

Protesters respond to Church plea for peace, call off Margao protest

Reiterate their demand for Velingkar's immediate arrest; claim inaction by the authorities was a tactic to divert attention from the critical issue of land conversion

Team Herald

MARGAO: Responding to the Church appeal for peace and harmony, a group of demonstrators from Salcete and neighbouring areas on Sunday called off their protest, but reiterated their demand that former RSS Goa chief Subhash Velingkar be arrested immediately.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the authorities' inaction in arresting Velingkar, the protesters claimed that this has been done to divert the attention of Goans from the burning issue of land conversion in Goa and added that they respect the call given by the



HERALD PIC

A BRIEF FACE-OFF

► A tussle between the police and some protesters led to a brief face-off

► Protesters vow to continue advocating for their cause through peaceful means

► Urge the Bom Jesus Basilica officials not to extend VIP treatment to political leaders, particularly the MLAs

Church to maintain peace. Adv Pratima Coutinho mentioned that she plans to file an intervention petition regarding the anticipatory bail application filed by Velingkar.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

MESSAGE OF HARMONY IN THE UK

PICS: ANA FERNANDES



TIME FOR ACTION: Hundreds of Goans staged a protest in Swindon, demanding the arrest of former RSS Goa chief Subhash Velingkar for his derogatory remarks on St Francis Xavier

Four more sections likely to be slapped on ex-RSS Goa chief

Bicholim Police issue second notice to Velingkar

PONDA/PANJIM: Former RSS Goa chief Subhash Velingkar is in for more trouble as four more sections are likely to be slapped on him for his derogatory remarks on St Francis Xavier. The Ponda Citizens Forum and parishioners from the town filed a complaint against Subhash Velingkar.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

FATORDA POLICE BOOK 500 PROTESTERS

MARGAO: With the law enforcing authorities failing to arrest former RSS chief Subhash Velingkar, Fatorda Police registered an offence against 500 protesters including Adv Pratima Coutinho for forming an unlawful assembly, blocking the road and obstructing the public. The police said that the case has been registered pending investigation. No one has been arrested, offences have been registered under Sections 189 (2) (3), (5), 285, 223 (a) (b), 126 (2), 125, 324 (1), 132, 115 (2) r/w 191 (2), of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 and Section 88 of The National Highway Act.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

Diverting Mhadei waters will doom Goa and N Karnataka: Environmentalists

Greens in Goa endorse statements by Karnataka counterparts that North K'taka region will become barren if the Mhadei's water is diverted

Team Herald

PANJIM: The diversion of the Mhadei waters is a sure-shot recipe for disaster. After environmentalists in Karnataka flagged off the the danger posed by the Kalasa-Bhandura projects, their counterparts in Goa have endorsed their stance, saying that any move to change the course of the waters will have a severe ecological fall-out in the region.

Dilip Kamat, an environmentalist from Karnataka has said that the diversion of Mhadei water from Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary in Goa and Maharashtra's forests will adversely affect 500 sqkm of biodiverse forest in southwest of Khanapur taluka and may turn it barren.

Speaking to O Herald, environmentalist Claude Alvares said, "Forget environmentalists, any normal person will say that if you divert water from one irrigated area to another, the former will become dry and barren. Forests are an underground water source and if you channelise the water and take it directly to

Entire Western Ghats is dependent on Mhadei. If Mhadei is diverted then not only Goa, but the entire West Coast and Western Ghats are going to be affected. We endorse whatever they (Karnataka environmentalists) have said. Mhadei should not be diverted anywhere. It should flow as per its course

—Adv Hrudaynath Shirodkar, convenor of Save Mhadei Save Goa Front

some other place then the vegetation will automatically die."

"Politicians nowadays do not understand basic environmental science. Even a common man will tell you that vegetation will die if you divert water. So we are glad and we hope that people of Karnataka will not be fooled by the politicians and use their common sense. The diversion is not only going to be destructive for Goa but it is going to be destructive for Karnataka as well.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

Pope names 21 new cardinals

AP, ROME: Pope Francis named 21 new cardinals Sunday, significantly increasing the size of the College of Cardinals and further cementing his mark on the group of prelates who will one day elect his successor.

They include a man who will be the oldest cardinal Monsignor Angelo Acerbi, a 99-year-old retired Vatican diplomat and the youngest the 44-year-old head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Melbourne, Bishop Mykola Bychok, named in a nod to the war in Ukraine.

BJP stoking communal tensions in Goa: Rahul Gandhi

PTI, NEW DELHI: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused the BJP of deliberately stoking communal tensions in Goa and asserted that the ruling party's attempts will not go unchallenged as the people of the State and the whole of India 'see through this divisive agenda'.

In a post on X, Gandhi said Goa's appeal lies in its natural beauty and the warmth and hospitality of its diverse

and harmonious people.

"Unfortunately, under BJP rule, this harmony is under attack. The BJP is deliberately stoking communal tensions, with a former RSS leader provoking Christians and Sangh organisations calling for an economic boycott of Muslims," the former Congress chief said.

Across India, similar actions by the Sangh Parivar continue with impunity, backed by support from the

highest levels, he alleged.

"In Goa, the BJP's strategy is clear: divide the people while exploiting ecologically sensitive areas by illegally converting green land and bypassing environmental regulations - an assault on Goa's natural and social heritage," Gandhi said.

"BJP's attempts will not go unchallenged. The people of Goa and the whole of India see through this divisive agenda and are standing united," he said.

Israel strikes Gaza again, 23 dead

Military says both strikes targeted militants

PTI, DEIR AL-BALAH: The escalating war in West Asia took a grim turn, as Israel bombed a mosque in the Gaza strip early on Sunday, killing at least 19 people, said Palestinian officials. The mosque, which was near the main hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah, was sheltering people displaced by the war. In a separate incident, four more were killed in a strike on a school near the town. The Israeli military said both strikes targeted militants, without providing evidence.

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Haryana poll battle turns into prestige fight for BJP

Exit polls indicate a strong resurgence by Cong

AGENCIES, CHANDIGARH: The Haryana assembly elections are shaping up to be a high-stakes battle for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as it faces a tough contest to retain power amid mounting anti-incumbency and governance challenges. With multiple exit polls indicating a strong resurgence by the Congress, the BJP's bid for a third consecutive term has turned into a fight for prestige.

For the BJP, Haryana has been a stronghold since 2014 when it

swept to power under Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. However, a decade later, a series of governance failures and rising public discontent have dented its prospects. The party's decision to replace Khattar in March 2024 — aimed at reviving its image — did little to sway public opinion.

One of the BJP's most glaring challenges has been the high unemployment rate, which stood at 9% in 2021-22, more than twice the national average. Adding to the BJP's woes was

the exposure of a corruption scandal within the Haryana Public Service Commission, which led to the cancellation of 47 competitive exams, further tarnishing the party's image.

Moreover, urban voters — traditionally the BJP's support base — have shown visible signs of discontent. Turnout in urban areas dropped significantly, signalling a decline in support from this key segment.

If the exit polls are to be believed, the results could mark a major setback for the BJP.

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