



## CCP POLLS ON MARCH 11; COUNTING ON MARCH 13

**Delimitation Completed, MCC Enforced | SEC Assures Free And Fair Elections**

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The State Election Commission has announced that elections to the 30 wards of the Corporation of the City of Panaji (CCP) will be held on March 11, 2026, with counting of votes scheduled for March 13 at Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium, Bambolim.

The current term of the CCP, elected in March 2021, will expire on March

29, 2026. In accordance with the City of Panaji Corporation Act, 2002 and Article 243ZA of the Constitution of India, the election process has been initiated to constitute the new Corporation before the completion of its five-year term.

The Urban Development Department completed the delimitation of 30 wards, which was notified on February 2, 2026. Ward-wise photo electoral rolls were

Sr.	Poll Event	Date
1	Receipt of Nominations (7 days except 22 February 2026 being Sunday)	17 February 2026 (Tuesday) To 24 February 2026 (Tuesday) 10 am to 1 pm
2	Scrutiny of nominations	25 February 2026 (Wednesday) 10 am onwards till scrutiny is complete
3	Withdrawal of candidature	26 February 2026 (Thursday) 10 am to 3 pm
4	List of Contesting candidates	26 February 2026 (Thursday) After 3 pm
5	Date of Poll	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Wednesday) 8 am to 5 pm
6	Date for Counting of votes	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Friday) 8 am till counting is completed



published on February 6, 2026, based on the Goa Legislative Assembly electoral roll as on January 1, 2025, along with supplements up to October 1, 2025.

Out of the 30 wards, 10 are reserved for women, 8 for OBCs and 1 for ST, while none are reserved for SC. The elections will be held on non-party lines. Nominations will be

accepted from February 17 to 24 (except February 22) between 10 am and 1 pm at the Office of the Dy. Collector, Tiswadi. Scrutiny will be held on February 25, withdrawal of

candidature on February 26, and the final list of contesting candidates will be announced the same day after 3 pm.

Polling will take place from 8 am to 5 pm across 48 polling booths. A total of 32,496 voters — including 15,225 male and 17,271 female voters — are eligible to cast their votes. Voting will be conducted by ballot paper. The maximum expenditure limit per candidate has

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## Ex-Tivim Sarpanch Questioned Over Alleged Plot Permission Irregularities

■ Police probe NOC for road construction at Survey No. 485/1-A following TCP complaint.

### Team Goemkarponn

**TIVIM:** Former Tivim Sarpanch Venkatesh Shirodkar was questioned at the Colvale Police Station after a complaint from the Town and Country Planning Department (TCP) regarding alleged irregularities in granting



permission  
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## Goa Ranks First In Country In Implementation Of New Criminal Laws

■ State tops national BPR&D assessment with 83.10% score; achieves full marks in administrative reforms and system integration.

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa has secured the first position among all States and Union Territories in the country in the implementation of the Nyay Samhitas (New Criminal Laws), as per the national ranking assessment conducted by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) in February 2026.

The State achieved an overall score of 83.10



per cent, reflecting strong institutional preparedness, coordinated reforms, and effective adoption of procedural, technological, and administrative changes under the new criminal law framework.

Goa secured a perfect score of 20 out of 20 in Administrative Reforms, with full compliance in issuance of statutory notifications and adoption of model rules under the Nyay Samhitas.

Officials stated that this demonstrates the State's readiness in translating legislative intent into enforceable and operational legal frameworks in a timely manner. In Operational Efficiency, Goa recorded 100 per cent compliance in Zero FIR registration, effective utilisation of NAFIS, adoption of e-Sakshya, and improved digital workflows ensuring better linkage between investigation and courts.

## HC Directs Coastal Panchayats to Submit Licence Records After Birch Tragedy

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Bombay High Court at Goa, while hearing a suo motu Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in connection with the Birch fire tragedy, has directed all coastal village Panchayats to furnish detailed information regarding trade licences issued within their respective jurisdictions. The Court has specifically sought details on whether commercial establishments granted trade licences possess valid construction licences and occupancy



certificates, indicating a wider scrutiny of regulatory compliance in coastal areas. During the hearing, the High Court also asked the Goa government to place on record information pertaining to ex-gratia compensation provided to the victims of the Birch fire tragedy.

## Opposition, GUJ Slam Threat To Journalist At Shiv Mahotsav; CM Assures Inquiry

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The alleged threat issued to a journalist during the Shiv Mahotsav 2026 event at Satpal Ground, Sacorda, Dharbandora, has sparked widespread condemnation from political leaders and media bodies across Goa. Archit Naik, President of the Goa Pradesh Youth Congress, strongly condemned the remark made against journalists

during the event in Sanvordem, calling it a direct attack on press freedom. He stated that such comments are an attempt to intimidate members of the media for performing their professional duties. Naik said the incident reflects growing intolerance towards accountability and criticism, adding that the media is the fourth pillar of democracy and any attempt to silence journalists amounts to an attack on democratic values.

## Budget 2026 Signals India's Readiness for Developed Nation Status, Says PM Modi

■ Prime Minister Highlights Infra Push, Trade Gains and Call for Private Sector R&D Investment

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described the Union Budget 2026 to 27 as a reflection of India's aspiration to emerge as a developed nation, calling it a moment shaped by preparation and confidence rather than compulsion. In an interview, the Prime Minister said the budget represents a "we are ready" phase for the



country, underlining that government financial plans are not routine accounting exercises but strategic roadmaps

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# CCP Polls Must Be About Panaji's Future, Not Old Excuses

So finally, the elections to the Corporation of the City of Panaji have been announced. On March 11, voters in the capital will choose 30 councillors who will be entrusted with shaping the city's future for the next five years. The formalities are in place. The wards have been delimited, electoral rolls updated, the Model Code enforced. What now remains is the harder part. Will this election be about Panaji's real problems, or will it once again descend into personality contests and neighbourhood rivalries?

Panaji is not a sprawling metropolis. It is compact, walkable, historically layered and symbolically important. What happens here sends a message to the rest of Goa. Yet, over the last decade, the city has struggled to balance its dual identity as a capital and a tourism magnet. The next council cannot afford to ignore that tension. Offshore casinos will inevitably dominate the debate. The vessels anchored on the Mandovi are more than a moral question. They are a civic issue. Traffic snarls during peak tourist season are directly linked to casino visitors. So are parking chaos, pedestrian safety concerns and late night congestion. Successive governments have promised relocation. Successive councils have largely watched from the sidelines. Candidates this time must clearly spell out what role they believe the Corporation should play. Silence will only confirm complicity.

Traffic congestion more broadly has become a daily frustration. From the bottlenecks near the Mandovi bridges to the gridlock along 18th June Road and the Campal stretch, commuting through Panaji is no longer the easy affair it once was. The introduction of pay parking zones was meant to regulate vehicle flow. Instead, it has triggered resentment among residents who feel they are paying for poor planning. The policy needs review, transparency and better communication. Is it about revenue or regulation? Citizens deserve clarity. The long pending redevelopment of the Panjim bus stand is another example of drift. The existing facility is cramped, chaotic and unbecoming of a capital city. Announcements have been



*The long pending redevelopment of the Panjim bus stand is another example of drift. The existing facility is cramped, chaotic and unbecoming of a capital city. Announcements have been made before. Plans have been floated. Yet the ground reality remains unchanged. A modern, efficient transport hub would ease congestion and improve commuter experience.*

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Then there are the unfinished Smart City works. Roads dug up and relaid. Pavements half completed. Utility lines exposed. The promise of a smarter Panaji has often translated into prolonged inconvenience. Residents have endured dust, diversions and delays. If Smart City interventions are to transform urban life, they must be coordinated, transparent and accountable. Councillors cannot shrug and say it is someone

else's project. They represent the people who are living through the disruption.

In neighbourhoods like Fontainhas, the pressure of tourism has reached a tipping point. What was once a quiet Latin quarter has become a backdrop for photo shoots, loud gatherings and unregulated commercial activity. Residents complain of privacy invasion, noise and littering. Tourism is vital to Goa's economy. But unmanaged tourism erodes the very heritage it seeks to showcase. The Corporation must evolve clear guidelines that protect residential character while allowing responsible tourism. The issue of beggars in commercial areas is also frequently raised, especially along church squares and market roads. It is easy to reduce this to an aesthetic concern. It is harder to confront the social realities behind it. A humane, coordinated response involving social welfare authorities is needed, not periodic eviction drives that merely shift the problem from one ward to another.

Importantly, these elections are being held on non party lines. In theory, that should encourage a focus on local governance rather than ideological battles. In practice, political affiliations often operate just below the surface. Voters must look beyond symbols and surnames. They should ask candidates specific questions. What is your stand on casino relocation? How will you address parking policy? What is your plan for ward level waste management? How will you ensure Smart City works are completed on time?

Panaji deserves councillors who see themselves not as power brokers but as custodians of a fragile urban ecosystem. The next five years will determine whether the capital regains coherence or slides further into ad hoc decision making. March 11 is not just about filling 30 seats. It is about choosing whether Panaji will be planned or improvised, preserved or exploited.

The announcement of the elections is merely the beginning. The real test lies in whether candidates and voters alike are prepared to confront uncomfortable questions about the city they call home.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Time to Revisit the Casino Debate

The public awareness meeting titled "Casinos and the Way Forward," scheduled for February 17 at the Institute Menezes Braganza in Panjim, comes at a crucial time for our State. For years, casino operations have expanded quietly but steadily, even as concerns over their wider impact have grown louder. What was once projected as a regulated revenue-generating activity has evolved into a complex civic issue. Traffic congestion, parking shortages, late night disturbances and mounting pressure on city infrastructure are now part of everyday reality in Panjim. The debate is no longer limited to moral arguments for or against gambling. It is about sustainability. How much strain can a small capital city realistically absorb? Are the economic benefits proportionate to the social and infrastructural costs? And most importantly, who bears the burden of these costs? Citizen initiatives such as those led by Ponnjekars Against Casinos provide a necessary democratic space for discussion. Public policy must reflect not only financial considerations but also the lived experiences of residents. Transparent dialogue, backed by data and clear policy options, is urgently required. The time has come to move beyond rhetoric and address the future of casino operations with clarity and accountability. Goa deserves a balanced approach that safeguards both its economy and its social fabric.

-Sandeep Rodrigues, Ribandar

### Opposition Unity Is the Only Credible Alternative

The recent public display of bonhomie between the Goa Forward Party and the Indian National Congress at a Carnival event in Fatorda has triggered speculation about a possible alliance ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections. More than optics, however, it raises a fundamental political question. Can the opposition afford to remain fragmented if it is serious about challenging the Bharatiya Janata Party? Goa's recent electoral history shows that divided opposition votes have repeatedly benefited the ruling party. Personal egos, local rivalries and post poll realignments have weakened public trust. If there is a genuine intent to present an alternative government, then unity cannot be an afterthought stitched together on the eve of elections. An alliance, if it materialises, must be built on a clear common minimum programme and not merely on arithmetic. Voters are weary of opportunistic tie ups that collapse once power equations shift. The opposition must articulate what it stands for beyond being anti-BJP. Issues such as governance transparency, unemployment, infrastructure stress and protection of Goa's identity require coherent policy direction. Signals from leaders like Vijai Sardesai and Amit Patkar may indicate the beginning of dialogue. The challenge now is to convert symbolism into structured cooperation. If the opposition truly seeks to defeat the BJP in 2027, unity is not optional. It is essential.

-Daniel D'Costa, Raia

# PM Surya Ghar Scheme To Power Homes For 30 Years

## ■ CM Pushes Women-Led Rural Entrepreneurship

### Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant said solar panels installed under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana will remain operational for 30 years, with performance guaranteed by both the government and the contractor. He was speaking at an awareness programme on the scheme held alongside a major women's entrepreneurship initiative in Ponda. Highlighting



the State's commitment to clean energy, Dr. Sawant said the PM Surya Ghar initiative is being implemented in Goa through the Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA), with Central Financial Assistance and

an additional 50 per cent subsidy from the State government. The Chief Minister was attending the Women Entrepreneurship programme titled "Har Ghar Udyam, Har Gaon Samridh" at Rajiv Kala Mandir, where he also flagged off 48 vehicles under the Aajeevika Gramin Express Yojana to strengthen rural livelihoods. Dr. Sawant set a target of enrolling one lakh women under Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and increasing their collective

turnover to ₹500 crore by next year. He urged women to step forward, become self-reliant and actively contribute to strengthening the rural economy. During the programme, the Mukhyamantri Mahila Lakhpati Nidhi Yojana (MMLNY), a dedicated loan scheme for women SHG members developed by the Goa State Rural Livelihoods Mission in collaboration with the Goa State Co-operative Bank, is set to be launched.

# Congress-Goa Forward Unity, 2027 Poll Signals Emerge

### Team Goemkarponn

**FATORDA:** The four-day Carnival organised by Goa Forward Party chief Vijai Sardesai under the "We for Fatorda" banner kicked off on Saturday with a strong political undertone, as senior Congress leaders shared the stage, hinting at a potential alliance for the 2027 Assembly elections. Addressing the crowd, Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) President Amit Patkar confidently declared



that the Congress and Goa Forward Party were poised to form the next government in Goa, a statement widely interpreted as a strategic political signal during the festive celebrations.

# Make Goa Goa Again: Vijai Sardesai Flags 'Northward Drift' of Development

## ■ Goa Forward Party MLA warns of identity crisis, says Carnival and Goemkarponn must be protected

### Team Goemkarponn

**FATORDA:** Vijai Sardesai raised strong concerns over what he described as a steady "northward drift" of major activities and infrastructure in the state, warning that Goa's identity and cultural roots could be at risk if the trend continues. Addressing supporters at Fatorda Square, the Goa Forward Party MLA said that with operations at Manohar International Airport fully functional and the future of civilian operations at Dabolim Airport appearing uncertain, the imbalance in regional development is becoming increasingly



evident. "Major activities are moving North. The airport at Manohar International Airport is operational, while civilian operations at Dabolim Airport face an uncertain future. This is not just about infrastructure. This is about identity," Sardesai said. He cautioned that if the present trend continues unchecked, even Goa's iconic Carnival could lose its traditional roots and character.

# Goa Government Signs Three-Year Deal to Host Formula 4 Events at Mopa

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that Racing Promotions Pvt Ltd (RPPL) has entered into a three-year partnership with the Goa government and the GMR Group to organise Formula 4 racing events in the state. The newly developed infrastructure at Mopa will remain in place throughout the agreement, ensuring that future editions of the event can be held without



additional construction or setup. Speaking on the significance of the initiative, Sawant highlighted that

hosting international motorsport events is vital for boosting global confidence in Goa's ability to manage high-profile competitions. He added that creating world-class facilities and a supportive sporting environment is a key step towards the state eventually hosting Formula One. Sawant also mentioned that RPPL has the freedom to introduce more car racing events independently, paving the way for increased national and international motorsport activities in Goa.

# Curti Sports Complex In Ponda Named After Late Ravi Naik

### Team Goemkarponn

**PONDA:** The sports complex at Curti in Ponda was formally christened as the Ravi Sports Complex by Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant at a ceremony held in honour of late Shri Ravi Naik, recognising his contributions to



public service and regional development. The naming ceremony paid tribute to Naik's people-focused leadership and his enduring role in

shaping developmental initiatives in the Ponda region. Speakers at the event highlighted his commitment to grassroots progress and community welfare. The newly named Ravi Sports Complex is expected to emerge as a key centre for nurturing sporting talent in the area. With

improved infrastructure and facilities, the complex aims to promote wider participation in sports at the grassroots level and provide aspiring athletes with opportunities to hone their skills. The initiative is seen as both a memorial to Naik's legacy and an investment in the future of sports in Ponda.

# Disability Body Alleges Violation Of PwD Quota In 722 Govt Posts

## ■ Goa Forward Party MLA warns of identity crisis, says Carnival and Goemkarponn must be protected

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** The Disability Rights Association of Goa (DRAG), a disabled persons' organisation working in the state for the past 22 years, has written to the State Commissioner for Persons with Disability alleging violation of statutory reservation norms in

the recent recruitment advertisement issued by the Goa Staff Selection Commission.

In a representation addressed to the State Commissioner for Persons with Disability, the association stated that the Commission, through Advertisement No. 2 of 2026, has advertised 722 posts in various government



departments without reserving a single post for persons with disabilities. The association termed the move as "blatant discrimination" and a violation of Section 34 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, which mandates that every government establishment reserve 4 per cent of vacancies for persons with benchmark

disabilities.

According to the association, the failure to implement the 4 per cent quota has effectively denied nearly 29 persons with disabilities the opportunity for gainful employment. The body has further objected to the clause in the advertisement granting preference to candidates employed

by the Goa Human Resources Development Corporation, alleging that the corporation itself does not maintain reservation for persons with disabilities. The association pointed out that a case regarding this issue has already been filed before the Commissioner's court and has been pending for over 18 months.

# Delhi Police Nab Investment Fraud Accused At Mopa Airport

Team Goemkarponn

**Goa/New Delhi:** The Delhi Police has arrested an alleged member of an international investment fraud network from Manohar International Airport, marking a major development in an ongoing probe into a multi-crore online trading scam.

The accused, identified as Rhonak Jagdish Bhai Thakkar, is suspected to have played a crucial role in managing financial operations for the syndicate, including arranging mule bank accounts used to siphon off funds collected from victims across the country.

The arrest stems from a 2024 complaint filed



by a Rajasthan resident who was allegedly duped of over ₹60 lakh after being persuaded to invest in a fraudulent online trading platform posing as a legitimate financial services firm. Investigators revealed that victims were approached through social media platforms and messaging apps,

where they were added to investment groups and shown fabricated profit statements to gain their trust.

Police investigations uncovered a complex network involving shell companies, forged documentation, and SIM cards obtained using fake credentials to facilitate the

scam. Funds collected from investors were routed through multiple bank accounts to obscure the money trail.

Officials said several arrests have already been made in connection with the racket, and digital devices along with incriminating documents have been seized during raids conducted in multiple locations.

Thakkar was apprehended while at the Goa airport, and authorities believe his custody will help unravel further international links of the syndicate. The investigation is ongoing, with efforts underway to identify additional victims and track the movement of defrauded funds.

# Four Booked For Assault Over Dustbin Dispute In Margao

Team Goemkarponn

**MARGAO:** The Margao Town Police Station has registered an offence against four persons for allegedly assaulting and threatening a 50-year-old man at Malbhat, Margao, following a dispute over placement of a dustbin.

According to the complaint filed by Kassim Sayed (50), a resident of Malbhat, the incident occurred on February 13, 2026, at around 11.00 am. He alleged that the accused — identified as Faiz, Saif, Azan and Kaif — acting with common intention,

wrongfully restrained him and verbally abused him in filthy language.

The complainant further stated that the accused assaulted him with slaps, blows and kicks. He alleged that accused

Kaif also struck him on the head with an iron rod during the altercation. The accused are also said to have threatened him with dire consequences. Police said the dispute reportedly arose over an issue concerning the complainant's wife keeping a dustbin near the house of one of the accused.



# Copper Items Worth ₹35,000 Stolen From Factory At Verna IDC

Team Goemkarponn

**VERNA:** A theft case has been registered at the Verna Police Station following a complaint by Lijo Anthony, Plant Manager of Siemens Limited, Verna IDC.

As per the complaint, between February 13 and February 14, 2026, unknown accused persons allegedly committed theft of copper items from the open space of the factory shop floor at the Verna



Industrial Estate.

The stolen materials are estimated to be worth approximately ₹35,000.

Police have registered an offence against unknown persons, and further investigation is being carried out by PSI Prisely Carvalho of Verna Police Station.

# Bengaluru Tourist Drowns At Morjim Beach

Team Goemkarponn

**MANDREM:** A 46-year-old tourist from Bengaluru drowned while swimming at Morjim beach on February 14, 2026. Police have registered an Unnatural Death (UD) case under Section 194 of the BNSS at the Mandrem Police Station.

According to police information, UD No. 14/2026 was registered at 7:26 pm after PSI Kunal Naik reported the incident. The deceased, identified as Kantharaj K (46), a native of Bengaluru, was brought dead to CHC Tuem by



108 ambulance services following a drowning incident.

During inquiry, colleagues of the deceased informed police that he, along with several other staff members of a

government hospital, had come to Goa on a visit. On February 14, they had gone to Morjim beach, where the deceased and three others entered the sea for a swim.

At around 4:00 pm, a

strong wave reportedly formed, causing them to drift further into the sea.

While three persons managed to swim back to shore safely, Kantharaj is suspected to have suffocated in the water and lost consciousness.

Lifeguards rushed to his assistance and rescued him from the sea.

He was immediately shifted to CHC Tuem, where doctors declared him brought dead.

Police have stated that no foul play is suspected. Further investigation is in progress with PSI Kunal Naik of Mandrem Police Station.

# 45-Year-Old Candolim Resident Dies After Sudden Breathlessness

Team Goemkarponn

**CANDOLIM:** A 45-year-old resident of Candolim died after reportedly experiencing sudden breathlessness while asleep in the early hours of Saturday, February 15, 2026. According to police sources, Prashant Kumar Khuntia, originally from Kendrapara district of Odisha and currently residing at Sainagar, Aradi in Candolim, was rushed to the Primary Health Centre at around



2:41 am after he became uneasy and unresponsive at home. Family members told police that Khuntia had been sleeping when he suddenly complained of discomfort and difficulty in breathing. He was immediately taken to PHC Candolim, where doctors declared him brought

dead. Based on the medical memo received from the health centre, police initiated inquest proceedings. Officials stated that preliminary enquiry has not indicated any foul play. The body has been preserved at the morgue of Goa Medical College and Hospital for post-mortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of death.

Further enquiry is underway with PSI Rajaram Bagkar of Calangute Police Station.

# Fire Disrupts Goa Street Race At Mopa Airport, Event Temporarily Halted

Team Goemkarponn

**Mopa:** The high-octane Goa Street Race at the Manohar International Airport faced an unexpected interruption on Sunday afternoon after a fire broke out close to the racing circuit, prompting officials to pause the event as a precaution.

The incident occurred at around 2 pm near the temporary street track prepared for the Formula 4 Indian Championship within the



airport premises. Thick smoke quickly spread across parts of the venue, causing concern among spectators and race teams and leading organisers to suspend proceedings for several hours.

Fire department officials later stated that the blaze originated from dry grass in the vicinity,

which caught fire and spread rapidly due to gusty winds. Teams from the Pernem Fire Station, supported by personnel from other units, responded immediately after receiving the alert and managed to contain the flames before they could cause major damage.

# Congress Slams BJP Over 'Shifting Figures' In Panchawadi Tank Project, Demands Transparency

**Team Goemkarponn**

**SANVORDEM:** Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President Amit Patkar on Sunday visited the protest site at Mirabag and extended support to residents of Sanvordem opposing the ongoing project linked to the augmentation of the Panchawadi Minor Irrigation Tank. Addressing agitating villagers, Patkar alleged serious inconsistencies in the BJP government's records regarding the project's capacity. He pointed out that the initial tender mentioned 30 MLD, the administrative approval dated December 22, 2023 sanctioned 50 MLD, and the latest public hearing notice refers to 60 MLD. "These shifting figures clearly expose the BJP government's hidden agenda. If the



Minor Irrigation Tank at Panchawadi requires 50 MLD, on what basis has the capacity suddenly increased again? Who benefits from this escalation? What is the final design and actual scope of this project?" Patkar questioned. He further alleged that despite having what he termed a "triple engine government," the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership has failed to respect the sentiments of

the people of Sanvordem and surrounding areas. "When the people themselves are opposing the project and asking genuine questions, why is the government bulldozing ahead without answers?" he asked. The Congress strongly condemned what it described as an attempt to push a controversial project without transparency and accountability, calling it another example of "anti-people governance."

The party has demanded immediate public disclosure of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), full hydrological data and flood impact assessment, all environmental and statutory clearances, and scrapping of the existing contract, which it termed controversial and anti-locals. Patkar stated that the issue would be raised in the upcoming session of the Goa Legislative Assembly to hold the government accountable for what he described as inconsistencies and attempts to mislead the public. "Development cannot be imposed through deception. It must be transparent, accountable, and in the interest of the people. The Congress Party will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Sanvordem until justice and clarity are delivered," he said.



## Food Supplies Donated To Animal Shelter In South Goa

**Chirag Naik Appeals For Greater Government Support And Public Participation In Animal Welfare**

**Team Goemkarponn**

**MARGAO:** Social worker Chirag Naik visited the South Goa Welfare Trust for Animals to donate food supplies and extend support to the shelter staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to care for abandoned and rescued dogs and other animals. During the visit, Naik donated essential items including bags of rice grains, biscuits, dog food and other daily necessities. He said such contributions help reduce the financial burden on shelters and

allow them to focus more on medical care, treatment and rehabilitation of rescued animals. Appreciating the dedication of the shelter team, Naik said that caring for abandoned and injured animals requires constant effort, compassion and resources. He emphasized that dogs are not just animals, but loyal companions who deserve love, protection and a safe home. "Supplies like rice, biscuits and dog food may seem small, but they go a long way in supporting shelters that struggle with rising expenses.

## CM Pramod Sawant Interacts With Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Councillors

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** Pramod Sawant met and interacted with councillors of the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation during a recent engagement, congratulating them on their electoral performance and encouraging stronger municipal governance. The Chief Minister lauded the councillors for what he described as a historic achievement in Kerala



and appreciated the faith reposed in the BJP by the electorate to serve in urban local bodies across the state. He said the mandate reflects the growing acceptance of the Centre's vision of inclusive development, highlighting the message

of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" and "Antyodaya" reaching people at the grassroots level. During the interaction, Sawant shared key initiatives undertaken by the Government of Goa in the field of municipal administration.

## IPC, Goa State Pharmacy Council Sign MoU To Boost Patient Safety And Pharmacovigilance

**Team Goemkarponn**

**Panaji/Ghaziabad:** The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Goa State Pharmacy Council (GSPC) to strengthen pharmacy practices and patient safety initiatives in Goa. The MoU was formalised on February 10, 2026, at the IPC office in

**MOU**  
Memorandum  
of Understanding



Ghaziabad and will remain in force for a period of three years. Dr. V. Kailaiselvan, Secretary-cum-Scientific Director of IPC, signed the agreement on behalf of the Commission, while Dr. Raj Vaidya, President of GSPC, signed on behalf of the state council.

Mr. Mahendra Naik, Executive Member of GSPC, along with other IPC officials, was also present on the occasion. The collaboration is aimed at encouraging the wider adoption of the National Formulary of India (NFI) among pharmacists in Goa.

## Don Bosco College Panjim Organises Colossus XIII IT Fest MoU Signed With Haztech Innovation

**Team Goemkarponn**

**PANAJI:** The Department of Computer Applications at Don Bosco College successfully organised Colossus XIII, the 13th edition of its flagship IT Fest, marking another

milestone in promoting technical excellence, creativity and collaborative learning among students. The fest was inaugurated in the presence of Director Rev. Fr. Kinley D'Cruz, Principal Prof. Teotone Vaz and Vice Principal

Dr. Cedric Silvera. Addressing the gathering, the dignitaries encouraged students to explore emerging technologies and cultivate innovation in the rapidly evolving IT landscape. The Chief Guest for the

occasion was Mohsin Sheikh, an accomplished Computer System Architect, Developer, Security Researcher and 3D Animator. In his keynote address, Sheikh stressed the importance of practical knowledge,



cybersecurity awareness, innovation-driven thinking and industry readiness

among students aspiring to build successful careers in technology.



## Adani Energy secures Japanese funding for major green power corridor

■ Hyman and Wohlwend combine for relay format win as Indian Racing Festival electrifies Goa street circuit.

### Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa transformed into a buzzing motorsport hub as Round 4 of the Indian Racing Festival unfolded on a challenging street circuit on February 15, 2026. Backed by enthusiastic crowds and growing local support, the event delivered high intensity racing, with Goa Aces JA Racing emerging victorious on home turf. Raoul Hyman and Fabienne Wohlwend powered the team to the top step of the podium in the relay format race, clocking a combined time of 42:11.779. The win marked the team's tenth triumph in the championship and strengthened their position in the title race. Hyman laid a strong



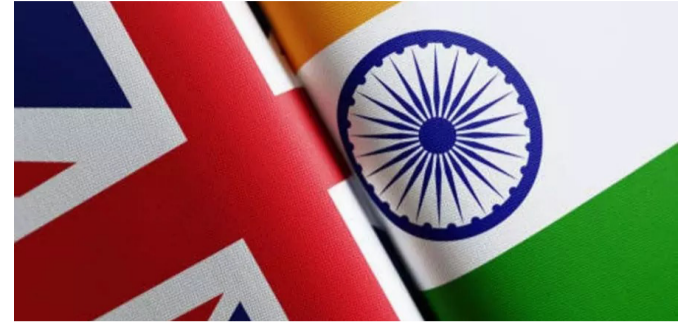
foundation during the opening stint, setting the fastest lap of 53.527 seconds and steadily extending his advantage on the tight circuit. Navigating traffic efficiently, he entered the mandatory driver swap window with a significant lead and handed over the car in a commanding position. Wohlwend's stint proved decisive under pressure. A safety car intervention erased the advantage and compressed the field, but she managed the restart

confidently. Holding off challenges from close rivals, she rebuilt the gap and maintained control to the chequered flag, becoming only the second female driver to secure a race win in the championship's history. Kichcha's Kings Bengaluru finished second with a time of 42:12.759, while Speed Demons Delhi secured third in 42:16.601.

Pole sitters Kolkata Royal Tigers were forced to retire early due to a mechanical issue.

Prominent team owners including John Abraham, Kichcha Sudeep, Naga Chaitanya and Sourav Ganguly were present, adding star appeal to the weekend spectacle. Following Round 4, Goa Aces JA Racing lead the standings with 145 points, narrowly ahead of Speed Demons Delhi on 144.

The championship remains tightly contested as the season progresses, with the Goa round further cementing the festival's growing footprint in Indian motorsport.



## India UK Free Trade Pact Set for April Rollout

■ CETA Implementation Expected to Boost Bilateral Trade and Market Access.

**New Delhi:** The free trade agreement between India and United Kingdom is likely to come into effect in April 2026, with both sides completing the final procedural steps required for its implementation. Signed on July 24, 2025, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement is currently undergoing ratification in the British Parliament. In India, the pact requires approval from the Union Cabinet before it can formally enter into force. Once cleared, the agreement will be operational from a mutually agreed date. Alongside the trade deal, both countries have signed the Double Contributions

Convention, which aims to prevent temporary workers from paying social security contributions in both jurisdictions at the same time. This arrangement is expected to be implemented in parallel with the trade agreement. Under the pact, 99 percent of Indian exports will gain duty free access to the British market. In return, India will reduce tariffs on a range of UK goods, including automobiles and Scotch whisky. The agreement is projected to raise annual bilateral trade by approximately 34 billion dollars and double total trade to around 120 billion dollars by 2030, from the current level of about 60 billion dollars.

...CONTD FROM PAGE 01

## CCP POLLS ON MARCH 11; COUNTING ON MARCH 13

been fixed at ₹2.5 lakh. The security deposit is ₹2,000 for general category candidates and ₹1,000 for reserved category candidates. Filing of affidavit in prescribed Form XXVI is mandatory along with nomination papers. The Model Code of Conduct has come into force with immediate effect across areas under CCP jurisdiction. Observers, expenditure observers and flying squads have been appointed to monitor compliance, and adequate police deployment has been planned to ensure smooth conduct of polls. Goa State Election Commission Commissioner Menino D'Souza said the Commission has completed all preparatory

work in a time-bound manner. "We are fully prepared to conduct the CCP elections in a free, fair and transparent manner. All necessary arrangements, including deployment of staff, training, security and enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, have been put in place," D'Souza said. He further stated that the electoral rolls have been updated as per statutory provisions and urged voters to actively participate in the democratic process. Meanwhile, by-elections to 14 vacant wards of various Village Panchayats across Pernem, Bicholim, Bardez, Salcete, Ponda, Quepem and Canacona talukas will be held on March 8, 2026, with counting on March 9.

## Ex-Tivim Sarpanch Questioned Over Alleged Plot Permission Irregularities

for development works at Survey No. 485/1-A of V.P. Tivim. Police sources informed that the enquiry was initiated based on inputs received from TCP authorities concerning the issuance of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for road construction linked to a plotted property in Tivim. Further investigation is currently underway. According to local sources, the property in question was subdivided and plotted between 2010 and 2016. Objections were reportedly raised in 2011 when Tulshidas Shinde was serving as Sarpanch of V.P. Tivim, with then ward member Arjun Aroskar

questioning aspects of the development. The matter is said to have remained in dispute between the panchayat and the developer until January 2025. Majority of the plots were allegedly sold between 2012 and 2016 during the tenure of former MLA Kiran Kandolkar. Sources further stated that after the demise of ward member Arjun Aroskar, the then Sarpanch Venkatesh Shirodkar issued an NOC in May 2025 permitting construction of internal roads within the plotted layout. It is alleged that Shirodkar is associated with a panel linked to Kandolkar.

## Budget 2026 Signals India's Readiness for Developed Nation Status, Says PM Modi

aligned with long term national goals. He emphasised that India is currently undertaking the largest infrastructure expansion in its history, with projects designed to strengthen future readiness, including in defence modernisation. The budget outlines measures aimed at accelerating growth across infrastructure, renewable energy, power and technology sectors. These initiatives are expected to provide a demand boost to the capital goods industry while supporting engineering, procurement and construction companies

as well as domestic manufacturers by lowering costs and improving competitiveness. On trade and investment, Modi said political stability and policy predictability have restored investor confidence, enabling India to negotiate agreements from a position of strength. He noted that India has concluded free trade agreements with 38 countries, expanding market access for micro, small and medium enterprises in sectors such as textiles, leather, chemicals, handicrafts and gems.

## Election Commission Suspends Seven Bengal Officials Over SIR Irregularities

■ Action Taken Under RP Act After Alleged Lapses and Delay in State Response.

**New Delhi:** The Election Commission of India has suspended seven officials in West Bengal with immediate effect over alleged irregularities in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision process. The action was taken under Section 13CC of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, citing serious misconduct, dereliction of duty and misuse of statutory authority. According to officials familiar with the matter, the disciplinary move follows instances where documents not prescribed under the SIR guidelines were uploaded during the revision



exercise. In certain cases, concerns were also raised over the sharing of official passwords with third parties, which was viewed as a breach of protocol. The commission has directed the Chief Secretary of West Bengal to initiate formal disciplinary proceedings against the suspended officers through their respective

cadre controlling authorities. The state administration has been instructed to regularly update the commission on the progress of these proceedings. Sources indicated that the commission had repeatedly urged the state government since August to take corrective action against the officials concerned.

## “Digital India Now Delivering Affordable Grain”: Amit Shah Launches CBDC Ration Platform

■ CBDC Enabled Platform Aims to Boost Transparency in Public Distribution.

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday inaugurated a Central Bank Digital Currency enabled Public Distribution System in Gandhinagar, describing it as a significant step in extending the Digital India initiative to welfare services. The newly introduced platform integrates digital currency mechanisms into the ration distribution network, with the objective of improving efficiency, transparency and accountability in the delivery of subsidised food grains. The initiative is designed to ensure that benefits reach eligible



citizens in a smoother and more reliable manner. Addressing the gathering, Shah said that technological advancements made over the past decade are now being applied to essential public services. He noted that the Digital India mission, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has fundamentally

transformed financial inclusion and digital transactions across the country. Reflecting on the progress achieved in the last eleven to twelve years, Shah pointed out that millions of citizens who previously had no access to banking services are now part of the formal financial system.

## India a Global Centre of Goodwill and Harmony, Says Mohan Bhagwat

■ RSS Chief Highlights Civilisational Values Rooted in Unity and Shared Belonging.

**New Delhi:** Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday described India as a global centre of goodwill and social harmony, emphasising that the country's civilisational foundation rests on a deep sense of unity and shared belonging rather than transactional relationships. Addressing a Samajik Sadbhav gathering organised as part of the centenary year celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bhagwat said Indian society has historically



evolved through interconnectedness and mutual respect. The event was held at Baba Gambhirnath Auditorium in Taramandal under the Goraksh province unit of the organisation. He noted that in several parts of the world, relationships are often shaped by exchange and self interest.



## Ahmedabad Air Crash Investigation Ongoing, Says Murlidhar Mohol

■ Minister Rejects Foreign Report Claiming Pilots Were Blamed in Probe

**New Delhi:** Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol has dismissed a foreign media report suggesting that investigators had fixed responsibility on the pilots in the Ahmedabad Air India crash, stating that the official inquiry remains underway and no conclusions have been finalised. Speaking in Sangli on Saturday, Mohol said the country's

investigative agencies are continuing their work and urged confidence in their process.

He stressed that any commentary would only be appropriate once the final report is completed and released.

Responding to claims published by an Italian daily that the probe had blamed the cockpit crew, he said such reports were premature.

## Seven Workers Killed in Massive Factory Fire in Bhiwadi 10 feared trapped

■ Blaze at Chemical Unit Contained After Intense Rescue Effort, Several Still Feared Trapped

**New Delhi:** At least seven workers lost their lives in a major fire that broke out at a chemical factory in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, on Monday morning. Authorities said around 10 workers are still feared trapped inside the industrial unit. The incident occurred at approximately 9.30 am when an estimated 20 to 25 workers were present at the facility. According to officials, flames spread rapidly through the private factory premises within minutes, engulfing a large section of the building. While some workers managed to escape, others were



unable to make it out as the blaze intensified. The fire was first noticed during routine police patrolling in the area, following which emergency services were alerted. Police personnel, fire brigade teams, medical responders and senior administrative officials rushed to the site and sealed off the vicinity to facilitate rescue and relief operations.

## India AI Impact Summit 2026 Opens in New Delhi With Five Day Global Agenda

■ Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Inaugurate Landmark AI Gathering at Bharat Mandapam

**New Delhi:** The India AI Impact Summit 2026 begins on February 16 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, marking a major global technology event hosted in the Global South. Prime

Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the summit at 5 pm, formally opening a five day programme focused on responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence.



Organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology with the Software Technology Parks of India as custodian, the summit is structured around three core themes described

as People, Planet and Progress.

Delegations from more than 100 countries are participating through seven working groups aimed at shaping global AI frameworks.

Day one sets the strategic tone with keynote addresses, policy discussions and expert roundtables across Bharat Mandapam, Sushma Swaraj Bhawan and Ambedkar Bhawan.

# "This Victory Belongs to India": Suryakumar Yadav After Dominant Win Over Pakistan

■ Ishan Kishan's 77 Powers Commanding T20 World Cup Victory on Challenging Surface.

**New Delhi:** India delivered a statement performance in the T20 World Cup with a commanding 61 run victory over Pakistan, as captain Suryakumar Yadav dedicated the triumph to the nation following an all round display. Batting first on a difficult surface, India posted 175 for seven, a total that proved well above par. The foundation of the innings was laid by Ishan Kishan, whose blistering 77 off 40 balls turned the contest decisively in India's favour. Walking in early after a wicket fell at the start, Kishan countered the challenging conditions



with calculated aggression and smart shot selection. Traditionally strong on the leg side, Kishan showcased significant improvement through

the off side, manipulating the field and forcing Pakistan's bowlers to adjust their lines.

His ability to rotate strike and find boundaries

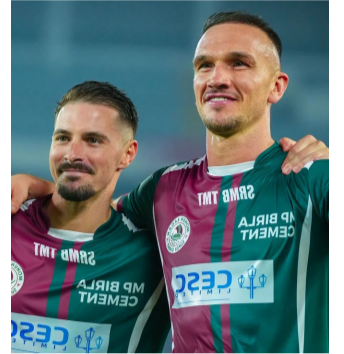
consistently ensured India maintained momentum despite the pitch offering grip and uneven bounce.

The left hander later reflected that a target in the range of 160 to 170 would have been competitive, making the final total even more satisfying. Suryakumar praised Kishan's willingness to take responsibility after the early setback, noting that the innings was both innovative and fearless. He described the team's total as at least 15 runs above par given the nature of the surface, adding that batting first had been the correct call.

# Mohun Bagan Open ISL Title Defence With 2 0 Win Over Kerala Blasters

■ Relegation Introduced as Delayed and Shortened Season Kicks Off Across 11 Venues.

**New Delhi:** Defending champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant began their Indian Super League campaign with a convincing 2 0 victory over Kerala Blasters at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharathi Krirangan in Kolkata. Goals from Jamie Maclaren and Tom Aldred ensured a winning start in a season that was delayed and reduced in duration. Under new head coach Sergio Lobera, Mohun Bagan fielded a strong lineup featuring Dimi Petratos, Jamie Maclaren and Alberto Rodriguez. New signings Mehtab



Singh, Robson Da Silva and Amey Ranawade were included in the matchday squad.

Kerala Blasters coach David Catala opted for a youthful combination, handing debuts to foreign recruits Oumar Ba and Victor Bertomeu.



# Kailas Gauns Wins IBC West Zone Title With TKO Triumph in Goa

■ Fight Night 5.0 at The Riverfront marks milestone for professional boxing in the state.

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Goa's Kailas Gauns captured the IBC West Zone Super Flyweight professional boxing title with a commanding technical knockout victory at Fight Night 5.0, held at The Riverfront along the Mandovi in Panaji. Competing in front of an enthusiastic home crowd, Gauns produced

a dominant display to secure the belt in emphatic fashion. The event was organised by Susegado Strike under the aegis of the Indian Boxing Council in collaboration with Goa Tourism. Staged in an open air riverside setting, the evening combined a scenic backdrop with high intensity action inside the ring, drawing strong local support.

# RC Goa Advance to PGM L 5.0 Final After Four Wicket Win

■ Priority Titans edge Manas Mavericks in Super Over to set up Qualifier 2 clash.

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** RC Goa booked their place in the final of the PGM L 5.0 Cricket Tournament with a hard fought four wicket victory over Baale Tigers in Qualifier 1 at the Panaji Gymkhana ground in Campal. The summit clash is scheduled for February 22. After opting to bowl, RC Goa restricted Baale Tigers to 117 in 19.5 overs in a low scoring encounter. Samar Dubhashi top scored with 33, while Lakshay Garg made 27 and Dhiraj Fadte added 20. Ramnath Gaonkar led the bowling effort with an impressive 4 for 17, supported by disciplined spells from the rest of the attack.



In reply, RC Goa faced early setbacks and were reduced to 59 for 4 in 12 overs. Gaonkar contributed 27 with the bat, but his dismissal left the side in further trouble at 87 for 6. Gauresh Khandepakar then turned the match with a blistering unbeaten 24 off just eight deliveries, striking three sixes and a four to guide his team to 120 for 6 in 19 overs and secure victory with an over to spare. Baale Tigers will now meet Priority Titans in



Qualifier 2 after the latter emerged victorious in a dramatic Eliminator. In the second match of the day, Priority Titans posted 199 for 5 in their 20 overs, with Adeep Miskin scoring 50 off 28 balls and Rijul Pathak adding 38. Manas Mavericks matched the total at 199 for 9, thanks to half centuries from Avishkar Mone and key contributions from Sairaj Dhond and Pranav Biche, forcing the contest into a Super Over.

# Manish Kakode's 11 Wicket Haul Powers Goa to 146 Run Win Over Jammu and Kashmir

Under 23 side seals emphatic three day victory in Colonel C K Nayudu Trophy clash

**PANAJI:** Goa secured a dominant 146 run victory against Jammu and Kashmir in the Colonel C K Nayudu Under 23 Elite Tournament, wrapping up the four day fixture inside three days at the Hostel Ground in Jammu. Set a target of 267 for victory, Jammu and Kashmir faltered under sustained pressure and were dismissed for 120 in 30.1 overs in their second innings.

Manish Kakode once again proved decisive with the ball, claiming 5 for 28 to add to his six wicket haul in the first innings and finish the match with outstanding figures of 11 for 77.

# Sinq Rangers Clinch Super Over Thriller in GSB Unity Cup 3.0

■ Dramatic finish at MCC Ground as Rangers edge past Ultracon Madgaon Royals

## Team Goemkarponn

**PANAJI:** Margao witnessed a gripping contest in the GSB Unity Cup 3.0 tournament as Sinq Rangers secured a dramatic Super Over victory against Ultracon

Madgaon Royals at the MCC Ground on Sunday. After being put in to bat, Sinq Rangers piled up an imposing 196 for 4 in their allotted 20 overs. The Royals responded with equal determination, finishing at 196 for 6 to



force the match into a Super Over decider. In the one over shootout, Ultracon Madgaon Royals struggled under pressure, managing only 4 runs in four deliveries while losing two wickets. Sinq Rangers approached

their chase with confidence and sealed the win in just two balls. Samrudh Bharne struck three runs off the first delivery before Vismay Falgaonkar finished the contest with a boundary on the next ball.

