



DABOLIM ROW ERUPTS: STATEWIDE AGITATION THREAT LOOMS

■ GFP alleges move to hand airport exclusively to Navy; Govt urged to clarify stand as Opposition, MP seek assurance from Defence Minister.



Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: A political storm has erupted over the future of Dabolim Airport, with the Goa Forward Party (GFP) threatening a statewide agitation if Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Minister Mauvin Godinho fail to clarify their stand by next week. GFP chief Vijai Sardesai launched a sharp attack on Godinho, terming it "shameful" to suggest that

private airport operator GMR is pressurising the Centre to "kill" Dabolim. Sardesai said. He further claimed that the Union Defence Minister had warned Godinho against speaking further on the issue and alleged that the Indian Navy intends to take over the airport entirely. "I had raised this issue in the Assembly on January 16. A prominent businessman informed

me that GMR and an Admiral have moved a file noting to keep Dabolim exclusively for the Navy post 'Operation Sindoos', " Sardesai stated. Calling Dabolim "Goa's symbolic airport," the GFP chief demanded that the Chief Minister and Godinho publicly spell out their position. "If they fail to clarify by next week, we will launch a statewide agitation," he warned. Leader of Opposition Yuri

"It is not GMR, but the Union Defence Minister who is pushing the State to shut down Dabolim. **Mauvin Godinho** has failed to protect Dabolim Airport and should resign as the MLA of Dabolim,"

- Vijai Sardesai

Alemao echoed concerns, saying apprehensions about Dabolim's future appear to be coming true. He questioned why no firm assurance has been issued by the Defence Minister regarding the continuation of civil operations. Alemao alleged that Godinho has merely repeated earlier statements and urged Goans to remain alert. "Something is fishy

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Casino Row Rocks CCP; AAP Goa Chief Removed from CCP As Citizens Demand Action

■ Libia Lobo Sardessai backs protest; confusion prevails as no Council meeting held.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Tensions flared at the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) on Thursday after AAP Goa President Valmiki Naik was removed by



police from the CCP

premises, where he had arrived with supporters to raise concerns over the continued operation of casinos in the Mandovi River. The incident unfolded as a group of

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Bail Rejected For Luthra Brothers In Arpora Fire Tragedy

■ Mapusa Sessions Court denies relief in Birch by Romeo Lane case that claimed 25 lives; victims' families call it a "day of victory"

Team Goemkarponn

Mapusa: The Mapusa Sessions Court today rejected the bail applications of Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra

in connection with the Arpora fire tragedy at Birch by Romeo Lane, which occurred on the intervening night of December 6 and 7, 2025, claiming 25 lives.

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Bengal Governed by Bomb Culture, Not Law and Order, Says Sitharaman



New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a strong criticism of the West Bengal government in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, accusing the ruling Trinamool Congress of failing to maintain law and order and allowing a culture of violence to dominate the state. Her remarks came while replying to the debate on

Dabolim Airport will not be shut: Min Mauvin

Godinho hits back at Sardesai, says he intervened amid reports of GMR lobbying Navy

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Goa Minister Mauvin Godinho today said that Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has assured him that Dabolim Airport will not be shut down, amid the ongoing political controversy over its future. Godinho said he met the Defence Minister in New Delhi and submitted a detailed memorandum highlighting concerns regarding Dabolim Airport and the need to continue civil operations. "I met Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and submitted a detailed memorandum regarding Dabolim Airport. The Minister has assured me that Dabolim Airport



will not be shut down," Godinho stated. The Minister further claimed that he had intervened after receiving inputs that private airport operator GMR was lobbying for the Navy to take over the airport completely. "I heard that GMR has been lobbying and urging the Navy to take over the airport. That is why I had to intervene," Godinho said, adding that he had been vocal about the issue from the beginning. Launching a counterattack on Goa

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VIVA CARNAVAL 2026

14th February - Panjim
 15th February - Margao
 16th February - Vasco
 17th February - Mapusa & Morjim
 (13th February, Curtain Raiser @ Porvorim)

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Another Acquittal, Another Question for Goa's Politics

The acquittal of Goa Revenue Minister Atanasio "Babush" Monserrate in a 2016 rape case may have settled a legal battle, but it has reopened a deeper political and moral debate. In a state where personalities often overshadow principles, the verdict is less about one man's relief and more about what repeated controversies mean for public trust.

A North Goa sessions court cleared Monserrate and a co-accused of all charges, including rape and offences under the POCSO Act, citing serious gaps in the prosecution's case. The court said essential facts were missing. Sexual assault could not be proved, the complainant's age was not conclusively established, and her testimony contained multiple inconsistencies. Under criminal law, where guilt must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt, the benefit went to the accused.

From a legal standpoint, the judgment follows established principles. Courts cannot convict on suspicion or sentiment. But public life is not governed by legal thresholds alone. It is shaped by accountability, ethical standards, and the confidence citizens place in those who govern them.

This case lingered for nearly a decade. During that time, Monserrate remained an influential political figure, changing parties, holding office, and consolidating his position in Panaji. The long delay itself is a problem. Justice delayed is not merely inconvenient; it corrodes faith in institutions. When serious allegations take years to resolve, the process becomes the punishment for some and an advantage for others.

The judgment also exposes a chronic weakness in India's criminal justice system. Cases of sexual violence often fail not because nothing happened, but because investigations are sloppy and prosecutions

Monserrate has called the verdict vindication. Legally, he is entitled to do so. Politically, however, the question remains unresolved. Should public life demand only legal innocence, or should it also insist on moral responsibility? Political parties routinely hide behind court verdicts to avoid uncomfortable conversations. Acquittal becomes not just a legal end, but an ethical escape.

This approach lowers the bar for leadership. Democracy is not strengthened when leaders survive controversy without reflection. It is weakened when accountability is reduced to what can be proven in court, years after the fact, amid investigative failures.

lack depth. In this case, the inability to firmly establish age under the POCSO Act proved fatal. Medical evidence did not support the allegations. Statements changed over time. These are not minor procedural issues. They are foundational failures.

Such lapses hurt everyone. They leave the accused under a cloud for years and deny complainants a credible chance at justice. When the state cannot investigate serious crimes with care and competence, the courtroom becomes a stage for uncertainty rather than truth.

For survivors of sexual violence, particularly those accusing powerful men,

verdicts like this reinforce a sense of futility. Reporting itself is arduous. Trials are slow. Outcomes often hinge on technicalities. Each acquittal in a high-profile case deepens the belief that influence, time, and resources tilt the scales.

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This approach lowers the bar for leadership. Democracy is not strengthened when leaders survive controversy without reflection. It is weakened when accountability is reduced to what can be proven in court, years after the fact, amid investigative failures.

The timing of the verdict, ahead of civic and assembly elections, adds another layer of unease. While courts do not operate on electoral calendars, politics certainly does. An acquittal at such a moment bolsters political confidence and quietens criticism, regardless of the broader questions it leaves unanswered.

The judiciary has done what it could with the evidence before it. The larger failure lies elsewhere: in policing, prosecution, and political culture. Until investigations are timely and professional, trials swift, and parties willing to draw ethical red lines, such outcomes will continue to shadow public life.

As Goa approaches the polls, voters are not merely choosing representatives. They are choosing the standards they are willing to accept. Courts decide guilt. Citizens must decide credibility.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

When Grief Meets Alleged Misconduct in Uniform

By Suraj Nandrekar

The recent registration of a case against a police constable in Anjuna for allegedly stealing gold ornaments from a man who died in a road accident is deeply disturbing, not only for the family involved but for the wider public that depends on the police in moments of crisis. According to the complaint, Police Constable Saish Parsekar, who was driving a police jeep and present at the accident site, is accused of stealing gold jewellery worth ₹7 to ₹8 lakh from 27-year-old Juster Rodriguez, who succumbed to injuries after his car met with an accident in the early hours of January 25. The family alleges that a gold bracelet, earrings, and a ring worn by the deceased went missing, and were never handed over during the official panchanama. What makes this case especially troubling is the context. This was not a routine interaction between a citizen and the police. It followed a fatal accident, a moment of extreme vulnerability, shock, and grief. In such circumstances, families place absolute trust in the authorities to act with integrity, sensitivity, and professionalism. Any betrayal of that trust strikes at the moral core of policing. The allegation that a family member's phone call to the deceased was answered by the constable present at the scene raises serious questions that go beyond theft. It points to potential misuse of access and authority at a time when the deceased could no longer speak for himself, and his family was desperately seeking information. While the investigation is still underway and the accused is entitled to due process, the registration of a case itself highlights a worrying pattern. Across the country, there have been repeated instances where police personnel have been accused of misconduct at accident sites, hospitals, or during custodial procedures. These are spaces where oversight is minimal, and power imbalance is at its highest. The police uniform represents authority backed by the state. With that authority comes responsibility. When even a small fraction of personnel are perceived to misuse their position for personal gain, it erodes public faith not just in individuals but in the institution as a whole. Law enforcement depends on cooperation and trust. Once that trust is damaged, it becomes far harder for the police to do their job effectively. For the Rodriguez family, the issue is not merely about missing jewellery. It is about dignity. The belongings of the deceased are often the last tangible connection families have with their loved ones. Losing them under questionable circumstances compounds grief with anger and helplessness. This case also exposes gaps in procedure. Clear protocols exist for documenting and safeguarding the personal belongings of accident victims. If these protocols were followed rigorously, allegations of this nature would be far less likely. The fact that jewellery allegedly worth several lakhs could go missing without immediate accountability suggests weaknesses in on-ground enforcement and supervision. It is not enough to register a case and wait for public attention to fade. The police department must ensure a transparent, time-bound investigation and communicate its findings clearly. Internal accountability mechanisms should be activated, and if wrongdoing is proven, consequences must be swift and visible. Silence or delay will only deepen suspicion. Equally important is the need for systemic reform. The use of body cameras, stricter documentation at accident scenes, and independent oversight in cases involving police misconduct are no longer optional. They are necessary to protect both citizens and honest officers who do their duty with integrity.

The police often ask the public to trust them during emergencies. That trust cannot be unconditional. It must be earned and renewed through accountability and ethical conduct. When allegations arise from moments of tragedy, the response must be firm, fair, and transparent. This case is a test. Not just of one investigation, but of the state's commitment to ensuring that those sworn to protect do not become a source of fear or injustice. The outcome will signal whether accountability is real or merely promised.

Molasses Tank Collapses During Dismantling, Toxic Waste Spill Sparks Public Outrage in Canacona

■ Shristhal residents confront officials, demand safe disposal plan as authorities seek action report from company.

Team Goemkarponn

Canacona: Disaster struck at Shristhal in Canacona after a highly corroded molasses tank partially collapsed during dismantling, releasing a large quantity of toxic waste into the open and triggering panic among residents. The incident occurred while workers were cutting a portion of the old tank. According to company supervisors, one large metal plate of the tank suddenly gave



way, resulting in the toxic solvent overflowing into the surrounding area. The uncontrolled flow led to the formation of a large pool of waste, emitting an unbearable stench across the locality

and causing irritation in the environment. Furious residents confronted Dy. Collector/SDO Prataprao Gaonkar, alleging unethical handling and discharge of toxic waste that they claim has contaminated nearby water bodies and endangered public health. Locals accused the authorities of being supportive of the company and risking the lives of people by allowing faulty dismantling and disposal practices.



of waste to flow into the open. The rivulet, which serves as a primary water source for cultivation in the area, flows about a kilometre behind the

hillock where the defunct liquor factory's molasses-filled tank is located. Early in the morning, women working in their chilli (locally known as 'Porus') and vegetable fields noticed a change in the colour of the stream water. Soon after, they found that the contaminated water had entered parts of their cultivation fields. Several women farmers complained of irritation on their hands and legs after coming into contact with the polluted water.

Goa CM Approves Cooperative Policy 2026

■ Maternity Leave for Coterminous Staff & Wage Hike for Pre-Primary Helpers

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant on Wednesday approved the Goa State Cooperative Policy 2026, along with key decisions granting maternity leave benefits to female coterminous staff and a wage hike for helpers working in government pre-primary schools. Briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant said the Goa State Cooperative Policy 2026 has been framed in alignment with the Government of India's National Cooperative Policy 2025 under the vision of "Sahkar se Samridhi" and Viksit Bharat 2047. "Keeping



in view our state's vision of Swayampurna Goa@2037, we have prepared the Goa State Cooperative Policy 2026 to strengthen the cooperative sector and address emerging challenges," the Chief Minister said. He stated that the policy focuses on tackling governance deficit, financial stress, limited professional capacity and the urgent need for digital transformation in cooperative institutions across the State.

Six Months After HC Closes PIL, Pollution Returns to Colva Creek

Team Goemkarponn

Colva: Half a year after the High Court disposed of a Public Interest Litigation concerning sewage discharge into Colva creek, residents claim the water body has once again deteriorated, with darkened water and floating garbage visible in several stretches. The PIL had been filed by the Colva Civic and Consumer Forum, which raised concerns over untreated sewage and effluents contaminating the creek. While disposing of the petition, the High Court had expressed satisfaction with the measures reportedly undertaken by the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) to tackle waste disposal into the sea and specifically into Colva creek. Despite this, locals now question whether those corrective steps



have been sustained. Residents are asking whether sewage inflow into the creek has truly been halted and whether routine maintenance and cleaning are being carried out. Concerns have also surfaced about whether all commercial establishments in the area have been connected to the Colva Sewage Treatment Plant by the Sewerage Infrastructure Development Corporation of Goa Ltd (SIDCGL), particularly when several businesses had earlier

indicated their readiness to opt for connections. Judith Almeida, Secretary of the Colva Civic and Consumer Forum and the original petitioner, said she has not observed visible follow-up action from the Pollution Control Board, Tourism Department or other concerned authorities. She expressed concern over the creek's condition, stating that many visitors, including children, may be unaware that the water is contaminated. Almeida has appealed

to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who also handles the Environment portfolio, Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte, and the Colva Village Panchayat to coordinate efforts to restore the creek. She warned that continued neglect could impact Colva's image as a tourist destination, particularly among international visitors. Activist Simon Rodrigues echoed similar concerns, asserting that meaningful improvement would only come once all commercial units are provided with functional sewage connections. He claimed that while businesses are willing to comply, there appears to be insufficient administrative follow-through. Rodrigues called for immediate intervention from the Tourism Minister and relevant officials to prevent further environmental damage.

GRLA Pushes For United Opposition Front In Goa Ahead Of 2027 Elections

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Global Romi Lipi Abhiyan (GRLA) has urged the Congress and Goa Forward Party (GFP) to spearhead the formation of a broad-based opposition



alliance in Goa ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, asserting that only a united front can effectively challenge the BJP government. GRLA President Kennedy Afonso said Goa Congress chief Amit Patkar and Leader

provide a credible political alternative. Calling for a cohesive strategy, GRLA appealed to opposition parties to draft a common minimum programme and a joint manifesto addressing pressing concerns facing the state.



Canacona Police Swiftly Nab Accused in Assault on Czech Republic Tourist

Team Goemkarponn

Canacona: Canacona Police have swiftly apprehended the accused involved in the assault on a lady tourist from the Czech Republic at Agonda Beach, sending a strong message that crimes against tourists will not be tolerated in Goa. The incident occurred on 09/02/2026 at around 10:15 hours at Agonda Cliff, Agonda Beach, where an unknown person picked



up an argument with the tourist and assaulted her with blows and a stone, causing grievous injuries. A complaint in this regard was registered at Canacona Police Station

on 10/02/2026, following which an offence under Section 117(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered. At the time of the incident, the identity of the accused was unknown and only a faint description was provided by the victim. Despite limited initial inputs, the Canacona Police Station team, led by PI Shri Praveen Gawas and working under the supervision of SDPO Shri

Nilesh Rane, immediately launched an intensive investigation. The team gathered field intelligence, carefully examined available CCTV footage, and tracked the suspect's movements with precision. Based on sustained efforts and technical analysis, the police successfully identified and apprehended the accused Rohan Velip (22 years), resident of Benordem, Balli, Goa.

Transporter Duped of Rs 2.8 Lakh in Online Truck Booking Scam in Ponda

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: A transporter from Santa Cruz, Ponda, has allegedly been cheated of Rs 2.80 lakh by unknown persons in an online truck booking scam. According to police, the complaint was lodged by Anil Kumar Singh, a resident of Santa Cruz, Ponda. He stated that between

February 3 and February 10, unknown persons contacted him over his mobile phone offering transportation services for delivering a consignment from Mangalore to Chhattisgarh, assuring that payment would be cleared on the same day.

The complainant further stated that different individuals, posing as

truck drivers, contacted him from various mobile numbers and promised to arrange trucks for the transportation. They allegedly demanded advance payment and shared a PhonePe UPI scanner for the transfer of funds. Believing their assurances, the complainant transferred money through multiple

UPI transactions, amounting to a total of Rs 2,80,000. However, after receiving the payment, the accused persons failed to provide the trucks as promised and did not return the amount, thereby allegedly cheating the complainant of Rs 2.80 lakh.

FRAUD



Two Injured in Hit-and-Run in Saligao

Team Goemkarponn

Saligao: A hit-and-run case has been registered following a road accident near Florentine Restaurant at Saligao, in which two persons sustained grievous injuries.

According to police, the complaint was lodged on February 10 at 7.26 pm by Monu, son of Ram Kailash, presently residing at c/o Narendra, Wadakade, Porvorim, Bardez-Goa, and originally from Dughara, Sairai Mamarej, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.

As per the complaint, the incident occurred on February 7 at around 7.45 pm. An unknown driver of a dark blue car, allegedly driving in a rash

and negligent manner towards Calangute, reportedly swerved into the complainant's lane near Florentine Restaurant and dashed against his motorcycle — a Super Splendor bearing registration number GA-03/AS-9617 — which was proceeding from Baga to Porvorim.

Due to the impact, the complainant and his pillion rider fell onto the road and sustained grievous injuries to their legs.

Police said the accused driver fled the scene without informing the police or providing medical assistance to the injured persons.

Further investigation is being carried out by HC 4770 Sudesh Naik.

Youth Duped of Rs 2.10 Lakh in Fake Job Offer Scam in Ponda

Team Goemkarponn

Ponda: A resident of Shantinagar, Ponda, has been allegedly cheated of Rs 2,10,804 in a fake job offer scam by persons posing as recruitment representatives.

According to police, the complaint was filed by Darsh Shinkre of Kurtarkar Nagri, Shantinagar,

Ponda. He stated that between February 2 and February 10, he received a call from a woman who identified herself as Priyanka Sharma from Naukri.com. She allegedly informed him that he had been shortlisted for a job at Bajaj Finance, Goa.

On the pretext of conducting an aptitude test, interview process,

document verification and bank account opening formalities, the accused allegedly induced the complainant to transfer money in multiple transactions through UPI to different bank accounts. He was also asked to share payment details on a WhatsApp number.

Police said the complainant transferred

a total amount of Rs 2,10,804, believing that he would be provided employment with Bajaj Finance in Goa. However, the accused failed to provide the promised job and did not refund the amount, thereby allegedly cheating him.

JOB SCAM

60-Year-Old Man Found Dead in Under-Construction House at Chapora

Team Goemkarponn

Anjuna: Anjuna Police have registered an unnatural death (UD) case after a 60-year-old man was found dead at his residence in Chapora on Monday night.

According to police, Anjuna PS registered UD No. 12/2026 under Section 194 of the BNSS at 10.22 pm on February

10 following a phone call from a local person informing that a dead body was found at House No. 175, Zorwaddo, Chapora, Anjuna, Bardez-Goa.

Police visited the spot and met Ramchandra

Babuso Agarwadekar, resident of the same address, who led them inside an under-construction house on the premises. He pointed out a male body found in a sitting position on an office chair and identified the deceased as his elder brother, Agnelo Bunty Cardozo (60), resident of H. No. 175, Zorwaddo, Chapora,

Anjuna. Preliminary inquiry revealed that the deceased had been residing alone in the under-construction house for the past 13 years. Police conducted a scene of occurrence panchanama and inquest panchanama. The body has been preserved at the GMC Morgue, Bambolim, for medico-legal formalities.



Man Caught Red-Handed Accepting Matka Bets in Chimbel

Team Goemkarponn

Old Goa: Old Goa Police have registered an offence against a 63-year-old man for allegedly accepting Matka bets in an open public place near Pratiyogen Bar at Indira Nagar, Chimbel.

Police said they seized cash amounting to Rs 1,450 in different denominations from his possession along with other gambling-related articles. The accused was arrested at 6.11 pm in connection with the crime and later released on surety at 7.47 pm the same day.

Further investigation is being carried out by ASI Chandrashekhar Amonkar of Old Goa Police Station.

Coal showdown brews in Mormugao as MLA Amonkar issues 3-day ultimatum

Team Goemkarponn

MORMUGAO: Tension gripped the Mormugao constituency on Wednesday after MLA Sankalp Amonkar issued a stern three-day ultimatum to the coal handling companies at Mormugao Port, warning that operations would be forcibly shut down if coal dust pollution and foul odour are not brought under immediate control. Hundreds of residents from Sada, Boggda, Jetty and Rumbawada gathered at Sada Junction before marching in protest to the gate of the company handling coal at the port. Locals complained that coal dust and a persistent stench



have once again begun affecting residential areas, triggering health concerns and widespread anger. Addressing the crowd outside the company premises, Amonkar announced that the official of a coal handling unit has been formally served with a memorandum

carrying nearly 1,500 signatures from citizens of the constituency. The memorandum demands urgent and visible corrective measures within three days.

"If coal pollution and the foul smell are not stopped within the next three days, we will enter the company premises and completely halt coal operations," Amonkar declared, asserting that thousands of residents are prepared to join the action if required. His warning drew loud cheers from the assembled protesters, many of whom said they have endured recurring pollution for years. The protest site witnessed tense moments as slogans were raised at the company gate.

Goa Becomes First State To Scale Up Depression Care Across All PHCs Under IMPRESS Programme

Team Goemkarponn

Bambolim: Reinforcing its commitment to strengthening mental healthcare at the grassroots, Goa has become the first State in the country to successfully scale up depression care services across all Primary Health Care Centres (PHCs) under the IMPRESS Programme.

The milestone was marked at the State-Level Mental Health & Well-being Event organised in association with the Directorate of Health



Services (DHS), Goa and Sangath at Goa Medical College & Hospital (GMC), Bambolim. Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, addressing the gathering, said the Government remains steadfast in its mission to make mental healthcare accessible, community-based and stigma-free.

Officials Inspect Mopa Airport Site Ahead Of Formula-4 Circuit Race

Team Goemkarponn

Pernem: Additional Collector-III Shri Pundalik Khorjuvekar, along with Deputy Collector Pernem Shri Shiv Prasad Naik and SDPO Pernem, PI Mopa, conducted a joint inspection of the venue for the upcoming Formula-4 Circuit race scheduled to be held on February 14 and 15 at Manohar International Airport, Mopa. Representatives from the Traffic and Fire Departments, along with the event organisers, were also present during the inspection. Officials



reviewed preparations at the site and issued directions to ensure comprehensive safety measures, proper parking arrangements, adequate medical facilities, traffic diversion plans, setting up of a control room and effective crowd management.

CM Chairs Review Meeting to Strengthen Healthcare Services Across Goa

Focus on Critical Care Expansion, Trauma Centre Upgrades and Filling Staff Vacancies.

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant chaired a comprehensive review meeting on Health Department issues, in the presence of Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, Ministers Mauvin Godinho,

Digambar Kamat, Ramesh Tawadkar and Subhash Phaldesai, along with the Chief Secretary, Secretary (Health), Director of Health Services and other senior officials. The meeting focused on key measures to strengthen healthcare delivery across

the state. Among the major decisions was the initiation of services aimed at enhancing critical care capacity and the upgradation of Emergency and Trauma Centres to improve emergency response systems. To address staff



shortages, the government will onboard Medical Officers, Casualty Medical Officers, nurses, MTS staff and technicians. Steps will also be taken to strengthen Sub-District Hospitals by bridging gaps in manpower and infrastructure.

Registration Of Goan Maand Groups Under Revival And Preservation Scheme Begins

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: The Directorate of Art and Culture has invited applications for the registration of Goan Maand groups across the State under the Government's scheme for the revival, preservation and protection of Goan Maand culture. The initiative aims to create an authentic and comprehensive record of traditional Maand practices while extending structured institutional support to safeguard this vital element of Goa's intangible cultural heritage. Maand traditions, regarded as the cultural backbone of many villages and communities in Goa, are traditionally practiced in temple



premises, village grounds and other community spaces. Sustained over generations through collective participation and oral transmission, these traditions encompass a rich range of folk forms, music, rituals and performances unique to the State. Recognising the need to preserve these living traditions in their authentic form, the Government has opened registration to all genuine and interested Maand groups, subject to scrutiny. The registration process will document details of the Maand Guru or Maandeli, group members and trainees, the specific Maand tradition practiced and its continuity within the community.



CM Felicitates Young Innovators At Qurious Minds STEM Programme

Team Goemkarponn

Panaji: Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant felicitated outstanding students for their remarkable achievements in Robotics and STEM education at a programme organised by Qurious Minds, held in the presence of Minister Shri Subhash Shirodkar.

Congratulating the young innovators who have brought pride to Goa by excelling at State, national and international levels in coding, robotics, gaming and STEM competitions, the Chief Minister lauded their

dedication and talent.

"A new era of innovation is unfolding in Goa.

Our students are proving that with the right guidance and opportunities, they can compete and excel at national and international platforms in robotics, coding and STEM education. Their achievements make the entire State proud," Dr. Sawant said.

He further emphasised the Government's commitment to nurturing scientific temper and innovation among youth.



Arunachal Hydropower Project Receives Environmental Nod After Three Decades

■ Kamala dam approval raises concern over loss of more than twenty three lakh trees.

New Delhi: A long pending hydropower project in Arunachal Pradesh has received a major regulatory push after the central expert panel recommended environmental clearance for the 1,720 megawatt Kamala dam. The decision comes nearly thirty years after the proposal was first conceived, but it has triggered serious concern due to the large scale ecological impact involved.

The project, proposed by NHPC Limited, involves construction of a massive concrete gravity dam on the Kamala River, a tributary of the Subansiri in the Brahmaputra basin. The structure is planned to rise to a height of 216 metres and the reservoir will spread across 3,858 hectares in Kamle, Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey districts. Most of this region is covered by thick natural forests that



support rich biodiversity. The expert appraisal committee, while recommending approval, highlighted that more than twenty three lakh trees would need to be felled for the project. The panel described this as a serious environmental challenge and stressed the need for strict mitigation measures. It asked for a detailed restoration and compensatory plan to be prepared in consultation with forest authorities, wildlife specialists and local communities before final forest clearance is

granted.

The social impact is also expected to be significant. Official assessments indicate that 126 villages with around thirty thousand residents fall within the directly affected zone, while a broader study area covers 377 villages in four districts. Many of these communities depend on forests and rivers for their livelihood.

Supporters of the project argue that it will provide reliable electricity and help manage floods in the downstream

Brahmaputra region. The dam is designed as a storage based facility with a special flood cushion to regulate excess monsoon water. Authorities believe it will strengthen energy security and contribute to economic development in the Northeast.

Initial studies for the project were carried out in 1996 and several designs were examined before the present site was finalised on technical and safety grounds. The estimated cost now stands at more than twenty three thousand crore rupees. Although the latest recommendation clears an important hurdle, the project still awaits final forest approval. Environmental groups and local residents are preparing to closely watch the next stage, as the decision will permanently reshape a vast stretch of Arunachal Pradesh's natural landscape.

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Dabolim Row Erupts: Statewide Agitation Threat Looms

about the developments surrounding the airport," he remarked. Amid the growing controversy, South Goa Member of Parliament has written to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh seeking assurance on the continuity of Dabolim Airport as a civil enclave. However, Minister

Mauvin Godinho and MLA Jit Arolkar have maintained that both Dabolim International Airport and Manohar International Airport at Mopa must function in coordination for the overall progress of the State. They have emphasized the importance of a dual-airport model to

support Goa's tourism-driven economy. The escalating war of words has revived long-standing concerns over Dabolim's future, particularly in the backdrop of the operationalisation of Mopa airport and the strategic interests of the Navy, which controls Dabolim as a civil enclave.

Casino Row Rocks CCP; AAP Goa Chief Removed from CCP As Citizens Demand Action

Panaji residents gathered at the CCP Conference Hall to voice their opposition to offshore casinos and seek clarity on the Corporation's stand. The citizens had assembled to meet the

Mayor and demand concrete action against casino activities in the river, which they claim are affecting the environment and the city's identity. Amid the protest, renowned Goan freedom fighter Libia Lobo

Sardessai extended her support to the citizens opposing the casinos. "I am objecting to the casino. We want to eat fish, not the dirt of the casino," she said, drawing applause from those present.

Bengal Governed by Bomb Culture, Not Law and Order, Says Sitharaman

the Union Budget 2026-27. Responding to comments made by TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee on

the Goods and Services Tax, the minister rejected his claim that people in Bengal were burdened

with tax even after death for lighting an incense stick. She described the statement as unfortunate

and suggested that corruption rather than taxation had become a norm in the state.



Defence Council Set to Consider Purchase of 114 Rafale Fighter Jets

■ Major meeting chaired by Rajnath Singh expected to reshape India's air and maritime capabilities.

New Delhi: India's top defence decision making body is expected to take a crucial step toward strengthening the Indian Air Force by approving the acquisition of 114 additional Rafale fighter aircraft at its meeting on Thursday. The Defence Acquisition Council, headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, will examine several proposals aimed at modernising the armed forces amid rising regional security challenges.

The proposed purchase forms part of the Medium Role Fighter Aircraft programme and has already received clearance from the Defence Procurement Board. If the council grants approval, the plan will be forwarded to the Cabinet Committee on Security for final sanction. The deal, estimated at around three lakh twenty five thousand crore rupees, could become one of the largest military aviation contracts in the country's history.

Air force officials have repeatedly warned about the declining strength of combat squadrons. The service currently operates only 29 squadrons against an authorised requirement of 42, creating a serious capability gap. Even with the arrival of indigenous Tejas aircraft, experts believe additional fighters are essential to maintain operational readiness on multiple fronts.

The latest proposal places strong emphasis on domestic manufacturing and technology transfer. A significant portion of the aircraft is expected to be produced in India with integration of locally developed weapons and systems. The project is seen as a continuation of the earlier multi role combat aircraft competition that began in 2007 but could not be concluded because of prolonged negotiations. Apart from the Rafale decision, the council is also likely to review procurement of high altitude pseudo satellites, which are solar powered unmanned platforms designed for long duration surveillance. These systems, being developed by Indian research agencies, would provide persistent monitoring of border and maritime regions at a lower cost than conventional satellites.

The meeting may further discuss expansion of the navy's Boeing P 8I maritime patrol fleet, a key platform for anti submarine warfare and ocean surveillance.

The navy currently operates 12 such aircraft and has sought six more to strengthen its presence in the Indian Ocean.

Delays in the indigenous Tejas Mk1A programme have increased pressure on the government to fast track foreign acquisitions.

Donald Trump Hails India Trade Pact as Historic Boost for US Energy

■ American President Highlights Surge in Coal Exports and Growing Role as Global Energy Supplier.

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: United States President Donald Trump has praised the recent trade understanding with India, describing it as historic and beneficial for American energy exports. Speaking at a coal industry event in Washington, he said the agreement would significantly expand the sale of US coal to major international partners. The American leader declared that the United States has become the



largest energy producer in the world and is rapidly transforming into a major exporter. He pointed to new commercial arrangements with India, Japan and South Korea as evidence of this shift, saying these deals would

lead to a sharp rise in coal shipments from the country.

Trump also expressed confidence in the quality of American coal, stating that it is regarded as among the best available globally.

According to him, the growing demand from Asian economies would strengthen domestic mining communities and create new employment opportunities in the energy sector.

The remarks come at a time when India is reviewing its long term energy strategy to ensure stable and affordable supplies. New Delhi has repeatedly stated that its decisions in this sector are guided by national interest, reliable availability and fair pricing.

Wait for Aviation Regulator to Complete Ajit Pawar Crash Inquiry, Says Fadnavis

■ Maharashtra Chief Minister urges restraint amid sabotage claims and political questions

New Delhi: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has appealed for patience until the Directorate General of Civil Aviation completes its investigation into the plane crash that claimed the life of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others. He said conclusions should be drawn only



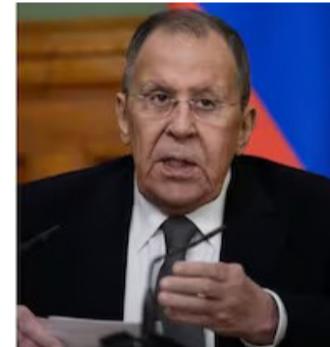
after experts finish examining all technical and operational aspects of the tragedy.

Lavrov Dismisses Trump Remark on India Ending Russian Oil Imports

■ Russian Foreign Minister says no Indian leader has indicated any halt in energy purchases

New Delhi: Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has rejected a claim by United States President Donald Trump that India had agreed to stop buying crude oil from Russia. Speaking before Russian lawmakers, Lavrov said he had not heard such a statement from any Indian authority, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi or other senior leaders.

Lavrov stated that



the suggestion of India abandoning Russian energy supplies did not match the reality of ongoing cooperation



between the two countries. He emphasised that no official communication from New Delhi had indicated a change in

its long standing policy of sourcing oil based on national requirements and market conditions.

The Russian minister also referred to recent attempts by Washington to pressure several countries to reduce trade with Moscow. He said various economic measures, including tariffs and restrictions, were being used to influence independent energy decisions of strategic partners.

UN Report Flags Jaish-e-Mohammed Link to Red Fort Attack, Warns of New Women Terror Wing

■ Global Body Flags Link Between Terror Group and Red Fort Attack

New Delhi: A new United Nations assessment has raised serious concern over the activities of the Pakistan based terror organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed, pointing to its alleged involvement in a deadly attack at Delhi's historic Red Fort and warning about the creation of a separate women only unit to assist militant operations. The findings indicate that the group continues to adapt its methods despite years of international sanctions and security pressure. The counter



terrorism monitoring team informed the UN Security Council that a member country had linked the organisation to the assault carried out on November 9 at the Red

Fort, an incident in which 15 people lost their lives. The site is regarded as a powerful symbol of Indian sovereignty and any attack on it is viewed as a major threat to national

security. The report also highlighted that the group's leader Masood Azhar announced the formation of a new body called Jamaat ul Muminaat on October 8.

Tobacco Businessman's Son Held After High Speed Lamborghini Crash

■ Police Arrest Shivam Mishra in Kanpur Accident That Injured Six People

New Delhi: Police in Kanpur have arrested Shivam Mishra, son of a prominent Uttar Pradesh tobacco entrepreneur, four days after a luxury Lamborghini rammed into pedestrians and vehicles on a busy city road. Officials said he was taken into custody on Thursday morning following information about his presence in the city and was produced before a court after medical formalities. Investigators stated that five police teams were formed to



trace Mishra, who had remained untraceable since the accident on Sunday afternoon. The crash occurred on VIP Road when the Italian sports car, valued at over ten crore rupees, allegedly lost control and hit an e rickshaw, two wheelers and a parked motorcycle.



“Home Is Where You Get Peace”: Gambhir Reflects As India Tackle Selection Woes Before Namibia Clash

■ Injuries and illness test defending champions ahead of crucial T20 World Cup fixtures.

New Delhi: India head coach Gautam Gambhir has underlined the emotional value of playing in New Delhi as his side prepares to face Namibia at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Calling home a place of peace and strength, Gambhir said returning to familiar surroundings provides balance in a demanding profession, particularly as India navigate fresh injury concerns during the T20 World Cup. The former opener shares a deep connection with the Delhi venue, having represented the city in domestic cricket, led the local IPL franchise and recorded his highest Test score there. He recently hosted



the squad and support staff at his residence, strengthening team bonds before the group stage intensifies with a marquee clash against Pakistan in Colombo on February 15. However, India's preparations have been disrupted by fitness setbacks. Explosive opener Abhishek Sharma was hospitalised with a

severe stomach ailment and, despite being discharged, remains doubtful for immediate selection. Sanju Samson is poised to step in at the top of the order. Further uncertainty surrounds Ishan Kishan, who picked up an injury during training, potentially prompting a reshuffle that could see Suryakumar

Yadav or Tilak Varma promoted. India are also monitoring their bowling combination. The pace spearhead, who missed the previous game due to fever, is expected to return, which may force a difficult decision despite Mohammed Siraj's strong showing in the last match. With Delhi's surface traditionally assisting spin, there is growing consideration for Kuldeep Yadav's inclusion to add variety. All rounder Washington Sundar has recovered from a side strain and offers an additional bowling option along with batting depth, making him a viable alternative if the team opts for greater balance.

Deep Understanding of Data Is the Real Edge in Modern Chess, Says Anand

■ Five time World Champion highlights pattern recognition and intuition over memorisation

New Delhi: Five time World Champion Viswanathan Anand has said that in today's data driven chess environment, deep understanding rather than access to information is what truly sets players apart. Speaking at the opening of a three day chess workshop, Anand observed that the explosion of computer generated analysis has made it harder for players to meaningfully absorb knowledge. He noted that modern players are constantly exposed to new engine evaluations and fresh conclusions, making it impossible to internalise everything. According to him, the ability to interpret and deeply understand



positions is now the defining quality of elite competitors. Drawing from his own experience of adapting to computer analysis years ago, Anand said openness to innovation is important, but genuine progress comes from grasping finer details. The Grandmaster also stressed that mastery in chess relies more on pattern recognition than rote memorisation.



“We Haven’t Been Given A Night Session”: Erasmus Questions Training Schedule

■ Namibia captain voices concern ahead of floodlit clash against India at T20 World Cup

New Delhi: Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus has raised concerns over the team's preparation ahead of their T20 World Cup encounter against India, revealing that his side was not allotted a single night training session before their floodlit match. Namibia are set to face India under lights on Thursday, but their build up has unfolded entirely during daytime hours. After playing a day fixture against the Netherlands earlier this week, their subsequent practice sessions were also conducted in daylight. In contrast, India reportedly trained twice in the evening to

prepare for the conditions. Erasmus admitted he was unsure why Namibia were not granted a similar opportunity. He pointed out that other teams, including Canada, were seen training under lights at the same venue. Canada, who are scheduled to play an afternoon fixture against the UAE, also had access to a night session. The Namibia skipper highlighted the structural challenges his team faces back home, noting that the country lacks floodlit facilities for day night matches. As a result, many players have limited exposure to playing and training under artificial lights.

Anish Bhanwala Clinches Rapid-Fire Bronze as India Strengthens Lead at Asian Championship

■ India's medal tally rises to 41 gold as shooters deliver strong performances across senior and junior events.

New Delhi: World Championship silver medallist Anish Bhanwala secured a bronze medal in the men's 25 metre rapid fire pistol event at the Asian Shooting Championship, adding another podium finish to his growing list of achievements. The medal marked his third at the continental meet, even as Kazakhstan enjoyed a



dominant outing with four gold medals on the eighth day of competition. India continued to lead the overall standings with an impressive haul of 41 gold, 19 silver and

15 bronze medals, with two days of events still remaining. Bhanwala and Adarsh Singh qualified for the rapid fire pistol final after finishing seventh and eighth with scores of 574 and 573 respectively. Kazakhstan's Nikita Chiryukin topped the qualification round with 582, leading a strong contingent from his country into the final.

In the eight series final, Bhanwala began confidently and stayed in contention through the early stages. After six series, he was tied for the lead with Japan's Dai Yoshioka and Chiryukin, each on 21 hits. However, a comparatively slower seventh series saw him slip behind, eventually finishing with 23 hits to claim bronze.

“We Are Helpless”: Bangladesh Players React After Minister’s World Cup Remark

■ Confusion deepens as sports advisor's comments on T20 World Cup withdrawal spark frustration within team.

Team Goemkarponn

New Delhi: Bangladesh's absence from the T20 World Cup has taken a contentious turn after the country's sports advisor, Asif Nazrul, attributed the decision to the cricket board and players, prompting strong disappointment within the squad. Bangladesh



were removed from the tournament by the International Cricket Council after declining to travel to India. Initially, it

was widely believed that the government had made the decision on security grounds. However, Nazrul recently stated that the Bangladesh Cricket Board and the cricketers themselves were reluctant to participate, suggesting they had chosen to step aside in the interest of national safety. The remarks have unsettled

several players, who maintain they were never consulted about any withdrawal and had been prepared to travel for the global event. Reports indicate that members of the squad were fully aware of the significance of the World Cup and the financial and professional consequences of missing it.

