



GOA'S THIRD DISTRICT TO BE CARVED TODAY?



Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The proposed creation of a third district in Goa triggered sharp political reactions, even as Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that Quepem taluka would serve as the headquarters of the new district and assured the opposition that the much-awaited 2023 committee report

■ CM says Quepem to be headquarters; Oppn Slams Govt For "Secret" Report

would be shared.

Speaking after an all-party meeting, Sawant said the third district is being created as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of having smaller districts across the country to ensure that administration reaches every doorstep. He said the proposed district will comprise the talukas of Dharbandora, Sanguem, Quepem and Canacona, with Quepem as its headquarters.

The announcement, however, came amid criticism from opposition leaders who accused the government of proceeding in a hasty and opaque manner without making the committee report public.

Opposition Leader Yuri Alemao said that while a meeting on the third district was held on Monday, the crucial 2023 report forming the basis of the proposal was not shared with

the opposition. "The government is moving ahead without placing the report before the legislature or making it public, and is relying only on a PowerPoint presentation," Alemao said, alleging a lack of transparency in a decision with far-reaching administrative and financial implications.

St Cruz MLA Viresh Borkar echoed the criticism, claiming that the report has neither

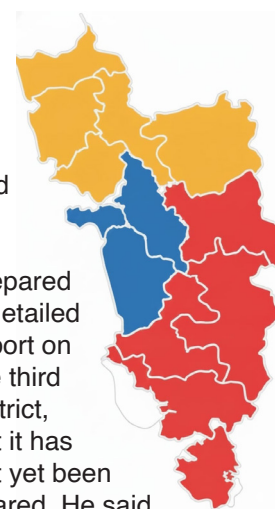
been tabled in the House nor made public, despite the Cabinet having approved the proposal. He further alleged that the Chief Minister was planning to notify the new district by December 31 without consulting the opposition. "Such a major decision cannot be taken unilaterally. The people of Goa are being kept in the dark," Borkar said.

AAP MLA Cruz Silva pointed out that a committee formed in 2023

had

prepared a detailed report on the third district, but it has not yet been shared. He said opposition MLAs are not against the creation of a new district, but want clarity on the financial burden and administrative

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Ward Boundaries to Remain Unchanged for Upcoming Municipal Elections in Goa

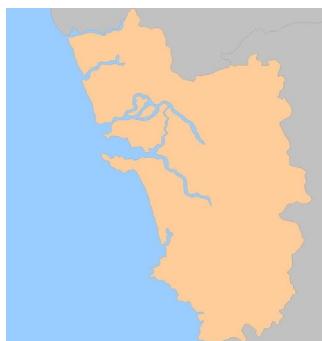
Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) has decided against undertaking a fresh ward delimitation exercise ahead of the forthcoming municipal elections in Goa.

The civic polls will now be conducted using the existing ward boundaries that were in place during the 2021 elections.

The decision follows a State government order imposing a freeze on all administrative boundaries, including municipal limits, village jurisdictions and assembly segments.

The freeze has come into effect from December 31, 2025, and will remain in force until



March 31, 2027, in view of preparations for the Census 2027.

As a result, elections to Goa's 11 municipalities, scheduled for April 2026, will be held without any changes to ward configurations. The same applies to the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP), where elections are due in March and will also follow the existing

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Reshma Bandodkar Elected Unopposed as North Goa ZP Chairperson

■ Namdev Chari elected Deputy Chairperson

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Zilla Panchayat (ZP) member Reshma Bandodkar was on Tuesday elected unopposed as the Chairperson of the North Goa Zilla Panchayat, underlining the BJP-led alliance's numerical strength in the district body.

Namdev Chari, ZP

member from the Honda constituency, was also elected unopposed as the Deputy Chairperson of the North Goa Zilla Panchayat. Both leaders subsequently took charge of their respective offices.

In South Goa, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced Sidharth Dessai of Xeldem as its Adhyaksha (Chairperson) nominee

and Anjali Velip of Barcem as its Upadhyaksha (Deputy Chairperson) nominee. Dessai had earlier served as Upadhyaksha before the recently concluded Zilla Panchayat elections.

The BJP has secured the support of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and independent ZP

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Sidharth Gauns Dessai elected South Goa ZP chairperson
Team Goemkarponn

Margao: BJP candidate Sidharth Gauns Dessai was elected chairperson of the South Goa Zilla Panchayat on Monday, securing 16 votes in the 25-member house. Congress nominee Luisa Rodrigues received nine votes.

"Strengthening Precision And Air Defence," Centre Clears Rs 79,000 Crore Defence Procurement

■ Defence Acquisition Council Approves Major Buys For Army, Navy And Air Force

New Delhi: The Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has cleared defence procurement proposals worth approximately Rs 79,000 crore, marking a significant push to enhance the combat readiness and technological capabilities of India's Armed Forces. The approvals were



granted during a meeting held on December 29, 2025.

For the Indian Army, acceptance of necessity was accorded for several critical systems aimed at strengthening battlefield

effectiveness and air defence. These include the Loiter Munition System for artillery regiments, Low Level Light Weight Radars, Long Range Guided Rocket Ammunition for the Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System, and the Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction System Mk II. The loiter munitions are designed

to carry out precision strikes against tactical targets, while the radars will improve detection and tracking of small, low flying unmanned aerial systems. The long range guided rockets are expected to significantly enhance the reach and accuracy of the Pinaka rocket system, enabling effective engagement of high value targets.

"We Stand Committed To Protecting Aravalli Range," Says Environment Minister

■ Namdev Chari elected Deputy Chairperson

New Delhi: Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to keep in abeyance its earlier order that accepted a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges. He said the government remains fully committed to the protection and restoration of the



ecologically sensitive Aravalli range and will extend all required support for its conservation.

The Supreme Court paused the directions

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Behind the Numbers: Goa's Rising Crime and the Cost of Looking Away

Goa's identity has long rested on an idea of ease. A small state where life moves more slowly, where tourists feel safe, and where crime seems distant from everyday conversation. That comforting image is now colliding with official data. According to recent figures, Goa is registering an average of two murders and nine rape cases every month, with over 2,000 criminal cases recorded so far this year. The numbers are unsettling, but what should trouble us more is how easily such data risks being consumed without serious examination.

Statistics alone do not tell a full story. They rarely do. When crime figures are presented without context, they can either incite panic or breed apathy. In Goa's case, both reactions are possible. Compared to larger states, the absolute numbers may appear modest. But Goa is not Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra. With a population of roughly 15 lakh, even a small rise in violent crime carries weight. Crime rates, not just totals, matter in a state where communities are tight-knit and social disruptions are quickly felt.

The focus on headline crimes like murder and rape is understandable. These offences demand moral outrage and immediate action. Yet the broader figure of more than 2,000 criminal cases raises questions that remain unanswered. What kinds of crimes are increasing? Are drug-related offences, domestic violence, cybercrime, or theft driving the rise? Without this breakdown, public debate remains shallow, driven by fear rather than understanding.

Equally important is the question of outcomes. Authorities point to hundreds of investigations being "completed," but completion does not equal justice. How many of these cases resulted in charges? How many led to convictions? Goa, like much of India, struggles with delayed trials and low conviction rates, especially in cases involving

"Equally important is the question of outcomes. Authorities point to hundreds of investigations being 'completed,' but completion does not equal justice. How many of these cases resulted in charges? How many led to convictions? Goa, like much of India, struggles with delayed trials and low conviction rates, especially in cases involving sexual violence. When reporting stops at case registration, it risks masking deeper failures within the criminal justice system. There is also an uncomfortable truth that often goes unspoken. A rise in reported crime does not always mean a rise in criminal activity. It can reflect improved reporting mechanisms, greater public awareness, or increased trust in the police."

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There is also an uncomfortable truth that often goes unspoken. A rise in reported crime does not always mean a rise in criminal activity. It can reflect improved reporting mechanisms, greater public awareness, or increased trust in the police. For crimes like rape, higher reporting may indicate that survivors feel more empowered to come forward. If that is the case, the numbers signal progress alongside pain. Journalism has a responsibility to explore this possibility rather than framing every increase as a simple breakdown of law and

order.

Predictably, calls for stricter policing and tougher enforcement have followed the release of these figures. While visible policing has its place, the belief that law enforcement alone can curb crime is deeply flawed. Crime is often rooted in social and economic stress, substance abuse, migration pressures, and breakdowns in community support systems. Goa's struggles with narcotics, unregulated tourism, and seasonal employment create vulnerabilities that no number of patrol vehicles can fully address.

The gendered nature of violence deserves particular scrutiny. Nine rape cases a month in a small state should provoke more than routine condemnation. It demands serious investment in prevention, survivor support, fast-track courts, and gender sensitization. Silence or superficial outrage only perpetuates the cycle.

Tourism adds another layer of complexity. Goa's economy depends heavily on the perception of safety. Sensational reporting may scare visitors, but sanitized narratives are equally dangerous. The state cannot afford denial. Sustainable tourism requires safe streets, responsive policing, and communities that do not feel abandoned by institutions.

What is missing most from public discourse is depth. Crime statistics should be a starting point, not an endpoint. They should lead to conversations with criminologists, social workers, women's rights groups, and local communities. They should provoke questions about governance, accountability, and long-term planning.

Goa does not need panic, nor does it need complacency. It needs honesty. Behind every statistic is a human life altered by violence or fear. Reducing these realities to monthly averages risks dulling their urgency. If Goa is to confront its rising crime meaningfully, it must look beyond the numbers and confront the social fractures they quietly expose.

Letters

Goa at a Crossroads: What Must Change in 2026

Goa is often spoken of as if it exists outside the realities facing the rest of the country. Sun, sand, and celebration dominate the narrative, while uncomfortable truths are pushed aside. As 2025 draws to a close, it is clear that this selective vision is no longer sustainable. Goa is facing a convergence of problems that demand honesty, urgency, and long-term thinking as we step into 2026.

Crime is no longer an occasional headline but a recurring concern. Rising cases of violent crime, particularly against women, point to deeper social failures. Law enforcement responses appear reactive rather than preventive, and public confidence is steadily eroding. Safety cannot be reduced to police statistics alone. It is shaped by lighting on streets, reliable public transport, functioning local communities, and swift justice. On these fronts, Goa is falling short.

Environmental degradation is another slow-burning crisis. Hill cutting, mangrove destruction, and unregulated construction continue with little consequence. Each monsoon exposes the price of reckless development through flooding, landslides, and collapsing infrastructure. Tourism-driven growth has been allowed to override ecological sense, even though Goa's environment is its greatest strength. Once damaged beyond repair, no policy statement or marketing campaign will restore it.

Goa's economy also remains fragile. Overdependence on tourism has created seasonal employment and chronic insecurity. Young Goans struggle to find stable, dignified work, while serious investment in skill development, innovation, and small industries remains limited. This lack of economic diversity is pushing talent out of the state and hollowing out local communities.

Governance itself needs urgent reform. Transparency in decision-making is weak, accountability in public works is inconsistent, and public consultation often feels like an afterthought. Decisions that reshape villages and coastlines are frequently taken without meaningful engagement with those who must live with the consequences.

As Goa enters 2026, the priorities should be clear. Strengthen safety through community policing and fast-track justice. Enforce environmental laws without exception. Build an economy that looks beyond tourism. Most importantly, restore trust by making governance participatory, not performative.

Goa does not need grand slogans or nostalgia. It needs responsible leadership and the courage to confront its own realities.

- Neil Braganza, Sirsaim

THANK YOU, SOCIAL MEDIA

Those memories as a school student when it was a nightmare queuing up at the Telephone exchange, then located at the Panjim Post Office, to even make a call to Bombay. One had to opt for an ordinary, urgent, or lightning call, and it was always a very long wait. Today, telecommunications and the Social media has transformed all this, while drastically enhancing our power to communicate instantly across the world.

Through WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other Global networking sites

We are able to effectively communicate to share a message or a thought to a multitude of our near and dear ones worldwide. A great blessing indeed. What an amazing world!

- Aires Rodrigues, London

Traffic Advisory Issued for New Year Celebrations Across Goa

■ *Calangute, Vasco, Colva and Canacona to witness temporary traffic restrictions and diversions

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: In view of the peak tourist season and the anticipated surge in vehicular movement during New Year celebrations, the Goa Traffic Police have announced a comprehensive traffic circulation plan across major tourist hubs including Calangute-Baga, Vasco, Colva, and Canacona. The measures aim to decongest internal roads, ensure smooth traffic flow, and minimise inconvenience to local residents and visitors during New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

With a significant rise in tourist vehicles entering Calangute, several restrictions have been imposed within the Calangute Village Panchayat jurisdiction. The road stretch from Bharat Junction to Tito's



Circle (Mambos Club) towards exit from Snow Park via Tito's-Baga will be declared a non-motorised zone from 3 pm to 6 am. Utility vehicles such as water tankers, LPG cylinder vehicles and sewerage tankers will also face restricted entry timings from 6 am to 10 am.

These measures will remain in force from December 23, 2025 to January 1, 2026. One-way traffic movement will be enforced on key internal roads, including routes from St Alex Church to Calangute-

Baga junction, Baga-Calangute junction to Government Primary School, Government Primary School to Fat Fish junction, and from Joia de Mar Resort to Piety Chapel in Baga. ple locations have been identified for temporary four-wheeler parking, including Calangute Association Football Ground, GTDC parking near Bhandarkar statue, fields near Baga bridge, areas behind Babreshwar Temple, Nazri Resort parking lot, and other open grounds across Calangute and Baga.

Entry and movement of heavy and medium tourist vehicles such as buses, mini-buses and tempos will be prohibited within Calangute from December 21, 2025 to January 31, 2026. These vehicles will be allowed to park only at designated barren fields near Fat Fish restaurant, Porbowado, and open space adjacent to Calangute Police Station.

In the Vasco region, the road from Bogmalo Church junction towards Bogmalo Beach will remain temporarily closed to all vehicles except two-wheelers from 7 pm on December 31, 2025 to 3 am on January 1, 2026. Vehicular traffic will be diverted through internal roads via Vieranagar junction, Indian Coast Guard campus junction and Tanisha Guest House junction.

"Goa Will Lose Its Soul if Goans Ignore Threats": Savio Rodrigues

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Veteran social activist and commentator Savio Rodrigues has issued a stern warning about the challenges confronting Goa today, stressing that the state's identity and cultural heritage are under threat.

Speaking on the ongoing socio-political and environmental changes in the state, Rodrigues highlighted that rampant illegalities, unchecked ecological destruction, and the degeneration of Goa's cultural ethos are endangering the very soul of the state.

He cautioned that if Goans do not become vigilant and actively safeguard their heritage, "Goa will exist, but it would have lost its soul to the devil of political greed."

Rodrigues urged citizens to wake up to the changing demographics and the growing influence of exploitative practices that threaten to erode



Goa's unique identity. He emphasized the need for collective action to protect the environment, preserve cultural traditions, and hold political powers accountable.

The activist's remarks come amid increasing concerns over unplanned urbanisation, encroachment on ecological zones, and political maneuvering that many fear could transform the character of the state.

Rodrigues called upon Goans to remain aware and proactive, stressing that safeguarding Goa's heritage and natural beauty is essential to ensure that the state retains its soul for future generations.

Mandatory Police Verification for All School Transport Staff in Goa

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: In a move to strengthen child safety measures, the Directorate of Education has issued a directive making police verification mandatory for all drivers and helpers involved in the transportation of school children across Goa.

The circular, issued by Director of Education Shailesh R. Sinai Zingde, applies to all government, aided, and unaided schools, including those operating Balrath and



other school transport vehicles.

According to the directive, no driver or helper will be allowed to transport students without a valid police verification certificate.

Schools are also required to maintain records of verification and produce them for inspection whenever required.

Goods Carrier Guttled in Fire at Chorla Ghat; No Injuries Reported

Team Goemkarponn

Valpoi: A Karnataka-registered goods carrier was gutted in a fire that broke out in the early hours at Chorla Ghat, causing extensive damage to the vehicle.

Personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services, Valpoi, rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and swiftly brought the blaze under control, preventing it from spreading further.

Although no injuries were reported in the



incident, the goods carrier was severely damaged, with losses estimated at around ₹5 lakh. The exact cause of the fire is yet

to be ascertained, and authorities have initiated an inquiry to determine the circumstances that led to the incident.



Two New Ro-Ro Ferries Planned to Improve Diwar-São Pedro Connectivity

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The State government is planning to introduce two new roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferries on the Diwar-São Pedro route in a move aimed at improving river connectivity and reducing congestion for daily commuters.

Officials from the River Navigation Department (RND) said the proposed ferries will be smaller in size compared to the existing Ro-Ro vessels operating on the Ribandar-Chorao stretch, but will be specifically designed to suit traffic needs on the Diwar crossing. Each ferry is expected to carry multiple cars, two-wheelers and passengers in a single trip, helping cut down long waiting times, particularly during peak hours. To facilitate the new service, dedicated ramps will be constructed at both Diwar and São Pedro jetties.

Funding Delays Could Bring Dog Sterilisation Drive to a Halt, Warns Goa Animal Federation

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Several non-governmental organisations involved in sterilising community dogs in Goa may be forced to suspend their work due to prolonged delays in payments from the State government, the Goa Animal Federation (GAF) has warned.

A delegation of the federation recently met

Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai and submitted a memorandum highlighting the financial strain faced by NGOs carrying out sterilisation and animal care programmes across the State. The federation said that although NGOs continue to undertake surgeries and medical treatment as mandated, reimbursements from the government are often released after long delays,



sometimes stretching into years.

According to GAF representatives, most animal welfare

organisations rely heavily on donations and limited grants, making it difficult to sustain operations when government dues remain

Jellyfish Stings Five, 24 Rescued From Drowning Off Goa Coast During Christmas Weekend

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Drishti Marine lifesavers rescued 24 people from drowning and administered first aid in five jellyfish sting cases across Goa's beaches during the Christmas weekend, a period that traditionally witnesses a sharp rise in tourist footfall and water-related incidents.

According to an incident report issued on December 29, lifesavers carried out a total of eight single rescues, three double rescues and two multiple rescues over the weekend, in addition to



tracing missing children and assisting injured beachgoers.

At Mandrem beach, a 33-year-old tourist from Hyderabad was rescued after facing difficulty while swimming, while at Ashwem beach, two tourists from Punjab, aged 47 and 15, were jointly rescued after drifting about 100 metres offshore. Multiple rescue operations were also reported at Morjim beach,

where groups of tourists from Karnataka and Hyderabad were saved from rip currents, and a missing four-year-old boy from Maharashtra was traced and reunited with his family.

At Anjuna beach, a 43-year-old tourist from Mumbai sustained a leg injury after being hit by a strong wave and was provided first aid. Baga beach witnessed several incidents, including the

rescue of six tourists—five Indians and a woman from Kazakhstan—from unsafe waters, along with separate rescues of tourists from Maharashtra and Pune. Two missing children, aged 11 from Hyderabad and seven from Hyderabad at Calangute beach, were traced and safely reunited with their families.

Rescue operations were also carried out at Calangute, Utorda, Majorda, Benaulim, Patnem and Palolem beaches, involving tourists from Bengaluru, Mumbai, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Two Held for Theft at Krishna Petrol Pump in Bicholim

Team Goemkarponn

Bicholim: Police have arrested two persons in connection with a theft reported at Krishna Petrol Pump in Sarvan, Bicholim.

The incident came to light after the pump owner, Sunil Parvatkar (51), a businessman and resident of Karapur, Tisk, Sankhali, lodged a complaint on December 28, 2025, at around 4.10 pm.

According to the complaint, the theft occurred in the early hours of December 28, prior to 5.50 am, when the accused allegedly broke open the lock of the main door of the petrol pump office located at Survey No. D-48, Sarvan, and gained entry.

The miscreants are said to have cut the CCTV



cable and stolen a DVR along with cash amounting to ₹9,000 kept in the office altar (Devara).

Following an investigation, Bicholim Police arrested Mahesh Shetty, son of Shiva Shetty, a resident of Karai, Shiroda, Ponda, and Bhuvan Pillai, son of Tilakraj Pillai, a resident of Flat No. 06, Diamond Apartment, Bilwan Peddem, Mapusa.

Further investigation is underway, and the case is being handled by LPSI Sonali Harmalakar of Bicholim Police Station.

Woman Killed, Son Injured as Tipper Truck Hits Scooter at Ponda

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: A woman was killed and her minor son injured in a road accident involving a TATA tipper truck at Warkhandem Junction, Ponda, on December 28, 2025. According to a complaint lodged by PSI Sushanat Gaonkar, the incident occurred prior to 4.30 pm near Shantai Niwas, when the accused truck driver, Prasad Patil, a resident of Pale, Bicholim, allegedly drove the vehicle in a rash and negligent manner, endangering human life. Police said the tipper truck was proceeding from Farmagudi towards a construction site near Savoikar Hospital at Warkhandem when it



dashed into a TVS Jupiter scooter coming from near Hanuman Temple towards Naga Masjid via Warkhandem, Ponda. As a result of the collision, the scooter rider Swati Rathod and her son Ayush Rathod, both residents of Curti, Ponda, originally from Maharashtra, were thrown onto the road. Swati Rathod succumbed to her injuries, while the pillion rider Ayush Rathod sustained injuries and is currently undergoing medical treatment at GMC, Bambolim.



Man Arrested for Illegal Gambling at Colvale

Team Goemkarponn

Colvale: Colvale police arrested a man for indulging in illegal gambling by running a game of chance, commonly known as a number game, at a public place in Bardez. The offence was registered on December 29, 2025, at 1.45 pm on the basis of a state complaint filed by Head Constable Anil Shetye (No. 5651), attached to Colvale Police Station.

Bus Hits Motorcycle at Verna, Rider Dies After Bike Catches Fire

Team Goemkarponn

Verna: A motorcycle rider was killed in a fatal road accident involving a passenger bus at Verna on December 28, 2025. According to a complaint lodged by HC 5895 Shiva Naik of Verna Police Station, the incident occurred at around 6.45 pm when the accused bus driver, Jakir Hussain Shaikh, a resident of Sancoale, allegedly drove the bus in a rash and negligent manner while proceeding from Margao towards Vasco. When the bus reached near Santa Marble & Granite shop at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Verna,



it reportedly dashed into an oncoming Honda Shine motorcycle.

As a result of the collision, the motorcycle rider, Kevin Ishanti Pereira, a resident of Sangargali, Belgaum, Gunji in Karnataka, was thrown onto the road

along with the bike. Due to the impact, the motorcycle caught fire and was engulfed in flames. The injured rider was immediately shifted to South Goa District Hospital, Margao, by a 108 ambulance, where he was declared brought

Electronic Gadgets Worth ₹1.84 Lakh Stolen from House Near Zalor Beach

Team Goemkarponn

Colva: An unknown accused has been booked for theft after electronic gadgets and other valuables worth approximately ₹1.84 lakh were stolen from a house near Zalor Beach, Carmona. According to a complaint lodged by Anuj Saxena, a resident of Pune, Maharashtra, the incident occurred between



7.00 am and 7.35 am when the accused gained entry into the complainant's house through the main door. Police said the stolen items include a Dell laptop valued at around ₹1 lakh, a Samsung Galaxy

tablet worth approximately ₹65,000, a Samsung Galaxy mobile phone valued at ₹19,900, along with other miscellaneous articles. Following the complaint, Colva police registered an offence and initiated investigation to trace the culprit.

Further investigation in the case is being carried out by PSI Manju Vantamuri of Colva Police Station.

Burglary at Construction Firm's Office in Margao, Cash and Laptop Stolen

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: An unknown accused has been booked for burglary after cash and a laptop were stolen from the corporate office of Golden Sands Construction LLP in Margao.

According to a complaint lodged by Ranjit Cotta Carvalho of Golden Sands Construction LLP, operating from the 5th

floor of Mabai Business Centre, the incident occurred on December 29, 2025, at around 12.53 pm.

Police said the accused gained entry into the corporate office by breaking a window and decamped with cash amounting to ₹15,400 and a laptop valued at ₹64,500,

taking away property worth a total of ₹79,900. Margao Town police have registered an offence and are carrying out further investigation.

Further investigation in the case is being conducted by LPSI Aanushka Parab of Margao Town Police Station.



Margao Congress Block Demands Sacking of PWD Minister

Alleges Misuse of Police and Electoral Machinery

Team Goemkarponn

Margao: The Margao Congress Block on Tuesday demanded the immediate sacking of PWD Minister Digambar Kamat, alleging that government machinery and the police department were being misused to file false cases against political opponents during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.

Addressing a press conference, Margao



Congress Block Convener Savio Coutinho, along with party leaders Lalan Parsekar, Lincoln Gomes, Damodar Onskar, Camilo Camara, Clifford Dias, Anwar Naroo and Aziz Shah, alleged that false

complaints and FIRs were deliberately registered against him to suppress scrutiny of irregularities in the voter revision process.

Coutinho also demanded the immediate suspension of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) who, he claimed, filed

false complaints to cover up their own lapses. He said documents in his possession prove that FIRs were registered for incidents that never occurred. Referring to information obtained from the Goa State Central Library, Coutinho stated that the South District Library premises were not used for any election-related or SIR-related activity, nor was any programme conducted there on November 26, 2025.



UD Secretary Inspects Mapusa Municipal Market Following CM's Directions

Team Goemkarponn

Mapusa: In line with the assurances given by Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, Secretary of the Department of Urban Development (UD) Yatindra M. Maralkar on Tuesday visited the Mapusa Municipal Market to review its condition and functioning.

The inspection was carried out as per the directions issued by the Chief Minister during a meeting held on December 18, where concerns related to the market were discussed. UD Secretary Maralkar was accompanied by Director of Municipal Administration (DMA) Brijesh Manerikar, Chief

Officer Chandrakant Shetkar, along with other municipal officers and staff.

Earlier in the afternoon, the UD Secretary visited the Mapusa Municipal Council (MMC) office, following which he proceeded to the municipal market. The officials took a detailed round of the market premises to inspect infrastructure, cleanliness, facilities, and overall conditions affecting merchants and consumers.

The visit fulfilled the commitment made by the Chief Minister to the Mapusa Market Association (MMA) committee during the December 18 meeting.

Thirty Selected as Goa Scholars Under Manohar Parrikar Scheme for 2024-25

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Thirty promising students from Goa have been selected as Goa Scholars under the Manohar Parrikar Goa Scholar Scheme 2018 for the academic year 2024-25. The flagship State government scheme, conceptualised by late Manohar G.

Parrikar, former Chief Minister of Goa, is being implemented through the Directorate of Higher Education to support meritorious students pursuing post-graduate and doctoral studies in India and abroad.

A total of 185 students applied for the scheme this year. Eligible candidates were shortlisted

by a Scrutiny Committee and subsequently interviewed by a high-level Selection Committee comprising reputed senior academicians, industry experts and administrators. Following the selection process, 30 candidates were chosen as Goa Scholars for the academic year 2024-25.



NFF presses for urgent implementation of small-scale fisheries guidelines

Team Goemkarponn

VASCO: The National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) participated in a two-day national workshop on aligning India's National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries with the global process, held at Narendrapur in West Bengal. The workshop was organised by the Institute for Motivating Self Employment (IMSE) in collaboration with the East Coast Fish Workers Union (ECFWU). The meeting brought together fishworkers' organisations, trade unions, researchers and civil society representatives from across the country to discuss the need for India's fisheries policies

to be aligned with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (VGSSF). Addressing the workshop, NFF general secretary Olencio Simoes said that the implementation of the FAO guidelines was crucial for the survival and security of millions of fishers. He pointed out that India had endorsed the guidelines in 2014, but even after 11 years, they remain unimplemented. In contrast, neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka have already taken concrete steps, he said, adding that the continued delay in India was causing serious hardship to fishworkers.

Sewer pipeline upgrade works launched at Baina to ease long-pending sewage issues

Team Goemkarponn

MORMUGAO: Mormugao MLA Sankalp Amonkar launched a ₹1.5 crore sewerline replacement project near Canara Bank at Baina, aimed at addressing persistent sewage problems in the area.

The project involves replacing a nearly 40-year-old sewer pipeline that has been the cause of frequent blockages and overflows. The ageing line is being upgraded to



a larger-capacity pipeline by increasing its diameter from the existing 150 mm to double the size to 300 mm, which is expected to significantly improve

sewage flow and reduce recurring complaints.

Speaking at the launch, Amonkar said the sewerage work is already underway at Sada jetty

and Bogda and other parts of the Constituency and is nearing completion. He added that the main pipeline connecting Sada to the Baina sewage treatment plant is expected to be replaced shortly, which will further strengthen the sewage infrastructure in the region. "We faced a lot of inconvenience due to this 40 year old sewerage pipeline and we are replacing it with a new pipeline, double the size to ensure smooth flow.

LoP Yuri Alemao Backs ST Protest Against Projects in Chimbel, Alleges Govt Ignoring Court Orders

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Leader of the Opposition Yuri Alemao on Monday strongly criticised the BJP-led government, accusing it of using the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community merely for electoral gains while failing to protect their land, rights and environment.

Alemao was speaking after meeting members of the ST

community who are protesting against the proposed Unity Mall and Prashasan Stambh projects at Chimbel, which locals have opposed, citing environmental concerns and alleged construction on wetlands.

Quepem MLA Altone D'Costa and Congress leader Samil Volvoikar were also present during the interaction with the protesters.



Goa, Norway Explore Deeper Trade And Innovation Ties In IT And Tourism

■ Talks Focus On Start-Up Collaboration, Digital Innovation, And Structured Business Engagement

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Senior policymakers and trade representatives from Goa and Norway have explored new opportunities to strengthen bilateral cooperation, with a focus on information technology, tourism, and start-up ecosystems. The discussions highlighted Goa's growing potential as a hub for digital innovation and international business collaboration.

The meeting brought together officials from the Goa government's Department of Information Technology and Department of Tourism, along with representatives from the Norway India Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the state's Startup and IT Promotion Cell. The engagement was facilitated by a Goa-based digital transformation firm with operations in both India and Norway,



which played a key role in connecting stakeholders from the two regions.

During the discussions, participants examined ways to enhance collaboration in IT services, digital solutions, and technology driven tourism initiatives. Start-up facilitation emerged as a priority area, with emphasis on creating pathways for innovation, skill exchange, and joint ventures between Norwegian companies and Goan enterprises.

A significant proposal that emerged was the establishment of a locally based liaison body in Goa. This proposed entity would serve as a direct

link between Norwegian trade organisations and the state government, providing a structured platform for collaboration. The liaison body is expected to support partnerships in IT, digital innovation, and tourism development, while also helping businesses navigate regulatory frameworks and investment opportunities.

Officials noted that such an institutional mechanism could strengthen long term engagement, encourage cross border investments, and promote Goa as a preferred destination for technology and tourism partnerships. The initiative

is seen as a step toward creating sustainable and measurable outcomes for businesses on both sides.

Further underscoring Goa's rising global profile, the Norway India Chamber of Commerce and Industry confirmed that Goa has been selected as the preferred destination for its Business Delegation to India in November 2026. This decision reflects growing international confidence in the state's business environment and policy framework.

In addition, Norwegian trade representatives proposed participation by Goa's IT and Tourism departments in Business Day activities scheduled to be held in Oslo in June 2026. The proposed engagements are expected to deepen institutional ties, expand market access, and position Goa as a globally connected destination for innovation, entrepreneurship, and tourism led growth.

"India Set To Become Third Largest Economy By 2030," Official Assessment Says

■ Strong Domestic Demand And Sustained Growth Momentum Push GDP Towards \$7.3 Trillion

New Delhi: India is on track to become the world's third largest economy by 2030, with its gross domestic product projected to reach \$7.3 trillion, according to an official assessment released on Monday. With its GDP currently valued at \$4.18 trillion, India has already overtaken Japan to secure the fourth position globally and is expected to surpass Germany within the next two and a half to three years.

The assessment highlights that India's growth momentum has exceeded expectations, with economic expansion reaching a six quarter high in the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year. This performance underlines the country's resilience despite ongoing global trade and policy uncertainties. Domestic factors, particularly strong private consumption, have played a key role in driving this expansion.

Real GDP growth accelerated to 8.2 percent in the second quarter of FY 2025-26, improving from 7.8 percent in the previous quarter and 7.4 percent in the final quarter of FY 2024-25. Real gross value added also grew by 8.1 percent, supported by strong performance in the industrial and services sectors, which continue to act as growth engines.

High frequency economic indicators suggest that activity levels remain robust. Inflation has stayed below the lower tolerance threshold, unemployment trends have shown improvement, and export performance has strengthened. Financial conditions



remain supportive, with healthy credit flows to the commercial sector and firm demand conditions, particularly in urban consumption.

India is positioned among the fastest growing major economies globally and is seen as capable of sustaining this momentum over the medium term. The country aims to achieve high middle income status by 2047, the centenary year of independence, building on ongoing structural reforms, steady economic growth, and social development.

Reflecting this optimism, the growth forecast for FY 2025-26 has been revised upward to 7.3 percent. Factors supporting domestic growth include strong demand, tax rationalisation, softer crude oil prices, front loaded government capital expenditure, and accommodative monetary and financial conditions backed by stable inflation.

Looking ahead, favourable agricultural prospects, resilient services exports, strong corporate and financial sector balance sheets, and continued reforms are expected to sustain economic activity. The current macroeconomic environment has been described as a rare phase of high growth combined with low inflation, offering a strong platform for India's long term economic ascent.

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GOA'S THIRD DISTRICT TO BE CARVED TODAY?

implications. Following the objections, CM Sawant assured that the report would be shared and that suggestions from stakeholders would be invited within the next 10 days. Meanwhile, Congress MLA Altone D'Costa said he had vociferously demanded that Quepem be made the headquarters of

the third district, citing convenience for people from his constituency and neighbouring areas. The government had earlier resolved to set up the headquarters at Curchorem. Adding to the mixed signals, Minister Ramesh Tawadkar said the talukas of Dharbandora, Quepem, Canacona and Sanguem would be

included in the proposed district, but maintained that the headquarters was yet to be finalised, underscoring the confusion surrounding the plan. At present, Goa has two districts — North Goa and South Goa. North Goa comprises Bardez, Tiswadi, Pernem, Bicholim and Sattari talukas, while South

Goa includes Ponda, Mormugao, Salcete, Sanguem, Dharbandora, Quepem and Canacona. The seven-member committee, headed by the Chief Secretary, was constituted in November 2023 to examine the need for a third district in view of Goa's increasing population and overall development requirements.

Reshma Bandodkar Elected Unopposed as North Goa ZP Chairperson

member Sunil Jalmi, significantly strengthening its prospects of securing leadership control in both the North and South Goa Zilla Panchayats. BJP leader Naik said that the decision to accept Jalmi's support was taken after internal party deliberations, especially after local MLA Govind Gaude pointed out that the MGP had opposed the BJP candidate in the Betki-Khandola

constituency during the elections. "With the nominations now filed, the BJP's priority is to ensure a stable administration and fast-track development works across Goa's Zilla Panchayats," Naik said. The unopposed elections in North Goa reflect the BJP-led alliance's consolidated position in district-level governance as it moves to replicate the same outcome in South Goa.

"We Stand Committed To Protecting Aravalli Range," Says Environment Minister

issued in its November 20 verdict, which had approved a uniform definition of the Aravalli hills and ranges proposed by a committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The court also proposed the formation of a high powered committee comprising domain experts to carry out a detailed and holistic examination of the issue. Reacting to the decision, Yadav said the

court's move to introduce a stay and initiate a fresh review through an expert panel was welcome. He reiterated that the ministry would provide all assistance required for safeguarding the Aravalli range and supporting efforts aimed at its restoration. He also clarified that, as of now, the ban on granting new mining leases or renewing existing ones in the Aravalli region remains in force.

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Ward Boundaries to Remain Unchanged for Upcoming Municipal Elections in Goa

ward structure.

Officials from the DMA confirmed that the earlier proposal to redraw wards or increase the number of wards in certain municipalities has been put on hold.

Any such exercise will now be taken up only after the census process is completed, likely ahead of the 2031 municipal elections.

“Her Role In Strengthening Ties Will Be Remembered,” Says PM Modi On Khaleda Zia’s Passing

■ Prime Minister Pays Tribute To Former Bangladesh Leader, Recalls 2015 Meeting

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow over the death of former Bangladesh Prime Minister and Bangladesh Nationalist Party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, describing her as a leader whose contributions to Bangladesh and India Bangladesh relations will be remembered.

In a message shared on social media, the Prime Minister said he was deeply saddened by the passing of Khaleda Zia in Dhaka and extended heartfelt condolences to her family and the people of Bangladesh. He said



her role as the country’s first woman Prime Minister and her efforts toward national development and bilateral relations had left a lasting impact.

Recalling his interaction with her, Modi said he fondly remembered meeting Khaleda Zia in Dhaka

in 2015 and expressed hope that her vision and legacy would continue to guide and strengthen the partnership between the two neighbouring countries. He also prayed for peace for her soul and strength for her family to bear the loss.

Khaleda Zia passed

away at the age of 80 while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dhaka. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party confirmed that she had been battling multiple health complications in recent years.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Modi had expressed concern over her deteriorating health and had conveyed India’s willingness to extend all possible support to Bangladesh during her treatment. Her death marks the end of an era in Bangladesh’s political history, with tributes pouring in from across the region.

“People In Bengal Are Fed Up Of Corruption,” Says Amit Shah Ahead Of Assembly Polls

■ Home Minister Accuses TMC Of Fear, Misgovernance And Stalling Development In West Bengal

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Trinamool Congress government, claiming that people across West Bengal are frustrated with years of corruption and poor governance under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Speaking in Kolkata ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, Shah said the state is at a critical turning point as it prepares to go to the polls in 2026.

He alleged that the past 15 years of Trinamool Congress rule have been defined by fear, corruption, and administrative failure. According to Shah, widespread corruption has crippled development and created an atmosphere of insecurity among citizens. He also raised concerns



over infiltration, stating that it has increased anxiety and affected the social fabric of the state.

Shah claimed that corruption under the current government has brought development activities to a standstill. He said welfare initiatives launched by the central government have failed to reach beneficiaries due to what he described as an entrenched syndicate system. As a result, ordinary citizens have been deprived of the benefits of key schemes meant to improve livelihoods and infrastructure.

“We Are Not Momo,” Says Nagaland Minister After Tripura Student’s Killing

■ North East An Integral Part Of India, Says Temjen Imna Along As Racial Attack Sparks Outrage

New Delhi: Nagaland Minister Temjen Imna on Monday strongly condemned the alleged racial attack that led to the death of a Tripura student in Dehradun, asserting that people from the North Eastern states are an inseparable and integral part of India. His remarks came amid growing anger over the killing, which has triggered calls for justice and accountability.



The victim, 24 year old Angel Chakma, was a final year MBA student at a university in Dehradun and a resident of Tripura’s Unakoti district.

“Very Angry About It,” Says Trump On Alleged Drone Attack Targeting Putin’s Residence

■ Ukraine Denies Russian Claims As Tensions Rise Amid Fragile Peace Efforts

New Delhi: US President Donald Trump said he was “very angry” after Russian President Vladimir Putin informed him of an alleged Ukrainian attempt to attack one of his residences. The incident, which Moscow claims involved a large-scale drone strike, has further intensified tensions between Russia and Ukraine at a sensitive diplomatic moment.



Speaking to reporters in Florida, Trump said Putin contacted him early in the morning to relay details of the alleged

attack. Trump described the claim as unacceptable and said targeting a leader’s residence was wrong, especially at a

time when discussions around ending the conflict were ongoing. He also acknowledged that the incident may not have occurred, stating that uncertainty remained about the accuracy of the claim. According to Russian officials, Ukraine allegedly launched long-range drones at a residence linked to Putin in the Novgorod region on December 28 and 29.

“Game Changer For Armed Forces”: India Successfully Tests 120 Km Range Pinaka Rocket

■ Maiden Flight Trial Demonstrates Precision And Boosts Indigenous Artillery Capability

New Delhi: India on Monday successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket with a strike capability of up to 120 kilometres, marking a major milestone in strengthening the country’s indigenous defence systems. The test was carried out at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha, and met all mission objectives.

The rocket was tested



at its maximum range of 120 kilometres and demonstrated all planned in flight manoeuvres. It accurately struck the designated target,

validating the system’s guidance, navigation, and control mechanisms. Range tracking instruments monitored the rocket throughout its

flight path, confirming consistent performance and precision.

The successful trial coincided with the Defence Acquisition Council clearing the project for induction into the Indian Army earlier in the day. The rocket was launched from an existing Pinaka launcher, highlighting the platform’s flexibility and its ability to deploy multiple variants with different ranges from the same system.

“Law Will Take Its Course,” Police Say As Air India Express Pilot Gets Bail

■ Pilot Arrested Weeks After Alleged Assault On Passenger At Delhi Airport

New Delhi: An Air India Express pilot has been formally arrested and later released on bail in connection with an alleged assault on a passenger at Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport. Police confirmed that the offence is bailable under the sections applied and that the investigation into the incident is ongoing.

The accused, identified as Virendra Sejwal, was taken into custody a few days ago after



investigators completed preliminary inquiries, including the examination of CCTV footage and the recording of statements from those involved. He was subsequently released on bail following his arrest.

BCCI To Remove Gautam Gambhir? Rajeev Shukla Clarifies Head Coach's Future

■ BCCI Stands By Gautam Gambhir Despite India's Struggles in Test Cricket

New Delhi: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has no plans to replace Gautam Gambhir as India's head coach, despite the team's mixed performance in the five-day format under his tenure. Gambhir, the former Delhi left-handed batter, took charge of the Indian team in July 2024 following Rahul Dravid's departure. Since then, India has won only seven out of 19 Tests under his guidance.



During his stint, India registered notable victories, including one Test in Australia last year and two in England this

year. However, the team also faced heavy defeats, including 0-3 and 0-2 whitewashes at home against New Zealand

and South Africa, respectively. Gambhir has now lost five home Tests, the highest for any India head coach, and is the only coach to be whitewashed twice in home series. These results have fueled calls for his removal, at least from the Test format.

Addressing the speculation, BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla clarified that there is no plan to remove Gambhir or bring in a replacement.



Legal Titans Storm Into Semifinals With Dominant Win Over United Brothers

■ Satyam Ghogale's 65 Powers Titans Into Last Four Of Advocates Cricket League 2025-26

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Legal Titans secured a spot in the semifinals of the Advocates Cricket League 2025-26 T20 tournament after ending United Brothers' winning streak with a commanding performance on Monday at Chicalim, Vasco. After a shaky start to the league, losing their first three matches, the Titans bounced back with two comprehensive victories, advancing to the semifinals thanks to a superior net run rate.

Winning the toss, Legal Titans chose to bowl first and restricted United Brothers to 156 for 7 in 20 overs. Shaumik Angle led the United Brothers' innings with 32 runs, while Dattaraj Gawas and Dattaraj Parab added 27 runs each. For Legal Titans, Satchit Mauskar and Pravin Gawas claimed

two wickets apiece, keeping the opposition in check.

Chasing 157 for victory, the Titans produced a clinical batting display. Openers Satyam Ghogale and Satchit Mauskar put on a 109-run partnership, with Ghogale striking 65 off 42 balls, including four fours and four sixes, and Mauskar contributing 42 off 32 balls. The lower order remained steady, as captain Pravin Gawas remained unbeaten on 32 and Kanhaiya added 8 not out to guide the team home in 16.1 overs, winning by eight wickets with 23 balls to spare. The emphatic win also eliminated Risers from semifinal contention.

The semifinals are scheduled for January 9, 2026, at the GCA Ground, Porvorim, with United Brothers facing Legal Titans in the first match.

MCC Thunder Clinch MCL 11 T20 Title With Dominant Final Win

■ Sudesh Rane's All-Round Brilliance Seals 25-Run Victory Over MCC Tigers

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: MCC Thunder were crowned champions of the MCL 11 T20 Cricket Tournament after registering a convincing 25 run victory against MCC Tigers in the final held at the MCC Ground in Margao. The title clash witnessed an authoritative performance from Thunder, led by an outstanding all-round effort from Sudesh Rane, who was named Man of the Match.

Batting first, MCC



Thunder put up a formidable total of 189 for 8 in their allotted 20 overs. The innings was marked by aggressive stroke play and quick scoring across the middle

order. Om Fadte set the tone with a brisk 35 off 20 deliveries, while Sudhir Shet followed with a solid 35 from 24 balls. Ved Mahambre provided a late surge with a blistering

36 off just 15 balls, and Iftikhar Agha added valuable runs with an unbeaten 30 off 16 balls, ensuring Thunder finished with a challenging target.

MCC Tigers' bowlers managed to pick up wickets at regular intervals but struggled to contain the run flow. Mrunmay Das, Pranav Dhuri, Viraj Tar and Balkrishna Hodarkar shared the wickets, though Thunder's batting depth kept the momentum firmly in their favour.



Late Manohar Dhond Memorial: South Stallions Edge Out BPS Army To Emerge Champions

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: South Stallions emerged champions of the Late Manohar Dhond Memorial All Stars Cup 2025 after edging out BPS Army in a closely contested finale at the Indoor Stadium, Campal, Panaji. Led by captain Sudhanva Udupa, South Stallions showcased consistency and composure to secure the prestigious junior team title, while BPS Army, captained by Sparsh Kolwalkar, finished runners

up.

The exclusive junior league team championship brought together some of Goa's most promising badminton talent in a professionally structured format. Organised by Dhond's Sports Club and Panjim Smashers Club in collaboration with the Goa Badminton Association, the tournament featured ten franchise teams competing in a unique Swiss League system that delivered intense and evenly matched encounters throughout.

Lalit Yadav's Unbeaten Century Powers Goa To 62 Run Win Over Sikkim

■ Third Straight Victory Lifts Goa To Second Spot In Vijay Hazare Group C

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goa continued their impressive run in the Vijay Hazare Elite Cricket Tournament with a commanding 62 run victory over Sikkim on Monday, registering their third consecutive win in the competition. The triumph was built around a superb unbeaten century by Lalit Yadav, whose



innings anchored Goa to a formidable total at the KL Saini Stadium in Jaipur.

Batting first in the 50 over contest, Goa recovered from an uncertain start to post a

strong 309 for 8. The top order struggled to gain momentum, but Lalit Yadav held firm and produced a match defining knock of 131 not out. Displaying composure and controlled

aggression, he struck 14 boundaries in his 111 ball innings and guided the innings through the middle and death overs.

Yadav found valuable support from Suyash Prabhudesai, who contributed a fluent 55. The pair added a crucial 92 run partnership for the fourth wicket, stabilising the innings and setting the platform for a late surge.

KOFS Cup 2.0: Goa's Young Football Stars Shine Bright in Grand Finale

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The second edition of the KOFS Cup 2.0, organised by Kick Off Football Schools (KOFS), concluded successfully at the Sunshine School Ground in Old Goa, featuring enthusiastic participation from young



footballers across the state. The grassroots tournament aimed at

nurturing emerging talent and included competitive matches across four age

categories: U8, U10, U12, and U15.

The finals and prize distribution ceremony were attended by Chief Guest Rajesh Faldessai, MLA of Cumbarjua Constituency, and India international footballer Laxmikant Kattimani as Guest of Honour.