.

The group also addressed the challenges they faced in the past, including resistance and division within their previous organization. Despite these setbacks, GRLA reiterat-

ed its determination to bring all Konkani lovers together under one inclusive platform. "We urge every Goan to stand with us in correcting the injustice done to the Roman script in 1987. Together, we can secure its rightful place in the Official Language Act," Afonso said.

GRLA also highlighted its efforts to foster unity among Konkani speakers, citing a meeting with three prominent Mangaluru-based Konkani associations—Maand Sobhann, Poetica, and Karnataka Lekhak Sangh. According to the group, this collaboration was aimed at organizing the first-ever Maha Sabha in Goa, a historic event that would bring together all five Konkani scripts—Roman, Devnagri, Kannada, Malayalam, and Perso-Arabic—on one platform to discuss the future of the language.