



Goa Leads AI-Driven Healthcare Revolution Under PM Modi's Vision: Vishwajit Rane

Over One Lakh Chest X-Rays Screened Using AI, Lung Cancer Detection Scaled Across PHCs and CHCs.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Goa is emerging as a frontrunner in India's healthcare transformation by leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), said Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Monday.

Addressing a joint press conference, Rane highlighted that with the support of AstraZeneca and Qure.AI, the state has already screened over one lakh chest X-rays using AI-based technology. The initiative has led to the identification of thousands of critical lung nodules and



has reduced diagnosis time by more than 50 per cent.

"Goa is among the first states in the country to successfully scale AI-enabled lung cancer detection across Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres. This is a major step towards early diagnosis and timely treatment," Rane said.

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We Are in Power Because We Deliver Good Governance: Health Minister Vishwajit Rane

Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Tuesday said he did not wish to comment on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), stating that parties delivering good work remain in power, while those that fail are voted out by the people.

"If they were doing good work, people would not have thrown them out of power. We are doing good work, and that is why we are in power," Rane said. Highlighting the government's initiatives in Goa, the Health Minister said the state, particularly in the health sector, is taking several innovative steps and providing quality healthcare facilities to the people.

PMO Monitoring Goa Cancer Hospital, Project to Be Completed by 2027: Health Minister

Panaji: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is closely monitoring the construction of the Goa Cancer Hospital, which is slated for completion by 2027, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said. Providing an update on the project, the Health Minister said the construction work has already progressed up to the seventh floor and efforts are being made to fast-track the remaining work in the coming days to ensure timely completion. Rane said the active monitoring by the PMO reflects the importance being given to strengthening cancer care infrastructure in the state. Once completed, the hospital is expected to significantly enhance specialised oncology services in Goa and reduce the need for patients to travel outside the state for advanced treatment.

The Health Minister reiterated the government's commitment to improving healthcare facilities and ensuring world-class cancer treatment for the people of Goa within the stipulated timeline.

HC Flags Recovery Action Against Retired Goa Police PSIs as Harassment

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The High Court of Bombay at Goa took up writ petitions filed by two retired Police Sub Inspectors (PSIs) of the Goa Police, challenging proposed recovery proceedings, and observed that initiating such action against pensioners amounts to harassment.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Suman Shyam and Justice Amit Jamsandekar was hearing a petition filed by Shivaji Narayan Birje, a former PSI who retired from service on December 31, 2024. The court noted that despite his retirement, the authorities had initiated steps to recover alleged

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Goa Govt Withdraws NOC Granted to Tirumalla Tirupati Multistate Credit Society

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The Government of Goa has withdrawn and cancelled the permission/No Objection Certificate (NOC) granted to Tirumalla Tirupati Multistate Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. for operating in the State, with immediate effect.

According to a press note issued by the Office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Goa,



the NOC earlier granted vide letters dated July 31, 2014 and June 28, 2018—

which permitted extension of the society's area of operation and opening of 13 branches in Goa has been withdrawn following regulatory scrutiny and inspection.

The action was taken after inspection carried out by the Office of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Goa, under powers delegated to State Registrars for inspection of Multi-State Co-operative Societies operating within their territorial jurisdiction, as per Section 108 of the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002, read with a circular issued by the Central Registrar of Co-operative Societies dated May 24, 2013. The inspection and subsequent proceedings revealed serious and persistent non-compliance with statutory requirements and regulatory directions.

India and United States Seal Landmark Trade Agreement With Major Tariff Cut

■ US reduces duties on Indian goods to 18 percent, opening new phase in bilateral economic ties

New Delhi: India and the United States have reached a significant trade agreement after months of negotiations, marking an important turning point in economic relations between the two nations. Following a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, Washington announced



an immediate reduction of tariffs on Indian goods from 25 percent to 18 percent. The decision is expected to provide a major boost to Indian

exporters and improve market access across several key sectors. The new arrangement is being viewed as one of the most meaningful trade developments in recent years. Although the full framework of the agreement has not yet been formally released, the tariff reduction itself represents a substantial gain for India.

Air India Begins Fleet Check After Fuel Switch Malfunction on Heathrow Flight

■ Boeing 787 aircraft undergo precautionary inspection following technical alert.

New Delhi: Air India has launched a detailed inspection of fuel control switches across its Boeing 787 fleet after a malfunction was detected in an aircraft that operated from London Heathrow to Bengaluru on Sunday. The issue was noticed during pre flight procedures when the fuel switch on the left engine failed to

remain securely in the run position. As a precaution, the airline immediately grounded the aircraft and initiated a wider safety review.

The airline has instructed all Boeing 787 pilots and engineering teams to conduct a reinspection of the fuel

control switch latch on every aircraft. The technical division has also escalated the matter to the manufacturer for urgent evaluation. Engineers are verifying whether the switches function normally and whether any mechanical weakness exists that could affect operations.



A Campus in Crisis: What Is Going Wrong at BITS Pilani Goa?

The tragic death of yet another student at BITS Pilani's Goa campus the sixth reported suicide in roughly two years should shake the conscience of the nation. This is not an isolated incident, not a momentary lapse, and certainly not something that can be explained away with routine references to "exam stress." What is unfolding at one of India's most prestigious educational institutions points to a deeper, systemic crisis that demands urgent scrutiny, accountability, and reform. BITS Pilani enjoys an elite reputation: high cut-offs, world-class infrastructure, and an academic culture that prides itself on merit and excellence. But behind this polished image lies an uncomfortable truth — a campus environment where repeated student deaths have become disturbingly frequent. When tragedies recur with such regularity, the issue ceases to be personal and becomes institutional.

The default explanation offered after each incident has been academic pressure. While academic stress is undeniably real and intense at top institutions, it cannot be treated as an inevitable by-product of excellence, nor can it be used as a convenient shield to deflect responsibility. Thousands of students across India face rigorous academics, yet do not see such alarming clusters of deaths within a single campus. This raises a critical question: what is uniquely broken at BITS Pilani Goa?

Mental health support systems, though frequently cited in official statements, appear either inadequate, inaccessible, or ineffective. Counselling services that exist only on paper, or function as reactive measures after tragedy strikes, are not enough. Students in high-pressure environments require proactive, visible, and stigma-free mental health care not token gestures or perfunctory advisories.

Equally concerning is the culture of silence that often

What BITS Pilani Goa needs now is not damage control, but deep introspection.

An independent judicial or mental-health commission, transparent reporting of findings, mandatory reforms in academic and hostel policies, and continuous monitoring by external bodies are no longer optional they are necessary.

Parents entrust institutions with not just their children's education, but their lives.

Each student lost is a devastating failure of the system meant to protect them.

follows these deaths. Details are scarce, internal inquiries opaque, and communication tightly controlled. This lack of transparency fuels speculation, fear, and mistrust among students and parents alike. In the absence of clear information, rumours spread, anxiety deepens, and the psychological environment deteriorates further a dangerous cycle that can contribute to what experts call "suicide contagion."

There is also the question of institutional accountability. Has there been an independent audit of academic policies,

evaluation systems, hostel life, grievance redressal mechanisms, and faculty-student engagement? Have students been meaningfully consulted, or are decisions being made in insulated administrative chambers? Excellence cannot come at the cost of empathy, and discipline cannot replace dialogue.

The Goa campus, in particular, has faced criticism for intense academic schedules, relative isolation, and limited off-campus engagement factors that can amplify feelings of loneliness and alienation. For young adults, many of whom are living away from home for the first time, such conditions can be overwhelming if not balanced with strong social and emotional support.

Blaming students implicitly or explicitly is both unethical and dangerous. Narratives that suggest students are "unable to cope" subtly absolve institutions of responsibility and normalize preventable deaths. The purpose of education is not merely to filter the "strong" from the "weak," but to nurture potential while safeguarding well-being.

What BITS Pilani Goa needs now is not damage control, but deep introspection. An independent judicial or mental-health commission, transparent reporting of findings, mandatory reforms in academic and hostel policies, and continuous monitoring by external bodies are no longer optional — they are necessary. Parents entrust institutions with not just their children's education, but their lives.

Each student lost is a devastating failure of the system meant to protect them. Six deaths are not a coincidence. They are a warning.

If institutions of national importance do not pause, listen, and change course now, they risk becoming monuments to academic achievement built on silent suffering. The cost of ignoring this crisis is measured not in rankings or reputations, but in young lives a price no society should ever accept.

EDITOR'S SPEAK

Let Goan Weddings Keep Their Music

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I wish to express concern over the growing restrictions being imposed on music during Goan Catholic weddings. Music has never been a mere add-on to our celebrations. It is an expression of joy, faith, community, and cultural identity that has defined Goan weddings for generations. While the need for discipline, order, and respect for neighbours is understandable, blanket restrictions risk eroding the very spirit of these occasions. A wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event for many families. The sound of live bands, traditional hymns, and Konkani songs are not acts of disturbance but reflections of a vibrant culture that blends faith with celebration. Goa has long been known for its rich musical heritage, especially within the Catholic community, where church choirs, tiatrists, and wedding bands have played a vital social and economic role. Excessive curbs do not only affect families but also musicians whose livelihoods depend on such events. Instead of imposing rigid limits, authorities and parish councils should focus on balanced solutions. Reasonable time frames, sound level regulations, and mutual understanding between hosts and neighbours can ensure harmony without stifling tradition. Dialogue, not prohibition, is the way forward. Cultural practices should evolve, but they should not be suffocated in the name of regulation. Goa must be careful not to silence the music that has always been at the heart of its identity.

-Brandon D'Souza, Cortalim

When Campuses Fail Their Students

The recent death of a student at the BITS Pilani Goa campus, reportedly the sixth such case in two years, is a tragedy that should deeply disturb everyone connected with higher education. These are not just numbers or isolated incidents. They are young lives lost within institutions meant to nurture talent, ambition, and hope. Repeated suicides at a single campus point to a serious failure of systems that are supposed to protect students' mental and emotional well-being. Academic pressure, competition, fear of failure, and isolation are realities many students face, especially in elite institutions. When these pressures go unchecked, the consequences can be devastating. What is worrying is that such incidents continue despite earlier assurances of reforms and support mechanisms. This raises uncomfortable questions about whether mental health services on campuses are adequate, accessible, and trusted by students. Counselling cannot be treated as a token facility, nor can student distress be addressed only after tragedy strikes. Institutions like BITS Pilani pride themselves on academic excellence. They must show the same commitment to creating humane, supportive environments where students feel safe seeking help. Faculty, administrators, and policymakers need to move beyond reactive statements and take sustained, transparent action. Parents send their children to these campuses with faith and hope. Each such death erodes that trust. If our best institutions cannot protect their students, then we must urgently rethink how success, pressure, and care are defined in higher education.

-Sridhar Naik, Vasco

Goa to Gain Rs 5,570 Crore from Centre as CM Dismisses Budget Criticism

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: Rejecting Opposition claims that Goa's interests were ignored in the Union Budget, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday asserted that the State stands to receive significant financial gains from the Centre in the coming fiscal year.

Speaking to the media, Sawant said Goa will receive Rs 5,570 crore as its share of tax devolution for the financial year 2026-27. In addition, the State is expected to secure between Rs 3,000 crore and Rs 4,000 crore for road and highway development projects.



Terming the Union Budget 2026-27 a forward-looking document, the Chief Minister said it provides a strong roadmap towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. He noted that Goa is poised to benefit across several key sectors, including tourism, micro, small and medium enterprises, agriculture—with special focus on coconut and

cashew cultivation and infrastructure development.

"Goa will directly receive Rs 5,570 crore through tax devolution. Over and above this, substantial funds amounting to Rs 3,000-4,000 crore are anticipated for road infrastructure, with national highway projects progressing in regions such as Canacona and Borim," Sawant stated.

Referring to allocations in the current fiscal year, the Chief Minister said Goa has already derived major benefits from the 2025-26 Union Budget.

Under the Special Assistance for Capital

Investment scheme, the State has received Rs 1,405 crore up to January 30, surpassing the total allocation of Rs 1,291 crore in the previous financial year. He further said that Goa has obtained Rs 650 crore under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, along with Rs 654 crore from the Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways for national highway works. Sawant also pointed out that during the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission, from 2020-21 to 2025-26, Goa has received a cumulative Rs 24,244 crore as its share of central tax revenues.

Konkan Railway RPF Records Major Success in Enforcement and Rescue Drives

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Konkan Railway undertook a series of security, rescue and crime-control initiatives over the past year, resulting in the recovery of stolen goods, rescue of vulnerable children and arrests in multiple offences, officials confirmed. Under Operation Amanat, RPF teams traced and safely returned lost and stolen belongings belonging to 252 railway passengers. The recovered property was estimated to be worth Rs 122.48 lakh.



In another key humanitarian initiative, Operation Nanhe Farishte, the RPF rescued 98 minor children found in distress or unsafe circumstances on railway premises. The children were subsequently handed over to the Child Helpline for protection, counselling and rehabilitation.



SDM Extends Sealing of Sunni Gulistan Masjid Premises in Gogol Till February 7

Team Goemkarponn

MARGAO: The Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Margao has ordered the continuation of the sealing of the Sunni Gulistan Masjid premises at the Gogol Housing Board for an additional seven days, extending the restriction until February 7 or until further instructions are issued.

As per the order, entry into or exit from the premises will remain prohibited during this period unless prior written approval is obtained from the Officer-in-Charge of the Fatorda Police Station or any official authorised by him. The SDM has also clarified that if any essential religious ritual needs to be conducted within the premises, advance written permission must be sought from the SDM or an officer authorised for the purpose.

The administration stated that the situation

will be closely monitored on the basis of inputs from the local police and other relevant agencies. Further directions will be issued if required, strictly in accordance with the law.

The masjid was initially sealed following an order issued on January 30, in the aftermath of a murder that occurred after Friday prayers, which led to concerns over the prevailing law and order situation in the area.

According to the SDM, the decision to extend the sealing was taken after receiving fresh reports from police authorities indicating that the conditions which prompted the preventive action still persist.

"After carefully assessing the facts and circumstances, it has been deemed necessary, in the interest of public safety and maintenance of public order, to continue the preventive measure until the next review," the SDM stated.

HC Issues Notice to Velim MLA Cruz Silva in Criminal Writ Petition

Team Goemkarponn

PORVORIM: The Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court has issued notice to Velim MLA Cruz Silva in connection with a criminal writ petition filed by social activist Subhash Bhasker Velingkar, challenging proceedings arising out of an FIR registered at the Bicholim police station. The petition, filed under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution of India, pertains to FIR No. 100/2024 dated October 4, 2024, registered under Section 299 of the



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. The proceedings also invoke Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. The matter came up for hearing on January 9, 2026, before Justice Ashish S. Chavan. Advocates Rohan Desai

and Aashay Priolkar appeared on behalf of the petitioner, while Public Prosecutor S. G. Bhohe represented the State of Goa. The High Court issued notice to respondent numbers one and two, with the public prosecutor waiving service on their behalf. The registry was directed to issue notice to respondent number three, Cruz Silva, MLA of the Velim constituency, upon payment of the usual process fees. The court granted liberty to the petitioner to serve respondent number three

through all permissible modes and directed that an affidavit of service be filed on or before February 3, 2026. The petition has been listed for admission on February 5, 2026, at 10.30 am. The court further directed Cruz Silva to appear either in person or through an advocate and show cause as to why the relief sought by the petitioner should not be granted, warning that failure to appear could result in orders being passed in favour of the petitioner or such other orders as deemed fit by the court.

HC Rejects Review Plea Over Assistant Professor Selection

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The High Court of Bombay at Goa on Monday declined to entertain a review petition filed by a candidate challenging his non-selection to the post of Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry at Goa University, ruling that no apparent error existed in its earlier decision to justify a review. A Division Bench comprising Justice Suman Shyam and Justice Amit Jamsandekar held that the scope of review jurisdiction is extremely

limited and cannot be used as a platform to re-examine the case on merits. The court observed that the petitioner was effectively seeking a fresh hearing, which is not permissible in review proceedings. The review application was filed by Kashinath Dhumaskar against the High Court's judgment dated July 30, 2025, which had dismissed his writ petition challenging the recruitment process initiated by Goa University through an advertisement issued on May 11, 2020. Dhumaskar had applied for one of the two Assistant

Professor posts reserved for OBC candidates. However, he secured 49 marks out of 100, falling short of the minimum qualifying requirement of 50 marks, and was therefore not selected. In his review petition, Dhumaskar argued that the University had miscalculated his marks in violation of its own regulations and claimed entitlement to a five per cent relaxation as an OBC candidate. He also questioned the eligibility of a candidate appointed against an unreserved post, alleging that the mandatory

residency certificate was not submitted within the prescribed timeline. Opposing the plea, Goa University informed the court that no candidate scoring below 50 per cent had been appointed and maintained that the petitioner's claims were unfounded. After considering the submissions, the Bench noted that all the issues raised in the review petition had already been examined by an earlier Division Bench and could not be revisited in review jurisdiction.



Drishti Marine Rescues Four from Drowning, Reunites Missing Children, Thwarts Theft Across Goa Beaches

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Drishti Marine lifesavers rescued four persons from drowning along Goa's coastline over the weekend and also responded to multiple non-water emergencies, including reuniting two missing children with their families, thwarting a theft, and attending to several medical emergencies.

At Arambol beach, a three-year-old girl from Rajasthan was found wandering alone by Drishti Marine lifesavers. An extensive search was launched, following which her parents were traced and the child was safely reunited with them after due verification.

At Ashwem beach, five lifesavers rushed to



the aid of a 24-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh who suffered a medical emergency. He was stabilised with first aid and transported to the Siolim Primary Health Centre using an official Drishti Marine vehicle. Two separate water rescue incidents were reported at Morjim beach. A 38-year-old woman from Noida struggled to stay afloat while swimming and was rescued by lifesavers Amon

Salgaonkar, Prathmesh Kubal and Sachin Naik using a rescue boat, rescue tube and jetski. In another incident, lifesaver Duttaram Chavan rescued a 50-year-old Russian woman who was found in distress in the water. Both victims were brought safely ashore and reported to be stable.

At Anjuna beach, a male tourist from Uttar Pradesh suffered a deep cut while walking through a rocky patch.

Lifesaver Suraj Nimbalkar administered first aid and controlled the bleeding before handing him over to his companion.

At Baga beach, a four-year-old girl from Maharashtra was found wandering alone. Lifesavers conducted a search and successfully reunited her with her parents. In another incident at the same beach, a 24-year-old tourist from Solan, Himachal Pradesh, who had lost his mobile phone, received assistance from Beach Marshal Riya, who helped trace and return the device after verification. At Candolim beach, a 40-year-old tourist from Karnataka was stung by a stingray while swimming.

Body Of Farm Labourer Found At Quepem, Police Register UD Case

Team Goemkarponn

Quepem: The body of a 31-year-old male was found lying near a coconut farm at Tiloi Balli, Fatorpa, Quepem, on February 2, 2026, police said.

According to police, at around 10.04 am, a call was received from PCR Margao after 108 ambulance staff informed that a male person was found lying near Deeajay coconut farm at Tiloi Balli. Police personnel immediately visited the spot and found a dead body of a male lying on the ground.

During enquiry, the deceased was identified as Pramod Khalkho (31), a resident of Tiloi, Fatorpa Balli, Quepem, originally from Jharkhand. Further enquiry with the farm



manager revealed that the deceased was an alcoholic and had been working as a labourer at the coconut farm for the past three years.

Police conducted the scene of occurrence panchanama and inquest under unnatural death (UD) proceedings. The body has been preserved at the South Goa District Hospital morgue for further medico-legal formalities.

Further enquiry in the case is being carried out by PSI Aditya Sawant of Cuncolim Police Station.

Minor Girl Allegedly Kidnapped From Cortalim, Police Launch Probe

Team Goemkarponn

Cortalim: Verna police have registered a case of kidnapping following a complaint lodged by the mother of a minor girl from Chauder, Cortalim.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred on January 31, 2026, at around 5.30 pm, when an unknown accused person allegedly

unlawfully kidnapped the complainant's minor daughter from her residence, taking her away from lawful guardianship.

Police have registered the offence and launched a search to trace the missing minor and identify the accused. Further investigation in the case is being carried out by PSI Carey Fernandes of Verna Police Station.

Man Assaulted With Glass Bottle Near Benaulim Beach Road, Case Registered

Team Goemkarponn

Benaulim: A 40-year-old man from Dadra and Nagar Haveli was allegedly assaulted by two unknown persons near Benaulim beach road in South Goa, police said.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred on January 31, 2026, at around 12.00 noon near Benaulim beach road, Salcete.

The complainant, Francis Co Dominic Fernandes, a resident of Indira Nagar, Silvassa, stated that the accused persons assaulted him



with fist blows and later attacked

him with a Honey Bee whisky glass bottle.

Police said the accused acted with common intention and caused injuries to the complainant on his chest and face. The assault reportedly took place following a sudden provocation.

Based on the complaint, police have registered an offence under Section 118(1) read with Section 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Further investigation is underway to identify and trace the accused persons.

Accident at Kundaim Junction Leaves Four Injured

Team Goemkarponn

Kundaim: An accident involving multiple vehicles occurred at around 8.15 am on Tuesday opposite Jayesh General Store at Manaswada Junction, Kundaim, Ponda, Goa. The mishap involved a Maruti Eco car bearing registration number GA05J3135, three scooters and a truck.

The scooters involved were a Yamaha Fascino (GA07AA0907), a TVS NTorq (GA05Q6348)



and a TVS iQube electric scooter (GA05R4412). A truck bearing registration number GA06T5580 was also involved in the accident.

Four persons sustained injuries in the incident. Pooja Chandrakant Naik (27), Pratik Chandrakant Naik (24), both residents

of Kundaim, and Prakash Ramchandra Talwar (40), also a resident of Kundaim, suffered simple injuries. Dhruv Anand Velingkar (21), a resident of Veling, was referred to the Sub-District Hospital, Ponda, where he was treated and later discharged.

Police reached the spot and initiated further investigation into the cause of the accident. Traffic at the busy junction was temporarily affected following the incident.

Cash Stolen From Sai Baba Temple At Curchorem, Case Registered

Team Goemkarponn

Curchorem: Police have registered a theft case following a complaint regarding a break-in at the Sai Baba Temple at Kamral, Curchorem.

According to the complaint lodged by Vijay Panchawadkar, a resident of Kamral, the incident occurred on February 2, 2026, at around 12.23 am.

An unknown accused person allegedly gained entry into the temple by breaking open the back door and stole



cash amounting to approximately ₹50,000 from the temple's fund peti. On receiving the complaint, Curchorem police registered an offence and initiated investigation into the

matter.

Further investigation is being carried out by PSI Prajot Bakhale of Curchorem Police Station.

Police are working to trace the accused and recover the stolen cash.

AAP Enters Ponda By-poll; Kejriwal Promises Transformation of ID Hospital

Team Goemkarponn

PONDA: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced the party's entry into the Ponda Assembly by-election, asserting that electing an AAP MLA would lead to immediate reforms in Goa's healthcare system, beginning with the transformation of the ID Hospital.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal visited St Alex Church, Calangute, where he sought blessings for



the people of Goa. He was received by Parish Priest Father Mariano Silveira.

Kejriwal was accompanied by former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP Goa In-Charge Atishi, AAP Goa State President Valmiki Naik, Working President Gerson Gomes,

Senior Vice President Sandesh Teleikar Dessai, Joint Secretary Manuel Cardozo, and local leaders Carol Fernandes, John Fernandes, Herton Fernandes and Sandeep Pednekar, along with party volunteers.

Speaking to the media after the visit, Kejriwal said the people of Goa were deeply dissatisfied with the state of healthcare. "Yesterday I was in Ponda, and people there are extremely frustrated. Patients from across Goa are forced to rush to GMC,

and even there, beds are unavailable without referrals. This is the reality under BJP governance," he said.

He further stated that the AAP government in Punjab has implemented a ₹10 lakh health insurance scheme for every citizen and asserted that Goans deserve the same. "I have appealed to the people of Ponda—elect an AAP MLA in the by-election and we will immediately transform the ID Hospital. Healthcare cannot wait," Kejriwal said.



Statewide Shigmo Festival 2026 to Be Held from March 5 to 18

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goa is all set to celebrate Shigmo Festival 2026, one of the State's most vibrant cultural festivals, from March 5 to March 18, 2026, showcasing Goa's rich folk traditions through colourful float parades, music, dance and artistic expressions across the State. A preparatory meeting to discuss the organisation of Shigmo float parades at various centres was chaired by Tourism Minister Rohan A. Khaunte, in the presence of Director of Tourism Kedar Naik and Managing Director, Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) Kuldeep Arolkar. The meeting was followed by a press conference, during which Director of Tourism Kedar Naik, along with MD, GTDC

Kuldeep Arolkar, and Deputy General Manager (Marketing/Hotels), GTDC Deepak Narvekar, officially announced the dates, centres and key details of Shigmo 2026. Addressing the media, Kedar Naik informed that Shigmo will be celebrated across 19 centres in the State. The festivities will commence at Ponda on March 5, followed by Calangute (March 6), Panaji (March 7), Mapusa (March 8), Mandrem (March 9), Bicholim (March 10), Sanquelim (March 11), Shiroda and Sanguem (March 12), Dharbandora and Cuncolim (March 13), Margao (March 14), Porvorim and Vasco (March 15), Valpoi and Curcholem (March 16), Quepem and Canacona (March 17), and will conclude at Pernem on March 18, 2026.

Mahesh Nadar demands independent probe into student deaths at BITS Pilani Goa, questions MLA's silence

Team Goemkarponn

CORTALIM: Cortalim Congress leader and former Youth Congress president Mahesh Nadar on Monday demanded the immediate constitution of an independent 10-member committee to probe the series of student deaths at the BITS Pilani–Goa campus, following



the alleged suicide of a 20-year-old third-year engineering student. Nadar also questioned the continued silence of Cortalim MLA Antonio Vas

on the issue. Addressing the media, Nadar said yet another young life had been lost at the campus despite repeated assurances, public statements and promises of reform made after earlier incidents. "This is no longer only about grief. It is about failure—systemic and institutional failure," he said. Referring to the latest

incident, Nadar stated that the death came after a pattern of similar cases over the past year, during which concerns were repeatedly raised about academic pressure, weak counselling mechanisms and the absence of proactive mental health support. "Committees were promised. Measures were announced.



Antonio Vas seeks urgent report from BITS Pilani Goa after sixth student death

Team Goemkarponn

SANCOALE: Cortalim MLA Antonio Vas met the top management of BITS Pilani–Goa campus at Zuarinagar following the alleged suicide of a student reported late Sunday night, marking the sixth student death at the institution within a year. Vas met Director Soman Kundu, Dean (Administration) Minal Kaushik and other senior officials, expressing serious concern over the recurring incidents. During the meeting, the management informed the MLA that the student was suffering from depression. Vas, however, demanded a thorough inquiry into the death, stating that

repeated incidents had caused deep anxiety among parents, students and local residents. He also asked the Director to issue a detailed press release clarifying the circumstances of the death, pointing out that several rumours were circulating. Subsequently, Vas wrote an urgent letter to the Director, terming the latest incident "shocking and disturbing" and stating that the situation had become unacceptable for the people of Goa, particularly residents of the Cortalim constituency. "This is the sixth death within one year. Such a situation can no longer be tolerated," Vas stated in the letter.

Maica Waddo–Canderlia Chapel Road Opened, Boosting Connectivity in Saligao

Team Goemkarponn

Saligao: The Maica Waddo–Canderlia Chapel road at Saligao was officially opened, significantly improving internal road connectivity within the Saligao constituency and providing multiple benefits to farmers, residents and devotees.

Saligao MLA Kedar Naik said the road has



been developed keeping the needs of all sections of society in mind. "This road will be extremely beneficial for our farmer friends, as it allows easy movement of tractors and agricultural vehicles and supports their daily farming activities,"

Naik said. He added that the road also serves as a convenient short-cut approach to Our Lady of Candelaria Chapel, Pilerne, making it easier for the Catholic community and devotees to access the chapel. "It provides an

alternative and time-saving route for people visiting the chapel, especially during religious events and feasts," the MLA said.

Highlighting its people-friendly design, Naik said the road is also suitable for daily walks, jogging and cycling. "It is a safe and comfortable space for children to cycle and for residents to engage in healthy outdoor activities," he added.

District Administration Reviews Preparedness for Shri Devi Lairai Jatra 2026

Team Goemkarponn

PANAJI: The North Goa District Administration held a high-level coordination meeting to review and strengthen arrangements for the Annual Shri Devi Lairai Jatra at Shirgao, scheduled to be held on April 21, 2026. The meeting was chaired by the Collector and

District Magistrate, North Goa, and was attended by District Magistrate Ankit Yadav, IAS, Superintendent of Police Harish Madkaikar, Additional Collector Pravin Parab, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Shubham Naik, DySP Shridevi B. V., IPS, along with senior officers from the Police Department,

District Administration, Health Services, Fire and Emergency Services, Public Works Department, Electricity Department, Panchayats, the Temple Managing Committee and other concerned departments.

Discussions focused on learning from past incidents and addressing site-specific



risk factors, particularly crowd congestion along approach roads. Emphasis was laid on crowd management, public safety, infrastructure preparedness and seamless inter-departmental coordination.

WhatsApp Privacy Policy Under Fire as Supreme Court Issues Strong Warning

■ Supreme Court criticises WhatsApp's data-sharing practices, warns tech giant against exploiting Indian users

New Delhi: The Supreme Court delivered a sharp rebuke to Meta, the parent company of WhatsApp, over its controversial privacy policy, questioning whether millions of Indians, particularly those who are poor or uneducated, can understand the terms. A bench led by Chief Justice Surya made it clear that the court would not allow the platform to exploit users' personal data. During the hearing on WhatsApp's 2021 privacy update, the Chief Justice stated, "You can't play with privacy... we will not allow you to share a single digit of our data," and cautioned the company, "If you can't follow our Constitution, leave India." The court highlighted that even citizens with limited literacy or who speak regional languages might struggle to comprehend



the policy, making it a potential avenue for misuse of sensitive information.

The proceedings involved a plea challenging the law tribunal's decision to uphold a Rs 213 crore penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). The CCI had fined WhatsApp for allegedly forcing users to accept its new data-sharing terms in order to continue using the platform. A cross-appeal by the CCI regarding

sharing user data for advertising was also discussed, with the tribunal previously ruling there was no abuse of dominance.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta criticised the policy as "exploitative," particularly for using user data for commercial purposes. The Chief Justice cited real-world examples, such as users receiving targeted ads immediately after sharing health information with a doctor on WhatsApp, to illustrate

the privacy risks. Defending the company, Senior Advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Akhil Sibal emphasised that all messages on WhatsApp are end-to-end encrypted, and the company cannot access the content directly.

The dispute traces back to November 2024, when the CCI determined that WhatsApp, leveraging its dominant market position, compelled users to consent to data-sharing with other Meta platforms. While the law tribunal later lifted a five-year restriction on data sharing, it upheld the monetary penalty, which Meta has already deposited.

The Supreme Court's observations underscore the judiciary's determination to safeguard personal data and hold global tech companies accountable to Indian law.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

Goa Leads AI-Driven Healthcare Revolution Under PM Modi's Vision: Vishwajit Rane

He stated that the government's focus is on early detection, faster treatment and saving lives, especially by reaching patients at the grassroots level.

The Health Minister added that the state plans to expand the programme to cover more than two lakh AI-based screenings in the next phase.

"Our goal is clear—early detection, faster treatment and saving lives.

We are committed to making Goa a national model for AI-driven diagnostics and ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare for all," Rane said. Emphasising Goa's leadership in innovation, the Health Minister said the initiative reflects the state's commitment to adopting cutting-edge technology for public welfare.

"Goa will lead, Goa will innovate, and Goa will save lives," he added.

HC Flags Recovery Action Against Retired Goa Police PSIs as Harassment

excess payments. Birje contended that the recovery pertained to so-called excess drawals and the withdrawal of pay fixation benefits with retrospective effect. He maintained that any overpayment occurred due to errors on the part of the department and not because of any misrepresentation or wrongdoing on his part. Relying on the Supreme Court's ruling in State of Punjab vs Rafiq Masih, the petitioner argued that recovery of excess payments is prohibited where such payments result solely from administrative mistakes. He further submitted that the apex court had categorically barred recovery from retired government employees

in such circumstances. The High Court observed that the legal position on the issue is well established and that recovery of excess payments from retired government servants is impermissible. The Bench remarked that dragging a retired employee into recovery proceedings after superannuation effectively amounts to harassment. The court granted the petitioner liberty to seek interim protection and also allowed him to amend his writ petition. A connected matter involving a similar challenge by another retired PSI, Ramchandra Pundalik Sawant, was also taken up briefly. In that case as well, the Bench permitted amendments to the petition.

Rupee Hits 90.4 Per Dollar, Surges 1.2% as US Cuts Tariffs on Indian Exports

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: India's financial markets rallied sharply on Tuesday following the announcement of a new trade deal with the United States, which reduces tariffs on Indian goods from 50% to 18%. The rupee strengthened by 1.2% to 90.40 per dollar in early trading, marking its strongest session since November 2022. The benchmark Sensex opened more than 3,600 points higher to cross the 85,000 mark from Monday's close of 81,666.46, while the Nifty 50 jumped 1,200 points to trade near 26,288, bringing it within 100 points of its January record high. Government bond yields eased, with the 10-year paper falling by five basis points to 6.72%. Analysts noted that the markets were poised for their strongest single-day performance in five years. This surge comes after a



period of extreme volatility. India's stock markets had recently recovered from losses following the "mother of all trade deals" with the European Union, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed as a historic achievement. Sectors such as textiles rallied more than 12%, while automotive shares declined by 4%. The optimism was temporarily overshadowed by the Union Budget 2026, when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's proposals, including higher transaction taxes on stocks, spooked investors. On Sunday, the Sensex fell nearly 1,547 points, wiping out close to ₹10 lakh crore in market value,

while the Nifty 50 lost 495 points, marking the worst budget-day decline in six years. Tuesday's positive response underscores the immediate market impact of lower US tariffs, which are expected to boost Indian exports, improve trade competitiveness, and support sectors heavily dependent on overseas demand. Traders and analysts suggested that the combination of policy support, global Rupee Hits 90.4 Per Dollar, Surges 1.2% as US Cuts Tariffs on Indian Exports India's financial markets rallied sharply on Tuesday following the announcement of a new trade deal with the United States, which reduces

tariffs on Indian goods from 50% to 18%. The rupee strengthened by 1.2% to 90.40 per dollar in early trading, marking its strongest session since November 2022. The benchmark Sensex opened more than 3,600 points higher to cross the 85,000 mark from Monday's close of 81,666.46, while the Nifty 50 jumped 1,200 points to trade near 26,288, bringing it within 100 points of its January record high. Government bond yields eased, with the 10-year paper falling by five basis points to 6.72%. Analysts noted that the markets were poised for their strongest single-day performance in five years. This surge comes after a period of extreme volatility. India's stock markets had recently recovered from losses following the "mother of all trade deals" with the European Union, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed as a historic achievement.

Goa Govt Withdraws NOC Granted to Tirumalla Tirupati Multistate Credit Society

These included non-submission of audited financial statements as required under law, non-cooperation with statutory inspection and verification processes, violation of the terms and conditions under which the NOC was granted, and failure to respond to or appear before the Registrar of Co-operative Societies

despite due service of notices.

In view of the withdrawal of permission/ NOC, the general public has been advised to take note of the regulatory status of the said society and to exercise due diligence and caution while undertaking any financial transactions or investments with it.

India Rejects Hague Tribunal Authority in Indus Waters Treaty Dispute

■ New Delhi terms arbitration proceedings illegal and refuses to share project data.

New Delhi: India has taken a firm diplomatic stand by rejecting the authority of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague over the long running dispute linked to the Indus Waters Treaty. As hearings continue in the Netherlands, the Indian government has declared that the tribunal was illegally constituted and that its recent directions, including requests for operational information on hydroelectric projects, are void and not binding. The latest confrontation arose after the court sought detailed records from the Kishanganga and Ratle power projects in Jammu and Kashmir. India has refused to provide the information, stating that it does not recognise the jurisdiction of the arbitration panel. Officials



indicated that the Ministry of External Affairs has formally communicated this position and confirmed that India will neither participate in the proceedings nor comply with any orders issued by the tribunal. New Delhi maintains that the creation of a separate Court of Arbitration violates the sequential dispute resolution mechanism laid down in the treaty. India had favoured the appointment of a

neutral expert to address technical concerns, but Pakistan pursued a parallel legal process at The Hague.

The government argues that this move undermines the original framework agreed by both countries.

India has also linked its position to broader national security considerations. Following the terror attack in Pahalgam in April 2025, the government

announced that it was placing the treaty in abeyance under its sovereign rights. Officials said that until security concerns are addressed and cross border terrorism is halted, India is not obliged to fulfil treaty commitments such as sharing hydrological data or engaging in arbitration. The decision signals a major shift in India's approach to water cooperation with Pakistan. Mandatory exchanges on river flow and flood related information have been put on indefinite hold, reflecting the view that strategic security cannot be separated from treaty obligations. Pakistan has portrayed the ongoing hearings as a procedural success, but India has dismissed the exercise as politically motivated.

Patience and Wisdom Delivered Results, Says PM Modi on India-US Trade Pact

■ Prime Minister tells NDA meeting that strategic perseverance secured crucial economic gains despite opposition criticism.

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday told National Democratic Alliance members that patience and wisdom had ultimately paid off in securing the India-US trade agreement. Addressing the parliamentary party meeting, he described the deal as essential for the country's economic future and said the government had remained focused despite continuous criticism from rival parties. The Prime Minister explained that the negotiations with Washington were the



result of sustained engagement at the highest level and reflected a long term strategic vision.

He emphasised that the agreement would open new opportunities for Indian industry, expand market access and strengthen the overall partnership between the two nations.



India-US Trade Deal Will Strengthen Make In India Endeavours: S Jaishankar

■ External Affairs Minister says agreement will create jobs, boost innovation and deepen trusted technology partnership

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday welcomed the newly concluded India and United States trade agreement, stating that it would accelerate economic growth in both nations and give fresh momentum to the Make in India programme. He said the understanding between the two countries would expand opportunities for businesses, promote innovation and create a stronger foundation for strategic cooperation.

The agreement provides for the United States to reduce reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from twenty five percent to eighteen percent. The decision followed discussions between the leadership of the two countries and has been described as a major step toward easing long standing trade barriers. Jaishankar noted that the announcements on bilateral trade were encouraging and reflected the vast potential of economic engagement between the two large democracies.

Trade Pact With US Opens New Doors For Farmers, MSMEs: Piyush Goyal

■ Commerce Minister says agreement will boost Make in India and expand access to American technology

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said that the new trade agreement between India and the United States will open vast opportunities for farmers, micro and small enterprises, entrepreneurs and skilled professionals. He described the pact as a significant step toward strengthening the Make in India



initiative and connecting Indian producers with global markets. Under the understanding reached between the two countries, the United States has agreed to

reduce reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from twenty five percent to eighteen percent. The decision followed discussions between the leadership of both nations and is expected to ease long standing barriers faced by several export oriented sectors. The minister stated that the agreement would also help India gain access to advanced

American technology and innovation. He emphasised that the arrangement would enable Indian businesses to design, manufacture and innovate for the world from within the country. According to him, the development shows the strength of cooperation between two democratic partners committed to fair trade and shared prosperity.

Mamata Banerjee Alleges ED "Stole Confidential TMC Data" During I-PAC Searches

■ West Bengal CM claims raids targeted sensitive political material under pretext of investigation.

New Delhi: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has accused the Enforcement Directorate of illegally taking confidential political data belonging to the Trinamool Congress during searches at the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC). In a counter affidavit filed before the Supreme Court,



Banerjee alleged that the agency used "pretextual" search operations to

seize sensitive campaign-related material rather than conduct legitimate investigations. According to the affidavit, ED officials visited I-PAC premises only briefly and focused solely on retrieving information related to the ruling party. Banerjee claimed that the Section 17 search warrants

invoked were "mechanical and invalid," lacking proper legal scrutiny and issued without adequate consideration of statutory requirements. She also suggested that the agency's actions reflected a broader pattern of politically motivated cases surfacing ahead of elections.

Pakistan Left Isolated as Cricket Boards Reject Boycott Call

■ PCB fails to gather international support for proposed withdrawal from World Cup match against India

New Delhi: Pakistan's attempt to rally global backing for a boycott of the upcoming World Cup fixture against India has ended in clear disappointment, with no international cricket board willing to endorse the move. The Pakistan Cricket Board approached several member nations seeking solidarity, but every conversation reportedly resulted in rejection. The governing body has also not formally communicated its position to the International Cricket Council, despite public statements from the Pakistan government announcing the intention to withdraw.

The absence of official dialogue with the ICC has deepened Pakistan's isolation within the cricket community. Other boards have conveyed



that the PCB lacks any legitimate standing to demand changes to the tournament schedule. Many administrators view the proposed boycott as an artificially created controversy rather than a genuine grievance requiring collective action. Several inconsistencies have further weakened Pakistan's argument. The national youth side recently competed against India in the Under



19 World Cup without raising any objections. In addition, the Pakistan Women A team remains scheduled to face India A on the same date in Bangkok, with no indication of pulling out from the Rising Stars Asia Cup fixture. These contrasting decisions have raised questions about the credibility of the boycott threat.

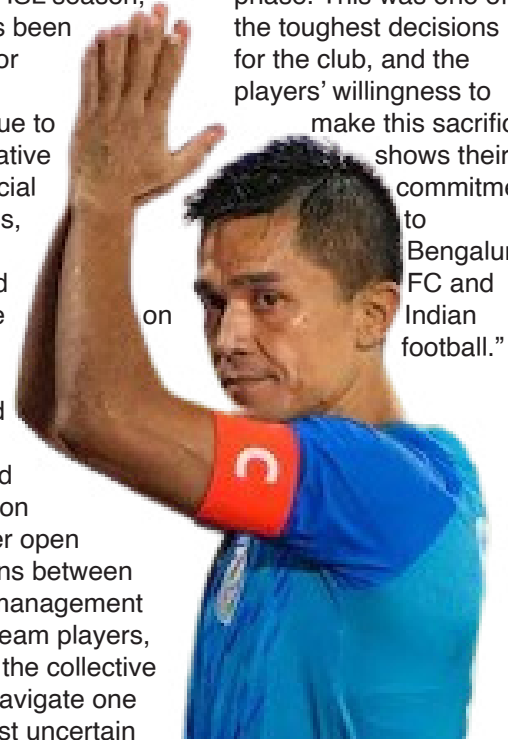
Security concerns cited in connection with

Bangladesh also appear irrelevant to Pakistan's case, as the men's World Cup encounter is set to take place in Colombo, a neutral location outside India. Fellow boards have pointed out that selective participation contradicts the spirit of a global sporting competition and creates an unstable precedent for future events. The ICC has already warned of serious long term consequences if Pakistan refuses to honor its commitment. Potential penalties include heavy financial losses estimated at more than 38 million dollars, forfeiture of World Cup points, and even suspension from international cricket activities. Without a single ally in the boardroom, the PCB now faces mounting pressure to reconsider its position.

Chhetri and Bengaluru FC Players Accept Pay Cuts Ahead of Shortened 2026 ISL Season

New Delhi: Bengaluru FC's senior players, led by Indian football captain Sunil Chhetri, have agreed to a reduction in their salaries for the upcoming truncated Indian Super League (ISL) season, club owner Parth Jindal confirmed on Monday. The 2026 ISL season, which has been delayed for over four months due to administrative and financial challenges, is scheduled to resume on February 14 in a shortened format. Jindal said the decision came after open discussions between the club management and first-team players, reflecting the collective effort to navigate one of the most uncertain

periods in Indian football. "Everyone is well aware of the challenging phase Indian football is going through," he wrote on social media. "I am grateful to all the first-team players who have agreed to reduce their remuneration during this phase. This was one of the toughest decisions for the club, and the players' willingness to make this sacrifice shows their commitment to Bengaluru FC and Indian football."



Parth Deorukhakar and Unnathi Muralidhar Shine at Gadre Gaspar Dias Open 2026

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Gadre Gaspar Dias Open 2026 concluded with impressive performances as nineteen year old Parth Deorukhakar captured the Open Men's Singles title and Unnathi V. Muralidhar emerged champion in the Open Women's Singles category.

The finals were played at the historic Clube Tennis de Gaspar Dias courts in Panaji, bringing together some of the finest talent from across the region. Parth completed a remarkable campaign by also winning the men's doubles crown,

securing a prestigious double triumph. In the men's singles final, Parth faced a strong challenge from Praneeth Venugopal but held his composure to win in straight sets 7 to 6 and 7 to 5 after a closely contested battle. The women's final witnessed an exciting comeback from Unnathi, who recovered after losing the opening set to defeat Nidi S with scores of 2 to 6, 6 to 4 and 10 to 3. Her fighting spirit and consistent baseline play earned her well deserved applause. The junior categories also produced outstanding contests.

India Wins Hosting Rights for 2027 Asian Shooting Championship With Olympic Quotas on Offer

■ Delhi event to play key role in qualification race for Los Angeles 2028 Games

New Delhi: India has secured the right to host the prestigious Asian Shooting Championship in 2027, a tournament that will carry major significance for athletes aiming to compete at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. The competition will feature rifle and pistol disciplines and will offer eight valuable Olympic quota places, making it one of the most important



events on the continental sporting calendar next year. The championship will be staged in Delhi, strengthening India's reputation as a growing hub for international shooting competitions.

Preparations for the event are expected to begin soon, with authorities set to finalise the exact schedule and logistical arrangements in the coming months. The tournament is likely to attract top shooters from

across Asia, all eager to secure early qualification for the Olympics. Hosting the championship is seen as a major achievement for Indian sport and reflects the country's rising stature within the global shooting community. India has invested heavily in world class ranges, coaching infrastructure, and athlete development programmes over the past decade.

YMCA Knights Crowned All Goa Basketball Men's Team Champions After Dominant Finish

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: YMCA Knights lifted the All Goa Basketball Men's Team Championship title with a commanding 72 to 56 victory over Sonics in the final held at the Manohar Parrikar Indoor Stadium in Navelim. The match delivered high quality basketball and



intense competition, and the final score did not fully reflect how closely fought the contest remained for most of the evening. Sonics

began with confidence and surprised the favourites through disciplined play and sharp shooting. Their effort earned them a 27

to 24 lead at the half time break. The third quarter continued in similar fashion as both sides traded baskets, and YMCA Knights edged ahead narrowly at 43 to 41. The contest appeared set for a tense finish before the champions produced a decisive burst in the closing period.