



Goa State Budget 2025-26 To Be Tabled in March

CM says govt has managed to achieve revenue surplus budget of 1423 cr for current fisca



Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant today informed that he will be tabling the state budget 2025-26 in the month of March. He said that crucial

Sawant chaired a Pre-Budget Meeting at Mantralaya, with the Chief Secretary, Secretaries, and Heads of Departments (HoDs) of the Government of Goa. He said that crucial

discussion focused on key aspects of preparing and implementing a balanced, forward-looking budget for the state. "Will table state budget 2025-26 in March; we have managed to achieve

revenue surplus budget of 1423 cr for current fiscal; debt ratio has been reduced from 30% to 29%," said Sawant. He further said that departments have been asked to actively identify and implement innovative ways to boost revenue. "A significant focus was placed on addressing underutilization of allocated budgets. Departments must ensure effective and timely utilization of resources to prevent inefficiencies,"

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Rajendra Arlekar takes oath as Kerala Governor

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, a former governor of Bihar, was sworn in as the governor of Kerala. Rajendra was the governor of Bihar before. Additionally, he was the first Goan to hold the office of Governor of Himachal Pradesh. Chief Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar of

the Kerala High Court administered the oath to the Governor at Raj Bhavan at 10:30 AM. "Wherever I go, I don't try to have any confrontation with the government. I am going there to assist the government. It is not to guide or pass any direction, nothing of that sort," he said in a statement. CONTD TO PAGE 04..

BJP's Scam 2024 Vs AAP's GOAT: Poster War Intensifies As Race For Delhi Polls Heats Up

BJP put up in a social media post with a poster of Kejriwal and claimed the former Delhi Chief Minister had launched a "new game in Delhi" to "save power by rigging votes" New Delhi: As the Delhi Assembly elections draw near, the political landscape in the capital is witnessing a fierce and creative battle between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The latest salvo in this electoral war is a series of provocative



posters that have ignited a heated exchange between CONTD TO PAGE 04..

First Cabinet Of 2025 Dedicated To Enhancing Prosperity Of Farmers: PM Modi

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the extension of the One-time Special Package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) beyond the NBS subsidy for the period from January 1 this year till further orders to ensure sustainable availability of DAP at affordable prices to the farmers.

New Delhi: As the year 2025 begins, the Indian government has made a strong commitment to the welfare of its farmers. In its first cabinet meeting of the year, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved several key initiatives aimed at enhancing the prosperity and security of farmers across the country. Ensuring Affordable Fertilizers: One of the significant decisions made by CONTD TO PAGE 06..



Sawant Counters False Propaganda: Goa's Tourism Sector in Full Swing

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has asserted that the state's tourism sector is thriving, contrary to claims of a decline in tourist arrivals.

Team Goemkarponn PANAJI: In a strong rebuke to social media influencers and users spreading misleading information, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has asserted that the state's tourism sector is thriving, contrary to claims of a decline in tourist arrivals. Sawant's remarks come amid a flurry of social media posts suggesting that Goa's streets and beaches are eerily empty, a narrative he vehemently disputes. Speaking to the media, Sawant emphasized that social media influencers are misguiding the public by claiming that tourists are avoiding Goa in favor of other destinations. "They are doing the wrong thing; they are giving a wrong message about Goa to the people. I also want to tell them that they should come and see the coastal sites themselves," he said. Sawant highlighted that the months of November, December, and January are traditionally the peak tourism season in Goa, and this year has been no exception. "As always, different festivals, from international festivals to Christmas and December 31, are celebrated with great fanfare. The months of Nov, Dec, and Jan in Goa are going to be filled with tourists. All the hotels here are full," he stated. He further added that every beach in Goa is bustling with activity, and the roads are filled with vehicles, indicating a robust tourist presence. The Chief Minister's comments are supported by data showing a record number of tourist arrivals in 2024. Despite some social media claims of deserted streets and beaches, CONTD TO PAGE 04..



Demolition In Velsao Sparks Outrage Over Double Track Work

Team Goemkarponn

VELSAO: Residents of Velsao are up in arms as demolition activities for the controversial double-tracking project continue unabated. The project, aimed at enhancing railway infrastructure, has faced stiff opposition from locals, citing environmental damage, heritage loss, and questions about its necessity.

MP Capt. Viriato Fernandes Raises Concerns on Underutilized Track

South Goa MP Capt. Viriato Fernandes has joined the chorus of dissent, questioning the rationale behind the project. "The existing track is grossly underutilized. Instead of imposing a redundant infrastructure CONTD TO PAGE 04..



Goa Remains a Tourist Hotspot: Exposing Misleading Social Media Narratives

"Contrary to the narratives circulating on social media, Goa was far from deserted in 2024. During the Christmas weekend, air tickets to Goa were in high demand, with prices soaring to between ₹27,000 to ₹35,000. One-star hotels were fully booked, with rates exceeding ₹10,000 per night. The rental market for vehicles was also thriving, with rent-a-bikes like Fascino and Activa being hired out for ₹1,500 and rent-a-cars costing no less than ₹3,000 to ₹4,000."

In recent months, social media platforms and some national media houses have been abuzz with claims that Goa, once a beloved tourist destination, has lost its allure and is now a deserted shadow of its former self. However, a closer examination of the facts reveals a starkly different reality.

The Reality on the Ground
Contrary to the narratives circulating on social media, Goa was far from deserted in 2024. During the Christmas weekend, air tickets to Goa were in high demand, with prices soaring to between ₹27,000

to ₹35,000. One-star hotels were fully booked, with rates exceeding ₹10,000 per night. The rental market for vehicles was also thriving, with rent-a-bikes like Fascino and Activa being hired out for ₹1,500 and rent-a-cars costing no less than ₹3,000 to ₹4,000.

Restaurants and shacks along the coastline, including popular spots in North and South Goa like Palolem in Canacona, were bustling with activity. The roads were congested with a significant influx of tourists, indicating a vibrant and bustling tourist scene. This scenario raises a

critical question: where is the evidence to support the claim that Goa is no longer a tourist paradise?

The Role of Social Media and Media Houses

The propagation of false information about Goa's tourism sector is not an isolated incident. Last year, a similar campaign was observed against the Maldives, following controversial statements by the Maldives PM and ministers, which led to a call for a boycott.

While the Maldives controversy is debatable, the attempt to discredit Goa's tourism industry lacks any justifiable basis.

It appears that certain social media influencers and media houses are deliberately creating a false narrative to undermine Goa's reputation as a tourist destination.

This misinformation can have severe economic and social implications for the state, which relies heavily on tourism as the backbone of its

economy.

Economic Impact and Government Response
Goa's revenue collection in December 2024 saw a significant surge, with an increase of ₹75.51 crore compared to the previous year, highlighting the state's strong economic growth and fiscal health. The tourism sector played a pivotal role in this growth, with a record number of tourist arrivals contributing to the state's revenue.

Given the substantial economic impact of tourism on Goa, it is imperative for the state government to address these false propaganda campaigns. The government needs to take decisive action against social media influencers and media houses that are spreading misleading information. This could include fact-checking initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and regulatory measures to ensure that accurate information is

disseminated.

Tourism Figures and Connectivity
Official data from the Union Ministry of Tourism reveals that Goa witnessed a 160% surge in foreign tourist arrivals in 2023, with 4.5 lakh tourists visiting the state. This figure surpasses pre-pandemic levels and indicates a robust recovery in the tourism sector. Additionally, the state's enhanced connectivity, with two operational airports and improved road and rail links, has further boosted tourism.

Conclusion
The narrative that Goa has lost its charm and is deserted is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. As the state continues to attract tourists in large numbers, it is crucial to combat false propaganda that could harm its economic and social fabric. The Goa government must proactively address these issues to ensure that the true picture of Goa's thriving tourism industry is presented to the public.

Tragic Accident Claims Toddler's Life at Vasco Petrol Pump

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: In a heart-wrenching incident, a two-year-ten-month-old girl, Afiya Khan, tragically lost her life at a petrol pump in Vasco.

The mishap occurred when her father, Kalilulla Khan, a tourist from Tamil Nadu, accidentally lost balance while refueling a rented bike, leading to the fatal accident.

According to sources at the Vasco police station, the



family had rented a bike at the airport upon arriving in Goa for a holiday. While refueling at the petrol pump, the father reportedly failed to deploy the bike's stand, causing him to

lose balance.

The bike, along with the father and mother, toppled onto the young child.

The severe injuries sustained by Afiya proved fatal. Despite being rushed to the Sub-District Hospital in Chicalim, doctors declared her dead on arrival.

The Vasco police have registered a case of unnatural death and have initiated a detailed investigation into the incident.

German national held with GPS device at MIA

Team Goemkarponn

MOPA: A 36-year-old German national has been arrested by the Mopa Police for allegedly attempting to use a GPS device to board a domestic flight.

Authorities claim that Niels Erik Weber Stroher, who lives at Gruberstrasse 12, Darmstadt 64289. He was apprehended while attempting to board an aircraft from Manohar International Airport in Mopa to Hyderabad.

The item, which is illegal in

India, was allegedly found in Niels' handbag during screening. The offender was unable to present any license or approval from the appropriate authority when questioned by police.

LPSI Sashanka Parab of the Mopa Airport Police Station has filed a formal complaint and is currently investigating the case.



ED seizes over 20 property documents in land grab case

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: In the course of its money laundering investigation into the suspected multi-crore land grab scheme, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has confiscated more than 20 property documents.

According to ED officials, on December 31, 2024, a raid was carried out at the homes of Estevan D'Souza in Goa Velha and Alcantro D'Souza in Mapusa, two of the defendants in land grab cases.

More than 20 documents pertaining to property were seized, according to ED officials, and they are currently being examined.

In conjunction with the money laundering investigation against many individuals involved in the suspected multi-crore

land grab scheme, the ED seized 19 separate land properties in December of last year. Eight of the 19 properties in dispute are in Assagao, and the remaining 11 are in Anjuna.

The results of the ED's investigation showed that the accused had unlawfully purchased a number of real estate properties under their names or the names of their acquaintances or family members. In order to prove that the immovable properties belonged to their ancestors, the accused filed forged documents in the land records, according to the ED.

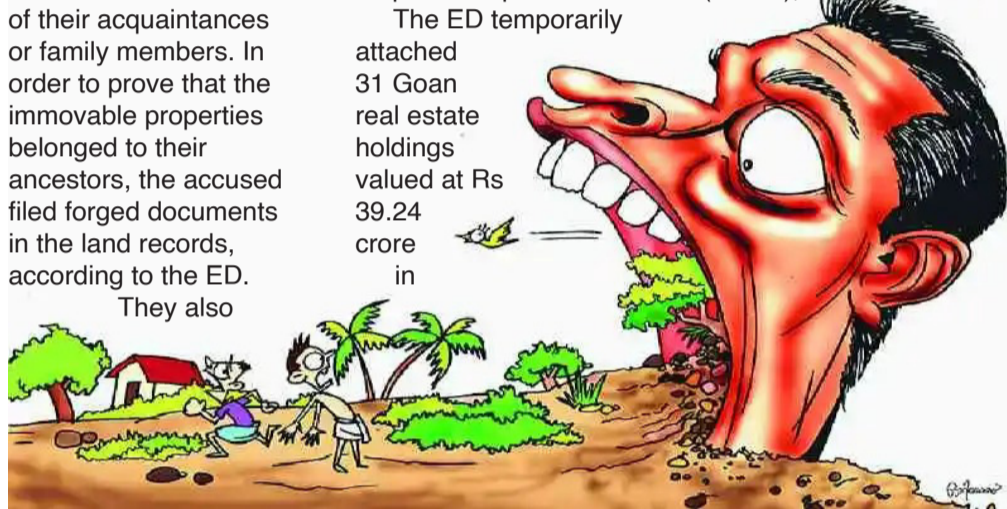
They also

claimed that they were able to update or insert their names in the land records by creating succession deeds and inventories using these forged documents.

The ED estimated the amount of the "proceeds of crime" to be over Rs 535 crore and filed a chargesheet against 36 accused individuals before the Special Court in Mapusa in April 2024.

The ED temporarily attached 31 Goan real estate holdings valued at Rs 39.24 crore in

November 2023. Vikrant Shetty, Mohammed Suhail, Rajkumar Maithi, and other accused individuals involved in unlawful land grabbing in the state were the subject of many FIRs filed by Goa police, which prompted the Enforcement Directorate to launch an inquiry under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.



RGP Chief Manoj Parab comeback in 2025?

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Manoj Parab, leader of the Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP), has indicated that he will return in 2025. After the Lok Sabha election results, Parab had taken a hiatus.

Today, Parab shared the message, "Let's Revolution 2025," on social media.

Parab was not available for comment, but according to reports, he plans to make a complete comeback in 2025. While Viresh Borkar, the MLA for St. Andre, has

been fighting a solitary battle on behalf of the party, the RGP has been comparatively idle in recent months.

Now, everyone is waiting to see if Parab will actually bring about the change in 2025.



Future Alliance? CM-Sudin hold political meet

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant met with MGP leader and Minister Sudin Dhavalikar on Wednesday to discuss future collaborations as the two parties prepare for the 2027 elections, which are nearly two years ahead of schedule.

Dhavalikar was present at the pivotal meeting

that Sawant convened regarding the BJP organizational elections.

Sawant told reporters that Dhavalikar attended the meeting because he is a coalition partner. He added, "We also talked about 2027 polls and future alliances."

The BJP and MGP fought together in the 2022 elections. Currently, MGP has two MLAs.

E-Auction: 172 tender documents purchased by bidders

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: 18 iron ore dumps are up for e-auction, and the Directorate of Mines and Geology (DMG) said that more than 172 tender documents have been bought to bid on them.

Beginning on January 22, more than 5.2 million metric tonnes of minerals that are now in the form of dumps will be put up for e-auction. The villages of Bandoli and Cormonem have the largest dump, totaling almost 14 lakh metric tons, while Sonus Vonvoliem has 11.7 lakh

metric tonnes.

DMG released a notice inviting tenders (NIT) last month. Applications for the e-auction must be submitted by January 9; technical bids will be accepted on January 10. On January 20, the names of technically qualified bidders will be revealed.

With 172 tender documents purchased, the department has received an enormous reaction, according to Mines Director Narayan Gad. According to him, all technical paperwork and bids for the e-auction



4 arrested for stealing iron bars worth Rs 1.8 lakh

Team Goemkarponn

COLVALE: A 54-year-old Mapusa man and three of his colleagues were taken into custody by the Colvale Police for stealing 400 iron bars valued at Rs 1.8 lakh from an educational society's construction site.

Katalsab Bepari from Karaswada, Mapusa, Manja Lamani, 30, from Cunchelim, Mapusa, and a Karnataka native, Surendra Jaiswal, 32, from Karaswada, Mapusa, and an Uttar Pradesh native, and Sharun Kumar, 23, from Durga Nagar, Colvale, and an Uttar Pradesh native, have been identified as the accused.

Police claim that Narayan Dicholkar, a representative of the Halamkar Education Society in Colvale, filed a complaint alleging that 400 25 mm, four-meter iron bars and their eight mm bar rings, valued at Rs 1.8 lakh, were cut and stolen from

the construction site between September 1 and December 31, 2024.

An investigation was started after a formal complaint was filed under BNS 2023 section 303 (2).

A scrapyard trader from the Karaswada Mapusa area was found to be engaged in the crime throughout the inquiry. As a result, the scrapyard was searched, and the stolen iron bars were found there.

At the request of the accused, a portion of the stolen property was retrieved and placed under panchanama. When the accused appeared before JMFC Mapusa, they were placed under three days of police custody.

Under the general direction of SDPO Mapusa Sandesh Chodankar and SP (North) Akshat Kaushal, IPS, and with oversight from PI Colvale Police Station Vijay Rane, PSI Sunny Kanekar of Colvale Police Station is looking into the case.



must be submitted by January 9 at the latest. According to insiders, the auction will start on January 22 and run through January 25.

The communities of Costi, Sancordem, Dabal, Rivona, Codli, Honda, Sirsaim, Collem, and others are home to the landfills that were put up for e-auction in the first phase. Approximately 5.2 million metric tons of dumps

have been selected for e-auction.

According to the agency's dump profile analysis, the dump grade ranges from 45 to 50 Fe concentration, according to Gad.

DMG has stated that it will not be held accountable for the amount, quality, or recovery of iron ore from the dumps and that the auction would be held on an as-is-where-is basis.

Shut polluting units, give better environment to Cuncolikars: LoP Yuri writes to CM

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Asserting that all polluting units should be permanently shut down in the interest of public of Cuncolim, the Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao wrote to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant demanding several measures including to conduct survey of groundwater and surface water monitoring to give better environment to people.

In his letter, the Congress leader demanded measures to manage Hazardous Waste, Air Pollution, and Water Pollution in Cuncolim Industrial Estate.

"I would like to draw your attention to health issues faced by People of Cuncolim staying in the vicinity of Industrial Estate due to pollution emanating



from steel and fish meal industries. The Cuncolim Industrial estate, which houses various industries of fish meal and steel, has become a hotspot for environmental degradation due to the lack of effective waste management systems and non-functional effluent treatment plants (ETPs)," he stated in the letter.

"Surprisingly, the polluting units which were sealed were allowed to operate within a short period of time by imposing environmental

He said that the BJP government has failed to keep its promise to act on pollutant units for its expedient politics. "On August 6, 2024, Minister for Environment Aleixo Sequeira had promised, in the assembly, of action within two months against the pollution at Cuncolim Industrial Estate. However, concerned departments have failed to take any steps and measures to stop pollution," Alemao said.

compensation and putting conditions. There is a need to check whether they have adhered to conditions and taken measures to stop pollution. Government has miserably failed to tackle the pollution problem, which is creating health issues in Cuncolim. These all polluting units should be permanently shut down in the interest of public," he further said.

In light of these concerns, Alemao has urged the Chief Minister to take immediate measures to address the

environmental issues in the industrial estate.

Installing an ambient air quality monitoring, conducting an odour control study for the Cuncolim IDC, installing real-time ambient air monitoring station, conducting characterization of hazardous waste dumping samples, and conducting survey of groundwater and surface water monitoring in and around the Cuncolim IDC to ensure compliance with environmental norms are some of the measures suggested by Yuri Alemao.



GMC Dean Dr Bandekar honoured with Nat'l Achievement Award 2024

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Goa Medical College (GMC) Dean Dr Shivanand Bandekar has been honoured with the prestigious National Achievement Award 2024 for Best Dean in Academic Administration.

Health Minister Viswajit Rane said that it is a matter of great pride for Goa that Prof. (Dr.) Shivanand M. Bandekar, Dean of GMC, has been honoured with

the prestigious National Achievement Award 2024 for Best Dean in Academic Administration.

He further said that the award was bestowed by the Global Society for Health & Educational Growth.

"This recognition acknowledges his outstanding contributions to academic excellence and his significant role in advancing national social and economic development," he added

14-Year-Old Girl Missing: Kidnapping Case Registered

Team Goemkarponn

ST CRUZ: In a disturbing incident that has sent shockwaves through the community, the Old Goa Police have registered a kidnapping case against an unknown individual following the disappearance of a 14-year-old girl from St Cruz.

According to the police, the father of the victim, who hails from Paina, Uttar Pradesh, lodged a complaint after his daughter failed to return home. The girl had left her residence on December 31, 2024,



informing her father that she was heading to a friend's house for a party. However, when she did not return by the expected time, her father grew concerned and immediately contacted the authorities.

The police have initiated a thorough investigation into the matter and are working diligently to trace the missing girl.

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Goa State Budget 2025-26 To Be Tabled in March

said Sawant
Sawant said that all Departments, Corporations, and Autonomous Bodies are directed to explore strategies to monetize existing assets, for self-sufficiency and revenue

enhancement.

"Reforms in service delivery processes are essential for efficiency and improved citizen satisfaction. Departments shall simplify procedures to maximize impact," he added

CM also informed that departments shall also conduct regular evaluations of Corporations and Autonomous Bodies under their purview to ensure optimal performance, relevance, and output.

"The discussions emphasized the importance of innovation, accountability, and efficiency in budget preparation and execution. Together, we aim to build a stronger and more self-reliant Goa," he said

Sawant Counters False Propaganda: Goa's Tourism Sector in Full Swing

the reality on the ground paints a different picture. Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte has also echoed Sawant's sentiments, noting that near-full occupancy rates in both four-star and five-star hotels are a testament to the sector's health. Sawant's defense of Goa's tourism industry is not just

about numbers; it also underscores the significant economic impact of tourism on the state. Goa's economy is largely driven by tourism, which supports a wide range of industries and livelihoods, from hospitality to small businesses and local artisans. The state's strategic enhancements in infrastructure, including

the commissioning of the Manohar International Airport in Mopa and upgrades to the existing Dabolim Airport, have made travel to Goa more accessible and convenient for both domestic and international tourists. In addition to infrastructure improvements, the state has diversified its tourism

offerings to include eco-tourism, spiritual tourism, and regenerative tourism, attracting a broader range of visitors and providing richer, more immersive experiences. These initiatives aim to deliver benefits to local communities while supporting the region's sustainability goals.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Rajendra Arlekar takes oath as Kerala Governor

"I met the newly appointed Governor of Kerala, @rajendraarlekar, at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport," Vijayan wrote in a post on X. Looking forward to collaborating in the spirit of unity and growth in Kerala."

President Droupadi Murmu named Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar the new governor of Kerala on December 21. Arif Mohammad Khan, the departing governor of Kerala, was also named governor of Bihar.

Yesterday he met Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai at Goa Raj Bhavan. Later speaking to the media, Arlekar said he went to meet Pillai as he wanted to learn more about Kerala before assuming office. "Before going to Kerala, I wanted to hear a lot about Kerala from P S Sreedharan Pillai because he is from Kerala, so that I can go there and work properly; I will make full use of whatever he has told me," Arlekar told the media in Goa.

Demolition In Velsao Sparks Outrage Over Double Track Work

project, we should prioritize development that genuinely benefits the people," he said. The double-tracking project, part of a larger plan to facilitate coal transportation, has been criticized for overlooking the interests of Goan communities.

Velsao residents have reported being displaced without adequate consultation or compensation, fueling anger and frustration.

Environmentalists, too, have raised red flags, warning that the project could destroy biodiversity-rich areas and disrupt the fragile

ecosystem. Local activists have vowed to continue their resistance, urging authorities to reconsider the project in light of the growing public outcry. The issue has escalated, with calls for state and central governments to step in and address the concerns of the people of Goa.

BJP's Scam 2024 Vs AAP's GOAT: Poster War Intensifies As Race For Delhi Polls Heats Up

the two parties.

The BJP has launched a scathing attack on AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal through a series of satirical posters. One such poster, shared on social

media, depicts Kejriwal as orchestrating a "new game in Delhi" aimed at "saving power by rigging votes." The BJP alleges that Kejriwal has been involved in fraudulent voter registrations, citing

instances where hundreds of votes were created using a single address, primarily targeting a specific community with voters ranging from 40 to 80 years old. In response, the AAP has countered

with a video labeling Kejriwal as the "G.O.A.T" (greatest of all time), an attempt to deflect the BJP's accusations. However, the AAP has also fired back with its own set of allegations.

Calangute VP hosts sucessful seeds distribution & awareness programme

■ Initiative Aims to Promote Variety Agriculture and Kitchen Garden Seeds Among Local Farmers and Residents

Team Goemkarponn

CALANGUTE: The Calangute Panchayat, in collaboration with Goa state bio diversity board and agriculture department organized a successful seeds distribution and awareness programme at the panchayat hall.

The event, which was attended by a number of local farmers and residents, aimed to promote the use of variety agriculture and kitchen garden seeds in the region.

During the programme, participants were educated on the benefits of using high-quality seeds, which can lead to improved crop yields, increased resistance to diseases, and enhanced nutritional value.

The programme



also highlighted the importance of adopting sustainable agricultural practices and promoting kitchen gardening as a means to ensure food security.

As part of the initiative, seeds of various crops, including [list of crops], were distributed among the participants. The seeds were sourced from [source] and are suitable for the local climate and soil conditions.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarpanch of Calangute Panchayat

Joseph Sequeira, said, "We are committed to promoting sustainable agriculture practices in our region. This initiative is a step towards achieving that goal. We hope that the seeds distributed today will help our farmers and residents to grow healthy and nutritious crops."

"The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is crucial for ensuring food security and sustainable development. Initiatives like the seeds distribution and

awareness programme organized by Calangute Panchayat are a step in the right direction

By promoting the use of high-quality seeds and sustainable agricultural practices, we can help local farmers and residents grow healthy and nutritious crops, while also conserving our precious biodiversity."

— said resource person about from the Biodiversity Board and agriculture department

The programme was well-received by the participants, who appreciated the efforts of the panchayat in promoting sustainable agriculture practices. The initiative is expected to have a positive impact on the local agricultural sector and contribute to the overall development of the region.



Goa Cong demand for Coconut Subsidies in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Goa Congress strongly demands that the government implement a subsidy for coconuts in Goa, as prices have surged to an alarming ₹70 per coconut.

This drastic price increase has placed a significant burden on families across the state, particularly during festive seasons when coconuts are a staple in every Goan household.

If this issue is not addressed promptly, we may be compelled to initiate public agitation,

similar to movements we have seen in the past said former GPCC President Girish Chodankar

Chodankar further criticised the government by raising a concern that substantial funds are being allocated to various unnecessary events, which often lead to corruption, the pressing needs of everyday citizens are being overlooked.

We call on the government to prioritize the welfare of the people of Goa and take immediate action to alleviate this financial strain.

Sahitya Academy Awarded Datta Naik to be felicitated by Shashi Tharoor

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: Prominent businessman, author, regular columnist, social activist thinker and Sahitya academy awardee Datta Damodar Naik shall be publicly felicitated on his completing 70 years at the hands of Lok Sabha M.P, former Union Minister, renowned author and former diplomat Shashi Tharoor on 5th January 2025 at 5:00 p.m at the Gomantak Vidya Niketan Hall, Margao.

Shashi Tharoor shall speak on the idea of India at the felicitation programme. Datta Damodar Naik has



dominated social, political and cultural life in Goa for the past over three decades from his student life onwards. He has been instrumental in building movements against communalism and hatred in society.

He was the pioneer in the organization of Samata Andolan, Lokshakti and was the founder convener of Dakshinayan Abhiyan in

Goa. He also played a crucial role in building a democratic space in the state of Goa. His regular columns in local dailies and in the weeklies published from Pune like Sadhana and Antarnad bring out his progressive outlook in society.

Eminent linguist and founder of Dakshinayan Abhiyan Dr. Ganesh Devi and Vinod Shirsat editor of Sadhna weekly Pune shall be special guest who shall also be speaking on the occasion.

The felicitation function is organised by Dakshinayan Abhiyan Goa Unit in collaboration with Civil Society.

SC disposes MHA's petition over Aires's OCI

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: A bench of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan today disposed of the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) challenging the High Court order on the OCI application filed by Adv. Aires Rodrigues with liberty to MHA to file a fresh petition after its review petition is heard by the High Court.

On July 25th last year the High Court of Bombay at Goa had directed the MHA to consider and decide within 30 days the application filed by Adv. Rodrigues for an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card.

The High Court has already issued notices to MHA officials on a Contempt of Court Petition filed by Adv. Rodrigues over the failure by MHA to comply with the High Court order and the next hearing is scheduled on 8th January.

On 15th May 2023, Adv. Aires Rodrigues obtained his Portuguese Passport in Lisbon and on his return to Goa in the first week of June



immediately surrendered his Indian Passport at the Goa Passport Office as was required by law.

After surrendering his Indian passport and obtaining a Surrender Certificate and all the other required documents he applied for his OCI card only to be told by the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) at Mumbai that the new rule required six months' residence in Goa before filing an OCI application.

After completing the requisite six months' residence, Adv. Rodrigues once again on 25th January last year applied for an OCI card and was given an appointment on 5th of March at FRRO Mumbai for verification of his original documents which was successfully completed on that day

and paying the requisite processing fee of Rs 15000. Three months later on 6th June Adv. Rodrigues received a one-line email from FRRO Mumbai that his OCI Application has been cancelled under Rule 32(2) of Citizenship Rules, 2009.

Aggrieved by the decision of FRRO, Mumbai, Adv. Rodrigues immediately on 20th June moved the High Court. Adv. Rodrigues in his petition submitted that the decision by FRRO Mumbai to cancel his OCI application was arbitrary, illegal, erroneous, unjust and contrary to law. Adv. Rodrigues further submitted that the mere one sentence decision by FRRO Mumbai without giving any reasons violated the principles of natural justice.

8.68 lakh ABHA cards created in Goa so far

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said that Goa is leading the way in digital healthcare with over 8.68 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health



Accounts (ABHAs) created.

"Goa is leading the way in digital healthcare with over 8.68 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs) created," said Rane

He further said that this ensures citizens have

secure, easy access to their health records.

"This transformative initiative highlights Modi-led government's commitment to efficient, patient-centric solutions, setting a new standard in digital health innovation," he added

Countdown Begins for the Goa Food & Cultural Festival 2025 - 3rd to 5th January 2025

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: The stage is set for the much-anticipated Goa Food & Cultural Festival 2025, which will take place from January 3rd to January 5th, 2025, at Costa/Dukle Properties, next to Costa Factory, Margao. Organized by the Department of Tourism, this three-day extravaganza promises an unforgettable experience, blending Goa's rich culinary heritage with vibrant cultural performances and artistic displays.

The festival will open on January 3rd with the inauguration in the esteemed presence of Dr. Pramod Sawant, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa, along with other prominent dignitaries: Shri Rohan A. Khaunte, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, IT, E&C, Printing & Stationary, Digambar Kamat, MLA – Margao Constituency, Ganesh Gaonkar, MLA - Sanvordem & Chairman GTDC, Dr. V. Candavelou, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Goa,



Sanjeev Ahuja, IAS, Secretary Tourism, Government of Goa, Shri Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa and Shri Damodar Shirodkar, Chairperson, Margao Municipal Council.

The opening evening will include a lamp-lighting ceremony, a felicitation honouring prominent personalities, and a traditional welcome dance. Attendees can look forward to enthralling performances by Divya Naik, the band Lynx, and a captivating dance and music showcase by Kanta Gaude and Pure Magic, setting the stage for a

vibrant start to the festival. Commenting on the festival, the Minister of Tourism, Rohan A.

Khaunte, said, "The Goa Food & Cultural Festival 2025 is a celebration of Goa's rich heritage and also an opportunity to present our state as a global destination for food, art, and cultural experiences. We are committed to showcasing the best of Goa to visitors from around the world."

Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, Director of Tourism, added, "This festival is a perfect representation of Goa's diverse culture and hospitality. It is our

endeavour to create memorable experiences for every visitor and continue promoting Goa as a vibrant and sustainable tourism destination."

On January 4th, the second day will spotlight budding talent and tourism-related activities, celebrating Goa's artistic diversity. Visitors can enjoy a performance by Konkani duet singers and a dance act by the Goan Image Dance Troop. The evening will feature a dynamic act by Samruddh and Vibha with their troupe, a comedy session by Saidutt Kamat, and a high-energy performance by the band Lace, ensuring an entertaining and engaging experience for all.

The grand finale on January 5th will celebrate Goa's cultural and artistic vibrancy. Highlights will include a dazzling performance by Rajesh and Gautami with their troupe and a captivating dance act by the Goan Image Dance Troop. Music enthusiasts can revel in a soulful session



North India To See More Rain & Snow In January After December's Excess Downpour

Two successive western disturbances are set to bring widespread rain over the plains and fresh snowfall in the hills in the coming week

New Delhi: Fresh snowfall and more showers are on the way for North India as intense cold waves swept many parts of India. The MeT has predicted above-normal rains for India in January, following December's excess downpour. The number of cold wave days are expected to be above-normal as well, it said. This comes as 2024 ended with the wettest December since 2001.

The rainfall over the country was 73 per cent above the long-period average (LPA) with continuous spells over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand as well as

Jammu and Kashmir. A total of seven western disturbances impacted northern India as compared to the month's usual of four to five.

These extra-tropical storms are responsible for most of the winter rain in India, and their subdued activity led to a snowless December last year. This time, however, at least three of them from Dec 7 to 10, December 21 to 23 and December 26 to 30 were intense and brought widespread rains as well as the season's first snowfall. "At least two successive western disturbances are set to impact North India in the first week of January.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

First Cabinet Of 2025 Dedicated To Enhancing Prosperity Of Farmers: PM Modi

the cabinet was the extension of the One-time Special Package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) beyond the existing NBS subsidy. This move, effective from January 1, 2025, ensures that DAP will be available to farmers at affordable prices for the foreseeable future. The government has allocated approximately Rs 3,850 crore to support this initiative, reflecting its dedication to maintaining the financial viability of agricultural practices.

Enhanced Crop Insurance Schemes:

The cabinet also approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and the Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme until 2025-26. With an overall outlay of Rs 69,515.71 crore from 2021-22 to 2025-26, these schemes will provide comprehensive risk coverage to farmers against non-preventable

natural calamities. This decision underscores the government's commitment to mitigating the financial risks faced by farmers due to unpredictable weather conditions.

Technological Advancements in Agriculture:

To further enhance the efficiency and transparency of these insurance schemes, the cabinet has established the Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT) with a corpus of Rs 824.77 crore. This fund will support technological initiatives such as the Yield Estimation System using Technology (YES-TECH) and the Weather Information and Network Data Systems (WINDS). YES-TECH, which uses remote sensing technology for yield estimation, is already being implemented in nine major states, with Madhya Pradesh adopting 100% technology-based yield estimation.

Train To Kashmir, Delhi-Meerut RRTS, 2 Major Expressways: What India Can Expect In 2025

■ In the initial few weeks of 2025, train connectivity to Kashmir is likely to begin. Around the same time, commercial services of the RRTS from Meerut to Delhi could also be started

New Delhi: India's Infrastructure Leap in 2025: New Connections and Enhanced Mobility As the calendar flips to 2025, India is poised to witness a significant leap in its infrastructure development, transforming the way people travel and connect across the country. This year promises to be a milestone in India's quest for modernization, with several long-awaited projects nearing completion.

Train Connectivity to Kashmir and Delhi-Meerut RRTS

In the early weeks of 2025, India will finally achieve a decades-long aspiration with the inauguration of broad-gauge railway connectivity to Kashmir. This all-weather line, part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), will revolutionize



travel to the region. The first train, a Vande Bharat sleeper, is set to be flagged off soon, marking a historic moment as there has been no direct train from Delhi or other major Indian cities to Kashmir until now.

Simultaneously, the commercial services of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) from Meerut to Delhi are expected to commence. This system, which has already seen operational

sections between Ghaziabad and Meerut, will provide a faster, cheaper, and more convenient mode of transport for commuters traveling between Meerut and Delhi.

National Highway Projects In addition to these rail projects, several critical national highway initiatives are also on the verge of completion. The Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, for instance, is set to be

partially operational this month, with the full stretch expected to be open by March. This expressway will significantly reduce travel time from Delhi to Dehradun, cutting it down from five to six hours to just two to two-and-a-half hours.

The Bengaluru-Chennai expressway, another major project, is also slated for completion in 2025. Spanning 262 kilometers and costing over Rs 17,930 crore, this expressway will connect parts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, enhancing regional connectivity.

Although the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway has faced delays and is now expected to be fully operational in 2026, some sections are already open for use, offering a glimpse into the future of high-speed road travel in India.

Bangladesh Court Denies Bail To Jailed Hindu Monk Chinmoy Krishna Das

His bail petition stated that Das - a monk who is suffering from various diseases including diabetes and respiratory problems - has been arrested in a false and fabricated case.

Dhaka: In a significant development that has sparked widespread concern, a Bangladesh court has rejected the bail plea of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a prominent Hindu monk and spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote. This decision comes despite Das's health issues and the contentious nature of the charges against him.

Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), was arrested on November 25 at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on charges of sedition. His bail petition, heard by Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Saiful Islam, argued that Das has been arrested in a false and fabricated case. The petition also highlighted that Das is suffering from various



serious health conditions, including diabetes and respiratory problems. The bail hearing, which lasted 30 minutes and was conducted under heightened security, saw a team of 11 lawyers representing Das. However, the court refused to grant him bail, a decision that has been met with disappointment from his supporters.

The arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das has been a flashpoint for unrest in

Bangladesh. The sedition charges were filed after he allegedly raised a saffron flag above the national flag in Chittagong on October 25. This incident triggered protests and violent clashes between his followers and law enforcement outside the Chattogram Court Building on November 27, resulting in the death of a lawyer.

Radha Raman Das, Vice President of ISKCON Kolkata, expressed his

dismay at the court's decision. "It's very sad news. We know that the entire world was keeping an eye on this. Everyone was expecting Chinmoy Prabhu will get freedom in the new year - but even after 42 days, his bail was rejected in a hearing today... Bangladesh government should ensure that he gets justice," he stated.

Earlier attempts to secure bail for Das had been postponed due to threats against the lawyers representing him. On December 11, a Chattogram court had also denied him bail due to the absence of a lawyer's letter of attorney on his behalf.

The rejection of Das's bail plea has heightened tensions and underscores the ongoing challenges faced by the Hindu community in Bangladesh, particularly in the wake of recent political upheavals.



"Expect J&K Statehood To Be Restored Soon": Omar Abdullah

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister said that the Supreme Court had directed statehood restoration over a year ago

Srinagar: In a significant development that resonates with the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has reiterated his optimism about the imminent restoration of statehood to the region. This assurance comes at a time when the region is navigating the complexities of its current status as a Union Territory, a designation imposed since 2019.

Since assuming office over two months ago, Omar Abdullah has been steadfast in his commitment to the promises made during the National Conference's 2024 election campaign.

One of the pivotal promises was the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, a status that was revoked in 2019 along with the region's

special status under Article 370. Abdullah emphasized that the current Union Territory status is temporary and that the people's active participation in the recent assembly elections was a testament to their expectation of a return to statehood.

Abdullah pointed out that the Supreme Court had directed the restoration of statehood over a year ago, underscoring the legal and judicial backing for this demand. The recent assembly elections, held after a decade, saw the National Conference secure a significant mandate, winning 42 out of 90 seats in the legislative assembly.

This electoral victory has emboldened the party to push for the reinstatement of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.



4 JeM Associates, Who Offered Logistics Support To Terrorists, Arrested In J&K's Pulwama

The arrested individuals were involved in providing logistics support and transportation of arms and ammunition to the active terrorists of JeM in Tral and Awantipora.

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday arrested four associates of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit from Awantipora area of Pulwama district.

"Police in Awantipora along with security forces have arrested four terrorist associates of proscribed terror outfit JeM in Tral area," a police spokesperson said. He said the arrested terrorist associates have been identified as Mudasir

Ahmad Naik, Umar Nazir Sheikh, Inayat Firdoos and Salman Nazir Lone. The spokesperson said incriminating materials have been recovered from their possession.

The arrested individuals were involved in providing logistics support and transportation of arms and ammunition to the active terrorists of proscribed terror outfit JeM in Tral and Awantipora areas, the spokesperson said.

"China's Planned Dam Will Make Brahmaputra Ecosystem Fragile": Himanta Sarma

The Assam chief minister said India has already conveyed its concerns to China.

Assam: In a stark warning, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has highlighted the dire consequences of China's proposed mega dam on the Brahmaputra River, emphasizing that it could render the entire ecosystem fragile and dependent solely on rainfall from neighboring regions.

The Chinese government's recent approval for the construction of the world's largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, known as the Brahmaputra in India, has sparked significant concern among Indian authorities. Located in the Himalayas in eastern Tibet, this dam is set to generate 60,000 MW of



power, but its impact on downstream regions is a major worry.

Sarma, during a media interaction in Guwahati, underscored that India has already communicated its concerns to China. "The Government of India has already conveyed its concerns to the Chinese side. This issue will definitely be raised in the ongoing dialogue process between India and China," he stated.

The chief minister elaborated on the potential consequences, noting that the dam's construction could make the Brahmaputra ecosystem highly vulnerable. "If this dam is built, the Brahmaputra ecosystem will become completely fragile. It will dry up and rely solely on the rainfall from Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh," Sarma warned. He added that if these regions do not

receive sufficient rainfall, the Brahmaputra could dry up entirely, posing a severe problem for the region.

Sarma also mentioned that Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has raised this issue with the Central government, highlighting the shared concerns about the dam's impact. The dam's potential to disrupt water flow, retain fertile silt, and exacerbate flooding during monsoons are among the key concerns.

This development has once again brought to the forefront the need for a robust framework for managing transboundary rivers and safeguarding the interests of millions dependent on their flow.

'Just Reports, Not Truth': Gautam Gambhir Lifts Lid On 'Honest' Dressing Room Conversations

Gautam Gambhir mentioned that he had some honest conversations with the team and wanted performances to ensure that they keep their spot in the squad.



Australia: In the wake of India's significant 184-run loss to Australia in the Melbourne Test, rumors of unrest within the Indian cricket team's dressing room have been circulating. However, India's head coach, Gautam Gambhir, has stepped forward to clarify the situation, emphasizing that internal debates should remain private.

Gambhir, known for his straightforward approach, addressed the media ahead of the fifth and final Test of the

Border-Gavaskar Trophy, set to begin on January 3, 2025.

He categorically stated that the reports of tension within the team were exaggerated. "Debates between coach and player should remain in the dressing room. Stern words are part of the game, but these were just reports, not truth," Gambhir asserted.

The former cricketer and current head coach highlighted the importance of performance and honesty within the team.

"Indian cricket will be in safe hands till honest people stay in the dressing room. The only thing that keeps you in the dressing room is performance," he emphasized. This stance underscores Gambhir's commitment to maintaining a unified and performance-driven team environment.

Gambhir also revealed that his conversations with the team were centered around honesty and the need for improved performances. He made it clear

that every individual in the team is aware of the areas they need to work on to achieve victory. When asked about discussions with key players like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, Gambhir mentioned that their conversations were limited to strategies for winning Test matches.

Additionally, Gambhir confirmed that pacer Akash Deep will miss the upcoming New Year Test due to a stiff back, though he did not specify

a replacement. This absence will add pressure to the already strained bowling unit, with Jasprit Bumrah expected to lead the charge once again.

As the fifth and final Test approaches, both teams are gearing up for a crucial match that could significantly impact their standings in the series. Gambhir's words serve as a reminder that internal team dynamics, while important, should not overshadow the ultimate goal of winning.

Akash Deep Set To Miss Sydney Test Due To Back Issue, Gautam Gambhir Confirms

■ Akash Deep is set to miss the fifth Test against Australia due to a back issue as mentioned by Gautam Gambhir during the press conference.



Australia: The Indian pacer, Akash Deep's availability for the fifth and final Test against Australia remains doubtful with the pacer reportedly developing a stiff back ahead of the Border-Gavaskar series finale set to be played at Sydney.

The Head Coach of the Indian Cricket

Team, Gautam Gambhir had mentioned that the 28-year-old pacer is set to miss the Sydney Test due to a back issue. He was a part of the two Tests in Brisbane and Melbourne and finished with only two wickets. However, his lack of wickets was due to India's poor fielding standards with multiple catches being dropped off his bowling.

The 28-year-old quick has bowled a total of 87.5 overs across both Tests and the high workload could have likely caused his injury. It remains unclear as to who would replace him in the starting 11.

The visitors would look to put in their best performance to close out the series on a draw and help retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.



Australia Have 'No Different' Plans But To 'Keep It Up' For A Win In Sydney Test, Says AUS Skipper Pat Cummins

The AUS skipper, however, conceded there are some issues with the Aussies' batting.

Sydney: As the cricket world sets its sights on the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), Australia is poised to make history by reclaiming the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the first time since the 2014-15 season. With a commanding 2-1 lead in the series, Captain Pat Cummins is adamant that the team's strategy remains unchanged – to win the final Test against India.

Cummins emphasized the team's consistent performance, saying, "We've shown that we've been the front-runners, and the aim again this week is to keep it up." Despite the favorable position, Cummins acknowledged that there are areas for

improvement, particularly in the batting department. "There are times when we would have liked to score more runs," he admitted, reflecting on the recent Test in Melbourne where Australia could have extended their lead to 400-500 runs.

The SCG pitch, known for its unique characteristics, presents a challenge that Cummins is well aware of. "It's a little bit different from the traditional SCG wicket," he noted. "The teams were happy with the wicket this year, which felt like there was a bit on offer for the bowlers, but also runs to be scored." The weather, too, could play a crucial role, with only day five of the Sydney Test expected to be affected by rain.

Carmel Sports Club Dominates United Boys of Ambaulim with 3-1 Victory

Team Goemkarponn

Navelim: In a thrilling encounter at the Rosary Church Ground in Navelim, Carmel Sports Club secured a convincing 3-1 win over United Boys of Ambaulim in the GFA 2nd League match. The victory was marked by stellar performances from Carmel's key players, who demonstrated their prowess on the field. The match began with an early goal from United Boys of Ambaulim, as Teron Fernandes found the net in the 14th minute.

This initial strike seemed to set the tone for a competitive match,



but Carmel Sports Club was determined to turn the tables. The second half saw a significant shift in momentum as Carmel Sports Club began to assert their dominance. Messiah Rebello broke through the United Boys' defense and scored in the 57th minute, leveling the score and revitalizing his

team's spirits. This goal marked a turning point in the game, as Carmel's confidence grew and their attacks became more relentless.

Tanvir Bagalkot further extended Carmel's lead by scoring in the 70th minute. His goal not only gave Carmel the upper hand but also highlighted the

team's strategic play and coordination. As the match neared its conclusion, Yunal Fernandes sealed the victory with a dramatic goal in the 90+5 minute, ensuring that Carmel Sports Club walked away with a well-deserved 3-1 win.

This victory is a testament to Carmel Sports Club's strength and resilience in the GFA 2nd League. The team's ability to bounce back from an early deficit and maintain their composure under pressure was impressive. The win is expected to boost their standings in the league and set a positive tone for their upcoming matches.